Service Control Operator Guidelines

THE MIDWEST AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE, INC.

SERVICE CONTROL OPERATOR AS THE FOCAL POINT

MidCars Service Control Operators run the service and control the frequency during the time that MidCars is in operation. SCOs are scheduled by the Director or Asst. Director and assigned time slots for an hour or more every week. A copy of this schedule can be viewed and downloaded as a PDF file on the MidCars Website at www.midcars.net. Proper Amateur Radio operating practice is expected. This includes having a properly adjusted transmitter and receiver, a good clear signal, an attentive ear, and an expeditious manner in moving the service along. Any Amateur licensed to operate on 7258 KHz is welcome to serve as a SCO if they can accomplish the task in a consistent manner. It is a relatively simple task and fun, but it does require a willingness to help others while paying attention to their needs. For this you will need to concentrate on the service 100% while running it and not be doing other things.

GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE CONTROL OPERATORS

Running the service requires that you be friendly and sometimes brief (especially when it is busy) while assisting people and taking check-ins. Be on time to relieve the SCO scheduled before you. Be sure to read the Preamble in the first few minutes after opening your session of the Service. It's best to read from a printed copy so you don't ramble while trying to remember it. Don't forget to identify with your own call letters every 10 minutes. It's easy to forget when things get busy.

As SCO it is your responsibility to recall all traffic that other stations have called or listed with you. You should try to do this periodically as traffic allows until the listed contacts have been made or until traffic has been passed or withdrawn. Do not chastise someone on the frequency if they make a mistake. Give them a gentle nudge and try to be tactful or take them off frequency later if you want to discuss a matter of procedure. Also, if you must use VOX, make certain that it is adjusted properly.

Avoid long-winded individual commentaries with each check-in and long redundant transmissions when asking for check-ins. It causes impatience, doubling, and slows down the service. Keep it short whenever possible. Checking for mobiles is fine, but don't over do it and leave a dozen fixed stations waiting too long or you will create a backup of irritable stations. Here are examples of some of the phrases you might use during callups:

"7258, Any mobiles need the service?"

"Any relays on mobile check-ins?"

"This is 7258, Does anyone need the service?"

"7258, Any check-ins or relays on stations that I'm not hearing at my location?"

"This is the Midwest Amateur Radio Service, 7258, Does anyone need the service?"

It is essential that the SCOs log each check-in to direct traffic if needed or to help others contact those who checked in earlier. Recognize stations in the order you heard them remembering to call mobiles first. Take a list of five or six at a time if it's real busy. You don't have to get all the calls exactly right…but it would be nice. If you are close, they will know who they are and will correct their calls for you. It works, but only works really well if you use a log sheet to keep things in order.

When a check-in places a call for another station and gets no response, it's good practice for the SCO to repeat the call for that station. If there is still no answer, ask the check-in if they would like you to LIST the station. If yes, write that station's call next to that of the check-in then quickly move on to the next station on the list. Remember to call the listed station periodically for the duration of the hour. If you have a long list of fixed stations, stop halfway through to ask for any mobile check-ins before continuing your list. Remember, mobiles may be on short time.

Many hams set up schedules to meet friends at the top or bottom of the hour so be sure to stand by at these times for anyone that needs to make a call or schedule.

When weather appears threatening, the SCO should request periodic weather reports, road conditions, and provide additional information as needed. If propagation appears poor, move the service around between a couple of stations to make sure everyone is being picked up and afforded the opportunity to make their calls.

See! It's All Very Simple! Just use good common sense. In fact, it's FUN. It's not all business and some joking is alright as long as it's done in good taste and it doesn't interfere with other ongoing traffic! After a few times you will get to know many calls from memory.

THE RULES ON SHARING 7258

MIDCARS does not own the frequency of 7258 KHz now, nor did they ever in the past! If 7258 is in use by stations other than MIDCARS at the time you need to begin the service in the morning or after 7258 has been opened for general amateur use, politely break in using your call sign and ask permission of those stations that may be using the frequency. Do not begin MidCars operations unless the occupying stations give you permission to use 7258. MidCars is not considered in operation unless an SCO is actively running the service. There is no such thing as MidCars "running on automatic" with no SCO present. At the end of the MidCars day or if there is no SCO to take the next shift, the outgoing SCO should close the service and "Return 7258 KHz to general amateur use."

EMERGENCY OPERATION

MIDCARS will suspend normal operations in the event of an EMERGENCY until the SCO has decided all the information has been properly passed and cleared up. DO NOT interfere with the emergency traffic. Instead, closely monitor the situation and any traffic being passed. The SCO may request assistance from someone on frequency or may state that he/she is not able to effectively respond or provide adequate assistance. Let the SCO determine and select the station deemed best able address the situation to avoid doubling and confusion. Trying to be overly helpful and jumping into the middle of things by making transmissions without coordinating your efforts can do more damage than good. Always listen intently first!!

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

MIDCARS does not handle formal traffic, although we will assist in finding a station to move off frequency with you to handle traffic. Remember, mobiles have preference when checking in. Their contacts and calls will be put through first. Fixed stations will then be called in the order they were checked in if possible; however weak stations may be called first before they are lost. Make certain if you are a mobile to state you are "mobile" when checking in so the SCO knows to give you priority. When signals are weak please use phonetics. Standard phonetics will be more readily recognized than cute novel ones. Use relays if needed.

COMMENTS ON QRM!

Please, please do not over emphasize or repeatedly acknowledge intentional QRM even though it is sometimes difficult to not say something. There are a few "less than stellar" operators out there who blow into their microphones, throw carriers, generate noise, or make comments in an attempt to tune up or disrupt the service. Whether you're an SCO or a Check-in, don't give them the satisfaction they are looking for of interrupting the Service or causing interference. It will come back to haunt THEM later in the form of a stiff monetary fine. Ignore it and work through or around the interference. Ask for a relay or transfer the SCO duties to a different station not affected by the QRM until it stops. The problem will go away when that person sees that the service is continuing without interruption. Do NOT run up and down the band chasing people away unless it is absolutely necessary to acquire a clear frequency to assist a mobile in serious need or to pass emergency traffic. A general inquiry or passing of information about someone's health and welfare is not considered emergency traffic.

YOUR IMPORTANCE AS A RESOURCE

We hope that MIDCARS on 7258 can continue to be a friendly and popular public service, source of road and weather information, and meeting place for mobiles traveling around the country as well as for fixed stations making schedules with friends. We are always willing to assist with information on radio signals, antennas, amplifiers, and any other service we can provide to amateur operators. It's FREE! There are no dues! So, if you enjoy helping others and making new friends. Join Us! Also we hold a forum or an informal gathering at the Dayton Hamvention every year so if you are in Dayton, please look us up.

We look forward to your ideas, participation and comments as we work together to keep MIDCARS focused on its intended purpose. Thank You for reading and following these rules and guidelines. Have fun and enjoy the experience of MIDCARS. See you on 7258!

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