



Citizen Corps Volunteer Material for NOAA Public Alert Radio Program

Citizen Corps Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to serve your community and your nation by acting as a NOAA Public Alert Radio¹ Program volunteer. The Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of Homeland Security thank you for your participation.

Your efforts to help educate school personnel and students about the NOAA Public Alert Radio and to program it correctly enable us to extend the reach of professional technical service. You are protecting school children and making our communities safer. Thank you.

Below are recommended procedures for you to follow to ensure the new radios at the school are set up correctly.

Before school visit checklist

- Use the public alert website below to familiarize yourself with the overall program and FAQs: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/proginfo.htm>. In addition to making sure you know how to program and set up the radios, be sure to familiarize yourself with the registration process for public schools and the licensing process for nonpublic schools so you can assist school staff with appropriate registration or licensing. And be sure to note the types of batteries that can be used for these Radios.
- Your Citizen Corps Council contact will be coordinating outreach to the schools through the emergency management office. The Emergency Manager and Citizen Corps Council and your Program Manager will develop the plan and procedures for providing support to the schools. This may include organizing volunteers to call school staff to verify receipt of the radio and to offer assistance with programming and registering/licensing the radios. The support plan may also include volunteers from local ham radio clubs or other trained volunteers.
- With the approval of your Citizen Corps contact, first call your assigned school to verify that the radio has been received and then, if requested, schedule an appointment with appropriate school staff. If possible, schedule this appointment to include a representative of the Office of Emergency Management and additional school staff including office staff, principals, security officers, science instruction team lead, and emergency preparedness team members.

¹ The Radios are also known as NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR).



- *To identify the main contact at each local school, go to:*
<http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>
 - Click on the “Register Your Device” button.
 - Click on “Continue to Radio Receipt Certification.”
 - Use the pull down scrolling triangle to select the schools state and county. A list of schools will appear.
 - Select your school and click “Submit Information.”
 - The school’s radio recipient (contact person), telephone number, and radio manufacturer will appear.
 - Be sure to then click “No this is not my school” to stop the registration process because we want the school staff to register or license the radio during your school visit if it has not yet been done by the school staff (see below).

- Visit http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov/cc_volunteer_material.htm, click on the EasyStart Guide for Schools, and print the appropriate radio model type guide to use during your school visit. Please print extra copies to leave with school personnel.

- Get the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) code number. SAME geographic location codes for your school’s county at www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr.
 - On the left hand column, click on the “Station Listings.”
 - Click on “County by County Coverage.”
 - Click on the appropriate state, look down the list for your COUNTY/CITY/ AREA. The SAME Code is the six-digit number in the second column.

SAME codes can also be obtained by calling (1-888-697-7263).

For future reference, be sure to write down the SAME geographic location code(s) for each school you are assisting.

During school visit checklist:

- Confirm whether your school’s radio has been registered or licensed and, if not, help school staff find the location to register or approve the licensing agreement for the radio at: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>
 - Click on the “Register Your Device” button.
 - Click on “Continue to Radio Receipt Certification.” Or “Continue to Radio License Acceptance/Decline”
 - Use the pull down scrolling triangle to select your state and county. A list of schools will appear.
 - Select your school and confirm your selection.



- Demonstrate and provide operational/technical assistance to school staff about the use of the Radio. Refer to the manufacturer's Owner's Manual and the EasyStart Guide for Schools you printed from the Internet. (Both are available on the website <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>.)
- Discuss the importance of school emergency plans that include alerts and education for parents and students. With approval from your Emergency Manager and Citizen Corps Council, offer to help schedule an appointment with Emergency Management to help the school develop their plan, to start a junior Citizen Corps Council within the school, organizing first aid or CERT training for the school children, community safety service projects, drills and exercises for the school, and outreach to parents through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). At a minimum, please refer them to some helpful websites, such as those below, or a local website that you know of.
 - <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>
 - <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/er/lwx/swep/Design-Plan.html>
 - <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/swep/index.htm>
 - <http://www.ready.gov>
 - <http://www.redcross.org>
 - <http://www.disastereducation.org>
- Set up the radio to receive the NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) station with the best reception and use the SAME geographic location code to program that radio to alert for the specific county(s)/independent city(s) in which the school district is located.
- It is best for the radio to be located where it can be monitored continually by school staff. Reception problems can be improved by changing the radio's location, or adding a simple, flat T-shaped antenna, similar to the type used for stereo receivers. For more information, see reference material at:
<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/mqt/nwr/nwrwebpg/antenna.php>
- Ensure proper batteries are installed and help school staff establish a battery replacement schedule. Suggest they make it part of the start of school-year check list or choose an annual date for them to mark on their calendars. For example, they might use September 1 (the start of the National Preparedness Month); the date to change to or from Daylight Savings Time; or some other easily remembered date.
- Ask them to unplug the AC cord from the back of the radio. If it still has a digital display, the batteries are good. Have them re-plug the cord into the radio to conserve the batteries. A typical radio will last about three days when relying only on batteries. This is why it is important to have backup batteries during an emergency.
- Write down the name, e-mail address and phone number of the person who will be the primary operator (most likely one of the main office staff workers). If possible, please call this person later to make sure the radio worked for the test alert.



After School Visit (Wednesday afternoon)

- The National Weather Service broadcasts a test alert every Wednesday between the hours of 10:00 am and 12:00 noon. If there is a threat of severe weather or other ongoing emergency, the test will be postponed until the next good-weather day. Call your main contact person on or after Wednesday afternoon to ask whether or not the alarm was received at their school.
- Remind the school's operator of your name and contact information in case they have questions in the future.
- Keep abreast of the latest information regarding the program by monitoring the site: <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov> and acting as a resource to your adopted school.
- Follow up with any discussions you had regarding further collaboration with the school. Schools are an important part of the community and should be included in Citizen Corps efforts to create a safe and secure community!

Thank you again for your time and your service. Your participation is an important contribution to the safety of our nation's school children.

National Office of Citizen Corps
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service
U.S. Department of Commerce

Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
U.S. Department of Education