

"A Good Attitude for your ARES/RACES Group."

Having a good attitude is the number one best asset your group can have when it comes to offering your services to served agencies. More than anything else they need volunteers that will work together to complete their functions and assignments without becoming a problem for their organization, when put under stress. A person having just completed basic training as a fire fighter is not going to be expected by the public, his peers, or his superiors to be as well suited to all aspects of the job, as one who has undergone additional training above the basic level, but he still can have a good attitude. Field experiences added to on-going training are what make a good firefighter, and the same will make a good emergency communicator, but neither is very useful to the served agency without a good attitude. A good attitude is a teamwork attitude, one where it is all about the mission and not all about you. Some in the Amateur Radio fraternity feel that having an operator's license automatically makes them a great asset to public safety communications and in some cases that statement may have merit, but without a good attitude, they hurt the image of Ham radio and many EC's can tell you stories that will back this up. They will say something like; I can't get past the door with my EM. He says "the last time he tried to use a group of you guys, we almost had to stop the operation to break up a fight, and everyone in the group wanted to be chief, and some of them even wanted to tell me how I should be doing my job. Truthfully their attitude in general was a real hindrance to the effort."

So it is important, especially for the new folks, but really anyone who wants to be a real asset to your group, that as you begin the technical material involved in learning about Emergency Communications, it is imperative that you understand your knowledge in emergency communications is not nearly as important as your attitude, during emergencies. Yes, technical ability will enable you to do a far better job of communicating. But your attitude will determine the success of the overall Amateur Radio effort. The person who brings a "know it all" attitude as described earlier, will only hamper relations with served agencies.

The people you will be servicing, remember that word, are professionals that have seen far too many people more interested in impressing someone than in completing the task assigned to them. You will actually impress them more, by being as quiet as you can, by not interrupting their work unless it is really necessary, and doing your assignment well. Results, without interference of served agency people, will cement relations with your served agency, and portray an image that will make your group more useful to any served agency, and much more likely to be called on the next time your group is needed. Our served agencies also respond well when we take a positive attitude as to what we can do, rather than what we can't do.

The attitude among some Hams is that, we are Volunteers and "Volunteers don't have to take orders." This is a free country. That's absolutely correct. We do not have to take orders. Just remember that served Agencies also live in a free country and they are free to say thanks, but no thanks to your group. Some of our very own EC's in the state have received this kind of treatment from their local served agencies, due to the previous experiences, that those served agencies have had before. Many of those that caused such attitudes have left and are pursuing different hobbies now, but the image still remains, and it is going to take time and effort on the part of our local ARES/RACES groups to change that image, but with the proper attitude, and the proper training, we can make a great difference in that image over time. Some groups have a good image with their local served agencies and I applaud your work, and encourage you to keep up the good work, so the next generation of hams will have a good start, and a good example to follow.