

Hobby vs. Commitment

This evening we are going to have an open forum discussion on volunteering and training. Throughout the years our volunteer Fire Departments have required their firemen to under go an enormous amount of training, including the NIMS courses, so they could do their jobs professionally and safely even though they are volunteers. These men and women are accepted as professional first responders by Emergency Management offices, Police Departments and professional fire fighters because they are well trained, committed and certified.

SO, WHAT DOES CERTIFICATION MEAN TO A VOLUNTEER?

It means you have successfully passed the required educational courses necessary to become a reliable, informed and productive volunteer. It also demonstrates your commitment and dedication to serving your Community and State more efficiently and effectively by investing time in learning how emergency events will operate and your part in those events.

Tonight I would like ask everyone on the net how you would feel about and what would you do if it became required for us to take basic training courses

in addition to the NIMS courses which are already required before we could be deployed or participate during an emergency and or disaster situation.

There are several reasons why certification could or should be introduced to ARES/RACES organizations. It would establish a well trained team of volunteers who not only are amateur radio capable, but are trained and aware of the organization, procedures and operational guidelines and policies that will be used during all emergency events managed by FEMA and or the Arkansas Emergency management offices around the State.

Now, before I give everyone their chance to respond, let me say this. No one in the Arkansas Section has brought this up nor have they suggested it. However there are several ARRL Sections around the country that have implemented such programs that have been successful. Dale Temple, W5RXU, has had several training sessions on the Arkansas ARES/RACES Training Net recently about credentialing and having the proper ID's to get into an area that has been affected by a disaster. Personally, it is my belief that before anyone gets any kind of ID that would allow them to be granted permission to enter into a disaster area for any reason that they MUST be trained and certified before they receive any credentials. Of

course, this would require some testing of your knowledge and skills by on the air operations and written test.