

*"Making Good Operating Procedures A Habit"*

Let's face reality folks. When push comes to shove, and when the chips are down, the majority of emergency communications will be voice. Around 100 years ago it was all in Morse code or rather Spark gap because that was the mode of the day, then later CW dominated. That was all there was. If you were not a Morse code operator you did not communicate. 50 years ago a reasonable guess might be that it was 50% Morse and 50% AM phone, some SSB maybe and a little FM.

It makes no difference if your favorite mode is CW or digital, and that voice is the least efficient, the reality is that most emergency Communications is on voice and will probably remain their for a long time. CW, digital, and other modes are more effective in many ways and still have their place; they can and will be used very effectively to supplement voice communications in certain situations and for specific functions. However, the reality remains, like it or not, voice is where we are at.

We all learned to speak before we entered kindergarten. By the time we left grammar school, most of us could read and write fairly well. By the end of high school we all should have at least mastered basic verbal and written language skills.

While some of us had learned the Morse language by that time, many had not, and struggled to learn it later in life. Many hams have only learned just enough Morse to pass an exam and unfortunately never or rarely use it, so SSB and FM prevail.

In all public service events, good communication skills are essential. But, unfortunately what we hear on the bands and our nets a lot of times is usually NOT a good example of effective communications skills or proper procedures. As emergency communications operators, we must NOT allow ourselves to become mediocre or worse voice communicators. Sadly, many operators emulate what they hear on the air and assume that what they hear every day, by both newcomers and old timers, is proper.