

**PSV-105**  
**MARATHON BEST PRACTICES**

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Some amateur radio operators argue that working public service events is not worth it, that these events do not prepare you for helping out in real emergency service situations. On the contrary: working public service event the size of a major city marathon is excellent practice and experience for working emergency situations. In the major city marathons there are 25,000 plus participants with over 250,000 spectators. During these events there are emergency conditions which occur unexpectedly which require quick handling to sustain life. The handling of these situations requires coordination of and working with agencies like the police, fire department, ambulance, medical services, local EOC, homeland security, public transportation, etc. Working with these agencies for public service events builds relationships, confidence, respect, and important personal connections with the same agencies as for an emergency situation. It also demonstrates that amateur radio operators are professionals who can adapt to and still be successful in unexpected situations.

Following are some Best Practices for working a Marathon event:

- Prepare and coordinate with the organizer/sponsors, and agencies early.
- Don't assume that because this event has been worked by radio operators for many years that you do not have to check things out and make changes ahead of time. Examples of changes are: the course route can change drastically, new buildings may have been built blocking communication paths, roads are under construction, and the Unified Command location moved drastically such that radio operation is affected or need to evacuate the event due to weather or other situations.
- Check out the use of repeaters planned for the event ahead of time. It may be necessary to changes the repeaters that will be used.
- Have additional qualified personnel available to fill key positions at the last minute and to relieve primary key personnel.
- Setup and checkout redundant radios at the key positions particularly NCS locations. Have spare equipment for your assignment.
- Carry spare fuses for every piece of your equipment.
- Have extra: cables, power supplies, coax, and antennas in case of failure or damage or someone else needs it.
- Continuous, uninterrupted communication is essential for every NCS position. Consider:
  - Power failure,
  - Equipment failure,
  - Serious incident occurring,
  - Need to evacuate the operating location
- Have redundant NCS positions setup in different physical locations.
- Provide sufficient personnel to cover the event.
- Do the job well so the event sponsors are extremely pleased with your participation. Do the job so well that key event personnel ask for their shadow by name or at least say "I want the same person I had last year".

- Provide course mapping/tracking information for:
  - Assets like:
    - Mobile medics,
    - Mobile medical carts,
    - Ambulances,
    - SAG vans,
    - Etc.Be able to communicate with and coordinate the movement of these assets.
  - Track the lead event participant's location,
  - Track the last event participant's location. This location is one of the most commonly asked questions. Assign a bicycle rider with GPS tracking to follow the last participant.
  - Provide this tracking of all assets, personnel, and participants all on the same map. This will require the cooperation of many agencies to provide the different tracking devices identities.

Quick-accurate-communication, efficient passing of traffic, coordination of other agencies saves lives time and time again. Public service events are worth working to develop and train a group of amateur radio operators for potential emergency situations. ARES Amateur radio operators should be professions and practice at public service events helps greatly toward this accomplishment.