

MERT



Marion County Emergency Radio Team



Shelter Manager Update

The following information details the role, responsibilities and resources provided by the Marion County Emergency Radio Team (MERT) to the MCPS during Shelter activations.

Who is MERT?

MERT was established by the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Division of Emergency Management to provide Sheriff Office vetted, Emergency Management protocol trained and FCC licensed amateur radio volunteers supporting emergency operations whenever required.

Why MERT?

MERT was designed to provide emergency communications support to areas such as Shelters, Healthcare Facilities, Points of Distribution (POD), Mobile Command Center (MCC) operations and county CERT communities during disasters when traditional telecommunications services have failed or not available. They assist with moving critical and valuable communications between agencies and locations about storm information, resource needs and requests to and from various local and state governmental agencies. MERT personnel and the equipment they use are capable of communicating with similar local, state and national facilities whenever necessary.



Who does MERT report to?

MERT volunteers report to the Director of the Division of Emergency Management who appoints a Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator that administer the organizations activities.



Who funds MERT?

MERT receives all financial funding to support its responsibilities from the Marion County Sheriff's Office. Resources include multiple radio transmission repeaters, access to communications towers, backup generators, mobile and portable communications radios, antennas, test equipment, uniforms and other items necessary to fulfill its mission.

What specific training do MERT Members receive?

MERT personnel are required to be HAM radio operators having active Technician, General, Advanced or Amateur Extra rated licenses from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Members are also required to have completed training and certification on the Incident Command System (ICS) procedures and protocols of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).



Members also receive additional training from personnel from the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Division of Emergency Management, the State of Florida Emergency Management; the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) and other emergency management organizations (Red Cross, etc.). MERT personnel volunteer thousands of hours annually to attend meetings, classes, training and practice operations.

What does MERT specifically do at the Shelter?

Members are assigned specific sites and remain on duty to pass any emergency messages from the Shelter Manager to and from the Marion County Sheriff's Office Emergency Operations Center (EOC) whenever regular phone, cellular voice and Internet services fail.

Members use specific FEMA communication form ICS-213 to document any formal message from the Shelter Manager by transmitting via voice, data or image communications to the EOC Incident Command organization. Messages received by MERT personnel at the Shelter are provided to the Shelter Manager when received and require acknowledgement by signature.

Simply, MERT will be the Shelter Manager's connection to the EOC when all other forms of communication have failed.



Where is MERT located?

The operations and primary radio communications facility is located at the MCSO Emergency Operations Center at 698 NW 30th Ave, Ocala, FL.

More MERT information at: www.kg4nxo.com or contact MERT Coordinator Harlan Cook at.... KG4NXO@marionso.com or call 210.331.3240