

**Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Santa Barbara Central County**

FIRE WATCH PATROL PROCEDURES

Complete your Assignment Sheet, receive your briefing. Which may include special information relative to your assignment or the day's activities, what to watch for, and whether to log the information or report it on the air.

Report to the met when you arrive in your patrol area, at each end of your patrol boundaries (turn-arounds), and whenever you will be stopped for more than about 15 minutes. Notify Net if you go off the net frequency or will be away from the vehicle. Stay in your assigned area unless directed to extend your patrol area, move to another, or have permission from the Incident Commander to leave. When you are cleared to return to the Command Post, report to the Debriefing Officer and complete your Assignment Sheet.

Remember the ABCs of emergency communications: ACCURACY, BREVITY, and CLARITY. Do not be chatty; someone may have to break with emergency traffic.

Report immediately to Net Control any emergency or situation requiring immediate attention, including:

- Sighting of fire or smoke.
- Sighting or discovery of open fires, barbecue or hibachi fires, etc.
- Hearing or seeing the discharge of fire-crackers or fireworks.
- Hearing or seeing the discharge of fire-arms (people of foot or in vehicles).
- Accidents, medical emergencies, motorists needing assistance, etc.

When reporting emergencies, give your mileage from the turnaround or your GPS coordinates. In the case of fire or smoke sightings, give a compass bearing and your location.

Be friendly at all times. Some people will ask you what you are doing. Explain that your amateur radio group has volunteered to watch for fires and report weather conditions to the Forest Service. **Do Not** mention you are logging vehicle license plate numbers; this could jeopardize your safety.

Record on your Log Sheet temperature, wind speed and direction (and hygrometer reading if you have the equipment) at assigned locations or wherever noticeable windy conditions are encountered. Be especially watchful for gusty winds. Monitor these same locations on each pass of your patrol and report any *significant* changes. Certain teams in key areas may be asked to report readings at specific areas to Net Control, but do

not routinely report conditions unless requested to do so.

Record, if safely possible, information on all vehicles encountered on your patrol. Include as much of the following as you can: vehicle license number, make and model, color(s) (predominate color first), number and gender of occupants, direction of travel (or if parked) and location encountered plus any other information you deem significant. Note the time of the encounter and mileage from your last turn-around or your geographical location (Romero Saddle, etc.) Do not be conspicuous about your logging.

Stop and scan your patrol area with binoculars whenever you have a good view of the back or front country. Look for fire, smoke, wreckage, people, vehicles, etc. Know where you are at all times and the closest/safest way out of your patrol area in the event of an emergency. Listen for reports from adjacent teams so you can pick up on anything heading your way, significant weather changes, etc. If another team reports a sighting of smoke, try to get a cross-bearing from your location and report it.

If you encounter a "suspicious" vehicle or person or a situation you are uncomfortable with report your location to the Net and request the Net Control log it and tell the Incident commander. This will clue the Net Control to check on you in about five minutes for a status report. Net Control will relay this information to the Incident Commander immediately. Report to Net when you have an "all clear" and resuming your patrol. Mark your log so you can remember to tell the debriefer about this encounter.

Do not approach suspicious vehicles or persons unless you feel safe to do so. Never confront someone (ask him what he is doing, etc.). If you decide to approach an individual, do it in an open, friendly manner and leave one person in the ARES vehicle with the radio for safety. The person in the ARES vehicle can unobtrusively take notes on the vehicle/person(s). Be careful to not be obvious about logging; it may be safer to make mental notes and write them down later.