

# South Coast Amateur Radio Service Net Control Station Operations Manual

## A Guide To Aid In Uniformity And Consistency

Revised By: KF4RO 2018

### Net Goals

It goes without saying, that consistency in our operation is of **prime importance**. If we each do not conduct our net sessions in a similar manner, then our net members can easily become confused as to our procedures. This, in turn, leads to disenchantment and eventual “fading” away of our members. We cannot afford for this to happen, because as it stands now, there are only about 275 members out of the 10,845 plus or minus who are not silent keys or had their license canceled by the FCC, and of those, only about 1% check in weekly. We need to insure they all feel welcome. We need to be sure that information pertaining to first time check-ins (how to get their number) is provided to each new prospective member.

We realize a number of our members hate to read, or refer to a manual unless, or until, all else fails! However, we ask that you **PLEASE** thoroughly read this manual and that you work with us in following the procedures and guidelines accordingly. Each one of you, and the service you provide to the success of South-Cars, is always greatly appreciated. Without each of you, we would not have a South-Cars Net! We do ask in return for the fun, satisfaction, and enjoyment that you receive as a net control station, that you help us by adhering to these guidelines.

This manual is for all of us, “old timer” NCS’s, Alternate NCS’s as well as new NCS’s and anyone else interested in knowing, and understanding, our preferred guidelines in our everyday net operations. We have net control stations that are giving out, from time to time, erroneous, and/or completely outdated, information. We have means in place for each of you to stay up to date on changes in procedures. We don’t want to change your personality. Everyone has his, or her, own unique personality. We do, however ask that we all be consistent in our procedures, hence the issuing of this manual. Please keep this manual handy for your reference; keep up on changes and updates.

Remember, if you allow deviations while other NCS properly adhere to the rules, you are not being fair to your fellow NCS, as deviations will probably propagate hard feelings by the members, towards those NCS who are following the rules. Your help, your cooperation, and your willingness to take time out of your busy day to conduct your net sessions are appreciated!

### NO PRELIST:

If you are opening the first hour in the morning and hear others on the frequency waiting for the net to start, **DO NOT** put them on your check-in list. Let them check in along with everyone else

when you start your first list. If asked to do so, just indicate that, in fairness to all, we don't take pre-list.

Stations with a schedule and Birthdays:

At the top of each hour we should ask if there are any stations on frequency that have a schedule and wish to call their station to move off frequency. You are only giving them the opportunity to call another station to move off frequency. Please do NOT add them to your check-in list. Let them check in, with everyone else when they return to the net. Some will take advantage of this to get on board if you let them. If they make contact and move off frequency, acknowledge this. If they don't, then simply indicate that you are sorry their "station wasn't there" and move on with your session. Then follow by asking if there is anyone celebrating their birthday. If so, check them in at this time and wish them a very happy birthday.

Finally, if propagation is "long" and you are not hearing stations close to you, try to at least once during your session, pick another NCS located far from you to take a list of Mobiles and then a list of "anyone, anywhere", thereby affording more people the opportunity to check in. Be clear to the assisting NCS as to what you want him, or her to do, so that you don't lose control of your session. Also, do not always pick the same NCS to assist you, it will take long before they will not be on your net.

8AM and 12PM Eastern Time Sessions:

A) Prior to your session **check your e-mail for net related messages, and the South-Cars Website at [www.southcars.com](http://www.southcars.com)**. If you have E-mail "blocker" settings, be sure to allow SCARS E-mails. If, for some reason, you don't have internet and/or E-mail capabilities then we ask that you find some way through the buddy system (having someone do it for you) or possibly over the phone, to stay current on changes, updates, announcements, etc. This really is important! Have a copy of the Preamble for opening the first and last sessions. Please do not try to wing the Preamble from memory, read it from the web page or print it out so you can read it. It is very distracting hearing someone trying to do the preamble from memory and tripping all over their tongue.

B) Starting and Running Your Session: Check to be sure the frequency is clear! Note: South-Cars does not own 7.251 MHz!

C) If the frequency is occupied: Here is the preferred procedure, if the frequency is in use at the time the net is to open: Identify yourself to them. Excuse yourself for the interruption. Let them know that the South-Cars net is about to start up and that normally it is conducted on 7.251 MHz. Tell them that since the frequency is in use, you will move up 3 KHz or so to conduct the

net, (I don't advise your going down 3 as you will probably plop in on the 7.248 group!) Ask them to inform anyone that should try to check in with them that the net is "up 3", or whatever, and also ask them to please come on the temporary frequency when they are through with their

QSO, and inform you, so that you can shift the net frequency accordingly, we can TRUTHFULLY say, we have never had anyone fail to offer to move their QSO, under these circumstances. If so, thank them for their help and cooperation. Be genuinely appreciative.

Procedures for all sessions:

1) Ask if there are any stations that have a schedule, (at the top of the hour) that wish to contact another station to move off frequency for a QSO. If a station responds, then tell them to “Go ahead and call their station”. Help them by repeating the call of the station they are looking for. If no reply, state that “the station was not heard” and move on to the next step.

2) Remember to announce our need for NCS’s and alternate NCS’s. Also, announce the Traders Net. Announce and refer everyone to our website [www.southcars.com](http://www.southcars.com).

3) Check to see if anyone is celebrating their birthday. If so, welcome them and let them check in, and wish them a Happy Birthday. You may choose to have everyone on frequency say “Happy Birthday”, followed by their complete call (Keep’em legal!). Do this “in mass”! The bedlam created usually impresses the birthday celebrant!

4) Always ask for check-ins by “suffix only, phonetically, one time only and spread them out!” If you hear someone checking in with their full call, repeat your request and emphasize the SUFFIX ONLY. If we all are consistent on this, they will, or SHOULD soon get the point. **Remember! Short timers, QRPs, or portables are no longer given priority.** Everyone is taken in the order in which they are heard. Always read back the list you heard before you start checking folks in, so they will know who was heard.

5) Start by asking for “Mobiles and mobiles only.” After taking the mobile list do NOT repeat it until after you have taken a list of anyone, anywhere. Now alternate back and forth between mobiles and anyone, anywhere. We have heard NCS’s take 3 or 4 mobile lists at the start and it’s 30 minutes into the session before the first “anyone, anywhere list” is taken. Again, this will contribute to stations indicating they are mobile, when they aren’t! **Let’s PLEASE alternate.**

6) If during a check-in, or while you are running your list, you hear someone say “check-in’ or they give their call, trying to get on the list, it’s best to simply state you are “not taking a list at this time but will be taking another lists shortly. Please stand by”. Move on with your regular list.

7) Always be aware of first time check-ins. (See the First time Check-in section in this manual).

8) Remember, you have a relief station coming on for the next hour. Be aware of the time. Don’t take a list that can last past the top of the hour when you get near that time. Keep your lists short, even one or two. Turn your session over in a timely fashion to the oncoming NCS. Treat him, or her, as you would like to be treated! At the conclusion of your session, conditions may prevent you from communicating directly with your relief station. If this is the case, ask another station who is hearing you well, to call for the relief station to be sure he, or she, is there. Do NOT con-

tinue on with your session until you have exhausted every effort at turning it over to the incoming NCS. We have heard NCS stations try to make contact but failed. They proceeded on with the net under the assumption the other NCS wasn't there when they actually were present! This is **REALLY** frustrating to the incoming NCS.

9) When you turn over your session let the incoming NCS know if you have any "carry over's".

10) Remember, we are taking suffixes only. This IS legal. HOWEVER, we are required to identify every 10 minutes, maximum. Therefore, when you take a list mark down the time by the first one on the list, watch your clock and when you get near the 10 minute mark, indicate that you will be calling on a given station next and that you want the following stations to identify with their full call. Then read the suffixes off (the entire remainder of the list!) And ask that they ALL ID now, (Be sure to emphasize this is for ID purpose only!), this speeds things up. It takes a long time to go through them one by one. All we need do is read the list and let them do it all at once. That keeps them legal. If you do not hear all of them ID, it is ok to carry on with your list, because you gave them the opportunity to ID and the responsibility is theirs. Note the time and proceed on through the list. Obviously, remember to ID your own station!

11) If intentional or malicious interference comes on the frequency, the worst thing we can do is comment about it. I know, this is hard to do at times. This just eggs them on because they know they are accomplishing what they have set out to do! If others comment about it ask them not to do so. They (the offending perpetrator) will usually go away. If conditions warrant, (i.e. something occurs time after time for multiple days, or sessions), then notify the enforcement officer of the FCC. We realize that not everyone is set up to record these events, so you might wish to communicate an ongoing event to one of our members. There are several out there capable of making recordings and burning the CD's to be sent to the FCC.

12) A previous Net Manager eliminated, to some degree, the use of relays. Well, it is the intent of our current Net Manager to re-institute the use of relays. However, the Net Control will enlist the help of other Net Controls or substitute Net Controls, who may be on frequency, to conduct the relays. If there are no other NC's on frequency, then the NCS will ID a person on frequency that they feel is proficient in conducting a relay and only that person that is ID'ed, will perform the relay. This is to prevent having two or more people trying to relay a station in to the net at the same time. With band conditions the way they are, relays do become a necessity from time-to-time; remember, **you as the NCS, are always in control of the Net;** in accordance with the guidelines as set forth by the Net Manager in this manual.

13) When you have a station that says "contact", this should be used strictly for the purpose of contacting the station that you are currently checking in. This should not be a means for them to get onto your check-in list. Politely discourage this process.

14) One last suggestion. It would be strongly recommended that you check in on various other

sessions. This helps to keep you aware as to what is going on. We have some NCS operators who we never hear from except on their net session. You are **MUCH** appreciated as an NCS but we sure would like to see all NCS participate in other net sessions. This is obviously somewhat more difficult for those who work, but give it a try. Get to know your fellow NCS operators.

Last Hour Session - The final session of the day mirrors the operation of the preceding sessions with just a few minor differences. The differences are simply that the preamble needs to be read again at the start of the 12PM session, again **DO NOT TRY TO WING IT**. Solely at your discretion, you can keep the net running longer than the posted hour should you choose to do so. If one stops to think about this, there is no other NCS to turn the net over to, and in many cases you might be very surprised at the number of additional stations that will participate. This holding the net open is by no means a requirement and is only suggested if you feel so inclined and have the time to do so.

### Traders Net

South-Cars operates a Traders Net. Although you probably, as an NCS, won't have anything to do with the operation of this Net, however you should be able to answer queries from other hams about it. The Traders Net is every Wednesday immediately following the close out of the 8 to 10 a.m., Eastern Time, regular session. The NCS runs the net until there is no further check-ins or listings. Hams can list ham radio related gear.

### Other "Car" Nets:

As most of you know, there are several other similar nets on the 40 meter band, such as North Cars, East Cars and Mid-Cars. We get quite a few inquiries from folks checking in regarding these nets. Therefore, you should keep this information handy to help them out. Additionally, often times someone will want to move another station off the SCARS frequency to another

frequency that is on or close to one of the other nets. It is a good idea to let them know so that they might pick another frequency, hopefully, without wasting a lot of net time. The "biggie",

(other than SCARS!), is Mid-Cars. They operate on 7.258 MHz and usually start up at around 7:00 a.m. Eastern time. They operate until "around" 3 p.m. unless conditions dictate a shorter, or sometimes even a longer period. Their geographical area is considered to be the Midwest but, like us, their operations can extend well beyond the Midwest. ECARS or East Cars meets all day

every day on 7.255 MHz., starting at approximately 7:30 AM East Coast time (conditions permitting), and continuing until around 3 P.M. or until the frequency gets over-run by Foreign Broadcast Stations. North Cars seems to be among the disappearing. They normally have, in the past, operated on 7.240 MHz and then started varying with most operations centering around 7.225. It appears they have evolved into the Nighthawks (6:30 to 7:30 p.m., eastern on 7.225 MHz) and seemingly have disappeared from the daytime North Cars operation. If anyone can come up with any other operations info regarding them, let one of the administrators know.

Some queries have been raised about West Cars. They were, at one time in operation and went away, following some legal battles, several years ago. We heard some indications that someone is trying to start them up again, but no confirmation as of this writing.

#### NCS Responsibilities to Others:

We, as net control operators, have agreed to assume the responsibility of being dependable, both to our sessions (showing up!) and to the time (showing up on time, starting on time) and, turning it over in timely fashion to your relief NCS. Obviously, there will no doubt, be times when you just can't make your session. However! **PLEASE** call the Scheduling Manager advising him/her of your need to be replaced during your session. Those NCS's that are paired up, and one is going to be absent, then the other NCS should run the complete hour session. If this is a problem, then contact the Net Scheduling Manager and advise him/her of your absence. As soon as you know you are going to be "out of pocket" follow these procedures so the team can find a temporary fill-in. If something happens that you find at the last moment you can't make it (thunderstorm??), then, pick up your phone and call the Net Scheduling Manager to advise him/her of the situation. All contact information is available on the website.

#### First Time Check-Ins:

- 1) We have definite procedures for first time check-ins. We receive inquiries from hams, far too often, regarding their having checked in before and still not on the roster. 1) At least once (preferably more) during your session request that any first time check-ins to please "let you know that they are a first timer".
- 2) When you get a first time check-in, make them feel welcome! Ask if they would like to become a member.
- 3) Quickly inform them of our hours of operations and about our website. Let them know that all they have to do to get a number is to go to our website: [www.southcars.com](http://www.southcars.com) and at the top of the home page in the yellow box right under where it says: Welcome to South-Cars, there is a link to click on which will guide them to getting their number. most likely within 7 days, they should be able to go to [southcars.com](http://southcars.com) and get their member number from our on-line Membership Roster. We do not E-mail the numbers to them, they must get it from the website roster lookup page. The Roster is updated every Tuesday morning.