

MYRTLE BEACH MARATHON COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

1. BACKGROUND

The Myrtle Beach Marathon began in 1997. The Marathon is sanctioned by the U.S.A. Track and Field and the course is certified by the USATF. Each year several thousand runners participate.

- **Date & Time**

The Marathon is scheduled to be run during February each year. Most often during the 3rd or 4th Saturday of the month. Starting times have been set for 0630 hours. All Amateur operators need to be at their stations and ready for roll call by 0600 hours.

- **Start & Finish Lines**

The Start & finish lines are both located in the Parking Lot of Coastal Federal Field.

- **Course Highlights**

The course uses the parking lots of Coastal Federal Field; runs back and forth through Broadway at the Beach; 29th Ave.; Ocean Blvd. through Myrtle Beach; Kings Highway; 79th Ave.

2. GSARC MISSION

Our mission is to provide two-way radio Public Service communications for the event. Specifically, Amateur radio operators are positioned at key points along the race course in designated vehicles and Medical areas to provide direct communications support for medical and public safety personnel. Area repeaters are used for this event to facilitate communications; Net Control will manage and prioritize the communications.

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3. REPEATERS

There will be at least 2 repeaters assigned for marathon use. The frequencies will be announced prior to the marathon. One of these repeaters will be designated as the “**Primary Tactical Repeater.**” Another repeater will be designated as the “**Secondary Repeater,**” among other duties, accepts runner “Drop-out” information and returns those stations back to the “Primary Frequency.”

4. NET CONTROL OPERATION

A Directed network will be maintained on area repeaters designated for the event. One Repeater will be designated as **Primary Net Control**, which will handle the majority of event radio traffic and will be located near the finish line. A **Secondary Net Control** will operate a **Drop-out Net** for runners leaving the race prior to the finish line and who may also need medical attention or evacuation and will be located at the information table near the triage unit. **Note: these nets are directed nets and managed by the Net Control Operators.**

5. USE OF CALL SIGNS

Tactical call signs will be used throughout the event. Net Control, Communications Manager, Mile Post #5, Medical #1, Medical #2, etc. will clearly identify by station location. In following FCC rules and regulations all amateur radio operators will announce their station call sign in compliance with Part 97 e.g. the 10-minute rule. Net Control stations will identify using W4GS.

- **Set-up Time**

Nets will open at approximately 0610 hours on the morning of the marathon. Operators will need to be at their stations in time to check into the net as it opens. Be sure to have your station equipment set up and operating by net opening time.

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6. OPERATOR NEEDS (equipment, clothing, etc.)

Here is the list of equipment every operator should possess, handheld or mobile 2-meter radio, magnetic mount antenna, sufficient battery power to last all day. If you have a dual band radio please bring it. If you have a cigarette lighter plug-in for your radio, bring it. We start early in the morning — **Please be sure to dress warm** — preferably in layers that can be removed as the temperature rises. Bring your own food and snacks. Medical station operators!! Be sure to locate within or as close to the tent as possible.

- **Clothing**

Wear your shirt prominently. If needed, display the Amateur Radio Placards on your vehicle prominently.

- **Battery Packs**

Any operator needing a battery pack may borrow one of our battery packs by contacting the club Marathon Chairperson at least one week prior to race day. The battery packs must be returned to the Red Cross office no later than the Monday following the race.

7. TYPES OF TRAFFIC

The majority of communications will support medical and emergency needs. For example, a nurse or physician at a medical station on the course requests the ham operator to call for an ambulance. The ham operator calls net control and passes the request. Net control will pass the request to the city of Myrtle Beach dispatcher. When the ambulance is dispatched, net control will call the operator in question and so notify. The operator is to let Net Control know when the ambulance arrives and when it departs that location. The same procedure is used when a runner drops out on the course and either needs medical assistance or transportation back to the finish line. The only exception here is the “**Dropout Net Control**” enters the communication. The Drop-out Net Control receives the details from the ham operator on the course and passes it along to the Drop-out Official. Then directs that particular ham operator to return to the Primary Frequency and report in that he or she is back on the Primary Net frequency.

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- **Lead Runner Reporting:**

This is not allowed, Period! You may indicate the location of the last runner in the race. This is the result of a FCC ruling!

8. STATION LOCATIONS

Primary Net Control will be located near the finish line in the Race Communications Command Vehicle. Secondary Net Control will also be located near the race finish line. Individual Amateur operators will be located at assigned points along the race course. Other operators will be assigned to “**Shadow**” event staff; ride in race sweep vehicles; locate within the medical treatment areas within the stadium.

9. JAMMING

As with any event, the marathon may incur some difficulties. Jamming is one of these possibilities. The best way to deal with a jammer is to ignore their presence. Hopefully, jamming will not be a problem in our area. All race communications will be logged; making it possible to identify the source of any jamming or other on-air spurious transmissions that may occur during the race.

- **Finally**

No two marathon operations are the same. Amateur Radio is a hobby, but if we exercise professionalism we will show the public that Amateur Radio is something special, this is what it is all about!

10. ANNUAL HANDOUT INFORMATION

- **Special Note:** The following information will be distributed with shirts each year.

Marathon Map

Operator Assignments

Station Locations

Direct comments or questions to: marathon@w4gs.org