

# ***Hudson Valley Disaster Communications Network***

## *An Overview*

***Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association***

*Representing the Hospitals in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan  
Ulster, and Westchester Counties of New York State*

# Hudson Valley Disaster Communications Network



Diagrammed by Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association  
Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association, 2002

## HUDSON VALLEY DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

### **Purpose:**

An alternative communications network that enables the hospitals in the Hudson Valley to transmit information on their capacity to accept casualties in the event of a major disaster, and receive vital data about the injuries of patients being dispatched from the disaster site.

### **Background:**

A common shortcoming, cited in the literature on medical disaster responses, relates to poor communications between the disaster site and the individual hospitals to which patients are dispatched.

To achieve an optimal medical disaster response, the disaster site command post needs ongoing information about a hospital's ability to care for a particular type of patient injury. During a disaster the capacity of a hospital to accept casualties changes. First, it expands as physicians report for duty; then, the capacity diminishes as patients arrive and begin to exceed available clinical resources. It is of great value for the disaster site command post to have continuous information so that patients are sent to hospitals that have the appropriate resources to provide care.

**How It Operates:**

The Emergency Management Office (EMO) of each county is normally responsible for coordinating disaster resources, including the use of the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) volunteers. The number of contiguous counties which may become involved, besides the county in which the disaster occurred, depends on the scope of the incident and the amount of local resources available.

The Hudson Valley Disaster Communications Network augments existing disaster protocols both within and between counties. The Communications Network activation is phased in as required, for only the county in which the disaster occurred, expanded to include the resources of a broader region, or if necessary, those of neighboring regions.

**Activation:**

When a disaster occurs, the county EMO will dispatch RACES volunteers to preassigned hospitals to activate prepared hospital communication posts. Once activated, the hospital communication post will transmit ER capacity and bed availability and other relevant data and receive information regarding incoming casualties from the site disaster command post.

Existing amateur radio repeaters, located on high terrain (such as Mt. Carmel or Mt. Beacon) provide radio coverage over the entire downstate area (Hudson Valley, NYC, Long Island) and therefore enable the transfer of current information between the disaster site, the EMO, and individual participating hospitals in these regions.

**EMO Responsibilities:**

- In cooperation with each of the participating hospitals in their respective counties, develop necessary communication protocols.
- Coordinate activities with other participating counties' EMOs.
- Preassign RACES volunteers to each hospital.
- Participate in region(s) drills to test the system's response

**RACES Responsibilities:**

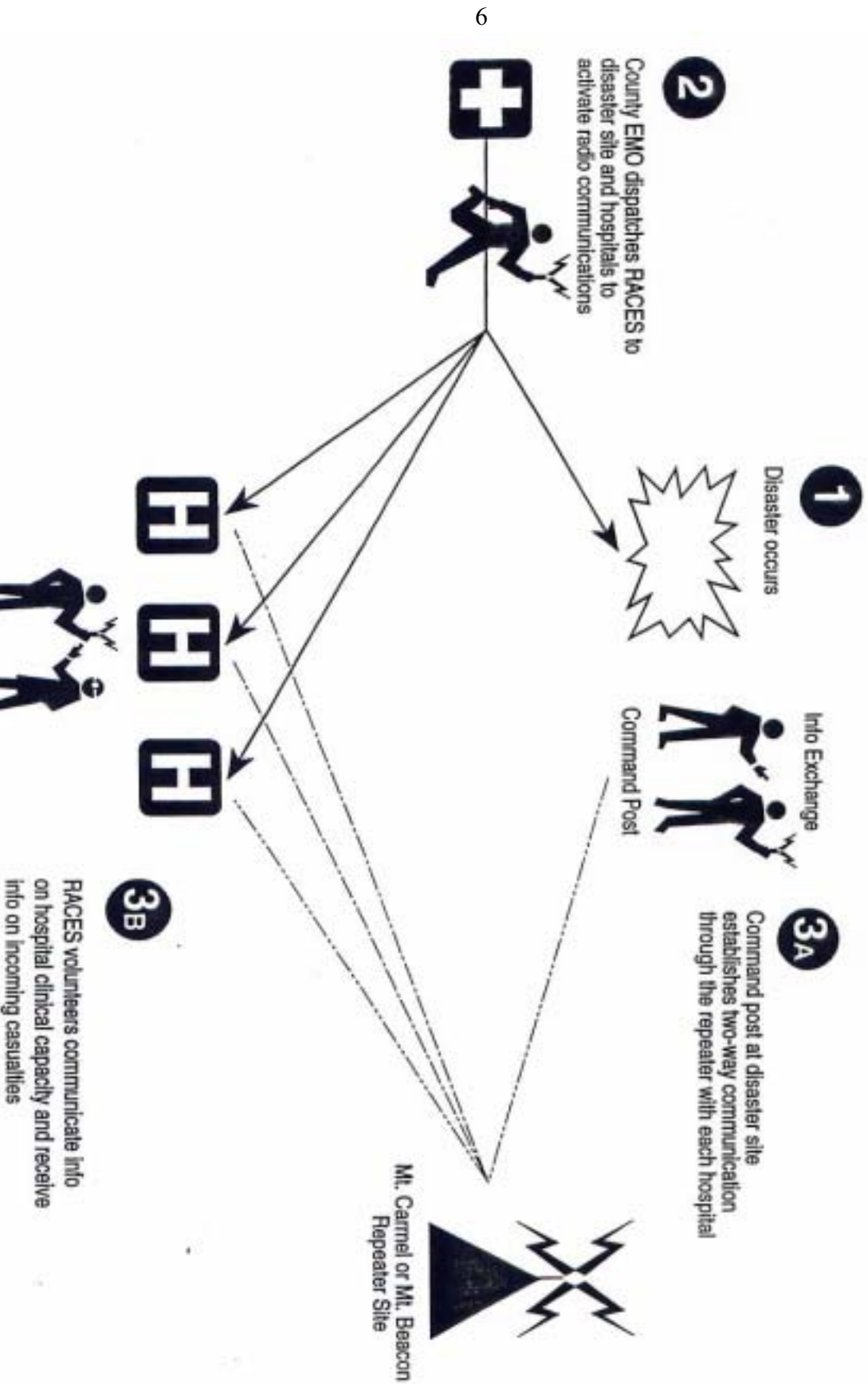
- Test the hospital command post antenna/cable installation.
- Upon activation, report to a preassigned hospital with all necessary radio equipment to activate the communications link.

**Hospital Responsibilities:**

- Identify the hospital communication post.
- Maintain an antenna/cable routed to the hospital emergency communication center.
- Incorporate the Disaster Communications Network into the hospital's disaster plan protocols.
- Participate in disaster drills utilizing the communication system.

# Hudson Valley Disaster Communications Network

## How it would work



## HUDSON VALLEY DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

### PARTICIPATING HOSPITALS

#### **Dutchess**

Northern Dutchess Hospital  
 Saint Francis Hospital  
 Vassar Brothers Medical Center  
 VA Hudson Valley Health Care System, Castle Point

#### **Orange**

Center  
 Bon Secours Community Hospital  
 Keller Army Community Hospital  
 Orange Regional Medical Center, Arden Hill Campus  
 Orange Regional Medical Center, Horton Campus  
 St. Anthony Community Hospital  
 St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital, Cornwall Campus  
 St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital, St. Luke's Campus  
 Westchester

Montrose

#### **Putnam**

Putnam Hospital Center

#### **Rockland**

Good Samaritan Hospital  
 Helen Hayes Hospital  
 Nyack Hospital

#### **Ulster**

Benedictine Hospital  
 Ellenville Regional Hospital  
 The Kingston Hospital

#### **Westchester**

Blythedale Children's Hospital  
 Burke Rehabilitation Hospital  
 Community Hospital at Dobbs Ferry  
 Hudson Valley Hospital Center  
 Lawrence Hospital Center  
 The Mount Vernon Hospital  
 The New York Presbyterian Hospital  
 New York United Hospital Medical

Northern Westchester Hospital Center  
 Phelps Memorial Hospital Center  
 St. Agnes Hospital  
 St. John's Riverside Hospital  
 St. Joseph's Medical Center  
 St. Vincent's Westchester  
 Sound Shore Medical Center of

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System,

Westchester Medical Center  
 White Plains Hospital Center  
 Yonkers General Hospital

#### **Sullivan**

Catskill Regional Medical Center