Receipt and dissemination of information in emergency situations

(involvement of radio amateurs)

According to Article 9 of this Act, in situations of imminent threat to human health or the environment, the public administrations are obliged to disseminate, immediately and without delay, all the information in their possession, to enable the public, which could potentially be affected, to adopt the measures necessary to prevent or limit the damage that could arise from such threats.

The purpose of Act 17/2015, of 9 July, on the National Civil Protection System, is to establish said system for protecting persons and goods, guaranteeing an appropriate response to the different types of emergencies and disasters originated by natural causes or resulting from human action, be it accidental or intentional.

Article 6 of Act 17/2015 stipulates that everyone has the right to be properly informed by the public authorities about the significant collective risks that concern them, the measures planned and adopted to address them, and the actions they must take to prevent them. This information must be provided in the case of emergency situations as well as preventively, before dangerous situations arise.
Under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergencies (DGPCE), is responsible for the coordination of the bodies of the General State Administration and of Spain’s regional governments in this area.

Pursuant to Act 17/2015, of 9 July, on the National Civil Protection System, the Center for the Monitoring and Coordination of Emergencies (CENEM) exercises the following functions:

• Managing the National Civil Protection Information Network, Civil Protection National Alert Network, and Communications and Emergencies Network.
• Periodically publishing data and statistics on emergencies.
• Acting as the point of contact for international cooperation in the field of civil protection.
• Channelling the information to be provided to citizens.

In the event that the Minister of the Interior declares a state of national emergency, the Center for the Monitoring and Coordination of Emergencies shall constitute the National Operations Coordination Centre.
The telephone number 112 is established as an essential tool for communication and management in emergency situations.

It’s a unique citizen assistance number for any type of emergency (sanitary, firefighting and rescue or citizen security) in the European Union, Switzerland, Colombia, and many other countries.

From the beginning of this service, the 112 Center allowed the possibility of making emergency notices, called 112 reverse, to landlines. Nowadays, with the proliferation of the use of mobile telephony, additionally, it was necessary to incorporate a tool that would allow to send notices to mobile telephony.

The type of situations in which it can be used includes from harsh winter conditions, floods weather or adverse weather events, forest fires, such as events that can alter the ordinary life of citizens.

Once the shipment has been made, all mobiles that having the application installed in the alert zone are notified, as well as all the phones that enter the affected area during the warning activation period. By clicking on a notice, it is possible to access the map view from where observe geographically the area affected by the notice, as well as the position of the citizen with respect to it and the text of the notice launched from the 112 Center.

TV, radio and other means can also being used to put citizens on notice concerned by emergency situations.
As an alternative instrument complementing the networks for the reception and dissemination of information in emergency situations, Order INT/1149/2018, of 29 October, provided for the creation of the National Emergency Radio Network (REMER), regulating its organization and functioning.

The particular circumstances that arise in emergency situations frequently mean that the operational capacity of conventional channels of communication is diminished or lost, and therefore it is necessary to plan for the activation of additional resources that can replace or complement those whose functioning has been affected.

This is the basis for National Emergency Radio Network, formed by radio amateurs—including both Spanish nationals and foreign residents in Spain—who collaborate on a voluntary, unremunerated basis with the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergencies, under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior.

The National Emergency Radio Network maintains a permanent and hierarchical organization, with coverage throughout Spain, which enables it to guarantee the speed and effectiveness of its action when needed.
The purposes of National Emergency Radio Network are to:

a) Create an alternative system of communications that complements the communication networks used by the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergencies as a communications system, it must enable the gathering of relevant information on any emergency situation, and the transmission of messages to those recipients who, due to the characteristics of the emergency, do not have other operational means of communication.

b) Form an operational structure that enables certified radio amateurs to exercise their rights and duties as citizens to collaborate in emergencies, voluntarily assuming the functions assigned to them by the General Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergencies as members of National Emergency Radio Network.

c) Establish itself as a State resource to support the National Civil Protection System whenever necessary.
Functioning of National Emergency Radio Network

At the national level, REMER encompasses different types of radio station which communicate with each other to achieve the objective of serving as an alternative communications system offering support in emergency situations. These stations are defined as follows:

a) Central head station, located at the Center for Monitoring and Coordination of Emergencies.

b) Provincial head stations, located at the operations coordination centres, or equivalent location within each Government Delegation and Sub-Delegation.

a) Local stations, which may exist or not, depending on the territorial structure in which each province is organized for these purposes.

b) Fixed amateur radio stations, from which the collaborators carry out their tasks of gathering and transmitting information, communicating with the coordination centres directly or through the local stations.

c) Mobile or portable amateur radio stations, which can be used to perform the same tasks as the fixed stations, and furthermore can provide communications coverage to areas which have no fixed station or whose fixed station has been affected by the emergency.
• National Emergency Radio Network shall be activated under any of the following circumstances:

  a) The gathering of specific information on the emergency situation is urgently required and this information can be provided by this radio network efficiently.

  b) Assistance is required, due to limitations affecting the channels usually available, to support communications to those involved or to the population which is, or might be, affected by the emergency situation, and this support can be provided by this network efficiently.

  c) Any other circumstance which, in the opinion of the Director-General for Civil Protection and Emergencies, or of the Government Delegate or Sub-Delegate, makes it necessary or advisable to deploy the communications capacities which this radio network can provide.

• As regards activation, depending on the urgency of the tasks assigned to the National Emergency Radio Network collaborators, action priorities and radio communications discipline shall be established, should these differ from the norm.
Thank you for your attention.

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