



# Santa Clara County ARES / RACES

## Mutual Aid Communicator Program Overview

Feb 2010

# What is a Mutual Aid Communicator?

- Amateur radio operator (any license class)
- Willing to be deployed outside their own city
- Meets basic/minimum requirements
  - Administrative
  - Training
  - Equipment
  - Experience
  - Performance

# Typical MAC Assignments

- Field Communicator
  - Field checkpoints, CERT team communicator, damage surveys, crowd observation and information assistance, shelters, ...
- Net Control Operator
  - County EOC, city EOC, tactical nets, staging area nets, ...
- Packet Operator
  - County EOC, city EOC, shelter, staging area, ...
- Shadow Communicator
  - Public event staff, city or county staff, hospital staff, ...
- HF Operator (TBD)
  - Pass traffic out of the county, remote locations, ...

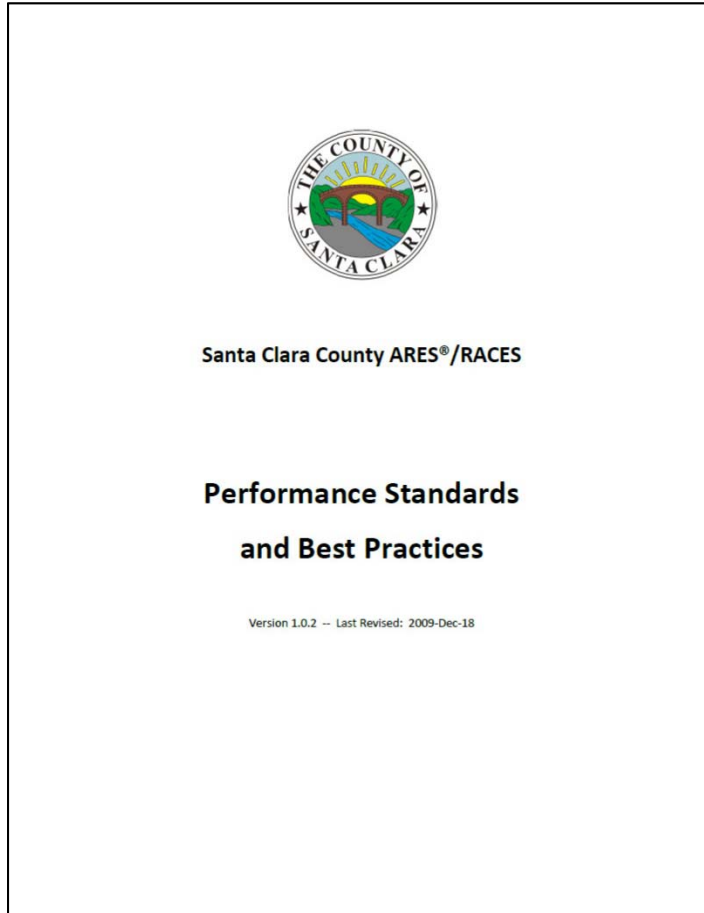
# MAC Program Entrance Requirements



- Candidate must meet minimum requirements
- City EC recommends candidate when ready
- County RACES Chief Radio Officer can accept or decline the recommendation
- Once accepted, the individual becomes a MAC

Process is defined in the MAC Program Handbook  
<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/mac>

# SCCo Performance Standards



- What are they?
  - An itemized, objective set of performance standards for emergency communicators
  - Distilled from county training courses and best practices
- How are they used?
  - Recommended for all EmComm
  - Required minimum standard for MACs
  - Objective standard for MAC evals

<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/operations.html>

# Performance Standards Summary

- **Professionalism**
  - Assignment, team member, served agency, independence, training
- **Communications Technique**
  - Verbal comms, radio technique, written comms, call signs,
- **Safety**
  - Personal safety, fatigue, stress, cold, heat, lightning, floods, land/mudslides, earthquakes, fire
- **Methods and Procedures**
  - County nets, resource net, message passing, maintaining contact, logging and record keeping, served agency protocols, relieve briefings
- **Equipment**
  - Go kit, maintaining control over radio, HT equipment, mobile equipment, packet equipment, HF equipment
- **Documentation**
  - Personal documentation, operations documentation; forms

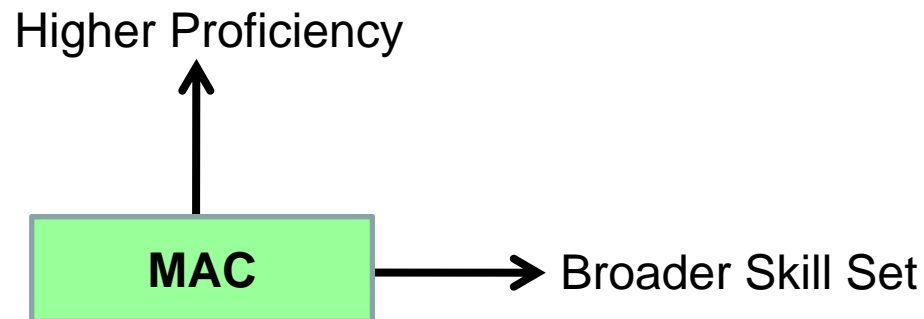
# Example from Performance Standards

- From Communications Technique section:
  - “Verbal communications is effective, clear and concise
    - Maintains a clear speaking voice
    - Controls tone of voice, even under stress
    - Has a good command of the English language
    - Uses plain English, no 10-codes, Q-codes, etc.
    - Properly uses/pronounces letters and numbers
    - Properly uses phonetics and can recite all ITU standard phonetic letters
    - Properly speaks numbers, including multi-digit numbers and decimal points
    - . . .
  - “Radio technique is effective
    - Makes only necessary transmissions
    - Leaves pause at beginning of transmission to allow repeater to key up
    - Leaves sufficient gaps between transmissions for others to break in
    - . . .

Objectively defines what we are already doing (or should be doing!)

# Becoming a MAC is Just the Beginning

- Opportunities to learn
  - Different cities + different served agencies + MAC drills = higher proficiency + broader skill set



- Existing pool of MACs has widely varying skill sets
  - This occurs naturally, based on individual interest
  - That's part of what makes it fun

# How to Use Widely Varying Skill Sets?

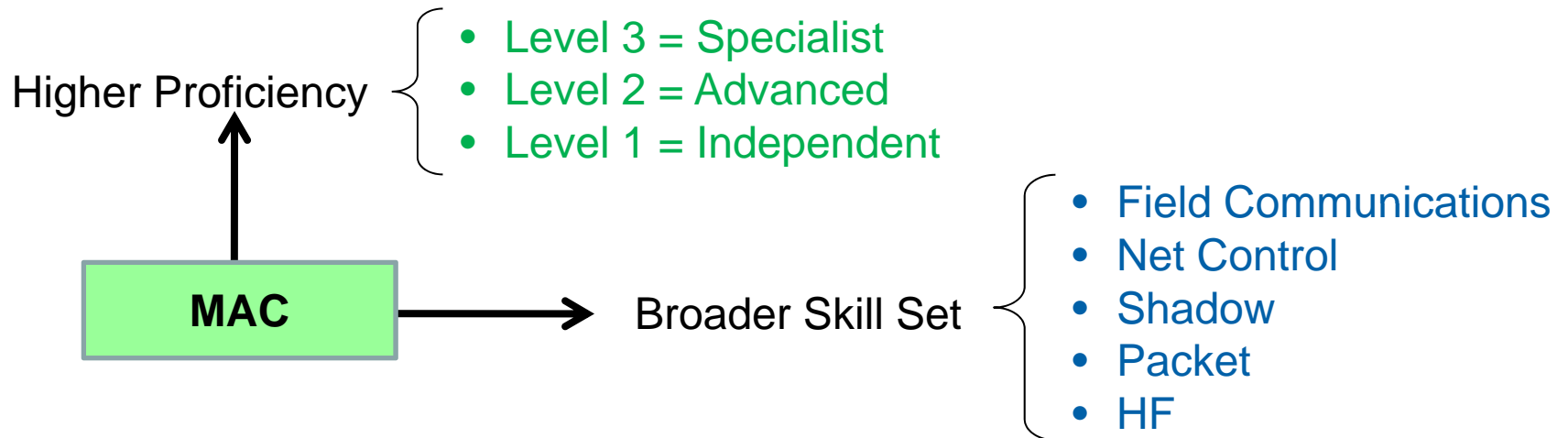
## Current Assignment Process:



- Requesting resources
  - What types of resources are available to request?
  - How does served agency request specific type of resource?
  - When a resource arrives, what capabilities does he/she have?
- Assigning resources
  - How many MACs do we have that can do X?
  - How does net control know which MAC has which capabilities?
- We currently use individual knowledge to fill the gap
  - Problem: Who can know everyone's skill level? (hint: no one!)

# MAC Qualification Program Structure

- Guiding principal: “what we already do, where and when we already do it”
- Take what we already do and divide it into meaningful and useful “buckets” of capabilities
- Structure:



# MAC Qualifications at a Glance

Broad Skill Set

| Higher Proficiency ↑  | Skill Areas             |               |          |          |             |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------|----------|-------------|
|                       | Field Comms             | Net Control   | Shadow   | Packet   | HF (future) |
| <b>Expertise</b>      |                         |               |          |          |             |
| <b>3- Specialist</b>  | Field Comm 3            | Net Control 3 | Shadow 3 | Packet 3 | HF 3        |
| <b>2- Advanced</b>    | Field Comm 2            | Net Control 2 | Shadow 2 | Packet 2 | HF 2        |
| <b>1- Independent</b> | Field Comm 1            | Net Control 1 | Shadow 1 | Packet 1 | HF 1        |
| <b>Basic</b>          | Mutual Aid Communicator |               |          |          |             |

Currently, Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications are defined

# View and Track your MAC Status Online

- View color coded qualification status summary
- Drill down to individual details in each qualification
- Print qualification credentials
- ECs: simplified report; rosters now include qualifications

**Santa Clara County ARES<sup>®</sup>/RACES**  
 Welcome, Michael (N6MEF) (This isn't you? Then [log in...](#))

**My MAC Qualification Status**

Click on a qualification level in the table below for more information

|    | F3 | H3 | N3 | P3 | S3 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| E2 | F2 | H2 | N2 | P2 | S2 |
| E1 | F1 | H1 | N1 | P1 | S1 |

**Mutual Aid Communicator (MAC)**

| MAC Evaluator | Field Communicator | HF Operator | Net Control Operator | Packet Operator | Shadow Communicator |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|               |                    |             |                      |                 |                     |

[Print Qualification Wallet Card](#) (opens new window)

Color Key:  
 Green: Completed  
 Blue: Partially Completed  
 Yellow: Portions about to expire  
 Gray: Not Started

**N6MEF**  
 Michael Fox

|                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| E1<br>SEP<br>2011 | F2<br>SEP<br>2011 | N2<br>SEP<br>2011 | P2<br>SEP<br>2011 | S2<br>SEP<br>2011 |
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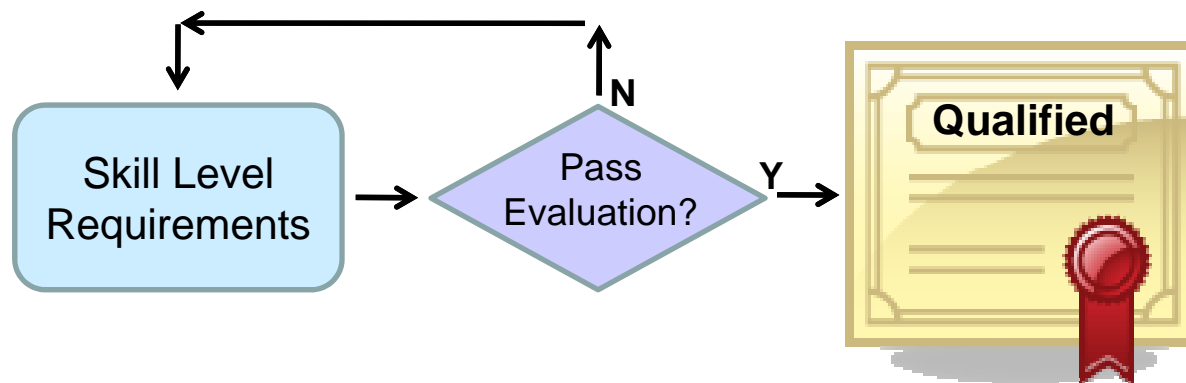
**MUTUAL AID COMMUNICATOR**

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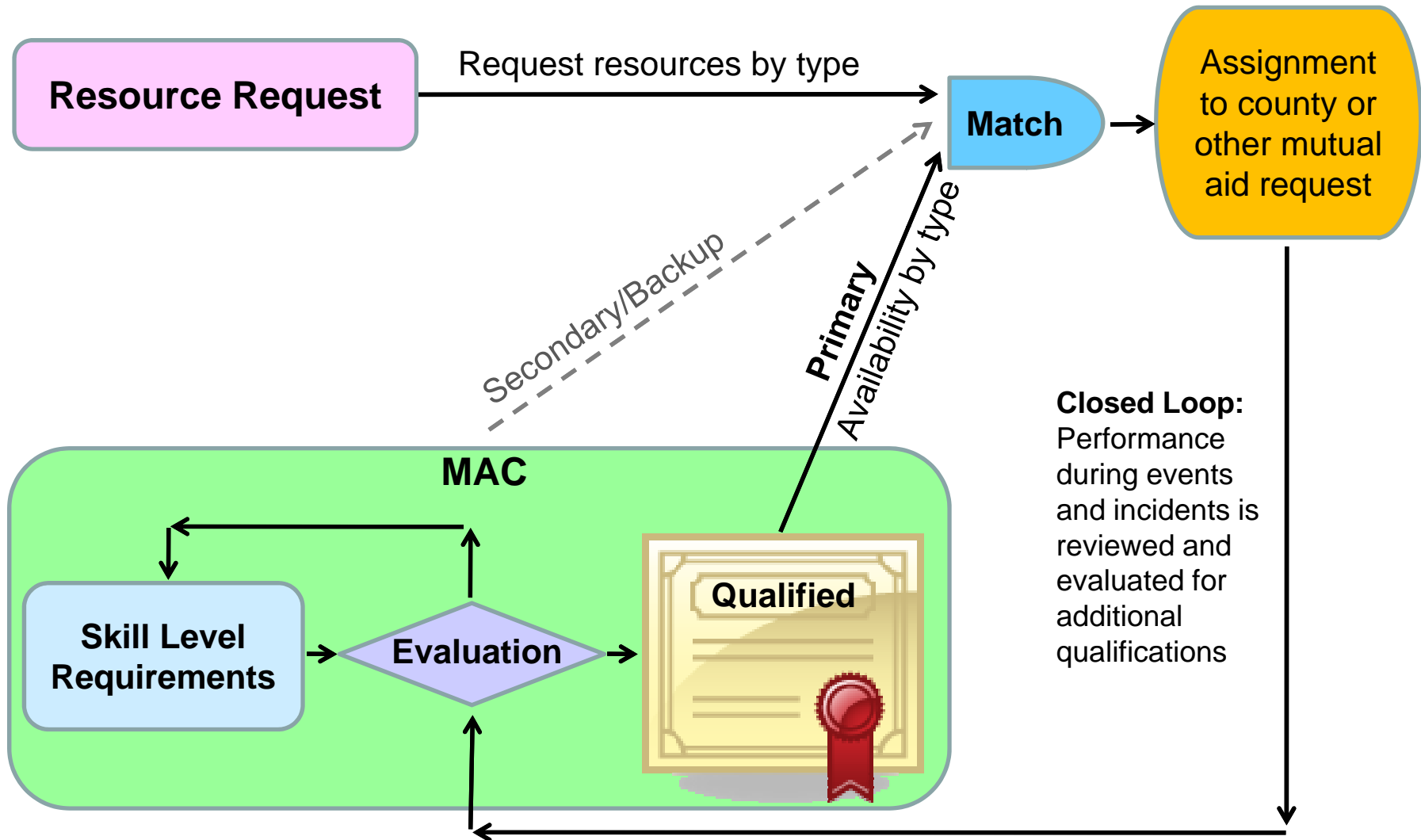
<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/activities/events.php>

# Earning a Qualification is Straight Forward

- Candidate completes requirements for the skill level
  - Prerequisites
  - Training
  - Participation
- Candidate undergoes a standardized evaluation
  - If passed, qualification is recorded in county database
  - If not, attend more training, participate in more activities, try again



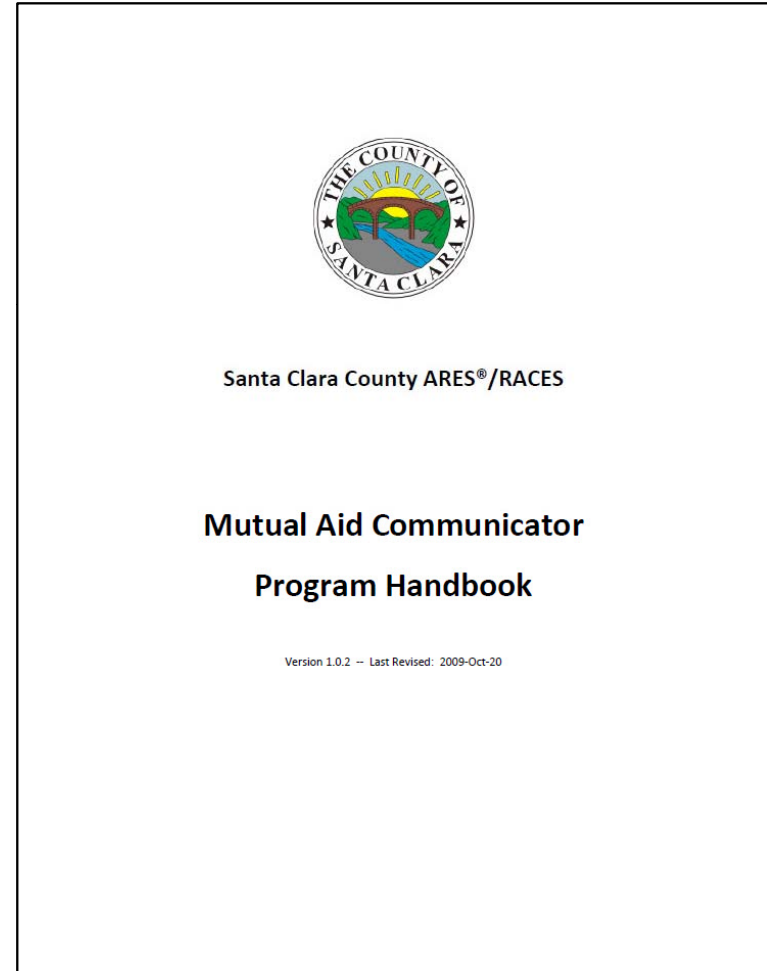
# Migrate to New MAC Assignment Process



# More Info in the MAC Program Handbook

## Table of Contents:

- Entrance Requirements
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Resource Assignment & Typing
- Beyond the Basics
- Evaluations
- Recognition
- Advanced Qualification Definitions
- MAC Response Teams
- ICS and NIMS
- Records Management
- Program Management



<http://www.scc-ares-races.org/mac>

# Thanks!

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