

June 28, 1943

AMENDED FCC RULES ENLARGE SCOPE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE RADIO OPERATIONS

To provide for the rapid mobilization of the nation's protective facilities in meeting "emergencies endangering life, public safety, or important property", the Federal Communications Commission has amended Part 15 of its Rules, effective immediately, to permit Civilian Defense stations in the War Emergency Radio Service to operate in any emergency which might adversely affect the war effort.

Under the amended rules, Civilian Defense licensees in the WERS may now use their stations to provide essential communications over limited distances in the event of emergencies such as floods, explosions in munitions plants, hurricanes, fire and other emergency situations affecting the nation's security. Prior to this amendment, these stations were authorized to be on the air only "for essential communication relating to civilian defense and only during or immediately following actual air raids, impending air raids", and other enemy operations, or for purposes of testing and drill.

To implement the "mutual aid" program inaugurated by the Office of Civilian Defense, the amended rules also provide for the designation of one or more of the licensed WERS stations as "control units". So that fire-fighting and other facilities to be used in "mutual aid" programs may always be in readiness, Civilian Defense licensees in this service may use their station units, under the supervision of such "control units", during the first 15 minutes of each hour, for the exclusive purpose of handling essential communications preparatory to any anticipated emergency.

The use of Civilian Defense Stations in connection with "mutual aid" programs is under the jurisdiction of the station licensee and radio aide for the purpose of providing emergency communication relating directly to the activities of the United States Citizens Defense Corps or other officially recognized organizations.

It is anticipated that this change in the Rules will provide increased opportunities for amateur radio operators as well as other qualified radio operators, technical men, and engineers to contribute their time, energy and talent to the war effort. At the present time, there are in the War Emergency Radio Service 192 Civilian Defense, eight State Guard, and two Civil Air Patrol station licensees, as well as many more licensed operators. Each station licensee may use from two to 100 or more radio station units, whose operation is coordinated to form a comprehensive local communications system.