

# ARRL Special Service Club

## Application Type

Renewal

Please indicate if this is a new application or renewal application.

NOTE: Your club must have an up-to-date ARRL affiliation record before applying to become a Special Service Club.

Date:

ARRL Section: Virginia

Club Name: Chesapeake Amateur Radio Service, Inc.

Call Sign: W4CAR

Address: 116 Reservation Road

Address

City: Chesapeake

State: Virginia

Zip Code: 23322-5253

## New Ham Development and Training

**Purpose:** Develop an effective, coordinated program of public relations, recruiting, training and ongoing assistance targeted to prospective and newly licensed hams in your community.

**Objective:** Our goal is to establish an effective, coordinated program that encompasses public relations, recruitment, training, and ongoing support, specifically targeting prospective and newly licensed hams in our community.

The Chesapeake Amateur Radio Service (CARS) takes pride in its comprehensive programs that actively promote amateur radio and foster the development of new operators.

**Recruitment:** We utilize our dynamic website, social media platforms, and member interactions to engage with the public and attract potential hams. Prospective members receive informative emails detailing various aspects of amateur radio, including its capabilities, the advantages of joining a club, the role of the FCC, the different license levels, the availability of online training, and the use of practice tests. As they prepare for their license test, new hams are paired with an experienced club member, known as an Elmer, for guidance and support.

**Training:** CARS places a high emphasis on training. We regularly host presentations at our general meetings and 'Shack Day' events, led by club members who are recognized as system experts in their

respective topics. For those interested in more extensive topics or operations, we arrange meetings with a system expert at our radio shack or in the field for in-depth discussions and training.

**Testing:** Our VE team conducts numerous test sessions throughout the year, administering both traditional paper tests and innovative computer and remote testing techniques. These additional methods have proven to be highly effective in the testing of new hams.

**Equipment Loaner Program:** To assist newly licensed hams, we offer an equipment loaner program. Initially developed to support our Youth program, it has since been expanded to include all newly licensed or upgraded hams. The program provides both VHF/UHF and HF equipment, sourced from donations. This equipment is either loaned directly or sold, with the proceeds used to repair or replace loaner equipment.

## Public Relations

**Purpose:** Establish an effective Amateur Radio presence in your community, including contact with local media and coverage of your activities; Public Information Officer appointment.

**Objective:** Our aim is to establish a strong Amateur Radio presence in our community, which includes liaising with local media, showcasing our activities, and appointing a Public Information Officer.

The CARS Vice President serves as the Public Information Officer when there is no specifically appointed member.

**Virginia Governor's Award:** In February 2022, CARS was recognized with the Governor's 2021 Virginia Fire Service Award for Civilian Excellence in Virginia Fire Service Support! In his nomination letter, City of Chesapeake, VA Fire Chief EE Elliott officially cited CARS members for "the critical service they provide, greatly enhancing the capability of both the Fire and Police Departments should normal communication systems be disabled due a severe weather event." The City of Chesapeake has made a major commitment to public safety and included Amateur Radio very early in the planning stages.

**Continuing Relationships:** CARS has successfully built robust relationships with various authorities in the City of Chesapeake, including city officials, police, fire, and emergency services. Our notable achievements include receiving formal recognition from the City Mayor at the Ham Radio Field Day in 2023 and a visit from the Chesapeake Fire Chief during the same event. In addition, we manage an active Facebook page with 840 followers, where we regularly share updates, engage with the citizens of Chesapeake, and promote our virtual meetings and general activities.

**CARS Pamphlet:** As part of our public outreach during Field Day, CARS produced a pamphlet for information on the Club and activities for the community.

**Club Gear:** This year, we have commissioned club t-shirts, hoodies, jackets, hats and lanyards for members as a means of showing pride in our club and initiating conversation about Ham Radio.

## Emergency Communications

**Purpose:** Club members should become skilled in communicating effectively during communications emergencies and be prepared to assist when needed; Official Emergency Station appointment and participation in ARES.

**Objective:** Our club members strive to excel in effective communication during emergencies and are always prepared to lend a hand when needed. This involves appointing an Official Emergency Station and participating in ARES.

**Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC).** CARS operates a dynamic ARES program in partnership with the City of Chesapeake. As recognized experts in emergency communications (EmComm), we play a crucial role in Chesapeake's EmComm plan. We have been allocated a room for radio operations in the PSOC, the most advanced and robust operations center in Hampton Roads. This designates it as a primary hub for coordination during area-wide emergencies in Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.

In the event of a major power and communications outage in the area, the PSOC is equipped with generators for power, space-based internet access, a VHF digipeater/Winlink RMS node with an antenna at 300ft AGL, and HF Winlink P2P via a series of FLEX radio equipment to communicate with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) in Richmond, Virginia.

Moreover, we manage 10 emergency communication portable kits capable of voice and digital communication for stations at designated city shelters to communicate with the PSOC. We are actively collaborating with the city to install dedicated antennas at each shelter. We maintain communication with Chesapeake Emergency Services during large events and inclement weather and are prepared to staff emergency shelters and provide communication support to the PSOC as needed.

We also hold a weekly ARES net on one of the club's four repeaters, with regular participation from Amateurs across southeast Virginia and northeast North Carolina.

**Preparedness Activities:** Our club participates in the ham radio field day and winter field day annually from the CARS shack and PSOC. In addition to the yearly CARS Shenandoah Shenanigans trip (see miscellaneous activities), we also organize, on average, two go-kit competitions in the park per year adjacent to the CARS shack. These field exercises often take the form of friendly competitions, allowing members to evaluate their abilities and maintain proficiency with emergency communications equipment under emergency conditions.

**Area Coordination:** CARS ARES collaborates with other ARES organizations in the Hampton Roads area to discuss and coordinate a wide area EmComm plan. Neighboring Hampton, Virginia and the CARS ARES members regularly practice using each other's VHF Winlink RMS nodes and digipeater functionality. This practice prepares us for an actual emergency, enabling EmComm across a geographically dispersed area due to the Chesapeake Bay and James River.

## Technical Advancement

**Purpose:** Continuing education in the technical aspects of Amateur Radio to ensure that your club members are technically competent, familiar, and comfortable with modern radio-electronics technology; Technical Specialist appointment.

**Objective:** Our goal is to provide continuous education in the technical aspects of Amateur Radio, ensuring that our club members are technically competent and comfortable with modern radio-electronics technology. This includes the appointment of Technical Specialists.

The CARS is a vibrant community of approximately 135 members based in Chesapeake, Virginia. We offer a dedicated shack for operations, training, testing, workshops, meetings, and fostering camaraderie

among Hams. Our members that act as Elmers have access to extensive technical training and support, including annual Technician through Amateur Extra training, depending on demand. We also conduct license testing 5-8 times per year.

**Technical Interest Groups:** Our members are proactive and often form interest groups. They host “Shack Day” presentations on various topics such as antennas, electronics, contesting, operations, propagation, and digital modes. Some of our members’ have even been published in QST Magazine. We actively participate in and train other members for Winlink Wednesday, reflecting the growing importance of digital modes and capabilities in the Ham community. Our Elmers’ enjoy passing on their individual interests and serve as technical specialists to assist with schematic understanding, radio troubleshooting, and electrical/electronic repair. We encourage the development of Go Boxes and members showcase their creations at Shack Day, Shenanigans excursions, Field Day, and local “Operations Checks.”

**Ham Shack:** Our operational radio shack is equipped with five HF radio workstations, a 2 Meter workstation, a test station, an active APRS node and Wires-X on 70cm. Each workstation has a computer for digital communications and is networked to our central server to facilitate logging and remote operations with associated clubs (N4CEC at the PSOC and W4ODU at the Old Dominion University (ODU)). Our Shack patch panel allows operators to select from multiple antennas covering 80m to 70cm. The club shack is available for use by any club member upon request and provides opportunity for technical activities that may not be available otherwise.

CARS is a welcoming community for Ham Radio operators, their families, and the interested public. With an available shack, active members, and supportive Elmers, CARS provides an excellent opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with fellow Hams.

## Operating Activities

**Purpose:** Active participation as a club in one or more major operating or operating support activities to ensure that your club maintains a high level of operating skill.

**Objective:** Our club actively participates in one or more major operating or operating support activities to maintain a high level of operating skill.

We focus on various operating activities throughout the year. These activities aim to promote good operating practices, camaraderie, support for the City of Chesapeake and other organizations, portable operations, and emergency communications.

**Field Day:** ARRL Field Day is another event we participate in. This is where we demonstrate our emergency communications capabilities to the public. This 24-hour event allows us to practice and display our skills while having fun coming together as a club. Public city park, 5 stations, cookout, dedicated field day coordinator. Special authorization from the city for overnight operations.

We host a monthly Shack Day, where we encourage members and non-members alike to bring their questions and projects and operate the club’s various radios in the CARS Shack. Our goal is to promote and teach proper radio etiquette while encouraging Hams to get on the air.

CARS members coordinated and operated Volunteers on the Air (VOTA) 2023 for a full week of operations in October 2023 as W1A1/4 for the state of Virginia, contributing to W1AW/4 scoring a fourth place overall.

In addition to Field Day, CARS also participated in Winter Field Day where we demonstrated our ability to operate under challenging weather conditions. This event raised awareness about the importance of emergency communications and honed the operator's skills in adverse conditions.

CARS operated in the Virginia QSO Party to establish communications with each county and city in the State of Virginia. We invited seasoned and new members and operators to join us at our clubhouse to operate the radios. It was an excellent opportunity for networking and showcasing our club.

**Other Activities with local Clubs:** CARS supports the Virginia Beach Ham Radio Club, providing volunteer operators for their events such as the Neptune Festival and the Shamrock Marathon. While we are not primary support, our club advertises it and encourages members to support the VB club.

### Miscellaneous Activities

**Purpose:** Every active club has its special interests and activities that make it unique, that give it a special personality. List three of these activities.

**Objective:** Every active club has unique interests and activities that give it a distinct personality. Here are three such activities that make the CARS club special.

**Shenandoah Shenanigans:** We organize annual and semi-annual Ham excursions to the Shenandoah Mountains, fondly known as "The Shenandoah Shenanigans." These three-day events aim to develop knowledge and skills in challenging physical and operational mountainous environments. Activities include mountain hiking, land navigation, and remote communications using propagation techniques such as Near Vertical Incidence Skywave from the valleys. This is a group of amateurs that enjoy the outdoors and like to conduct portable operations. Our Shenanigans camp and hike in various campgrounds and parks, we use portable power and experiment with different antenna types and configurations and delve into exploring the various modes of communication available to us as amateur radio operators. Shenanigans include members back at home base and across the Hampton Roads area, local parks (NW River Park). This home-grown event has steadily grown in size and frequency, offering members and our local community a chance to participate, enjoy friendships, and explore new capabilities in Ham radio.

**Support for the Tour de Cure:** CARS is committed to supporting various causes and organizations. A prime example is our annual support for the American Diabetes Association's Mid Atlantic Tour de Cure cycling event. CARS has supported the Tour de Cure for 28 years. During this event, we establish a base station at the coordination center and deploy mobile operators at checkpoints and rest stops along the route to provide emergency communications. We ensure the safety of the riders by relaying their positions, reporting any mechanical issues, and requesting medical attention when necessary. Additionally, our club members participate as cyclists to raise awareness and support life-saving research in the fight against diabetes.

**Support for New Clubs and Centers/Sponsor of the ODU Ham Club:** CARS sponsors and supports new clubs and centers. We spun off a new organization at the Chesapeake City Public Safety Operations Center (N4CEC) to support emergency communications for the city. As part of our youth support goals, we aided in the re-establishment of the Old Dominion University (ODU) Amateur Radio Club (W4ODU) and continue to mentor its leadership and members. We actively use donations to purchase equipment

for ODU to encourage young people to become Hams. These initiatives expand the range of activities available to members and provide opportunities to grow the Ham community.

Club President's Name: Michael S. Tromba

Call Sign: WM4ST

2nd Officer's Name: Duane D. Ettwein

2nd officer can be VP, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.

Call Sign: KJ4YKG