

Santa Cruz County ARES Updated Frequency List

Santa Cruz County ARES has published its updated list of recommended frequencies for local VHF and UHF Amateur Radio communication. You can find it [here](#).

Why a new frequency list?

The previous list was out of date. It included some repeaters long out of service, it allocated simplex channels in ways not matching current needs, it lacked channel numbering, it intermixed frequently and infrequently used channels, and it was located on a web site not editable by ARES management.

What's better about the new list?

The new list includes a number of improvements:

- It assigns a number to each channel which should match your radio's memory channel number.
- It assigns a unique 6-character identification for each channel for display on your radio.
- It assigns a default *skip* code to each channel so that channel scans cover only channels you are likely to use. Of course, you can customize this to add or delete channels to your radio's *scan* list.
- We added simplex channels on the output frequencies of local repeaters, for convenient use if the repeater is off the air.
- We added more frequencies commonly used by ARES teams in adjacent counties.
- We added local APRS and packet frequencies so your radio will be ready when you try out these useful digital modes.
- We also added lots of local public safety channels (receive only) which can be useful to monitor in an emergency.
- We arranged the list so similar channels are grouped together, and the most frequently used channels are near the beginning.

Do I have to update my radios right now?

No, not if you don't want to. No repeaters have changed frequency and you could access some simplex channels by their old name and enter the half dozen new simplex channels manually. But it's a lot easier just to load the whole new list. We recommend updating your radios as soon as convenient.

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What's the best way to program my radio?

We're always glad to help new hams by programming their radios for them. We also hope all ARES members will get the simple equipment needed to update and maintain their own gear. Here are two ways to do that:

RT Systems

RT Systems makes and supports high quality programming cables and software for most makes of amateur radios. Their products are easy to use, with versions for Windows or Macintosh. They provide excellent phone support. Cost is \$49 for each model radio including the compatible cable. Here's their FT-60 programming product:

https://www.rtsystemsinc.com/ADMS-1J-Programming-Software-and-USB-57A-cable-for-the-Yaesu-FT-60_p_37.html

RT Systems software can read the files that we provide for many radios on the XCZCOMM website and load the new list into your radio. Here's a YouTube video showing how it works:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxR83JofEws>

(Skip the first 5 minutes if you don't want to learn how to find repeaters in distant cities.)

Chirp

Chirp is free multi-platform software which will program most ham radios. You can download it here: <https://chirp.danplanet.com/projects/chirp/wiki/Download>

Chirp can read files that we will be providing soon on the XCZCOMM website and load the new frequency list into your radio. To use Chirp, you need to get an inexpensive cable appropriate for your radio. A variety of these cables of varying quality are available on the internet. The general advice is to get a cable made with the FTDI chip set. Here's one for the Yaesu FT-60:

https://www.amazon.com/FTDI-3-5mm-Cable-Yaesu-CT-42/dp/B082ST6TF6/ref=sr_1_7?dchild=1&keywords=yaesu+ft-60r+programming+cable&qid=1601320121&sr=8-7

Because the software is free, there is no phone support; there is community support online. It generally takes a little fiddling around to identify the right COM port on your computer. You may have to load a different USB driver yourself. When you get Chirp to work, it's as good as RT Systems and a lot cheaper. Here's a video that makes it look easy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uQcJ4g0akM>