

VarAC Trial March 2026  
Coos County ARES /RACES  
<https://coosares.com>

What is VarAC?

VarAC is a FREE, modern HF P2P (person to person) real-time chatting and emergency communication (EmComm) application for amateur radio operators.

VarAC includes file sharing and an internet connectable Radio Email Gateway that runs ad-hoc, station to station.

VarAC is free (<https://www.varac-hamradio.com/>) and leverages the same Vara HF and Vara FM TNC's (terminal network controller) as Winlink. Since the latter is an ARES standard, adding VarAC seems relatively easy.

\*\* Winlink is an asynchronous standardized messaging platform. VarAC delivers realtime chat.

Testing notes.

Great care should be taken when tuning the audio settings on the computer as well as the radio. There are copious instructions online. (Thomas KF7RSF has been an enormous help. Thank you sir.

NOTE: The TNC will use a custom driver (radio dependent) and serial communication ports that require audio in/out settings tuning. These operate / are adjusted independent of the native audio hardware embedded in the computer.

VarAC comes pre-configured with selected CCF's (Center Calling Frequencies.) And it can be operated on alternate CCF's.

For EmComm purposes, it may be beneficial to operate on alternate frequencies because in a disaster, choosing a clear frequency serves to filter unwanted traffic. Beacons and connections with stations outside the team would interrupt 'Net directed activity.

Alternate frequencies can be added to the VarAC chooser by editing a file.

Net check-ins can be accomplished via Beacon.

Directed net conversation can be managed by a Net Control station by calling on station beacons in turn.

Unexplored capabilities.

Document libraries

Email Gateway  
Custom “pre-configured” Messages  
GPS Integration / Mapping  
\*\* EmComm interface

## Broadcasts

VarAC can send asynchronous messages - also known by the name BROADCAST. A broadcast is an AX25 message (similar to APRS). Send to one person or to all. Unlike VarAC QSO's, there is no delivery-guaranteed mechanism in broadcasts.

The screenshot shows the VarAC by 4Z1AC (V6.2.4) software interface. The top bar displays the frequency 14.105.000, MyCall 4Z1AC, and Connect 4Z3AC. The interface includes various controls for frequency, mode, and messaging. A table of broadcast messages is visible, and a 'BROADCAST' button is highlighted in the bottom right corner with a red arrow.

Bnd	Time	From	To	Broadcast message
20m	22:08	4Z1AC	ALL	Hi everyone. Finally a group chat !!
20m	22:08	4Z3AC	4Z1AC	Hi Irad. This is really great. Looking forward for the release!!
20m	22:09	4Z1AC	4Z1AC	Soon my friend. soon... 73s!

**Broadcast** is for group chat when you and your partners have good signals.

Recommendations.

A weekly VarAC / Vara HF check-in via Beacon in parallel with the Weekly VHF Role Call.

Continue testing to include the unexplored capabilities (Broadcast)

Develop an Exercise focused on the EmComm UI.

Conclusion.

VarAC could be indispensable in a DR scenario as a real time augment to Winlink.