

American Radio Relay League South Texas Section

Harris County, Texas

District 14 ARES®

Emergency Communications Plan



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Revisions Page

Revision 1 – 16 July 2008.

1. The official ARRL® Job description for the Assistant District Emergency Coordinator was added as Addendum B. On 22 December 2007 a revised South Texas Section Emergency Communications Plan was created. That Plan has been included as Addendum F.

Revision 2 – 15 June 2009.

1. The Alert Codes have been changed from automatic. These now require initiation by the DEC for all District 14 ARES® District wide alerts. Individual Unit ECs, or their designated AECs, may initiate an alert for their respective Unit.

2. Satisfactory completion of FEMA courses IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 are required for all ARES members.

3. Completion of the basic and advanced ARECC courses for ECs, AECs and RRT Leaders strongly encouraged. Satisfactory completion of the basic ARECC course strongly encouraged for all other ARES® members. NOTE: The ARRL® advises that Level II and Level III of the current ARECC courses are being combined into an updated advanced course. According to the ARRL the advanced course will be available late summer 2009.

4. All ECs to appoint a Unit PIO. (Must be a ARRL member.)

5. VHF / UHF frequencies listed in Addendum D have been updated.

6. Miscellaneous corrections relating to sentence structure, spelling and grammar.

Revision 3 – 19 May 2010.

1. The ARRL guideline Acceptance or Termination of Field Service Volunteers was added as Appendix F.

2. South Texas Plan renamed as Appendix G. Due to numbering of the table of contents, the STX plan will always be the final appendix in the sequence.

Revision 4 – 15 July 2013.

1. Replaced cover page.

2. Revised Appendix D – “VHF/UHF Frequency Guide”

3. Updated Appendix C of STX Emergency Plan

Harris County, Texas
District 14 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)
Emergency Communications Plan

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To implement Part 97.1 of the FCC regulations, and Federal and international treaty law applying to Amateur Radio and specifically to Harris County, Texas, District 14 ARES®.

Part 97.1 Basis and Purpose.

The rules and regulations in Part 97.1 are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

- 1.1.1 Recognition and enhancement of the value of the Amateur Radio Service to the public as a voluntary non-commercial communications service, *particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.* [Emphasis added]
- 1.2 Harris County, Texas is a part of the American Radio Relay League, hereinafter referred to as ARRL®, South Texas Section. The South Texas Section is divided into fifteen (15) districts. District 14 is the only district in the South Texas Section containing only one county. Most districts are comprised of a few to several counties. Harris County is designated South Texas Section District 14 ARES®, and it is the only county in District 14. District 14 is further divided into four geographical areas, southwest (SW), northwest (NW), northeast (NE) and southeast (SE). Interstate Highway 10 is the north and south boundary line. Interstate Highway 45 is the east and west boundary line north of Interstate Highway 10 and Highway 288 is the east and west boundary line south of Interstate Highway 10. Each area is served by an ARES organization within that defined area which are called units and named for the geographic area in which they serve. As an example, the unit serving the NE area of Harris, County would be District 14 ARES Northeast Unit, and so on for each of the other three areas.
- 1.3 The primary responsibility of the Harris County, Texas, District 14 ARES® is to provide effective and efficient communications in the event of a natural disaster or emergency involving any major threat to life or property, to supplement normal communications, or in the event of communications failures to provide the necessary communications links where applicable and possible. Overall coordination and direction for District 14 ARES® operations is the direct responsibility of the District 14 ARES® Emergency Coordinator (DEC). See Appendix A to this Emergency Plan.

1.4 Each Unit in District 14 ARES[®] is under the operational coordination of a Unit EC recommended by the DEC and appointed by the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC). Each of the Unit ECs is tasked with developing a Unit Emergency Plan that incorporates the broad guidelines in the District plan. It is recognized that each Unit because of its geographical, demographic and infrastructural differences will develop an Emergency Plan and incorporate allowances and provisions for coping with these unique differences. Each Unit plan is subject to approval and periodic review by the DEC.

1.5 All drills, training and instruction will be planned and executed to ensure maximum readiness and capability to respond expeditiously and to provide effective and efficient Federal Communications Commission, hereinafter FCC, licensed radio operator volunteers for emergency communications whenever the need arises.

The following agencies may be served during an emergency situation requiring supplemental communications: all agencies or entities with whom District 14 ARES[®] has entered into Memorandums of Understanding, hereinafter referred to as MOUs, and other agencies or entities, which may from time-to-time request assistance from District 14 ARES[®]. Agencies with MOUs will receive first priority for the resources of District 14 ARES[®].

1.6 District 14 ARES[®], and each of the Units in the District are organized to merge with the overall management template of the Incident Command System, hereinafter ICS, and the National Incident Management System, hereinafter NIMS. The organizations served by ARES[®] units across the United States are required to work within the NIMS and ICS. On 23 February 2003, President Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, which required the Homeland Security Secretary to develop and administer a National Incident Management System. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across all functional disciplines. All District 14 ARES[®] communications personnel are required to satisfactorily complete FEMA courses IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800, which describe the Incident Command System, National Incident Management System and The National Response Plan. All District 14 ARES ECs, and other District leadership personnel, are very strongly encouraged to successfully complete the current ARRL[®] Emergency Communications Courses. All ARES[®] personnel who are serious ARES[®] members whose emergency communications skills are important to them should, as a minimum, successfully complete the basic Level I course.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 ARES[®] members are FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service communications duty. All District 14 ARES[®] personnel are strongly encouraged to obtain a State of Texas Division of Emergency Management

State RACES Authorization Unit Number.

- 2.2 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. All District 14 ARES[®] radio operator personnel are federally licensed, receive no remuneration of any kind for their services, and in most cases, provide the equipment utilized at their own expense.
- 2.3 District 14 ARES[®] functions under this Emergency Plan by direction of the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC), who is appointed by the ARRL[®] South Texas Section Manager.
- 2.4 Where conflict may exist between this Emergency Plan and the South Texas Section Emergency Plan, the South Texas Section Emergency Plan will take precedence and the District 14 Emergency Plan will be subordinate.
- 2.5 As an ARES[®] volunteer you are working for ARES[®] and operate within ARES[®] guidelines (see Appendix F) and FCC regulations. You are not an employee of the served agency and although we serve and operate strictly within their operational rules and regulations we are not their employees.
- 2.6 If you desire to take on an assignment other than your current District 14 ARES[®] assignment you must clear that with the on-site District 14 ARES[®] leader or supervisor you are currently working with and ensure that a qualified replacement is available to cover your assignment for the remainder of its duration.
- 2.7 The following is required by the Section Emergency Plan and this District 14 ARES[®] Emergency Plan:

The DEC is the chief ARES[®] official for District 14 ARES[®]. The duties of DEC require a serious commitment of time and effort, together with supervisory and managerial skills, to bring about the harmonious coordination of the District 14 ARES[®] organizations within Harris County. The DEC shall coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of the Emergency Coordinators, hereinafter EC(s) in his District. The DEC will coordinate the interrelationship between all District 14 ARES[®] Unit emergency plans and between communications networks within District 14 ARES[®], and nationally when the need arises. See appendix A for the ARRL[®] District Emergency Coordinator Job description for a more detailed description of the DEC duties and responsibilities, which duties and responsibilities are incorporated herein and made a part of this Emergency Plan by their reference hereto.

The ARRL[®] has authorized the DEC to appoint an Assistant District Emergency Coordinator, hereinafter ADEC, to assist in the execution of the DEC's responsibilities. See appendix B for the ARRL[®] Assistant District Emergency Coordinator Job description for a more detailed description of the ADEC duties and

responsibilities, which duties and responsibilities are incorporated herein and made a part of this Emergency Plan by their reference hereto. The DEC may also appoint others to serve at the DEC's pleasure in various staff positions.

The EC is the chief ARES® official within their respective Units, and is directly responsible to the DEC. The duties of EC require a serious commitment of time and effort by the volunteer who accepts this position. The EC's duties will be many, varied and complex. No EC can do everything himself. To be effective, he must delegate duties to Assistant Emergency Coordinators, hereinafter AEC(s). The EC may appoint as many AECs as are needed to effectively manage and develop an effective organization. AEC appointments do not need approval by any other ARES® official, although as a matter of precedence and deference the EC will discuss AEC appointments and request advice and direction from the DEC. AECs are not ARRL appointees are not required to become members of the ARRL®; however, they aggressively encouraged to become ARRL® members. They are also strongly encouraged to complete the ARRL® Emergency Communications Courses (ARECC). ICS training is now mandatory for emergency responders and volunteers, including District 14 ARES® members. AECs serve at the pleasure of the EC and their appointments lapse when the EC resigns or is replaced, although any or all of the same individuals may be reappointed by the new EC at that EC's discretion. Each EC should endorse the appointment of a public information officer (PIO) and submit the applicant's name to the Assistant Public Information Coordinator for the District.

The EC organizes and coordinates Amateur Radio communications in his specific assigned area of responsibility to accommodate the needs of served agencies, merge with the overall productive efforts of District 14 ARES®, and the South Texas Section of the ARRL®. The District 14 ARES® organizational structure will merge with the overall management and production template of the ICS and NIMS. (See appendix C ARRL® Emergency Coordinator Job description for a more detailed description of the EC duties and responsibilities, which duties and responsibilities are incorporated herein and made a part of this Emergency Plan by their reference hereto.)

- 2.7.1 Each EC will develop an emergency plan and operations manual, which will compliment the South Texas emergency Plan and this document. Each Unit's emergency plan is subject to approval of the DEC. Where conflicts may occur, if any, this document and the South Texas Emergency Plan will prevail.
- 2.7.2 Each EC will include within their emergency plans job descriptions for each of their AECs, which shall include as a minimum those AEC duties and responsibilities described on the ARRL® site where job descriptions are listed. Another source for a succinct job description is the Emergency Coordinator's Manual, which is published by the ARRL®.

2.8 Liaison stations to the following National Traffic System (NTS) nets and local VHF and UHF communications nets will be assigned as necessary:

H.F. Frequencies (+/- QRM)

- 3.873 MHz Night Emergency Net
- 7.285 MHz Day Emergency Net
- 3.935 MHz Night Health and Welfare Net
- 7.290 MHz Day Health and Welfare Net
- 7.0925 MHz Day Digital
- 3.5925 MHz Night Digital

VHF & UHF Frequencies used by District 14 ARES®

See Appendix D for VHF & UHF Frequencies

* Memorandum of Understanding for use of the repeater has been agreed to.

Note: The VHF and UHF frequencies listed in Appendix D are consistent with the VHF and UHF band plans listed in the current edition of The ARRL® Repeater Directory; however, these plans are subject to local requirements, which may from time-to-time change. With the advent of D-Star in the Houston area some simplex designated areas of the two meter and seventy centimeter bands may be re-coordinated to accommodate D-Star repeater pairs.

Never interfere, always be courteous and report the circumstances relating to interference to the appropriate District or unit digital / repeater restoration AEC. Restrict the use of repeater output frequencies for simplex communications to repeater outages, emergencies, or situations where specifically authorized by the repeater trustee. Follow the band plans for all HF, VHF and UHF Amateur Radio bands.

If you are intentionally interfered with on a simplex or repeater frequency ignore the interference. Confrontation is what the interfering station wants. Ignore it, move on and report the circumstances with as much information as possible.

See the District 14 ARES® site for the repeater training net schedule.
<http://harriscountyares.org/>.

2.8.1 District 14 ARES® personnel are dispatched to supported agencies and other assignments as required. Supported agencies with MOUs, will have priority for District 14 ARES® resources.

2.8.2 Operators of home stations with extended emergency power capabilities may be requested and coordinated to function as temporary “Key Stations”, if required. (See appendix D definitions.) Official Emergency Stations (OESs), not functioning with an RRT, will be assigned specific duties at their residence, or as portable stations to function as liaison stations or to fill communications gaps as required and deemed appropriate by the DEC during regional incidents, or events. The Unit EC may make assignment of OESs in localized incidents or events.

3 ACTIVATING THE PLAN

Any member of District 14 ARES[®] who for any reason believes that a communications emergency exists, or is imminent, should monitor the South Texas Section District 14 ARES[®] information / bulletin repeater, 147.000 MHz (+) PL 103.5 Hz. This repeater should be monitored for bulletins, announcements and other pertinent information relative to an incident, event or drill. Activation will occur by the automated District 14 ARES[®] emergency call up system and/or the phone tree and email notification systems. It is the responsibility of each Unit EC to ensure that their Unit personnel are fully informed of all District preparations, operational activations and alerts to which the EC is privy. Each Unit EC must ensure that liaison with the District is maintained. In the event of an actual emergency, or an impending emergency in which FCC licensed volunteer radio operators could be deployed to serve the community District 14 ARES[®] will be alerted. The actual alert will normally come through the District 14 ARES[®] DEC. The automated alert system may be used for the initial alert.

3.1 The phone tree and email notification systems may also be employed in addition to the District 14 ARES[®] database automated system. The net frequencies for each unit in District 14 ARES[®], and other vital information will be transmitted on the 147.000 MHz (+), PL 103.5 repeater.

4. MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE:

Each Unit EC, or an AEC will initiate mobilization by direction of the ARES[®] South Texas Section SEC or District 14 ARES[®] DEC. Instructions, including frequencies, will be given with directions for stations to be dispatched to shelters, assembly areas, or the situation site as appropriate. Net control may be handled from Transtar, a mobile unit in route, or other fixed station location depending on availability, requirements and severity of the situation. Units should monitor the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 District 14 ARES[®] bulletin/information repeater for information concerning the alert and/or mobilization, until otherwise directed by their Unit EC or other Unit official. It is the responsibility of each Unit EC to ensure that contact is maintained with the District throughout any incident, event or training scenario.

Ready Response Team, hereinafter RRT, Leaders, or their designated duty officer, should be in contact with served agency personnel with regard to that agency's

intention. Information on all served agency alert status will be passed to the District to ensure proper dissemination and coordination of personnel assets. See paragraph 12.

4.1 If telephone service is available, the appropriate duty officer, EC or AEC, will also activate the telephone tree and the email alert system. The Section or District EC will activate the automated alert system. All District 14 ARES® members should check their email, monitor their phones and cell phones, and monitor the regularly utilized repeater frequencies, especially the District 14 ARES® information / bulletin repeater 147.000 MHz (+) PL 103.5 Hz.

4.2 When notification, or knowledge, that a communications emergency exists, members of each unit will check into their designated unit's local net and remain on frequency for instructions. The repeaters in use by all units will be announced on the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 information / bulletin repeater. Each unit will announce the specific net frequencies for their areas of responsibility.

4.3 RRT(s) are activated and should be at their designated sites, or in route, within thirty minutes of the mobilization and receipt of instructions.

NOTE: Each served agency in Harris County shall have a RRT assigned. These teams consist of three to five individuals, including a RRT Leader. Each team has its own pre-written ICS plan for that particular served agency. Upon activation the team enters the pertinent information on their plan and is ready to operate in accordance with the plan. RRTs report to their assigned RRT Leader in accordance with their team's plan.

4.4 Tactical control will be on the announced primary tactical repeater for each unit in accordance with their emergency plan. The actual location of the net control station will be as directed by the unit Communication Incident Commander, and appropriate to the specific emergency situation. The net control station will list all stations on frequency, and identify the simplex relay stations in the event that simplex operation is required. Simplex frequencies shall be published within the each unit's communication plan. The national simplex calling frequency is 146.520 MHz and should **not** be used as a NET frequency. 146.520 MHz should be used as a calling frequency or simplex frequency to make announcements directing volunteers to other frequencies.

4.5 Anticipate that in the confusion that inevitably occurs during the early stages of an emergency, *you may be refused admittance to an area to which you have been dispatched.* Be courteous. Attempt to explain. Follow the orders of the person in charge, or the official with whom you are in contact. Call the NCS and standby for further instructions. *Be courteous and maintain a positive attitude. Always think in terms of how can I make this work to the*

best advantage of the mission. Tact and diplomacy work extremely well. Be part of the solution and do not become a part of the problem.

4.5.1 NO District 14 ARES[®] personnel are authorized to go to the scene of an emergency or disaster without authorization, or an invitation from the on scene commander, or individual in charge at the site. Mobile stations and assigned personnel may proceed to assembly areas in the general vicinity to await further instructions and authorization. The assembly areas may be announced on the net or disseminated prior to the event. When assembly areas are required, and designated, an Intake Coordinator shall be dispatched to the assembly areas as needed. The Intake Coordinator disseminates instructions and directions to volunteers. The Intake Coordinator, using the appropriate ICS forms, will maintain an accurate and clearly legible record of all who have checked in and the location(s) to which they have been dispatched. This record will be passed to the relief Intake Coordinators and turned over to Logistics when the event has been secured. Accurate records of participating ARES[®] personnel are extremely important and must be retained. In an actual emergency, training exercise or drill, the NCS may operate from a "Key Station". Key stations may be extensively utilized during any communications emergency or training exercise. In order to be designated a Key Station, the station must have full emergency power capability, and in an actual emergency the station would have relief operators assigned to ensure that continuous operation over a prolonged period will be sustained.

4.6 Key Stations: There is one permanently designated Key Station used by District 14 ARES[®]:

4.6.1 Harris County Transtar, Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, call sign N5TRS is the Primary Key Station for District 14 ARES[®], and is located in the NW Unit boundaries of Harris County.

4.6.2 *Each unit shall identify Key Stations in their individual unit emergency plans.*

5. Operations

5.1 All written messages for the NTS must be in standard ARRL[®] format using the approved ARRL[®] transmission and receipt protocol and message forms. Formal messages within the ICS must be on the ICS 213 message form.

5.2 See paragraph 7.3.2 of the South Texas Emergency Communications Plan, Appendix T, for information on Winlink 2000.

5.3 *All messages must include the signature and title of the official originating the message.* The official signing the message assumes full

responsibility for the message content. When drafting a formal message the criteria must be more than, “*can this message be understood?*.” The final check and criteria must be not only be can this message be understood, it must also be scrutinized from the perspective of, “*can this message be misunderstood?*”. Only after satisfying these criteria should the message be sent. *Never change the text of a message without written permission of the person that drafted the message.* If the message does not look correct and the authorizing person directs you to send the message, even after you have pointed out a possible error, then *send the message exactly as the originator wrote it.* Always ensure that originators of message traffic to be sent over Amateur Radio circuits understand that Amateur Radio is **NOT** a secure mode of transmission.

5.4 The appropriate message precedence of Emergency, Priority, Welfare, or Routine, as defined on ARRL[®] FORM FSD-3, are to be used at all times. The message precedent **Emergency** is always written out. The first initial of the precedence, as in “P”, “W” and “R” abbreviations are used for Priority, Welfare and Routine, respectively. **Emergency is always written out as “EMERGENCY”**. The Emergency Precedence is never abbreviated on the message form.

5.5 Stations should not transmit unless directed to do so by the net control station (NCS). Stations with pertinent information for the net such as updates on situational information should break the net with the pro-words “re-check”, “info”, “relay”, or their call sign as appropriate. *Call sign is preferred*, and facilitates more expeditious communications because the NCS knows who called. It is inappropriate and incorrect procedure on the net to use non-standard phonetics, or to transmit only the words “net control” when attempting to be recognized by the net control station. It *is appropriate* for a station with emergency traffic, or emergency information, to break the net at anytime by transmitting the station call sign with the words **emergency traffic**. Alternatively, a station may transmit the pro-word “break” two times in succession, as in “**Break Break**” which means that the transmitting station has an emergency. *Use of the station’s call sign with the word Emergency is preferred.* Refrain from using the word “break” unless you have an emergency.

6. Drills and Alerts

6.1 Each year in October District 14 ARES[®] will participate in the ARRL[®] Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Other units in District 14 ARES[®] may also participate in other drills and tests. The National Weather Service and other entities also run drills and tests and District 14 ARES[®] units may be requested to participate.

District 14 ARES[®] members are encouraged to participate in public service events even when District 14 ARES[®], may not be participating. These public service events

frequently provide realistic training in real life situations, enable the participants to acquire valuable experience and promote ARES® and Amateur Radio to the general public.

- 6.2 District 14 ARES®, if requested, will regularly provide public service communications in conjunction with local events, to test the effectiveness of ARES® communications operations. District 14 ARES® will actively participate in the annual MS-150 and other exercises, such as the CERT Rodeo.
- 6.3 Each unit shall establish a Training NET each week on the designated repeater or simplex frequency as established in their unit emergency communications plan. Check the District 14 ARES® website at: <http://harriscountyares.org>, or simply Google Harris County ARES®.
- 6.4 At the discretion of the EC, and with authorization of the DEC, the District 14 ARES® NET will be activated unannounced via the automated alert system, telephone tree, or email system at least once per year.

7. Federal Terrorism Threat Level Warning Codes

- 7.1 The federal Department of Homeland Security has created a warning system that represents increasing terrorism threat levels by a Green, Blue, Yellow, Orange and Red color code progression. Since this was first implemented, the warning code level has been changed several times from Yellow to Orange and back again. These colors correspond to Moderate, and High threat levels, respectively. Each unit shall adopt emergency readiness procedures that correspond to these levels. See the South Texas Section Emergency Plan for an explanation of the codes and the actions to be taken by South Texas Section ARES® members.

8 NET OPERATIONS

- 8.1 The Texas Traffic Net System embraces many types of net operations, using many modes of communication. Traffic nets operate around the clock, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days a year on a wide variety of schedules. The basic cluster of Section nets in Texas subscribes to, and functions within, the operating procedures of the NTS as well as a variety of special-purpose nets such as the Texas Traffic Net, the ARRL® Information Net, various circuits operating CW, together with a number of other digital modes.
- 8.2 In addition, a great many VHF and UHF local or semi-local nets operate every day, and in just about every mode authorized by the FCC. These include repeaters, which by their inherent nature, may be defined as nets, and may or may not become subject net control situations. Each of these nets has its own procedures, schedules and operating practices, and many of them shift almost automatically from routine casual operation to emergency mode when the circumstances and situation dictate.

- 8.3 Procedures for any of these nets unless they are explicitly part of a unit, District, or Section ARES[®] program vary widely. Individual participation in almost any well-conducted net in any mode, on any frequency is strongly encouraged and recommended as a way to become familiar with net operating procedures and how different nets function and operate. The discussions below refer to and recommend procedures for ARES[®] affiliated nets.
- 8.4 It should be noted that most of these procedures work efficiently and effectively for most well disciplined traffic nets or emergency nets. The ARES[®] North, South and West Texas Sections operate combined traffic nets, which serve all three sections. Please note that the frequencies listed are +/- QRM.
- 8.5 The primary daytime HF SSB traffic net is the 7290 KHz Traffic Net, which meets Monday through Saturday from 1000 local through noon Central Time, and Monday through Friday from 1300 to 1400 Central Time on 7,290 KHz.
- 8.6 In an emergency, either one or both nets may be activated. When operating in emergency session:
- 8.7 Emergency and tactical traffic will be handled on 7,285 KHz during the daytime and 3,873 KHz at night.
- 8.8 Health and Welfare Traffic will be handled on 7,290 KHz during the day and 3,935 KHz at night.
- 8.9 There are two CW nets that also serve the combined ARES[®] North, South and West Texas Sections. The Texas CW Net operates daily from 1900 to 2200 Central time on 3,643 KHz. The Texas Slow Speed CW Net operates daily at 2000 Central Time on 3,719 KHz.

9 STAGING AREA OPERATIONS.

- 9.1 When amateur operators in large numbers augment District 14 ARES[®] in response to a disaster or emergency one or more staging areas may be established and announced on the designated repeaters (see Appendix C). Incoming amateurs will report to the Intake Coordinator at the designated staging area to be briefed, given directions, and assignments in accordance with their capabilities and matched to the needs for support at that time. The District 14 ARES[®] designee, or designated unit official managing a staging area will maintain close liaison with the appropriate unit EC, or other designated District 14 ARES[®] personnel, via net control on the resource net, or tactical net if no resource net has been established, to ensure effective use of resources.
- 9.2 The Intake Coordinator managing the staging area will record the following: operator names, call sign, license class, cell and home phone numbers, capability to provide HF, VHF, UHF and digital modes without

assistance, and the length of time the operator is able to operate. The Intake Coordinator should note special needs such as food and shelter or other important information on the appropriate ICS forms. Each unit shall include copies of ICS forms in their communications plan. It is important to note how long each volunteer operator is prepared to operate. Forms shall be retained and given to Logistics.

9.3 One or more staging areas may be set up at appropriate locations based on the type of emergency response required. Sites should be readily accessible along main routes that are unlikely to cause any traffic congestion or conflict in any way with sites in use by the County or State. Where available, sites will have the capability to temporarily park up to 20 vehicles without interfering with commercial or institutional activities that may be in progress. Ordinarily, schools, churches, or other high volume traffic sites would **not** be designated as staging areas.

9.4 Staging area sites are as follows:

9.4.1 HEB Parking lots.

9.4.2 Wal-Mart Parking Lots

9.4.3 Other locations that may be designated during NET operations.

10. District 14 ARES[®] Alert Definitions and Increased Readiness Conditions.

NOTE: These alert definitions have been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. Each has additions to make them more applicable to the District 14 ARES[®] Emergency Plan while still maintaining the direction and intent of the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. The word **Level** may be used interchangeably with **Condition** and corresponds to the Transtar alert plan, which uses the word “**Level**”.

Most natural occurring emergencies follow some recognizable build-up period during which actions can be taken to achieve a state of maximum readiness. These readiness conditions are used as a method of increasing the alert posture of District 14 ARES[®] members within their respective units. These alert conditions are not automatic and must be initiated by the DEC for ARES District 14 for all District alerts. The appropriate EC, or Designated AEC, may initiate alerts for Unit to which they are assigned.

10.1 **Condition 4 – Awareness.** A Condition 4 situation suggests that a higher level of readiness is required. This condition could be triggered by possibility of a weather watch or possibility of increased fire threat because of drought conditions. This condition could also be invoked when there is some potential possibility of civil disorder or terrorism threat.

10.1.1 **District 14 ARES[®] Action** - All members should review their unit

emergency plan.

10.2 **Condition 3 – Caution.** A Condition 3 alert may be triggered when the National Weather Service or local weather service, issues a “Watch” condition, or anytime Harris County Transtar goes to Level 3. In Condition 4 Alert there is no immediate threat to life or property; however, in a Condition 3 Alert it is recognized that conditions may deteriorate into a more hazardous situation. .

10.2.1 Conditions that would typically initiate a Condition 3 alert would include, but not be limited to the following sever weather conditions:

10.2.1.1 Hurricane Watch.

10.2.1.2 High wind advisories with wind velocities in excess of 50 mph.

10.2.1.3 High water watch.

10.2.1.4 Flash flood watch.

10.2.1.5 Tornado watch.

10.2.1.6 Winter storm watch.

10.2.1.7 Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties that could escalate into a mutual aid requirement.

10.2.1.8 The possibility of the threat of civil disorder or terrorism could also trigger a Condition 3 Alert.

10.2.2 **District 14 ARES® Action** – Follow instructions in your unit emergency plan. Be prepared. Your welfare and your family’s welfare take priority. Review Section Four of this Operations Manual.

ECs and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All District 14 ARES® members should monitor the District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater (147.000 MHz [+]
103.5) and check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

10.3 **Condition 2 - Alert.** A Condition 2 Alert may be triggered by severe weather warnings or anytime that Harris County Transtar issues a Level 2 Alert. A weather warning is issued when hazardous weather is observed or imminent. Weather warnings, which would include, but not be limited to the following conditions will automatically trigger a Condition 2 Alert:

10.3.1.1 High wind warnings with winds in excess of 60 miles per hour.

10.3.1.2 High water warnings.

- 10.3.1.3 Tornado warnings.
- 10.3.1.4 Flash flood warnings.
- 10.3.1.5 Winter storm warnings.
- 10.3.1.6 Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties when the DEC there has advised that there may be a requirement for assistance and mutual aid from District 14 may be requested.
- 10.3.1.7 An increased possibility of civil disorder or terrorism may also trigger a Condition 2 Alert.
- 10.3.2 **District 14 ARES® Action** - Follow instructions in your unit emergency plan. Be prepared. Expect the unexpected. Family first.
 - 10.3.2.1 EC and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All District 14 ARES® members should monitor the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 bulletin repeater and check their email for information bulletins. A net may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.
 - 10.3.2.2 Planning and operational aspects of emergency activation should be reviewed and refined by the DEC, Unit EC and AECs. Operations AEC and Logistics AEC should be in contact with RRT leaders, the NET Manager, NCS operators, Duty Officers and Intake Coordinators to ensure their availability and readiness. Planning AEC should review and update the appropriate served agency Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and ensure that the most current version has been sent to all concerned.
 - 10.3.2.3 Depending on the situation's synoptic overview, and anticipated developments, any and all nets may be activated by direction of the DEC or EC.
 - 10.3.2.4 All District 14 ARES® members should monitor the NET frequencies announced on the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater.
 - 10.3.2.5 All District 14 ARES® members should be aware that the automatic call up and alert system, the phone tree and the email alert system could be initiated in a Condition 2 Alert.
- 10.4 **Condition 1 Alert – Imminent Danger.** A Condition 1 Alert is triggered by actual weather conditions or severe weather warnings when the danger to personal property and life may be threatened. This level of alert will only be issued when there is a situation that has put the region, state or nation in extreme danger.
 - 10.4.1 The South Texas Section SEC or the District 14 ARES® DEC would

normally be the ARES[®] authority that would be authorized to trigger a Condition 1 Alert. **Condition 1 Alert will not be automatic.** Only in extreme circumstances will the unit EC issue a Condition 1 Alert. An example of an extreme circumstance could be the touching down of a tornado in southwest Harris County with the probability of extensive damage.

10.4.2 Condition 1 Alert – Imminent Danger could be triggered by civil disorder, terrorism, or any condition including, but not limited to the weather events listed:

10.4.2.1 Extremely high winds approaching Hurricane Category 1 status.

10.4.2.2 Tornado sightings or tornado sightings moving toward Harris County.

10.4.2.3 Actual flooding.

10.4.3 **District 14 ARES[®] Action** – This is the highest alert level in the South Texas Section and District 14 ARES[®]. All preparations have been made by all District 14 ARES[®] members and all are at the ready and standing by for instructions. The automated alert system has been activated. Assuming that there was sufficient warning and time available, the telephone tree and email systems have also been activated.

10.4.3.1 All District 14 ARES[®] units have been activated.

10.4.3.2 Assigned personnel have been activated and are at, or in route to Transtar, the Greater Houston American Red Cross Headquarters and Disaster Control, and all other EOCs.

10.4.3.3 Other personnel have been activated and are at, or enroute, to their assignments.

10.4.3.4 Assigned teams are in standby and making any final preparations.

10.4.3.5 Each unit's tactical net is in operation.

10.4.3.6 Each unit's resource net is in operation.

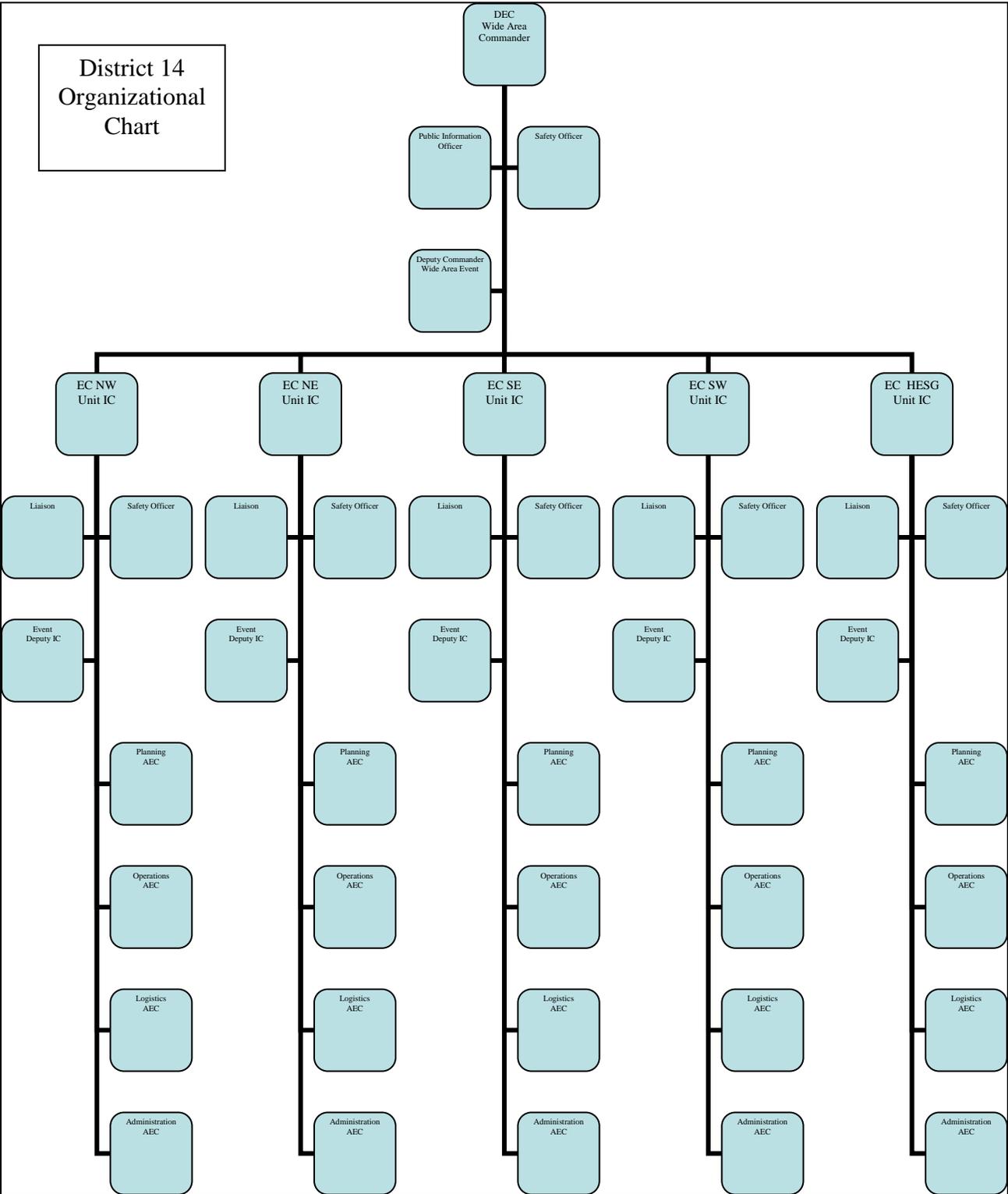
10.4.3.7 Harris County Transtar is on Level 1 alert status.

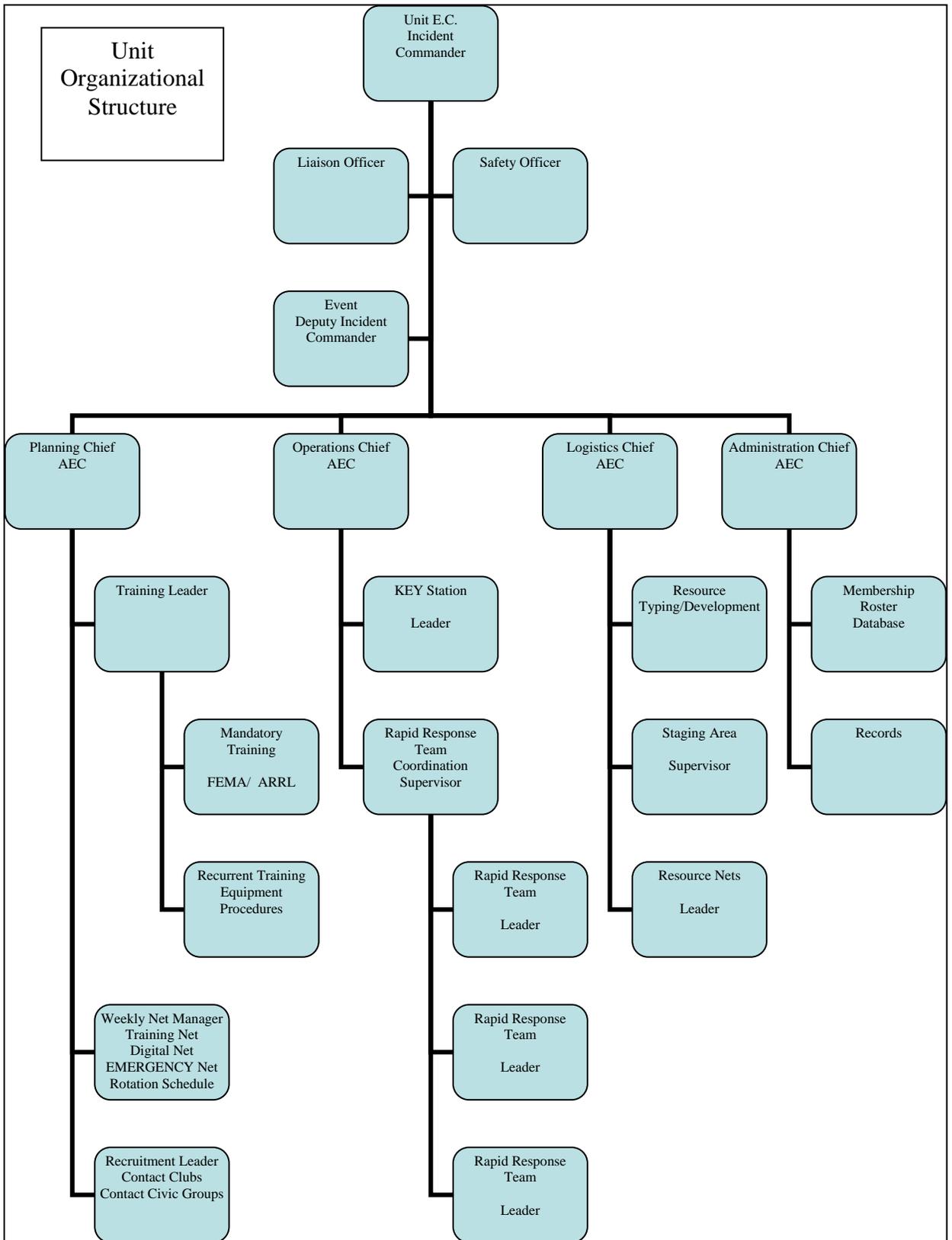
10.4.3.8

11. District 14 Organizational Structure and Organization Charts.

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District 14
Organizational
Chart





11.1 In response to the attacks on 11 September 2001 President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) in February 2003. HSPD-5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improved coordination of Federal, State, local, and private industry response to incidents and described the way these agencies will prepare for such a response. All District 14 ARES[®] personnel are required to have successfully completed ICS training. The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security announced the establishment of NIMS in March 2004. One of the key features of NIMS is the ICS. The DEC, Unit EC and all AECs are strongly encouraged to have completed the ARRL[®] Emergency Communications Training.

District 14 ARES[®] is organized to function within the broad guidelines of the ICS. The ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demand of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

11.2 The ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations. The ICS is just as applicable to a multi-agency situation as it is to an ARES[®] communications EmComm operation.

11.3 All of the organizations with which District 14 ARES[®] could be involved in an emergency situation will be operating within an ICS/NIMS organizational template. All ARES[®] personnel must have a working knowledge of the ICS/NIMS. The agencies we serve expect all ARES[®] EmComm personnel to have that working knowledge.

12. Ready Response Teams, hereinafter referred to as RRT(s).

12.1 Most ARES[®] units employ some form of response team. In some areas they are called Quick Response Teams (QRTs). The ARRL[®] Emergency Communications Course calls them Rapid Response Teams, and there are many other variations. While the team name may be different, they all have a similar role to play in the EmComm scheme of things. That role is to provide effective and efficient emergency communications when required. Within District 14 ARES[®] the goal is to have a RRT assigned to each served agency. Served agencies with which a MOU has been entered into will receive priority.

12.2 The primary goal of the RRT is to provide preeminent client service as a team of qualified EmComm communicators for the specific served agency to which it is assigned. When the team arrives on site they are READY, familiar with the needs of the served agency, trained and ready to go to work. When not called upon to support their assigned agency, their secondary objective is to provide backup support to other RRTs.

- 12.3 Each RRT is composed of three to five qualified Amateur Radio operators, including the RRT Leader.
- 12.3.1 The RRT Leader has the following responsibilities:
 - 12.3.1.1 Act as the liaison between the entity in operational control and the served agency. Ensure that a current copy of the served agency's emergency plan is available to the unit EC and the unit Operations AEC.
 - 12.3.1.2 Maintain a current listing for each of the team members including their most current contact information.
 - 12.3.1.3 Each Team Leader is responsible for maintaining the team's operating schedule during drills and during actual emergencies. When personnel shortages exist the team leader will immediately notify operations and logistics.
 - 12.3.1.4 The RRT Leader is responsible for ensuring that each of his team members has been trained on the operation of all Amateur Radio equipment at the served agency site.
 - 12.3.1.5 If there is no radio equipment at the served agency site the RRT Leader shall be responsible for making arrangements for Amateur Radio equipment to be fulfill the served agency's EmComm requirements. This can be done in the form of a "Communications Go Kit" with radio(s), coax, antennas and power source, as applicable to the particular served agency, which each member assigned to the RRT has contributed to. Or, it may be a situation where the served agency has provided an antenna and coax down to the operating position and members bring their own equipment to the site for the operating period. It is the responsibility of the RRT Leader to work out these details with the team members. As always, members of the District 14 ARES® leadership team and other members are available to help with working out the details of the operation.
 - 12.3.1.6 When District 14 ARES® is alerted it is the RRT Leader's responsibility to communicate with the served agency, find out what their intended response will be, what their requirements may be and communicate that information to their EC.
 - 12.3.1.7 It is the RRT Leader's responsibility to ensure that the chain of command is fully informed regarding the served agency's EmComm requirements and their intended response to the alert.
 - 12.3.1.8 The RRT Leader must have a working knowledge of the ICS and NIMS and have completed IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800.
 - 12.3.1.9 The RRT Leader must be a qualified NCS operator and must be willing to run the local unit ARES® Training Net from time to time to maintain NCS operator proficiency.
 - 12.3.1.10 It his highly recommended that the RRT Leader have completed the ARRL Emergency Communications basic and advanced Courses.
 - 12.3.1.11 The RRT Leader is responsible for the team's training and performance.

- 12.3.1.12 The RRT Leader will rely on assistance of the unit ARES® EC, Operations AEC and Logistics AEC in locating and recruiting members for their team.
- 12.3.1.13 The RRT Leader should have thorough knowledge of the served agency's emergency plan.
- 12.3.1.14 In circumstances where the RRT leader is unavailable, one, or more, of the RRT members shall be trained to take command during absence of the RRT leader.
- 12.3.1.15 Each RRT may have designated "Duty Officers". These individuals function as the served agency contact. Each RRT leader, based on the requirements of the served agency and the needs of the RRT, will determine their rotational schedule. If Duty Officers are designated and a rotational schedule established that information must be available to the Unit's Operations AEC, who will ensure its proper dissemination.
- 12.3.1.16 Team members will train as a unit for a specific served agency. Each RRT is responsible for determining its logistic requirements relating to support, lodging and food. Some served agencies may make all these available, while others may provide only some support. In some cases no support will be available. Team members must be aware of these circumstances and make provisions for their own support as needed.
- 12.3.1.17 Each RRT member should have a reasonable understanding of where each of the other RRT members are during the work week and make arrangements for RRT members on vacation, out of town on business, or when out of commission because of an illness or family emergency. This is particularly critical during the period from 1 June through 1 November when this area can be subject to tropical weather.
- 12.3.1.18 Served Agency Site Preparation for RRTs: EOCs, such as fire stations, police stations, City EOCs, etc., with pre-installed radio equipment are critical to the success of the RRT concept. Served agencies that expect RRT personnel to be on site and ready to operate within thirty minutes of notification need to make provisions for a permanent station. *As an unreduceable minimum, preinstalled antennas, coax cables and an operating position where RRT members can connect their own equipment must be available.* Closets and equipment rooms do not make satisfactory RRT operating positions. RRT operating positions should be as close as possible to the served agency's emergency operations center. A UPS source of power must also be available at the operating site.
- 12.3.1.19 The RRT Leader will have to improvise if the minimum required EmComm equipment has not been provided by the served agency. The extent of that improvisation will depend on the served agency's commitment to utilizing Amateur Radio EmComm operators as a back-up source of emergency communications.
- 12.3.1.20 Some RRT Leaders will conclude that the best situation is for the served agency to provide the antenna(s), coaxial cables to the antennas, a

place to operate and an uninterrupted power source. The RRT would operate with their own radios and back up equipment, or with their RRT “Communications Go Kit” and radios. This concept ensures that each operator is familiar with the equipment that will be used and that all of the necessary components are present when needed.

12.4 Advance Preparations for RRTs.

12.4.1 The preparations made by RRT members are critical to the team’s success. Each member will require significant advance training and practice, a set of specific assignments and the proper equipment and personal gear for the EmComm support mission. All of this must be ready to go at a moments notice.

12.5 Education and Training.

12.5.1 RRT members shall develop their own training syllabus designed to be consistent with the requirements of the served agency. Well in advance of any anticipated emergency, all team members should complete the following training:

12.5.1.1 FEMA ICS and NIMS courses. These courses are mandatory for all District 14 ARES members.

12.5.1.2 ARRL Emergency Communications Basic Course. Although not mandatory, it is highly recommended.

12.5.1.3 The Team Leader should complete the ARRL Emergency Communications Basic Course. The advanced course is highly recommended, especially if acting as an NCS, or as a net manager.

12.5.1.4 All RRT members should be familiar with, and have a clear understanding of the District 14 ARES emergency plan and their own unit’s emergency plan.

12.5.1.5 All RRT members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of their EmComm mission.

12.5.1.6 Experience in operating all of the equipment at the served agency pertaining to their emcomm mission.

12.5.1.7 Demonstrated skills as NCS in several regular training net sessions.

12.5.1.8 Practice getting assigned stations operational at the supported facility within thirty minutes.

12.5.1.9 Participation in a simulated activation designed to test their notifications system.

12.5.1.10 Periodic “refresher” training sessions.

12.6 Equipment and Information for RRTs.

- 12.6.1.1 It is strongly suggested that each team member have at least the following information and equipment available to them when activated:
 - 12.6.1.1.1 A laminated wallet sized card containing information on the notification system and key phone numbers and frequencies relating to their specific emcomm mission.
 - 12.6.1.1.2 Identification: FCC license, ARES, RACES, and the appropriate served agency ID cards.
 - 12.6.1.1.3 Seventy-two hour response pack, including water, food, protective clothing/footwear and cash for personal needs.
 - 12.6.1.1.4 A vehicle equipped with a two-meter or dual band mobile radio. Amateur Radio license plates. Magnetic identification signs for the doors are desirable.
 - 12.6.1.1.5 Stop and fill up the gas tank when in route to the served agency site if possible.
 - 12.6.1.1.6 A handheld two-meter or dual-band radio, with spare rechargeable and alkaline battery packs, rubber duck antenna, telescoping whip, twenty-five feet RG-58 or mini-8 feed line, ribbon J-Pole antenna and earphone headset in a fanny pack, shoulder carry bag or back pack.
 - 12.6.1.1.7 Anderson PowerPole connectors on all of their equipment DC connections.
 - 12.6.1.1.8 Two-meter or dual band mobile radio, magnetic mount gain antenna, fifty feet of coaxial cable and a switching power supply in a portable carrying case or bag.
- 12.7 Relief and Back-up for RRTs.
 - 12.7.1 All personnel must be aware that they may be called on to fill in for a missing RRT member or to relieve members of a RRT that have exceeded a reasonable crew duty time. Operations and logistics must be keenly aware of RRT replacement needs during drills and actual emergencies and plan accordingly.
- 12.8 Mutual Aid and the RRT.
 - 12.8.1 In some situations it is probable that resources within District 14 ARES[®] will be overwhelmed. One unit may be devastated while another may survive an event unscathed. RRTs should be prepared to render assistance where needed. Additionally, areas outside of Harris County may require assistance. The District 14 ARES[®] leadership and unit ARES[®] organizations shall render service to their primary areas of responsibility first and secondarily provide assistance as described in the ARES[®] Mutual Assistance Team (ARESMAT) plans and protocol.
 - 12.8.2 Each Unit's ARES[®] communications plan will provide for the development of an Amateur Radio Communications Team (ARCT) consistent with the ARRL definition of Amateur Radio Communications Teams (ARCT).

12.8.3 Resource Typing: Each District 14 ARES® unit will *type* their personnel to ensure *resource* consistency between assigned and unassigned ARES® volunteer personnel.

Official ARRL Field Organization Appointment Description: District Emergency Coordinator

[ARRL Field Organization](#)

The ARRL District Emergency Coordinator is appointed by the [SEC](#) to supervise the efforts of local Emergency Coordinators in the defined district. The DEC's duties involve the following:

1. Coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of Emergency Coordinators in your district of jurisdiction.
2. Make local decisions in the absence of the SEC or through coordination with the SEC, concerning the allotment of available amateurs and equipment during an emergency.
3. Coordinate the interrelationship between local emergency plans and between communications networks within your area of jurisdiction.
4. Act as backup for local areas without an Emergency Coordinator and assist in maintaining contact with governmental and other agencies within your area of jurisdiction.
5. Provide direction in the routing and handling of emergency communications of either a formal or tactical nature, with specific emphasis being placed on Welfare traffic.
6. Recommend EC appointments to the SEC.
7. Coordinate the reporting and documenting of ARES activities in your district of jurisdiction.
8. Act as a model emergency communicator as evidenced by dedication to purpose, reliability and understanding of emergency communications.
9. Be fully conversant in National Traffic System routing and procedures as well as have a thorough understanding of the locale and role of all vital governmental and volunteer agencies that could be involved in an emergency.
10. District Emergency Coordinators are encouraged to earn certification in Levels 1 and 2 of the ARRL Emergency Communications Course < <http://www.arrl.org/cce/> >.

Recruitment of new hams and League members is an integral part of the job of every League appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.

Requirements: Technician or higher class; Full ARRL membership.

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Official ARRL Field Organization Appointment Description: Assistant District Emergency Coordinator

[ARRL Field Organization](#) · [Technical Coordinators Manual](#)

1. The Assistant District Emergency Coordinator (ADEC) may serve as a general assistant to the [District Emergency Coordinator](#) or as a specialist. That is, the ADEC may assist the District Emergency Coordinator with general leadership matters as the District Emergency Coordinator's alternate, or the ADEC may be assigned to handle a specific important function that does not fall within the scope of the duties of the District Emergency Coordinator's other assistants. The ADEC will act as the DEC in his/her absence or in emergency response operations to maintain continuity of leadership when 24 hour activity requires multiple shifts.
2. At the Section Manager's discretion, the ADEC may be designated as the recommended successor to the incumbent District Emergency Coordinator in case the District Emergency Coordinator resigns or is otherwise unable to finish the term of office.
3. The ADEC should be familiar with the "[Official Appointment Description for the ARRL District Emergency Coordinator](#)," which contains the fundamental responsibilities of the DEC.
4. Assistant District Emergency Coordinators are encouraged to complete Levels 1 and 2 of the [ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course](#).

Requirements: Technician or higher class Amateur Radio license; Full ARRL membership.

Recruitment of new hams and League members is an integral part of the job of every League appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.

Official ARRL Field Organization Appointment Description: Emergency Coordinator

[ARRL Field Organization](#)

The ARRL Emergency Coordinator is a key team player in [ARES](#) on the local emergency scene. Working with the [Section Emergency Coordinator](#), the [DEC](#) and [Official Emergency Stations](#), the EC prepares for, and engages in management of communications needs in disasters. EC duties include:

1. Promote and enhance the activities of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) for the benefit of the public as a voluntary, non-commercial communications service.
2. Manage and coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of interested amateurs working in support of the communities, agencies or functions designated by the [Section Emergency Coordinator/Section Manager](#).
3. Establish viable working relationships with federal, state, county, city governmental and private agencies in the ARES jurisdictional area which need the services of ARES in emergencies. Determine what agencies are active in your area, evaluate each of their needs, and which ones you are capable of meeting, and then prioritize these agencies and needs. Discuss your planning with your Section Emergency Coordinator and then with your counterparts in each of the agencies. Ensure they are all aware of your ARES group's capabilities, and perhaps more importantly, your limitations.
4. Develop detailed local operational plans with "served" agency officials in your jurisdiction that set forth precisely what each of your expectations are during a disaster operation. Work jointly to establish protocols for mutual trust and respect. All matters involving recruitment and utilization of ARES volunteers are directed by you, in response to the needs assessed by the agency officials. Technical issues involving message format, security of message transmission, Disaster Welfare Inquiry policies, and others, should be reviewed and expounded upon in your detailed local operations plans.
5. Establish local communications networks run on a regular basis and periodically test those networks by conducting realistic drills.
6. Establish an emergency traffic plan, with Welfare traffic inclusive, utilizing the [National Traffic System](#) as one active component for traffic handling. Establish an operational liaison with local and section nets, particularly for handling Welfare traffic in an emergency situation.
7. In times of disaster, evaluate the communications needs of the jurisdiction and respond quickly to those needs. The EC will assume authority and responsibility for emergency response and performance by ARES personnel under his jurisdiction.
8. Work with other non-ARES amateur provider-groups to establish mutual respect and understanding, and a coordination mechanism for the good of the

public and Amateur Radio. The goal is to foster an efficient and effective Amateur Radio response overall.

9. Work for growth in your ARES program, making it a stronger, more valuable resource and hence able to meet more of the agencies' local needs. There are thousands of new Technicians coming into the amateur service that would make ideal additions to your ARES roster. A stronger ARES means a better ability to serve your communities in times of need and a greater sense of pride for Amateur Radio by both amateurs and the public.
10. Report regularly to the SEC, as required.
11. Emergency Coordinators are encouraged to earn certification in Level 1 of the ARRL Emergency Communications Course <http://www.arrl.org/cce/> .

Recruitment of new hams and League members is an integral part of the job of every League appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.

Requirements: Technician or higher class license; Full ARRL membership

District 14 ARES®
“VHF/UHF Frequency Guide”

Because of the vast size of District 14 ARES (all of Harris County) there are few repeaters that can effectively cover the entire District. This dictates that several repeaters may have to be used in different parts of the County and for different purposes such as informational, tactical, and logistics nets. Because repeater availability may change from time-to-time, this guide will be reviewed and updated at frequent intervals. Refer to the Harris County ARES® web site for the most current repeater updates. http://harriscountyares.org/resources/ARES_repeater.pdf

Two meters (144-148 MHz) is the most heavily utilized band by Amateur Radio operators, and more equipment is available for this band. Because of this, preference shall be given to two-meter frequencies.

Countywide operations

147.000 (+)(103.5) – District 14 ARES net to keep the general membership informed and to direct them to other nets.

145.370 (-)(103.5) is the back up to the 147.000 repeater.

145.170 (-)(123.0) is the hospital net repeater

Geographical Areas

District 14 ARES NW Unit (North of I-10 and West of I-45) 146.660 (-)(141.3) 147.000 (+)(103.5) 147.300 (+)(103.5) 146.840 (+)(103.5) 146.440 Simplex 147.440 Simplex 145.070 Winlink 2K		District 14 ARES NE Unit (North of I-10 and East of I-45) 145.430 (-)(none) Simplex 147.280 (+)(100.0) Use Simplex (if repeaters down) 147.280 simplex 28.410 USB 145.070 Winlink 2K
District 14 ARES SW Unit (South of I-10 and West of 288) 145.190 (-)(123.0) 146.940 (-)(167.9) 145.170 (-)(123.0) 147.200 (+)(141.3) 442.350 (+)(103.5) 146.560 simplex 147.560 simplex 145.050 Winlink 2K		District 14 ARES SE Unit (South of I-10 and east of 288) 146.640 (-)(none) 145.390 (-)(123.0) 145.290 (-)(103.5) 146.780 (-)(123.0) 145.600 simplex 145.700 simplex 145.050 Winlink 2K

Inside the IH-610 Loop

145.170(-)(123.0)
 146.840(-)(103.5)
 146.960(-)(167.9)
 147.080(+)(none)
 147.320(+)(none)

 146.470 (+1) D-Star
 446.600 (+5) D-Star

 North 145.07 Winlink 2K
 Central 145.09 Winlink 2K
 South 145.05 Winlink 2K

Definitions

ADEC – Assistant District Emergency Coordinator, an appointee 2nd in command of ARES® activities in a county cluster or contiguous counties comprising a District.

AEC – Assistant Emergency Coordinator

APRS – Automatic Position Reporting System – A digital system that transmits and displays data on maps on computer screens. Highly effective as a parallel to voice circuits.

ALERT Definitions: See paragraph 7 and paragraph 10 of this manual.

ARES® – Amateur Radio Emergency Service; a part of the ARRL® field organization.

ARRL® – American Radio Relay League – National Amateur Radio organization dedicated to implementing Part 97 of the FCC regulations.

CEM – County Emergency Manager or County Emergency Management.

Communications emergency – as defined the FCC occurs when normal communications systems are disrupted in a specified area.

County – Any geographical jurisdiction assigned to an EC. For ARES® purposes a County can be an actual County, a portion of a County, or a combination of counties.

County Warning Point – A county public safety site, such as a Sheriff's dispatch office that functions 24 hours a day. It is a principal contact point for the State Warning Point.

DEC – District Emergency Coordinator, an appointee in charge of ARES® activities in a county cluster of contiguous counties comprising a District.

DEM also **TDEM** – The Texas Division of Emergency Management.

Disaster – An event causing death or serious injury to humans or a major loss of property.

Distress traffic – Any traffic relating to an acute, immediate threat to human safety or property; i.e. SOS, MAYDAY, or EMERGENCY traffic.

District – A county or cluster of contiguous counties assigned to a District Emergency Coordinator (DEC).

DRO – District Radio Officer. A RACES title used to describe the radio operator in charge of a RACES district.

DPS – Department of public service.

D-Star - (Digital Smart Technologies for Amateur Radio) is a digital voice and data protocol specification developed for use in amateur radio. D-Star compatible radios are available on VHF and UHF amateur radio bands. In addition to the over-the-air protocol, D-Star also provides specifications for network connectivity, enabling D-Star radios to be connected to the Internet or other networks. D-STAR is the result of research by the Japan Amateur Radio League to investigate digital technologies for amateur radio.

EC or **Emergency Coordinator** – An ARES appointee who supervises emergency planning operations in a specified geographical area. Reports to the DEC.

Email – Electronic messages exchanged over the Internet or local computer network.

EOC – Emergency Operations Center.

Emergency – any situation in which human life or property is threatened. The emergency ceases when relief agencies have no further need for our services. (See "Disaster") Also the highest priority message precedence used in the traffic system. When used in a message the word "EMERGENCY" is always written out.

Emergency Net – A group of Amateur Radio operators using the same frequency and associated side frequencies to support emergency relief measures.

EOC or **Emergency Operations Center** – An emergency headquarters. The Harris County EOC is Transtar. See Transtar in these definitions.

ESF or **Emergency Support Function** – Each of the 16 ESFs is a group of people in an EOC dealing with specific kinds of problem.

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

Formal traffic – Written traffic in ARRL message form. It is used when Amateur Radio operators relay information between third parties.

GATEway Stations – Fixed stations providing liaison between two nets.

HAZMAT – Hazardous Materials.

Hot Standby Alert – Activation with deployment is imminent.

ICS, or Incident Command System– The Incident Command System (ICS) is a management tool designed to bring multiple responding agencies, including those from different jurisdictions, together under a single overall command structure.

Informal communications – Radio exchanges between two people not requiring verbatim relay to any third party. Classified as non-traffic; not handled on emergency nets.

Jump Team – A group of experienced Amateur volunteers selected and trained to mobilize on a very short notice to meet an emergency. See also Rapid Response Team.

Key City – A cluster of GATEway stations within a specific geographic area-providing liaison between activated emergency nets or a served agency HQ.

Key Station – An Amateur Radio station with the capability to stay operational without commercial power for a week or more. The Key Station would be able to sustain itself and its operators in addition to staying on the air.

LGL – Local Government Liaison is an appointment by the State Government Liaison (SGL) for any specific task.

NM – Net Manager.

NOAA or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Home agency for the National Weather Service.

No alert – Normal operations.

NTS – National Traffic System. A field organization of the American Radio Relay League.

NWS – National Weather Service.

QNC – QN signal for CW or digital net use meaning “All net member stations please copy.” It indicates that the message to follow is of general interest. A comprehensive listing of “Q” signals used by military and Amateur Radio operators can be found on the Internet by simply entering “comprehensive list of Q signals” in Google or other search engine.

QST – Attention all listening stations. A comprehensive listing of “Q” signals used by military and Amateur Radio operators can be found on the Internet by simply entering “comprehensive list of Q signals” in Google or other search engine.

RACES – Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service – **RACES** is defined by the FCC as a Service, like the Citizens Band Service. Where it is functional in Texas, it operates at the County level under direct control of the County Emergency Management Director or at the State level under the control of State Races Officer who is appointed by the Governor under the authority of, and in accordance with the following:

1. Federal Communications Rules and Regulations, Part 97
2. Texas Disaster Act of 1975 (Texas Government Code, Chapter 418)
3. Executive order of the Governor of the State of Texas
4. State of Texas Emergency Management Plan

Rapid Response Team (RRT) Level 1 – Flexible and adaptive concept that can provide a timely initial response to any emergency. The goal is a limited, coordinated, operational response within 30 – 60 minutes. Some ARES® groups refer to these teams as Rapid Response Teams, Ready Emergency Deployment Teams (RED Teams), and Quick Response Teams (QRT). In SWHCA these are the teams assigned to various supported agencies. **NOTE:** In District 14 ARES® RRT are called Rapid Response Teams. They are comprised of a group of 3 to 5 qualified EmComm operators who are permanently assigned to a served agency. A Team Leader is responsible for their organization and

training. RRTs should be prepared to operate from an assigned agency for 36 to 48 hours, with operators rotating, and under a pre-planned ICS formatted plan.

Rapid Response Team (RRT) Level 2 – In some ARES® organizations this would be a follow on to a RRT Level 1 response, which would occur within two to three hours, or whatever time frame resources and served agency requirements dictate.

Section – ARRL administrative unit headed by elected Section Manager (SM). Texas has three Sections; Northern, Southern, and West Central.

SEC or Section Emergency Coordinator – Official responsible for all ARES activities within a Section.

Secondary net – A communications channel associated with the primary emergency net used for traffic handling and other time-consuming net business.

SEOC – State Emergency Operations Center in Austin, Texas.

SET – Simulated Emergency Test, which is a national communications exercise held each year in October. The American Radio Relay League sponsors the annual SET.

SGL – State Government Liaison is an appointment made by the Section Manager. The role is that of interface between amateur radio and all facets of state government.

Side Frequency – Secondary Net or frequency used to send traffic off the primary NET frequency.

SITREP – Situation Report – message-reporting status of emergency-related activities.

SM – Section Manager. ARRL® term used to describe the person in charge of a state ARRL® section.

SOC – State Operations Center.

SRO – State Races Officer.

Standby Alert – Activation is likely.

STM – Section Traffic Manager.

STS – South Texas Section.

SWP – State Warning Point – Communications center at the FDEM; operates 24 hours a day, everyday.

SWPAS – State Warning Point Amateur Station – An amateur station located at the State Warning Point in the State Emergency Operations Center in a state capitol. It is activated by the SEOC Operations Officer when needed, is staffed by amateurs recruited by the LGL who has that role, and serves the roles given to it by the SEOC Operations Officer. Usually that will include receiving input from the state GATEway, including SITREPS from the SEC, and transmitting traffic for County Emergency Managers from the SEOC. It will NOT usually include receiving or transmitting messages to individual amateurs unless they are serving County Emergency Managers or SECs. Not all states are organized in this manner.

Tactical traffic – Spoken instructions or consultation on the air.

Generally, no third party communication occurs, although third party informal traffic can and sometimes does occur.

Traffic – Any exchange of information between two or more Amateur Radio Stations.

Traffic Log – A list of incoming and outgoing traffic at an Amateur station.

Transtar – Harris County Transtar, Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management. Transtar is the Harris County EOC.



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AMATEUR RADIO

ACCEPTANCE OR TERMINATION OF FIELD SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

1. The ARRL is not obligated to accept volunteer service from anyone.
2. The ARRL is not obligated to continue to accept volunteer service from anyone, even if it has accepted such service in the past.
3. The ARRL does not discriminate in accepting volunteer service based on suspect classifications, including race, skin color, nationality, sex, age, sexual orientation, or religion.
4. The ARRL does not require criminal background or credit checks as a precondition to volunteer service.
5. Local Field Service units may conduct searches of public databases when considering whether to accept volunteer services.
6. If local Field Service units wish to terminate the volunteer service of any existing member, the ARRL has determined the primary responsibility for notifying the volunteer of the decision to terminate the volunteer's service should lie with the Section Manager, or his designee. This procedure permits a uniform response to be maintained across all Sections. The written communication from the Section Manager, or his designee, should substantially conform to the form provided by the ARRL. The written communication, letter or email, should thank the volunteer for the volunteer's past service and advise the person their service is no longer required. The written communication should not, under any circumstance, state a reason for the decision to terminate the volunteer's service.
7. Local Filed Service units may decline to accept volunteer service based on the results of public database searches, provided the decision to decline volunteer service is not based on suspect classifications. However, no reason should be stated, orally or in writing, for the unit's decision not to accept the volunteer's service.

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Emergency Communications Plan**

APPROVAL

**This document is hereby accepted for implementation and
supersedes all previous editions.**

February 11, 2010

DATE

Lee Cooper

**LEE COOPER, W5LHC
SECTION MANAGER
SOUTH TEXAS SECTION ARRL**

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GLOSSARY

ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Service
ARRL	American Radio Relay League
ARCT	Amateur Radio Communications Team
ASEC	Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator
CRT	Communications Response Team (Response within section)
DEC	District Emergency Coordinator
EC	Emergency Coordinator
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
ICS	Incident Command System
MAT	Mutual Assistance Team (Response beyond section)
NTS	National Traffic System
RMS	Remote Mail Server component in the Winlink 2000 system
SEC	Section Emergency Coordinator
SM	Section Manager
TNC	Terminal Node Controller

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1 Authority

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®)¹ is sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for amateur radio, to fulfill the general responsibility of the Amateur Radio service to be prepared to provide communications in an emergency as defined in Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules, *47 CFR 97.1*. ARES exists for the purpose of providing supplemental communications for the public, government and non-profit organizations involved in emergency and disaster preparedness, response and recovery. ARES is part of the ARRL field organization that reaches all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico and other island protectorates, and territories. In the ARRL South Texas Section, ARES groups serve all 97 counties as well as other agencies that serve those counties.

The Section Manager (SM) is elected by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) members in the section as their representative. The SM delegates their responsibility for administering and directing ARES within the section to an appointed Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC). In consultation with the SM, the SEC appoints District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) for multi-county districts, and Emergency Coordinators (EC) for counties or sub-divisions within counties. The SEC, DECs, and ECs are charged with developing, recruiting, training, leading and directing ARES members, developing emergency plans and relationships with served agencies within their geographic area as necessary to meet anticipated communications emergencies.

2 Purpose

This plan exists to provide general and specific guidance to the appointed leaders of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) in meeting their responsibilities to develop, train, and direct ARES members in mitigating communications emergencies among public safety and disaster relief organizations within the ARRL South Texas Section.

3 Situation and Threats

3.1 Situation

3.1.1 General

The ARRL South Texas Section consists of 97 counties, covering nearly 96,000 square miles. It is approximately 525 miles east to west, and 450 miles north to south. It includes over 600 miles of coastline with the Gulf of Mexico, 450 miles of border with Mexico, and 60 miles of border with Louisiana. The geography includes thick forest, coastal plains, hill country, rivers and lakes. The population of over 11 million people is in large urban areas with high population density (Houston, San Antonio, Austin), and in counties with little population and low density. It includes the state capitol in Austin, and several international seaports.

3.1.2 Climate

The climate across the section is a modified marine climate, classified subtropical, with four subheadings. A marine climate is caused by the predominant onshore flow of tropical maritime air from the Gulf of

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Mexico. The onshore flow is modified by a decrease in moisture content from east to west and by intermittent seasonal intrusions of continental air. The four Subtropical subheadings - Humid, Sub-humid, Semi-arid, and Arid - account for the changes in moisture content of the northward flow of Gulf air across the section. The eastern third of the section has a Subtropical Humid climate that is most noted for warm summers. The central third of the section has a subtropical, sub-humid climate that is characterized by hot summers and dry winters. The western most third of the section has a subtropical steppe climate that is typified by semi-arid to arid conditions.

3.2 Threats

3.2.1 Extreme weather

The entire South Texas section can be affected by extreme seasonal weather conditions, including temperatures above 100 degrees during late summer, drought, abundant rainfall, high humidity, and mild winters with rare snowfall.

3.2.2 Weather threats

Weather threats include flooding, flash flooding, strong wind, ice storms, tropical storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, thunderstorms, severe thunderstorms, lightning, drought and extreme heat.

3.2.3 Technological threats

Technological threats include hazardous materials from both fixed facilities, such as the major petrochemical facilities in Pasadena, Corpus Christi and Port Arthur, and from transportation incidents on interstate and state highways, railroads, urban, rural and suburban roads. Radiological incidents are possible from the South Texas Nuclear Project near Bay City, as well as the many medical and industrial uses of radioactive materials. Structure fires and wildfires claim 20-30 deaths each year in the counties of the South Texas Section.

3.2.4 Hostile individuals

Hostile individuals or groups may engage in terrorist acts any place that large groups of people gather; against private or government buildings, petrochemical and other industrial sites; air, sea, rail, highway transportation and communications infrastructure. Materials employed can include conventional firearms, biological, nuclear, incendiary, chemicals, explosives, and improvised devices.

4 Concept of Operations

4.1 Agency assistance

When an agency asks the South Texas Section ARES for communications assistance, it gets the full benefit of the entire ARES organization. The ARES infrastructure includes privately-owned radios, antennas, ARES-dedicated and cooperating repeaters, and accessory equipment. Even more important than the equipment, the organizational structure includes numerous nets, training programs and exercises, and cooperative planning with agencies to learn their needs, and the services of scores of trained operators, few of whom are visible at the disaster site.

The ARES field organization is designed to support as fully as possible, upon request, any and all emergency response and disaster relief organizations. In doing so, ARES retains its own identity and organizational structure, personnel and physical infrastructure while providing communications support.

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Officials of emergency and disaster response agencies who desire ARES assistance should contact the closest ARES leader to the incident or disaster, usually an EC or DEC. The EC or their designated representatives are the only persons who may authorize the activation of the registered ARES members in their area. Officials may also contact the SEC, the Assistant SEC (ASEC) for Operations or the Section Manager. See Appendix C for contact information.

4.2 ARES Member Response to Actual or Potential ARES Need

When any ARES member becomes aware of an actual or potential need for ARES, all effort should be made to contact the responsible EC or an Assistant EC. Only when an EC or delegated representative cannot be contacted in a reasonable time should the DEC or SEC be contacted.

Once the EC, DEC, or SEC has been notified, ARES members should monitor their local resource net, or the Texas ARES HF net, for more information and instructions.

ARES members are prohibited from self-deploying.

4.3 Communications Emergencies

Communications emergencies take two general forms: systems either fail, or are otherwise inadequate for the immediate needs. System failure can be caused by hardware (physical equipment, electrical or interconnecting lines) or software. Inadequacy can mean the existing infrastructure is inadequate to handle the information volume, or the organizations responding to an incident have unanticipated communications needs, such as communicating with non-traditional services.

4.4 Amateur Radio as a Force Multiplier

During critical events, amateur radio is being increasingly used as a “force multiplier” to extend limited public service resources even when existing communication systems are fully operational. An example is stationing amateur radio operators along a rising river to report gauge readings instead of stationing police resources there. Using SKYWARN trained amateurs to qualify weather reports is a second example.

4.5 ARES Response

ARES leaders identify the communications needs and priorities of the served agencies, then assign and direct ARES resources to address that need. ARES ECs and DECAs should avoid accepting operating assignments so that they remain available to coordinate ARES resources.

The staffing priority in any emergency incident will be given first to those who are registered with ARES. Lower priority will be amateur radio operators not associated with any ARES group. Assignments will be made to minimize the travel distance.

ARES members are prohibited from traveling to the site of any emergency incident beyond their immediate area unless authorized to do so by an EC, DEC, SEC, or their designated representative, such as the net control station of a resource net. ARES members will only be authorized to go to the site of an emergency incident after the appropriate served agency requests ARES help at that site

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4.6 ARES Member Safety

If any requested action involves unacceptable risk, the person should NOT take the action. Upon refusal, the person should notify the net control station that they will not be performing the requested action, along with a brief statement of their risk assessment. There is not any ARES assignment which is so important that it cannot be done safely.

5 Organization

5.1 Districts

The 97 counties in the South Texas Section are divided into fifteen (15) ARES districts as follows. The SEC may appoint District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) and Emergency Coordinators (EC) as needed to effectively organize ARES activities and groups within these districts and counties. Maximum effort should be made to appoint ECs for counties with over 50,000 in population. ARES members are under the direction of Assistant ECs, the EC, DEC, and the SEC.

SOUTH TEXAS ARES DISTRICTS

D01	Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller
D02	Angelina, Houston, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, Walker
D03	Brooks, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Zapata
D04	Aransas, Bee, Jim Wells, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio
D05	Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Milam, Robertson, Washington
D06	Bandera, Edwards, Kerr, Kinney, Medina, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde
D07	Bastrop, Blanco, Caldwell, Hays, Lee, Travis, Williamson
D08	Burnet, Concho, Gillespie, Kimble, Llano, Mason, McCullough, Menard, San Saba
D09	Jasper, Jefferson, Hardin, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine, Tyler
D10	Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Karnes, Lavaca, Victoria
D11	Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Matagorda, Wharton
D12	Atascosa, Bexar, Comal, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Kendall, Wilson
D13	Dimmit, Duval, Frio, LaSalle, Maverick, McMullen, Webb, Zavala
D14	Harris
D15	Cameron, Kenedy, Willacy

5.2 Training

ARES leaders are expected to complete the following training classes, prior to or as soon after their appointment as possible: FEMA IS 100, IS 200, IS 700 and IS 800. See Appendix A for more details of the courses.

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5.3 EC Authority

Emergency Coordinators may appoint, and cancel the appointment of, Assistant ECs as necessary. It is recommended that these appointments be given the titles and duties as described by the Incident Command System (ICS) for general staff positions.

5.4 Situation Report

Upon activation of an ARES group by its leaders, the EC or representative should send a short situation report to their DEC not less than once daily. DECs should consolidate EC reports and send one to the SEC each day of the ARES activation based on a schedule determined for the incident. By citing only the line number (Line 1, Line 2, Line 3, Line 4a, Line 4b, etc), this can be passed in radiogram format.

ARES DAILY SITUATION REPORT

1. INCIDENT TYPE: brief description
2. REPORTING PERIOD
3. SUPPORTED CLIENTS & LOCATIONS: brief description
4. NUMBER OF ARES OPERATORS
 - 4a. Currently committed:
 - 4b. Contacted:
 - 4c. Additional needed:
5. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS
6. REPORT BY: name, callsign, county

5.5 Mutual Aid

The population of the counties in the South Texas section varies greatly, from around 400 in Kenedy, to almost 4 million in Harris. Regardless of the population, extensive, widespread, or extended operations may require additional ARES members from adjacent counties, ARES districts within the section, or from outside the section.

5.5.1 ARES response levels

5.5.1.1 Level 1 Response

The primary responding ARES group has sufficient resources to meet the identified communications needs, using registered ARES or spontaneous volunteers.

5.5.1.2 Level 2 Response

The resources of the primary ARES group are insufficient, and additional resources are needed from the ARES groups in adjacent counties, or from within the ARES district. As soon as this need is reasonably anticipated, the EC should contact the ECs of adjacent counties, identify the needs, and then inform their DEC. If the DEC cannot be contacted after multiple attempts over a reasonable time, the EC should contact the SEC. If the SEC cannot be contacted after multiple attempts over a reasonable time, the DEC should contact the ASEC for Operations. If the ASEC for Operations cannot be contacted after multiple attempts over a reasonable time, the DEC should contact the SM.

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5.5.1.3 Level 3 Response

The resources of the primary ARES group, adjacent counties and the ARES district are insufficient, and additional resources are needed. As soon as this need is reasonably anticipated, the DEC should contact the DEC's of adjacent districts, identify the needs, and then inform the SEC. If the SEC cannot be contacted after multiple attempts over a reasonable time, the DEC should contact the ASEC for Operations. If the ASEC for Operations cannot be contacted after multiple attempts over a reasonable time, the DEC should contact the SM.

5.5.1.4 Level 4 Response

The resources of the primary ARES group, adjacent counties, surrounding ARES districts are insufficient, and additional resources are needed from outside the South Texas section. As soon as this need is reasonably anticipated, the DEC should contact the SEC and SM. The SEC and SM will normally coordinate resources from outside the section.

5.5.2 Mutual Assistance Resources

All requests for mutual assistance resources within the South Texas Section will follow the Amateur Radio Communications Teams (ARCT) resource types, ARCT 1 through 4; see Appendix A.

In-Section Response:

The members of pre-organized or ad hoc mutual assistance teams for response in the section will be designated as ARES Communications Response Teams (ARES CRTs), Type 1-4.

Out of Section Response:

The members of pre-organized or ad hoc mutual assistance teams for response outside of the South Texas section are designated as ARES Mutual Assistance Teams (ARES MATs), Type 1-4.

Type	Response Area	Recommended by	Approved by
ARES CRT	Within Section	EC	DEC
ARES MAT	Outside Section	DEC	SEC

6 Readiness Conditions

Most emergencies follow some recognizable build-up period during which actions can be taken to achieve a state of maximum readiness. These readiness conditions are used as a method of increasing the alert posture of ARES members. The current readiness condition may be found on the <http://www.arrltx.org/> website.

6.1 Condition 4 – Normal

Denotes that normal and routine conditions are present.

6.1.1 ARES leader actions

ARES leaders should maintain contact on the state ARES HF net at 7:30 PM each Monday evening; establish relationships with potential ARES clients; organize, recruit and train ARES members.

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6.1.2 ARES members actions

ARES members should improve their knowledge and skills through training such as taking suggested FEMA courses, participating in public service events, meetings, traffic and ARES training nets; program radios with ARES frequencies; verify the readiness of their equipment on a monthly basis; and enjoy amateur radio. Members should participate in local nets.

6.2 Condition 3 – Increased Readiness

Condition 3 refers to a situation which presents an increased potential threat, but poses no immediate threat to life or property. This condition includes situations which could become hazardous. This includes severe weather such as hurricane watch, high wind (above 39 MPH) expected, tornado watch, flash flood watch, or winter storm watch.

6.2.1 ARES leader actions

If activated, ARES leaders should maintain contact on the state ARES HF net at 7 PM each evening, participate in local nets, review the ARES emergency communications plan, contact potential ARES clients and notify ARES members that activation is possible but not expected.

6.2.2 ARES members actions

ARES members should review their family emergency plan; refresh food, water and clothes in go-kits; check or charge HT and storage batteries weekly; carry HT at all times; keep their vehicle fuel tank more than half full; and participate in weekly nets.

6.3 Condition 2 – Escalated Response Condition

Condition 2 could be triggered by severe weather warnings, such as inland hurricane; high wind, high water, tornado, flash flood, or winter storm warnings.

6.3.1 ARES leader actions

If activated, ARES leaders, or their representative, should maintain contact on the state ARES HF net at 7 PM each evening; participate in local nets, prepare operator schedules for key clients, operations and resource nets; activate a resource net; conduct a daily meeting or conference call with ARES leaders; notify ARES members that activation is expected or imminent.

6.3.2 ARES members actions

ARES members should monitor their ARES repeaters; secure their home, family and emergency supplies; top off their vehicle fuel tank; place go-kits and batteries in car.

6.4 Condition 1 – Emergency

Emergency Condition 1 could be triggered by severe weather warnings or actual conditions, such as high winds, tornado sighted close to or moving towards a populated area, or flooding.

6.4.1 ARES leader actions

ARES leaders, or their representative, should maintain continuing contact on the state ARES HF net; activate local operations nets; and send a daily situation report to their DEC or the SEC.

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6.4.2 ARES members actions

ARES members should follow the direction of their ARES leaders or delegated representatives, such as net control stations.

7 Section Emergency Frequencies

7.1 Emergency and tactical traffic

day: 7285 kHz LSB night: 3873 kHz LSB

7.2 Health and welfare traffic

day: 7290 kHz LSB night: 3935 kHz LSB

7.3 Digital Messaging

7.3.1 The HF Digital National Traffic System

The HF Digital National Traffic System is recommended for NTS type messages without email addresses.

7.3.2 The Winlink 2000 System

The Winlink 2000 system is recommended for destinations with email addresses. This may include HF and VHF with RMS Packet, Paclink or Airmail. The STX ARES section maintains a number of HF capable EMCOMM Winlink 2000 RMS PACTOR Stations. A current list of these stations is maintained on the www.arrltx.org website. These RMS PACTOR, as well as other EMCOMM or public RMS PACTOR stations, are preferred for HF digital traffic over point-to-point communications for the flexibility of communicating to multiple recipients, to minimize propagation limitations and to free up stations from fixed, pre-planned frequencies. A current list of EMCOMM RMS PACTOR frequencies and stations may be found under the files section of the STX ARES Yahoogroup. This list is not to be distributed outside ARES nor posted on a website.

7.3.3 Other HF Digital Modes

HF Digital Modes such as RTTY, PSK31 and others which do not have error correcting or error checking are not recommended due to their ability to receive errors without realizing the transmitted message has changed.

7.3.4 Point-to-Point Digital Traffic

PACTOR is the preferred mode for point-to-point HF digital communications using Airmail. The simplex point-to-point frequencies will be 3590.0 and 7090.0 USB Mark (3591.5 and 7091.5 center) for utilization inside the section.

7.3.5 Digital Installations: Districts over 250,000 people

ARES districts with populations over 250,000 (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14) should develop a minimum of two VHF or UHF RMS Packet Internet gateway stations to provide Packet to Internet email capability. All counties in these districts with an ARES EC should have a minimum of one station with the ability to contact one or more Winlink HF, VHF or UHF Winlink stations. Running RMS Relay with HF PACTOR 3 forwarding capability, preferably in a hardened location with backup power is recommended

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in high hurricane risk areas. This allows hubbing local communications in the event of an Internet failure as well as providing HF mail routing outside the affected area.

7.3.6 Digital Installations: Districts >1 million people

ARES districts with populations of over 1 million (Districts 1, 3, 7, 12, 14) should have a minimum of 4 RMS Packet stations and are encouraged to run RMS Relay with HF PACTOR 3 capability, preferably in a hardened location with backup power. This allows hubbing local communications in the event of an Internet failure as well as providing HF mail routing outside the affected area.

7.3.7 ARES Member Digital

Each ARES member should utilize Airmail or Paclink for VHF, UHF and HF Winlink 2000 for ARES training and emergency communications on a regular basis. This includes receiving messages for third party delivery as well as sending messages.

7.3.8 ARES DEC Digital

All DECs should have HF Winlink capability.

7.3.9 Agency Digital Installations

ARES groups with equipment installed in local facilities such as EOCs are encouraged to extend these to include Winlink capability for communication with local RMS Packet or remote HF Winlink facilities.

7.3.10 APRSLINK

APRSLink is a limited capacity option for those areas with active APRS IGates and no RMS Packet stations.

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Appendix A: Amateur Radio Communications Teams (ARCTs)

ARES operators who desire to participate in a pre-organized or ad hoc ARCT for in-section or out-of-section response are expected to complete the following training:

1. FEMA IS-100, Introduction to Incident Command System
2. FEMA IS-200, ICS for Single Resource and Initial Action Incidents
3. FEMA IS-700, National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction
4. FEMA IS-800, National Response Framework, An Introduction

All of the above courses are available on-line and free of charge.

ARES operators who desire to be considered as an ARCT supervisor or assistant supervisor are expected to complete the above requirements, plus the ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Course (ARECC), Level 1.

ARCT Type	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Description	Full field or base station & 4 mobile/portable units	Field or base station	Mobile or portable field unit	Mobile or portable field additional support unit
Assignment	Complete amateur radio emergency/auxiliary communications team for single or multiple agency communications	May be assigned to a specific agency, or for emergency/auxiliary communications at a staging area, CP, EOC, etc., for multiple agency service	May be assigned to a specific agency or to supplement or relieve an existing multi-agency ARCT	May be assigned to a specific agency or to supplement or relieve an existing ARCT. Rarely ordered singly.
Number of People	12 radio operators total, 1 supervisor, 1 assistant supervisor	4 radio operators, 2 General class or higher	2 radio operators, 1 General class or higher if possible	1 radio operator
Sustained Operations	24-hours, self-sufficient for first 72-hours	24-hours, self-sufficient for first 72-hours	24-hours, self-sufficient for first 72-hours	12-hours, self-sufficient for first 72-hours
Communications	Short range (VHF/UHF) and long range (HF) voice and digital communications for tactical, logistics, health/welfare, administrative and other radio traffic. Is not dependent upon any outside power source or infrastructure. Consists of one ARCT Type 2 base station; and four Type 4 units (mobile, portable, or rover).	Short range (VHF/UHF) FM and long range (HF) voice and digital communications for tactical, logistics, health/welfare, administrative and other radio traffic Is not dependent upon any outside power source or infrastructure.	VHF FM (minimum) HF mobile/portable desired VHF/HF Digital desired.	VHF FM (minimum)

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ARES Districts with over 1 million population (Districts 1, 3, 7, 12, 14) are recommended to identify and pre-qualify sufficient candidates for a minimum of one (1) ARCT Type 1 for potential in-section and out-of-section response (12 minimum, 24-36 preferred).

ARES Districts with 250,000-500,000 population (Districts 2, 4, 5, 9, 14) are recommended to identify and pre-qualify sufficient candidates for a minimum of two (2) ARCT Type 2 for potential in-section and out-of-section response (8 minimum, 16-24 preferred).

All other ARES Districts (Districts 6, 8, 10, 11) are recommended to identify and pre-qualify sufficient candidates for a minimum of two (2) ARCT Type 3 for potential in-section and out-of-section response (4 minimum, 8-12 preferred).

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Appendix B: Digital Message Network

Message Origination

All messages should be uniquely numbered when originated, and that number perpetuated for all reply messages, regardless of the mode. The full name of the final recipient should appear in the subject line. Messages should be composed and read off-line. Both HF and VHF/UHF users should listen on the frequencies before connecting to minimize interference.

Message attachments must be as small as possible and still accomplish the intended purpose. Consider plain text, RTF, or CSV formats.

RMS Packet Stations

RMS Packet stations should use operating systems Windows 2000 or later. A UPS should be used on the computer, TNC and cable/DSL modem for reliable operation.

Remote PC log-in for RMS Packet stations not easily accessible is recommended. For locations sharing a TNC between RMS Packet and local e-mail, a RMS Packet / Paclink combination using the professional version of the AGW packet engine is recommended.

Frequency Coordination

RMS Packet frequencies should be coordinated over an area for both physical coverage and bandwidth. Local areas should have default RMS Packet connection plans to maximize bandwidth and coverage. For example, an RMS Packet on a frequency with wide area coverage might be reserved for distant users when possible.

RMS Relay software (optional)

In the past, only very large metropolitan areas were able to have what was known as an EMCOMM PMBO. This software allowed for local hubbing of email during an Internet outage. Today a program called RMS Relay may be run in conjunction with RMS Packet to provide for local email hubbing during an Internet outage. Areas with multiple RMS Packet stations may wish to only enable RMS Relay during a widespread outage to avoid trapping email at that station when the Internet is operational at other station. Stations running RMS Relay and equipped with SCS PACTOR 3 HF capability can connect to RMS PACTOR stations outside the affected area to route mail beyond the local area.

EOC Installations

Separate voice and digital setups including radios and antennas are strongly recommended. Antennas should be placed to minimize interaction between voice and digital stations and installations tested to detect problems.

When separate voice and digital setups are not possible, the station should remain on voice, except when sending or receiving a digital message.

A list of Winlink addresses for South Texas Section Emergency Operations Centers (STX ARES EOC email list) in the files section of the South Texas ARES yahoogroups. This file should not be distributed outside the organization.

During large incidents, the SEC will designate a Winlink address to send any email routing changes to.

American Radio Relay League, Inc.®
South Texas Section
Amateur Radio Emergency Service®
Emergency Communications Plan

Appendix C: ARES Contact Information

Section Emergency Coordinator
Tom Whiteside N5TW
228 Wind Ridge Cove
Georgetown, TX 78628
Phone: 512-863-6865
512-924-1573 Cell
Email: n5tw@arrl.net

Assistant Section Emergency Coordinator for Operations
Jeff Walter KE5FGA
14926 Forest Lodge
Houston, TX 77070
Phone: 713-461-3404 Day
281-320-2353 Evening
281-467-8595 Cell

Section Manager
Lee Cooper W5LHC
2507 Autrey Drive
Leander, TX 78641
Phone: 512-658-3910
Email: w5lhc@arrl.org

ARRL Headquarters
225 Main Street
Newington CT 06111
Phone: 860-594-0200
FAX: 860-594-0259
Email: hq@arrl.org

A "South Texas ARES Leaders" contact list is maintained on the STXARES Yahoo group in the files section.