

DIS-101B

Alert Definitions and Increased-Readiness Conditions

EXCERPTED from District 14 Emergency Communications Plan (DIS-101)

Prepared Oct. 6, 2017 by KE5JBW - EDITED Oct. 18, 2017

Tonight's training is taken from Section 10 of the District 14 Emergency Communications Plan, and will focus on the four levels of official alerts, which are referred to as Conditions.

The alert definitions used in this training script have been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. The definitions have 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.

Most naturally 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 Units to which they are assigned.

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. **District 14 ARES® Action** - All members should review their unit emergency plan.

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.

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

- Hurricane Watch.
- High wind advisories with wind velocities in excess of 50 mph.
- High water watch.
- Flash flood watch.
- Tornado watch.
- Winter storm watch.
- Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties that could escalate into a mutual aid requirement.

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

Condition 2 - Alert. A Condition 2 Alert is the one that is actually called “Alert,” indicating its increase above the level of “Caution.” It 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. For example, High Wind warnings are issued when there are winds at 60 miles per hour or greater.

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 instigate a Condition 2 Alert request for District 14, to assist the nearby county. An increased possibility of civil disorder or terrorism may also trigger a Condition 2 Alert.

All District 14 ARES® members should be aware that the email alert system, and possibly a text-message phone tree could be initiated in a Condition 2 Alert. Unit EC’s who wish to use a phone-tree text-message system should make sure that the trees are established and up to date for each unit, and that the DEC has a copy of the current phone tree.

Condition 1 - 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.

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. A Condition 1 Alert will not be automatic. Only in extreme circumstances will the unit EC issue a Condition 1 Alert. Examples of an extreme circumstances could be the touching down of a tornado in Harris County with the probability of extensive damage, or civil disorder, terrorism, extremely high winds, or actual (as opposed to predicted) flooding.

District 14 ARES® Action – Condition 1 is the highest alert level in the South Texas Section and District 14 ARES®. All preparations will have been made by all District 14 ARES® members, and all are at the ready and standing by for instructions. The automated alert system will have been activated. Assuming that there was sufficient warning and time available, the telephone-text-message tree and email systems will have also been activated.

This concludes tonight’s training on Alert Definitions and Increased-Readiness Conditions. This was excerpted from the District 14 Emergency Communications Plan, which can be found in the training section of the Harris County ARES website.