Eastern Pennsylvania Section
Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)

Emergency Communications Plan

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Table of Contents

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Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Plan

1.0   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this document is to provide general guidelines and an organizational framework in support of Emergency Communications within the ARRL Eastern Pennsylvania Section while leaving the specific details for each District and County Emergency Communications plans to be developed at those respective levels.

1.2   It describes an organization within which District and County Amateur Radio units may function with maximum effectiveness and minimum confusion. It is intended to promote uniform procedures among Local, District and Section Amateur Radio units, their officials and their operators.

1.3   These guidelines are not intended as rigid regulations. The appointed Emergency Coordinator (EC) in each county may interpret and adapt the plan as reasonably necessary for efficient and effective management of their local situation.

2.0   Background

2.1   The Amateur Radio Service in the United States is governed under the rules of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) officially called Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97.

2.2   Specifically, in Part 97.1.a (revised October 1, 2008), the FCC rules recognize that a fundamental purpose of the Amateur Radio Service is to provide voluntary noncommercial communication service to the public with respect to emergency communications.

2.3   In support of this, the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is part of the field organization administered by the American Relay League (ARRL) for the public good, and is designed to provide communication services to agencies such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and additionally support other public service events such as walkathons. Any Amateur Radio operator with a sincere desire to assist in an emergency is encouraged to register and participate.

2.4   Additionally, the FCC in part 97.407 authorizes such Amateur Radio stations to also be enrolled with their local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) to provide emergency communications support to local, county and state governments.

2.5   Although not specifically mentioned in Part 97, the Amateur Radio Service also supports the Federal Government's National Weather Service (NWS) with Radio Amateurs assisting as communicators and storm spotters in the Skywarn™ program, which is a concept developed to promote a cooperative effort between the National Weather Service and communities. Local Skywarn™ county coordinators are appointed by one of the Regional NWS Forecast Offices (NWSFO) for their area. Whenever possible, this person should also be appointed as a county AEC for Skywarn™ to lead this function and to arrange for recurring training of Amateur Radio operators.

2.6   In the Eastern Pennsylvania Section, the suggested method of operation is for one combined county organization to perform all three functions (ARES®, RACES & Skywarn™). However, if they are not one and the same, an alternative is that the County Radio Officer could be appointed as an ARES® AEC for RACES; while on the other hand, the ARES® EC in turn could be appointed as a RACES Assistant Radio Officer. This ensures that the Amateur Radio response to an emergency situation is well coordinated and provides the most flexibility in operations and effective allocations of our limited resources. Such a combined effort is commonly referred to as Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (EMCOMM),. This approach is reflected in the latest guidance from the ARRL and aligns well with the Incident Command System (ICS) that is used in both Pennsylvania and nationwide.

3.0   Concept

3.1   The Amateur Radio operator's primary emergency service mission should be to provide supplemental communication channels and to tie different systems and agencies together. In addition, Amateur Radio operators should have a high degree of technical ability that can assist in quickly establishing or repairing communications facilities. Each emergency is different, and as such, flexibility is a necessity in order to provide the appropriate and adequate response to each.

3.2   Amateur Radio serves as back-up communications to established services and often is not called immediately if normal communications circuits are intact and adequate. Members should monitor developments and be prepared for swift deployment should such a request be received.

3.3   Periodic drills, training, and instruction should be carried out to insure readiness and quick response in providing effective communications for when the need arises. Each District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) and County Emergency Coordinator (EC) should arrange to participate in or create an effective annual Simulated Emergency Test (SET) to evaluate their organizations capabilities.

3.4   Agencies that could be served during a communications emergency include, but are not limited to, government offices, the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, hospitals, Offices Of Emergency Management (OEM), police, fire, rescue squads, schools, military, utility companies, large industrial concerns, the National Weather Service, forestry services, or other Pennsylvania Voluntary Agencies Assisting in Disaster (PAVOAD). Contact should be made with selected agencies prior to crisis situations to develop mutual understandings and plans of action. Memoranda Of Understandings (MOU) exist between ARRL and some of these organizations and are available from ARRL at http://www.remote.arrl.org/FandES/field/mou/.

4.0   ARES Organization

4.1   The primary level of organization for ARES® in Pennsylvania is at both the District and the County level, with a District subdivided into a number of counties. The Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) appoints the respective District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) and an Emergency Coordinator (EC) for each county within each district, who in turn are responsible for organizing the local Amateur Radio Operators into an effective and flexible team supporting both governmental and non-governmental agency emergency needs at the county and local levels.

4.2   In some of the larger districts the DEC can appoint an Assistant District Emergency Coordinator (ADEC) while in the larger counties the County EC should appoint Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AEC) to take the lead in supporting the various types of organizations within their jurisdiction. ADEC's and AEC's may also be appointed for various organizational functions such as administration, training, logistics, public relations, etc.

4.3   Each individual county is encouraged to form ARES Mutual Assistance Teams (ARESMAT) with their adjacent counties, including those on bordering states, and develop a written a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Service Level Agreements (SLA) amongst themselves, defining their relationship and level of support.

4.4   Each county should develop a roster of their registered ARESMAT members who are willing and trained to travel to neighboring Sections to provide communication support inside the disaster area. In addition, it is important that pre-disaster planning include inter-county and other training exercises including inter-county and district VHF/UHF nets.

4.5   Since not all counties will have a sufficient number of trained and equipped personnel to deploy full ARESMAT teams on their own, the individual county plans should then be incorporated into District wide and Section plans, but note that any deployment of such teams outside of the Section requires the approval of the SEC, SM or designate.

Due to its large Amateur Radio operator population the sixty seven counties of Pennsylvania are divided into two separate ARRL administrative Sections, namely Eastern Pennsylvania (EPA) and Western Pennsylvania (WPA).

4.5.1   Eastern Pennsylvania Counties

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
Bucks	Berks	Lackawanna	Bradford	Adams
Chester	Carbon	Luzerne	Columbia	Cumberland
Delaware	Lehigh	Pike	Lycoming	Dauphin
Montgomery	Monroe	Susquehanna	Northumberland	Juniata
Philadelphia	Northampton	Wayne	Montour	Lancaster
	Schuylkill	Wyoming	Snyder	Lebanon
			Sullivan	Perry
			Tioga	York
			Union	

4.5.2   Western Pennsylvania Counties

North 1	North 2	South 1	South 2
Clarion	Cameron	Allegheny	Bedford
Crawford	Centre	Arrmstrong	Blair
Erie	Clearfield	Beaver	Cambria
Forest	Clinton	Butler	Franklin
Lawrence	Elk	Fayette	Fulton
Mercer	Jefferson	Greene	Huntington
Venago	McKean	Indiana	Mifflin
Warren	Potter	Washington	Somerset
		Westmoreland	

5.0   Personnel

5.1   All FCC licensed Amateur Radio operators who wish to assist in public service are encouraged to register with their County EC. While membership in the American Radio Relay League is encouraged, it is not required except for persons holding ARRL leadership appointments such as Emergency Coordinators and Official Emergency Stations.

5.2   The issuance of identification cards and vehicle placards by the County EC and county Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is encouraged. With this privilege comes the responsibility to be trained in emergency procedures, be willing to regularly participate in practice and actual emergency operations, and to always act in a manner that reflects favorably on Amateur Radio. Participation is a privilege and can be denied by the County EC at any time.

5.3   All Amateur Radio operators are encouraged to maintain currency as Skywarn™ Spotters through training offered by the regional NWSFO office.

5.4   ARRL members may also apply for designation as an Official Emergency Station (OES) from the ARRL. The County EC can determine the exact duties of such stations, but they should include certain training requirements and emergency power capabilities. OES appointments are also appropriate for stations functioning as primary liaison to other communication systems, such as MARS, CAP, etc.

5.5   Each County EC should prepare a one-page reference card describing their counties Amateur Radio Emergency Procedures for their members. This can also be used for informing other hams how to respond in an emergency and as a recruiting tool for potential new members.

6.0   Operational Support

6.1   When operating in support of state, county and local government, Amateur Radio operators can function as either RACES operators under the Pennsylvania State RACES Plan published by the Pennsylvania Office of Emergency Management, or as ARES® operators, depending upon the circumstances of the activation. These days most are handled as ARES® due to restrictions on RACES operations under FCC part 97.407.

6.2   When operating in support of the National Weather Service, Amateur Radio operators will function in accordance with the procedures established by the regional NWSFO office for the Skywarn™ program.

6.3   When operating in support of non-governmental relief agencies such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc., Amateur Radio operators will function as ARES operators in accordance with the guidelines published by the ARRL Public Service Manual, the appropriate MOU and their local County EC.

6.4   Support of public gatherings such as walkathons, parades, etc. can provide valuable operational experience. As these events become more numerous, consider using them to gather new members and to train new leadership by delegating them to local Amateur Radio clubs. Advice on supporting such events can be found in the ARRL Special Events Manual.

7.0   Planning

7.1   Each County EC will develop a written emergency communications plan to define how emergency communications are to be handled within the county. The plan should allow for the support of government operations between township Emergency Operations Center (EOC's) and the county EOC and also between the county EOC and the state EOC, while simultaneously supporting operations between shelters and the local Salvation Army and Red Cross chapter. Additional ARES circuits may also be needed to support other PAVOAD's or agencies.

7.2   The county emergency communications plan should establish alerting procedures and self-alerting procedures when communications fail, as well as mutual support arrangements with adjacent counties. For example, a telephone call-out tree might be used as well as a common rallying frequency to assemble on if telephones fail.

7.3   Arrangements with local repeater operators to support these operations should be made in advance and renewed annually. Such arrangements when possible should be reduced to a simple writing or memorandum of understanding (MOU) to settle on details in advance regarding ARES® priority of use of a repeater facility. The SEC may make written forms of agreement available from time to time for use by the County EC to facilitate such understandings between ARES® and repeater operators. Plans should also be made for simplex operations in the event of repeater failure or for long-term operations so as to release repeaters back to normal use. 146.52 MHz should not be a primary channel for these operations.

7.4   The county emergency communications plan should also identify stations for regular liaison with the ARRL National Traffic System (NTS) for message handling out of the area.

7.5   The local County plan should permit the County to function independently in local events, yet intermesh smoothly with the District and Section plans.

7.6   A copy of the county emergency communications plan should be filed with the county Office of Emergency Management, local Red Cross Chapter, Salvation Army and any other served agencies. Copies should also be sent to the SEC and the adjacent County ECs. The plan should be reviewed annually.

8.0   Training

8.1   Each member is expected to be trained and proficient in appropriate emergency communication procedures. The exact training requirements will be determined by the County EC, but as general rule, they should be based on achieving AECCC Level I certification as well as practical on-the-air experience in formal and tactical message handling, exercises and nets. Maintaining annual proficiency in formal message handling and the equipment and procedures used at the local EOC, Salvation Army, local Red Cross chapter and other served agencies is encouraged.

8.2   Leadership officials (ECs, AECs, OESs) are encouraged to additionally obtain both ARECC Level I and II certification.

8.3   Pennsylvania local governments and other agencies have adopted the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Incident Command System, and have established local minimum Incident Command System (ICS) courses to be completed in order to assist in any activation.

8.4   In the Eastern Pennsylvania ARES® we recommend a minimum of ICS-100 and ICS-700 for general ARES® members, and those in leadership positions should also complete ICS-200 and ICS-800.

9.0   Logistics

9.1   Each County EC should ensure that personnel are adequately trained, sufficient equipment is available, and review any pre-arranged MOU for repeater use in order to support ARES® operations within their county for a minimum period of 72 continuous hours. The County EC has the authority to request priority use of simplex frequencies. Each County EC should establish a liaison station in the event of a multi-county emergency

9.2   Each member is encouraged to use 30 amp Anderson Powerpole connectors on all portable 12 VDC powered radios, batteries and power supplies to facilitate quick response and the ability to share resources in a disaster. Information on this ARES standard can be found at http://www.ocraces.org/powerpole.html.

9.3   Each member should assemble a 24 hour go kit to allow them to rapidly respond to local emergencies. Each is also encouraged to develop a 72-hour go kit to allow response to longer-term emergencies. Members of ARES® Mutual Assistance Teams must maintain such a 72-hour go kit. Suggested contents of such kits are described in the AECCC Level I course. Additionally the Virginia RACES organization has a good list of 24-hour kit contents at http://www.va-ares.org/24_hour__pack__Rev24Dec021WV.htm.

9.4   Each County EC should work with their served agencies to ensure the establishment of permanent radio stations and emergency power at EOCs, Red Cross chapters, hospitals and similar locations. The development of portable shelter radio kits is also encouraged

10.0   Concept of Operations

10.1   The Section ARES® operates under the "lead agency" principal. This means that the local ARES® group responds to requests from the agency that has the authority under local, county or state legislation to provide the lead in response to an emergency or disaster. In most instances this will be the local county emergency management agency (EMA). By following this guideline Amateur Radio resources are coordinated through the local EMA and any conflicts for the resources are decided by EMA officials who are in a better position to prioritize communications needs.

10.2   County EC's should have a memorandum of understanding with their local emergency management agency or at least provide them with contact information.

11.0   Authority to Activate ARES

11.1   Local ARES® groups can be activated by the Emergency Coordinator (EC), or the Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC), at the request of:

            1. The City or County Emergency Management Agency
            2. The Pennsylvania State Police
            3. The Governor or his designated representative, such as the Pennsylvania Emergency
                Management Agency (PEMA)
            4. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA or other designated agency under the Federal
                Response Plan
            5. Any agency that has an existing MOU with ARRL.

11.2   Should ARES® members be aware of a communications emergency they should make every attempt to contact their County EC or AEC to ensure that he/she is aware of the situation.

11.3   *ARES® members should not respond to any emergency or request from any agency unless the County EC or AEC (or in their absence the DEC, SEC or SM) has authorized deployment of ARES®. Members should never self-deploy to any incident.*

11.4   Once the local ARES® group has received a request the County EC should attempt to notify the DEC as soon as possible. The DEC should notify the SEC.

11.5   The County EC may request additional assistance from other ARES® groups within the District by contacting the DEC. The DEC may request assistance from other ARES® groups in other Districts by contacting the SEC.

12.0   Warning, Alert & Response Levels

12.1   Local ARES® groups should develop phone trees and other appropriate notification methods to alert their ARES® group in the event of an emergency. They should also work with local repeater owners to establish emergency alerting procedures.

12.2   <u>Level 1 – Standby</u>   (Officials anticipate a potential need for ARES® assistance)

12.2.1   ARES® groups should be placed on standby when there is information that might indicate the need for ARES® deployment. Such indications include severe weather alerts including earthquakes, hurricanes and tornados, etc.

- County EC's should be in close communication with their local EMA officials and confirm contact information

- County EC's should contact those in their ARES® group and confirm contact information and their availability

- County EC's should also check with local repeater owners to confirm the operational status and emergency power capabilities of local repeaters

- ARES® members should check their equipment and ensure they have emergency power capabilities as well as 24-hour and 72-hour preparedness kits

- County EC's should notify the DEC, or if unable to make contact with the DEC then the SEC.

- District DEC's should notify the SEC or if unavailable the SM.

- The SEC should contact the DEC's to confirm that ARES groups within the effected area have been placed on standby.

- The SEC should insure that the SM is notified.

12.3   Level 2 – Alert   (Prepare for immediate deployment and wait until assigned)

12.3.1 An alert status should be initiated when there is an indication of an impending need for ARES® deployment. Such indications would include severe weather alerts, such as earthquakes, hurricanes and tornados, etc. An initial contact from the local EMA requesting to know the availability of ARES® for deployment could also indicate the need to initiate an alert. The following actions should be taken If not already done for a standby:

- County EC's should be in close communication with their local EMA officials to confirm contact information and obtain a list of sites & location where communications may be needed, along with initial staging areas.

- County EC's should contact those in their ARES® group to confirm contact information and their availability

- County EC's should notify and obtain OK from local repeater owners for exclusive use of local repeaters if Level 3 is entered, per the MOU with the repeater owners to confirm the operational status and emergency power capabilities.

- ARES® members should check their equipment to ensure they have emergency power capabilities as well as emergency communications and 72-hour preparedness kits

- District DEC's should contact the County EC's in their District to confirm that these activities have been done and to confirm contact information and emergency net frequencies. The potential need for additional ARES® members from other Districts should be considered

- The SEC should contact the DEC's and confirm that ARES® groups within the effected area have been placed on standby. The potential need for ARESMAT should be considered if sufficient resources are not available within the Section.

12.4   Level 3 - Deployment of Personnel

12.4.1 The County EC will usually be the liaison with the agency served and coordinates the alerting and deployment of personnel. Upon arrival at the assigned location ARES members should immediately identify themselves to the person in charge or the contact person provided by the County EC or Net Control.

12.4.2 In most instances two or three operators will be assigned to each location to provide relief and backup equipment. This allows one person to establish communications while the other is setting up other equipment or acting as liaison to the served agency.

13.0   ARES® Mutual Assistance Team (ARESMAT)

13.1   In a disaster, such as a hurricane or tornado, ARES® resources may be quickly overwhelmed, especially if the event and recovery operations are going to be prolonged. In these situations communications assistance may be needed from other Districts or even other Sections. The ARESMAT concept is designed to do just this.

13.2   EC's and DEC's should maintain a list of ARES® members who are able and trained to be on an ARESMAT. All ARESMAT members should:

- have completed the ARRL-ARECC level 1 course
- have completed the NIMS ICS courses required by agencies they will report to

- have completely mobile & portable 2-meter and HF equipment, including emergency power supplies, antennas, etc.
- have sufficient food, water and other supplies to be self-sufficient for 72 hours
- have strong inter-personal communication skills and be physically fit

13.3   ARESMAT teams should be requested through the SEC and when a request is received for an ARESMAT team the SEC will contact DEC's in Districts not affected and/or SEC's in adjacent Sections and determine the availability of team members.

13.4   If the scale of the disaster indicates that ARES® operations may be prolonged the SEC should contact adjacent Section SEC's in advance to determine the availability of an ARESMAT team and consider placing them on standby and notify the SM of such action.

13.5   When a team is requested a designated reporting point and a point of contact should be provided to the other DEC's and Section's SEC before the team departs. This should include contact frequencies, repeaters and any other pertinent information.

13.6   If a request is received from an adjacent Section for an ARESMAT team the SEC should contact ARESMAT members through the DEC's and County EC's. The ARESMAT should only be deployed after the exact nature, destination, reporting contact and other details have been determined. No deployment should be made until all details have been confirmed in writing.

13.7   In the event that it is necessary to request that the FCC declare a communications emergency the County EC should contact the DEC or SEC. The SEC should request a "voluntary communications emergency" to the FCC Field Office. The SEC should also contact the ARRL office and advise them of the situation. As soon as the frequency is no longer needed the SEC should request that the FCC rescind the declaration.

14.0   Net Operations

14.1   Nets are established to control the radio traffic on any given frequency. There can be multiple nets in operation for a given disaster, each with a specific purpose, and each with a Net Control Station (NCS).

14.2   The Eastern Pennsylvania traffic net system embraces many kinds of nets, using many modes of communication. They operate around the clock, seven days a week, on a wide variety of schedules. The basic cluster of Section nets in Pennsylvania embraces those of the National Traffic System (NTS) as well as a variety of special-purpose nets such as the Pennsylvania Traffic Training Net, the ARRL Information Net, and various other digital modes.

14.3   In addition, a great many VHF and UHF local or semi-local nets operate all day, 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, although they may sometimes not be subject to net controls. Each of these nets has its own procedures, schedule and operating practices and many of them shift almost automatically from routine, casual operation to emergency mode.

14.4   It is not the intent of this plan to prescribe operating functions or procedures for any of these nets unless they are explicitly part of the County, District, or Section ARES® program. Individual participation in almost any well conducted net in any mode, on any frequency is strongly recommended as a way to become familiar with nets and how they operate.

14.5   Section-wide coverage during an emergency is normally maintained using frequencies on 75- or 40-meter sideband. The Net Control operator on duty will decide whether to keep the net on its current frequency, or to move up or down a few kHz to avoid interference. However, if it becomes desirable to move the net to another band, the Net Manager on duty at the time decides whether to move the net and if so, to what band, frequency, and mode.

14.6   If conditions are unfavorable on 75 and 40 meters, a CW or digital circuit might be set up on an arbitrary frequency, perhaps on 30- or 160-meters, or via APRS, D-Star, Winlink or other digital modes, thus maintaining contact with critical locations while the net itself continues to operate on one of its normal frequencies.

15.0   Message Operations

15.1   Operations communications are formal messages requiring legal documentation, provided between the various agencies to facilitate the coordination of equipment, personnel and resource requests in support of emergency protective measures, search and rescue and recovery efforts. These shall be in a written (formal) format, as required by the served agency.

15.1.1 Health and welfare traffic are messages concerning the welfare of people in the effected area; these can be from people within the effected area to family in another area to let them know they are safe, or it can be inquires from family outside of the effected area. In either case these are low priority and are usually handled after the initial response has been transitioned into recovery operations. In most instances the Red Cross coordinates these inquiries. During the response phase to disasters send no welfare traffic into an effected area while any operations traffic remains listed to be handled.

15.1.2 Whenever possible packet stations and/or D-star stations should be established for handling most non-tactical traffic, i.e., all welfare requests, logistics & supply requests, damage reports etc. Packet traffic and D-Star provides more detailed information, is less likely to be misinterpreted, and takes up less air time. In addition it is more difficult for the general public to listen in on packet, Winlink or D-Star traffic.

16.0   Shelter Operations

16.1   Shelter operations and other deployment sites should be staffed by a minimum of two people; one to man the radio and the other to act as a runner. Ideally both will be operators so that they can provide relief for each other. Shelter operators need only be Technician class operators as all communications will normally be on 2-meters or 70cm.

16.2   The purpose of operators in the shelters is to provide communications between the Shelter Manager and the organization in charge of the shelters, usually the Red Cross or Salvation Army. Shelter operations may be on their own net depending on the scale of the incident.

16.3   Some of the communications may be lists of persons at the shelter, logistics requests or Welfare messages. Ideally these should be passed by packet, Winlink or D-Star text.

16.4   Internal shelter communications should be accomplished by other means, i.e., simplex, Family Radio Service, etc.

16.7   Operators should avoid accepting duties or roles other than those associated with the function of ARES as this will hinder effective communications, our primary role.

16.8   All shelter communications should be authorized by the Shelter Manager and should be in the form of a written message.

17.0   Search & Rescue Operations

17.1   ARES® members may be called upon to assist agencies conducting Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. Many times these types of operations are conducted in remote areas, where communications on the agency's frequencies may be difficult due to lack of repeaters.

17.2   In most instances communications will be tactical in nature and a single net will be sufficient. In addition, simplex operations may be sufficient with the occasional use of a repeater to pass logistical requests. The NCS should choose the most appropriate modes.

18.0   Public Service Communications

18.1   Public service communications are communication services provided to non-profit organizations sponsoring a public event. Public service communications are:

- Normally scheduled
- Do not require activation by an emergency management agency
- Do not normally require coordination with multiple agencies

19.0   Working with Served Agencies

19.1   The ARES® field organization is a self contained emergency communications organization designed to support as fully possible, upon request, any and all emergency response and disaster relief organizations. However, ARES® retains its own identity and organizational structure, personnel and physical infrastructure while providing communications support.

19.2   When an ARES® operator is assigned to a duty post anywhere, he/she remains an ARES® operator for the full length of the assignment. And, while the operator comes under the Operational authority of the served agency, the operator at the same time remains under the Administrative authority responsible directly to the County EC (and designated assistants).

20.0   Plan Development and Maintenance

20.1   This plan was developed with input from numerous sources including the Southern New Jersey Section plan in addition to information provided by Amateur Radio Operators who have had "hands-on" experience in emergency communications. However, the continued input from those that use the plan is essential if it is to be a useful document for the deployment of ARES® in this Section.

20.2   The Section Emergency Coordinator is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the plan.

20.3   After any ARES® deployment, after-action reports should be submitted that include any problems associated with the plan. The plan should then be revised as necessary, and reviewed on an annual basis.

21.0   Drills and Exercises

21.1   Drills and Training are an essential function of preparing for performance during emergencies. It is known through experience that individuals and organizations will execute a function based on training and knowledge of the emergency plan.

21.2   Participation by ARES® operators in regular Section traffic nets and local VHF nets can be an excellent emergency training tool and should be encouraged by ARES® officials at every opportunity.

21.3   In addition the annual ARRL sponsored Field Day is designed to test Amateur Radio Operator's ability to establish stations other than at their normal location and using non-commercial power.

21.4   Each October, on the third full weekend, the ARRL sponsors a nation-wide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) to assess ARES® abilities in handling (simulated) emergency traffic. The SET weekend gives communicators the opportunity to focus on the emergency communications capability within their community while interacting with NTS nets. The date is elastic; it can be any time between 1 September and 31 October.

21.5   The Pennsylvania weather drill is conducted with Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the National Weather Service (NWS), and is usually scheduled in the first quarter of a calendar year. This exercise affords County EC's and ARES® members to set up operations at their local Emergency Management facility and assist in communications locally and on the state wide 75 meter net.

22.0   National Incident Management System

22.1   On February 28, 2003, President George W. Bush issued a Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-5) in reference to Domestic Incidents, which directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS).

22.2   On December 20, 2004, Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell issued a Proclamation that mandated that NIMS be used for all incident management in the Commonwealth.

22.3   This Presidential directive and Governor's proclamation includes Amateur Radio volunteers who are encouraged to complete the ICS-100, 200 700 and 800 on line courses.

22.4   Each County EC is required to maintain a record of each individual's accomplishments, and make it available to any EMA office requiring NIMS certification.

Acknowledgements

This document would not be possible without inspiration from other Section ARES® groups and in particular the Southern New Jersey Section (SNJ)

Other ARRL Sections are welcome to borrow from document with attribution.

Online References

FCC Rules, Part 97, Amateur Radio Service http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/regulations/rules-regs.html

The ARRL Public Service Communications Manual http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/pscm/

The ARES Field Resources Manual http://www.remote.arrl.org/FandES/field/aresman.pdf

The ARRL Special Events Manual http://www.remote.arrl.org/FandES/field/spevman/index.html

ARRL Net Directory http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/nets/

ARRL Emergency Communications Certification Courses, AECCC Levels I, II & III http://www.arrl.org/cce/

Mt Holly NWSFO Skywarn™ Plan http://wx2phi-skywarn.org/

FEMA online NIMS reference http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/

Offline References

The ARRL Emergency Coordinators Manual

Additional EPA Documents & Guidelines

EPA Web site http://epa-arrl.org/docs.html