



LOUDON COUNTY ARES EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

MARCH 2008

**LOUDON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Amateur Radio Service

The Amateur Radio Service is composed of radio operators who have volunteered their capabilities and equipment to provide supplementary communications in time of public need. Amateurs are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission after passing an examination on their knowledge of telecommunications and technical skills in the operation of radio equipment.

In accordance with treaties agreed under the International Telecommunication Union, frequencies throughout the radio spectrum are allocated to the Amateur Radio Service. By selection of appropriate frequency bands, amateurs are capable of communicating around the world, throughout a geographic region or may limit communications to only a local area.

All nations allocate valuable space in the radio spectrum to the Amateur Radio Service because of its ability to immediately respond in time of need and quickly establish communications where none existed or to supplement existing emergency radio services overloaded with disaster communications.

Under FCC rules, amateurs may not be compensated for providing communications and are prohibited from providing communications that further the conduct of any business.

B. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)

Under FCC rules, RACES is provided specific radio frequencies on which amateurs, registered with state and local Civil Preparedness agencies, would continue operating in the event Emergency War Powers were invoked or a nationally declared disaster occurred.

C. Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

ARES is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) to provide supplementary or emergency communications for public service purposes other than Civil Preparedness agencies. Agencies served include American Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Weather Service, and local police, fire and emergency management agencies.

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D. National Traffic System (NTS)

NTS provides a network of local, state, area, and transcontinental radio circuits for the transmission of non-commercial message traffic in support of the public interest.

E. Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)

MARS is a radio communications service of licensed amateurs who are affiliated with the Department of Defense military services as an adjunct to military communications.

F. Loudon County ARES Organization

The Loudon County ARES Organization is an organization of licensed radio amateurs within Loudon County, Tennessee dedicated to serving the public needs of our area during communications emergencies.

II. AUTHORITY

References:

- A. Title 47 US Code 97.1 et seq., Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations, Amateur Radio Service.
- B. American Radio Relay League, Tennessee Section, Amateur Radio Emergency Service Emergency Communications Operations Plan, dated January 2006.
- C. Tennessee Emergency Management Plan, Appendix 10 to ESF 2.
- D. Loudon County Emergency Management Plan, dated June 14, 2004.

Reference (A) establishes the Federal Regulations controlling the Amateur Radio Service. Specific provisions are made for emergency communications within these regulations. Reference (B) establishes the guidelines for ARES within the State of Tennessee. References (C) and (D) are the All-Hazard emergency plans for the State of Tennessee and Loudon County, respectively. These plans assign specific roles to ARES.

This plan has been reviewed and approved by the Loudon County Emergency Management Agency Director and the E-911 Director.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidelines for the authorization and mobilization of

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volunteer Amateur operators when needed in a communications emergency and to define procedures to be followed.

IV. ORGANIZATION

The Loudon County ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC) is appointed by the Tennessee Section ARES Emergency Coordinator (SEC), with the concurrence of the Director of Loudon County Emergency Management. The Loudon County ARES EC is responsible for all aspects of Loudon County ARES, to include recruiting, training, and operations. The County EC may delegate specific functions, as necessary, by appointing Assistant ECs.

The County EC reports administratively to the SEC and operationally to the Loudon County Emergency Management Director.

ARES networks may be organized to accommodate any emergency communications need. Examples of the various types of networks include:

1. Coordination Net: A communications circuit among various officials, agencies, or services not normally in contact with each other or whose normal means of communication have been disrupted or overloaded.
2. Relay Net: Direct communications between competent local officials and the local broadcast station(s) to relay emergency information or program material for rebroadcast.
3. Point-to-Point Communications: Direct communications between any two or more points, even in remote areas not served by other communications facilities.
4. Observation Net: Spotters may be positioned in strategic locations to report observations of local conditions (weather, traffic, etc.) back to public officials.
5. Back-up and Supplementary Communications: Where a public safety radio system may be out of service, overloaded, or not able interface with diverse units, amateurs are capable of providing necessary communications, by supplementing or replacing the primary system.

V. ACTIVATION PROCEDURE

A. Activation will be at the direction of the Loudon County EMA Director. Activation may be requested by any agency or organization within Loudon County by contacting the Loudon County EMA Director. Cities, municipalities, American Red Cross, Hospitals, Salvation Army, or any agency that serves the citizens of Loudon County in an emergency may request ARES assistance. In an emergency, the Loudon County EMA Director may be contacted 24-hours-a-day through the Loudon County 911 Center.

B. The requesting official, or their delegate, must define their communications needs.

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C. The EMA Director will contact the ARES EC or other designated ARES members to initiate activation. A “Call Tree” is maintained to ensure all available members will be notified.

D. The ARES EC will design, organize, and staff the communications networks to fill the stated needs. If additional assets are needed, the EC will contact the ARES ECs in surrounding counties or the SEC for assistance.

E. Loudon County ARES may be activated to provide support to other regional ARES organizations. The activation procedure will be the same as for a local emergency and additional mobilization instructions will be provided based on the circumstances. Reference (B) contains statewide ARES alerting procedures and levels.

VI. MOBILIZATION

ARES members will immediately establish communications on the 146.685 MHZ repeater when notified by the EC or other ARES member tasked with telephone alerting. If members directly observe conditions that indicate an emergency condition might exist or an alert or warning is issued on NOAA Weather Radio for Loudon County, they should monitor 146.685 MHZ for possible mobilization instructions.

The EC will designate a station to act as the net control station (NCS). NCS will generally operate from the Loudon County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in the Justice Center.

There are three permanently installed ARES stations within the county. The station located in the EOC will serve the EOC staff and the EMA Director. Another station is located in the Community Room of the Fort Loudon Medical Center. This room serves as the command center for the hospital during emergencies. The ARES station here supports the Hospital Director and the command center staff. The third station is located in the Loudon County Mobile 911 Center trailer. This station will support the 911 Center personnel and the entity the trailer is deployed to support.

These stations are designated as “Key Stations” and will be extensively utilized during a communications emergency. Key Stations have full emergency power capability and will be staffed with relief operators assigned to ensure continuous operation. Other temporary, portable or mobile stations will be established depending on the communications needs.

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VII. OPERATIONS

A. The NCS will establish a directed net on 146.685 and receive check-ins from responding ARES members. Check-ins will be with FCC assigned call signs. The NCS will instruct operators to either (1) stand by, (2) report to a staging area with specified equipment, or (3) report to a public official or agency at a specified location.

B. To speed communications flow, tactical call signs may be assigned by the NCS. The call sign will be indicative of the function or location of the operator. FCC call signs will be used to close out each exchange of transmissions, e.g., “This is Weather One, WA4XYZ, Out.” Operators should contact the NCS with their tactical call signs when (1) reporting on station, (2) when they have traffic, or (3) when called by the NCS.

C. If necessary, operators will be directed to shift to an alternate repeater if the primary malfunctions or becomes overloaded with traffic. Simplex operations may also be used for point-to-point applications. The alternate repeater is 146.625 (PL of 100) and the primary simplex frequency is 146.550 MHZ.

D. While activated, ARES operates under the Incident Command System organization that is in place to deal with the emergency. ARES may be assigned to provide communications for any or all of the elements in the command structure, either in the field or at command posts.

VIII. SCOPE

A. Amateur Radio operators are trained communicators. When acting in that capacity, they are not interpreters, evaluators, or field responders. Their purpose is to transmit messages given to them by responsible officials.

B. Messages should preferably be written and initialed by the responsible official. Short, verbal messages that are easily understood are acceptable in tactical situations. If officials need to discuss an issue, it is sometimes more efficient to allow the two parties to talk directly. This is permissible as long as the ARES member remains in control of the radio..

C. By this plan, amateurs are prohibited from transmitting personal observations or opinions, unless specifically requested by a responsible official. This avoids misinterpretation by citizens or media who may be monitoring on scanners.

D. Safety is paramount. ARES members will not endanger themselves during operations. Members should remain aware of the hazards around them if operating in the field.

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VIII. TRAINING AND EXERCISES

A. Training

Although there are no mandatory requirements to be an ARES member, all members are strongly encouraged to complete the following minimum training:

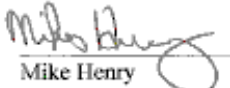
ARRL Emergency Communications Course, Level 1
FEMA IS-100, Introduction to the Incident Command System
FEMA IS-700, National Incident Management System, An Introduction

A training session will generally be conducted during each of the monthly meetings. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, usually at 7:30 PM local time in the Loudon County Fire and Rescue Squad building. Limited training may also be conducted during weekly nets. These nets are held each Thursday (except the second Thursday) at 8 PM local time on the 146.685 MHz repeater. Net control is assigned on a rotating basis to provide experience to all members.

B. Drills and Exercises

1. An annual exercise should be held in conjunction with the national Simulated Emergency Test.
2. At the discretion of the EC, the activation procedure should be tested annually.
3. At the request of the EMA Director, ARES may participate in any exercise involving Loudon County, such as those conducted with the Department of Energy, the Tennessee Valley Authority, or local hospitals.
4. Participation in the ARRL Field Day will be encouraged to provide additional field experience.

Submitted:


Mike Henry
Loudon Co. ARES EC

Reviewed:


Jennifer Estes
Loudon Co. E-911
Director

Approved:


Gordon Harless
Loudon Co. EMA
Director

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