

Faulkner County Amateur Radio Club



Standard Operating Procedures

1. GENERAL

ARES/RACES operators can be activated to perform a variety of communication support tasks:

Shadow Key Leaders

Support to government is the most important role that ARES/RACES members play during emergencies. With handheld transceivers the Amateur operator can follow key individuals providing them with communications capabilities.

Back-up Downed Communications

Hams provide a back-up to downed or jammed communications by shadowing each individual and facility affected.

Liaison

Most government agencies have their own communications, but often do not have the capability to talk with other agencies. ARES/RACES (HAMS) bridge this gap by placing radio operators with each agency.

Spotters/Runners

Hams are mobile and can act as runners to keep people informed as well as the "eyes and ears" during emergency periods.

Health and Welfare Traffic

Hams are best known for this capability. In the context of ARES/RACES operations this is a low priority and depending on the severity of the situation, a moratorium may be imposed on all H & W traffic for a period of time.

2. LOCATION

The primary Faulkner County ARES/RACES station is located in the City of Conway/Faulkner County Emergency Operations Center which is located on Hogan Lane. Station VHF/UHF equipment is owned by the City of Conway and the HF equipment is owned by the Faulkner County Amateur Radio Club or by the volunteer radio operators. A secondary or alternate location may be assigned by the ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator.

3. STAFFING

The station will be staffed only by Faulkner County Amateur Radio Club Volunteer ARES/RACES members displaying a valid ARES/RACES ID card.

Management of the station will be the responsibility of the ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator who will assign qualified operators as needed.

All assigned ARES/RACES operators will become familiar with the operations and equipment of the station.

All ARES/RACES operators will be trained in areas pertaining to the support of the City of Conway Communications Center.

4. ACTIVATION

RACES not ARES operating procedures and communications protocols will be used when a Communications Emergency is declared by a Federal, State, County or Local Government Agency.

Upon the authority of the Faulkner County Judge or his designee or City of Conway Emergency Management Director and through the utilization of the Activation Tree, ARES/RACES members will be mobilized for duty. At the time of activation/mobilization the 146.37/97 repeater or alternate repeater assigned by the ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator will be used for check in by members and as the prime coordination frequency by ARES/RACES officials. Members use simplex frequency 146.520 MHz if both primary and alternate repeaters are none operational. Individuals' assignments will be made by the ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator either by telephone or over the net. Under special situation, ARES/RACES members may be directed to report to the ARES/RACES Net Control Station. Some ARES/RACES members will be pre-assigned to County Volunteer Fire Department stations.

Other fixed points of contact with VHF/UHF equipment:

- Conway Regional Hospital
- MEMS Headquarters in Conway
- MEMS Central Office in Little Rock

5. GENERAL OPERATIONS

A station log will be maintained. All traffic sent or received will be logged as well as all communications, personnel assignments and equipment provided/used.

All messages received at the Net Control Station will be given to the EOC Operations Officer for action/disposition.

Hard copy of all messages sent and received will be kept on file.

Identifiers; ARES/RACES operations will use tactical station identifiers in conjunction with their Amateur call sign. Tactical identifiers will be assigned as needed by the EOC.

Operations will be conducted only on Amateur frequencies. Interference problems will be resolved by the ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator. In the event of an emergency requiring the invoking of the President's war emergency powers, RACES will be governed by paragraph 97.184 (b) of the FCC Rules and Regulations.

6. OPERATING IN A TACTICAL RADIO NET

Emergency radio communications nearly always use formal nets, as do NTS nets.

ARES/RACES operations can at times interface with Federal, State, Military and other official communications networks. Operating in this environment is completely different from the HAM world.

All nets are controlled by a Net Control Station (NCS). The primary task of the NCS is to maintain control of the net in order to facilitate speed and reliability in passing of traffic and communications between stations on the net. Basically, NCS runs the net and no transmitting is done unless stations are directed to. Stations joining the net either call in or are called in by NCS. Once in the net, no station may transmit or leave without NCS permission.

When RACES is activated stations will be called by their tactical call sign, not your FCC call sign when in the net. This allows the net to be conducted without regards to the actual RACES operators at that particular location. The NCS will keep track of individual FCC call signs at the various locations. To comply with FCC rules on station identification every 10 minutes simply add your FCC call at the end of each communication.

NCS can identify in the same manner. Following are good net operating procedures:

- Get your assignment ahead of time.
- Keep all transmissions short.
- Use plain language and the phonetic alphabet.
- Keep the channel available for interruptions (which do occur in stressful situations).
- Stop transmitting when you stop talking.
- Avoid unnecessary transmissions.
- Never leave a net without checking out.

Operating on nets efficiently requires practice. The best operator is always the one that listens, listens and listens, transmitting only when necessary.