

**American Radio Relay League
South Texas Section
District 14 ARES®
Northeast Unit
Harris County, Texas**

Emergency Communications Plan



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**District 14 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)
Northeast Unit
Emergency Communications Plan**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this plan is 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 Northeast Unit ARES® (NEU)
- 1.2. In addition, this Plan expands on, supplements and supports the ARRL® South Texas Section ARES and District 14 Emergency Communications Plans (EMCOMMs). These higher level Plans are incorporated into this plan by reference. All NEU members should have a copy of these Plans and be familiar with their contents and requirements. Portions of higher level plans are included in this Plan for convenience. In the event of conflicts, the provisions of the higher level Plan governs.

2. INTRODUCTION & GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1. In order to safeguard our volunteers, served agencies and the general public, District 14 Amateur Radio Service (ARES®), Northeast Unit will not accept as a volunteer and will remove from its list of volunteers any individual identified as a registered sex offender on the Texas Department of Public Safety Sex Offender Registry Database.
- 2.2. The Northeast Unit of District 14 is part of the American Radio Relay League, ARRL, South Texas Section hereinafter referred to as STX. District 14 covers all of Harris County, TX and is further divided into four geographical quadrants. 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. Highway 288 is the east and west boundary line south of Interstate Highway 10.
- 2.3. The primary responsibility of the Northeast Unit is to provide effective and efficient communications to designated Served Agencies 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. Communications support is provided by pre-assigned Ready Response Teams (RRT) who maintain contact with Served Agency representatives and are trained to operate equipment installed at Served Agency locations. Equipment has been installed in some Agency facilities; however, in others, equipment must be brought in by the assigned Ready Response Team. See Appendix C for a list of these Served Agencies and current RRT assignments.

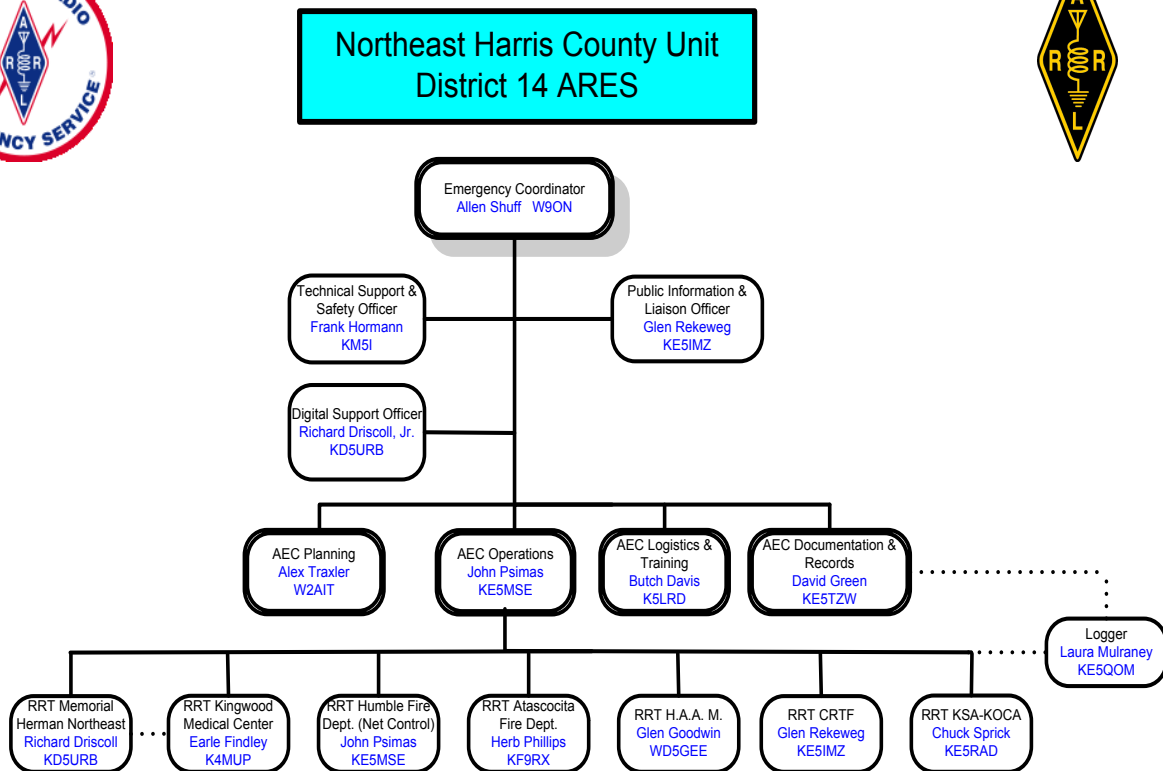
- 2.4. As an ARES volunteer, NEU members serve ARES and operate within the ARES guidelines and FCC regulations. NEU members are not employees of the served agency and although they serve and operate strictly within Served Agency operational rules and regulations they are not their employees. The following statement has been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan and is pertinent to this issue: *“When ARES operators are assigned to a duty post anywhere, they remain an ARES operator for the full length of the ARES assignment. That operator is responsible directly to the EC (and Assistant ECs), and to no one outside of the ARES organization. The officials of a served agency must never be permitted to take control of ARES operators assigned to them, or to absorb them into their own organization, though they may some times attempt that. ARES does not recruit and train operators for other groups to use for non-ARES purposes.”*
- 2.5. Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. NEU radio operator personnel do not receive or accept compensation for their time or for use of personal equipment or vehicles and are not reimbursed for any expenses.
- 2.6. Likewise, NEU, District 14, STX and ARRL do not provide any kind of insurance for members. Therefore, each individual participating in an incident or event is responsible for providing his or her own insurance, if deemed necessary by the individual. This includes property, vehicle, liability and accident/health insurance. Members are responsible for their own actions, their own health and safety and the safety and security of any equipment, vehicles or supplies they bring to an event/incident.

3. ORGANIZATION OF NEU

- 3.1. The NEU functions under this Plan under the direction of the Northeast Unit Emergency Coordinator, hereinafter EC, who is appointed by the ARRL District 14 District Emergency Coordinator, hereinafter DEC.
- 3.2. NEU is organized to merge with the overall management 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. All NEU communications personnel are strongly encouraged to take 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.
- 3.3. The NEU Emergency Coordinator is the chief ARES official for NEU and reports to the District 14 ADEC and DEC. The EC coordinates and directs the training, organization and emergency participation of the Northeast Unit ARES team members. The EC may appoint as many AECs as are needed to effectively manage and develop an effective organization. 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. Northeast Unit personnel are dispatched to Served Agencies and other assignments as required. NEU members who desire to change to an assignment other than their current NEU assignment must clear that with the EC, the on-site NEU leader or the supervisor of their current assignment to ensure that a qualified replacement is available for the remainder of its duration.

3.4. The structure of the NEU is depicted in the below organization chart.



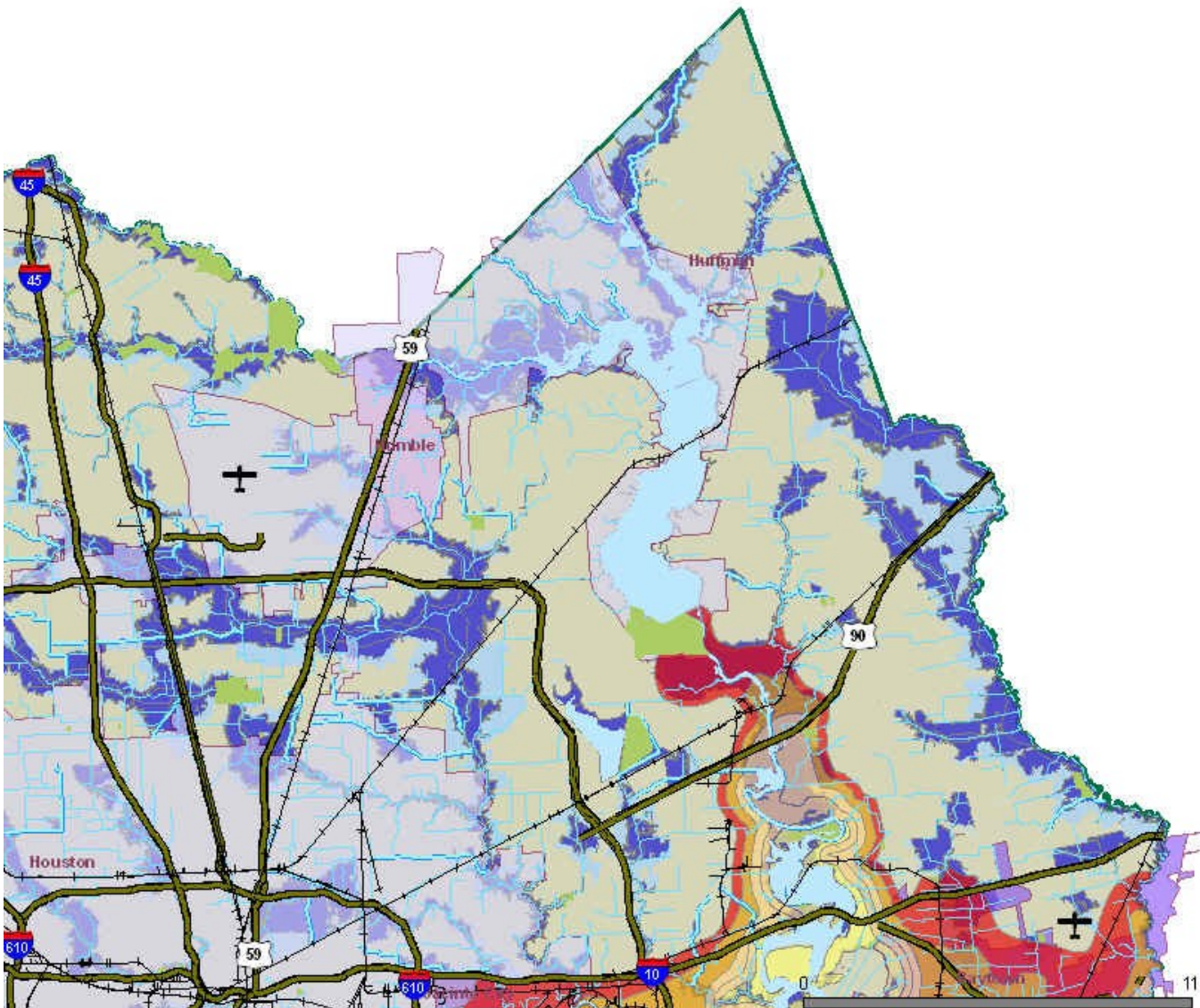
March 15, 2008

See the NEU Organization Plan for a details and job description in the NEU.

4. THREATS

4.1. NEU is located in the NE portion of Harris County and includes Lake Houston, major drainage areas of the San Jacinto River, Bush Intercontinental Airport, five major rail lines and six major highways serving Houston and points south. See map below.

4.2. This map also shows the FEMA potential flood plains (blue areas) and the hurricane impact area (red outlined area), as defined by Harris County Emergency Management.



- 4.3. Potential situations which may occur in the NEU and require activation of this Plan and/or mobilization of NEU members include those addressed in the District 14 EMCOMM. These include the following:
- Hurricanes
 - Tornados
 - High winds
 - Flooding
 - Winter storms (ice and extended freezing temperatures)
- 4.4. Due to its geographic location, the presence of Lake Houston and its feeder streams, Bush Intercontinental Airport and major surface transportation routes used to transport hazardous materials, NEU is exposed to these and other potential emergency conditions.
- 4.5. Harris and Galveston County hurricane preparedness plans call for the mandatory evacuation of over 1 million people in the event of imminent hurricane landfall in the Galveston area. Major evacuation routes pass directly through and along the boundaries of the NEU and many evacuees are expected to seek shelter within the NEU area.
- 4.6. Several NEU members are active participants in the Community Response Task Force (CRTF) in northeast Harris County. CRTF is a formal organization of volunteer public service, governmental and faith based/mission organizations who meet monthly to foster cooperation, coordination and preparation for emergencies. A primary focus of CRTF is preparing to shelter evacuees during evacuations.
- 4.7. One of the primary support functions for NEU ARES could be to provide communications at shelters set up by CRTF or other groups. Several designated shelters have amateur radio equipment installed and RRTs assigned as operators; however, numerous other shelters within the NEU area could be required and will likely be opened by churches or governmental agencies during a mass evacuation. As such, NEU should prepare to step forward to provide communications support if required. This could only to be accomplished by the use of individual member's "go kits" deployed at the last minute and operated within the framework of this EMCOMM Plan.
- 4.8. The potential for portions of northeast Harris County and eastern Montgomery County to be isolated from the area south of the San Jacinto River exists. Major flooding of the San Jacinto at the SR 59 Bridge has, in the past, closed SR 59 to all traffic for days, resulting in major impacts to obtaining supplies and services from Houston or Harris County. Likewise, as shown on Harris County flood control maps, flooding of local roads and streets in areas such as Kingwood are very likely. The presence of numerous trees in the area which could be felled by major winds could also impact travel. Thus, alternate routes of travel to Served Agencies or other points of need must be planned by each NEU member.

4.9. No emergency plan can cover all possible scenarios for response. This Plan simply provides a basic outline of procedures to cover “generic” responses and serves as a starting point for member’s guidance. Hopefully it will prompt additional individual forethought, planning and preparation.

4.10. **See Appendix A for a typical incident flow diagram**

5. PLAN ACTIVATION

5.1. Plan activation is normally the first phase of NEU mobilization. Plan activation means that the procedures outlined in this EMCOMM are placed in effect. NEU mobilization may or may not be implemented for the incident, depending on what develops. For example, this Plan may be activated if a hurricane enters the Gulf of Mexico and appears to be headed for our area. Activating the Plan will alert NEU members of the need to review the Plan, start preparing for bad weather and notify them to more closely monitor events and modes of communications such as e-mail and repeaters.

5.2. When the Plan activation is announced, members should review the Plan requirements and provisions and be familiar with their responsibilities under the Plan. NEU members do not report to any Served Agency locations until the NEU is mobilized as described in the next section of this Plan. Mobilization might not be called until after an event or incident has occurred. An example might be a hurricane impacting Harris County. NEU members might ride out the hurricane in their homes or other locations and not be alerted to report to Served Agencies until the storm has passed, normal power and communications have failed and recovery operations begin.

5.3. Any member of NEU who for any reason believes that a communications emergency exists or is imminent should immediately contact the NEU EC or a NEU AEC. The NEU EC or his designated representative will contact the ADEC or DEC to make District 14 leadership aware of the situation and receive instructions regarding District actions.

5.4. In the event of an actual or impending emergency, the DEC may activate the District 14 EMCOMM Plan, which, in turn, triggers the NEU EC to activate this NEU EMCOMM Plan. Activation will occur through use of the District 14 emergency call up system phone tree, email notification systems or other alert procedures.

5.5. NEU activation will occur through use of the NEU phone tree call up, e-mail notification and announcements on the TEAC repeaters.

5.6. The NEU EC may activate this Plan for localized emergencies in the Northeast quadrant of Harris County. He will immediately notify the ADEC and DEC of this action and brief them on the situation and the possible need to activate the District 14

EMCOMM Plan. The ADEC and/or DEC will decide if adjacent or all other District 14 Units should be contacted and activated or mobilized.

5.7. A NEU Net may be established upon Plan activation at the direction of the NEU EC or his designated representative. This Net may be an intermittent Net, operated at certain times daily for the purpose of providing event/incident updates to NEU members, or it may operate continuously if mobilization is imminent until such time as a formal NEU Event Net is established. Net Control for this Net could likely be the NEU EC or an AEC, operating from home or a mobile or portable station. This Net will be a directed net and shall follow standard net procedures with formal check-ins and all traffic handled through Net Control.

5.8. NEU over the air announcements, bulletins and Nets will normally be conducted over the Texas Emergency Amateur Communicators (TEAC) club repeaters until a Net Control is established and a primary frequency assigned by Net Control. TEAC repeaters are shown in the following table. Should repeaters fail, simplex operations on the repeater output frequencies will be used until the repeaters are back in operation. If all VHF/UHF communications are problematic, the 10 meter band HF, frequency 28.410 MHz will be used by NEU.

REPEATER	OUTPUT FREQ.	OFFSET	STONE
TEAC 1	145.4300	Negative	None
TEAC 2 *	147.2800	Positive	100.0
TEAC 3	444.8250	Positive	103.5
TEAC 4	443.5500	Positive	103.5

* Primary Northeast Unit Repeater for weekly nets, drills and actual events.

5.9. Upon Plan activation, Ready Response Team Leaders, or their designated duty officer, should immediately make contact with Served Agency personnel to update the Served Agency and obtain information on the Agency's intention. Information on all Served Agency alert status and intentions will be passed to NEU EC/AEC or Net Control to ensure proper dissemination.

5.10. Mobilization of any ARES activity in Harris County will normally come through the ARES District 14 DEC; however, under localized emergencies, the NEU EC may mobilize NEU before District 14 mobilizes as a whole.

6. NORTHEAST UNIT MOBILIZATION

6.1. The NEU EC or a designated NEU AEC will mobilize the NEU at the direction of the ARES South Texas Section SEC or ARES District 14 DEC or ADEC.

- 6.2. In the event of a localized emergency threatening life or property in Northeast Harris County, the NEU EC may mobilize the NEU individually and follow up by notifying the DEC and/or ADEC or the situation.
- 6.3. Notice of NEU mobilization will occur through use of the NEU phone tree call up, e-mail notification and announcements on the TEAC repeaters or through Net Control if a Net was initiated during Plan Activation. Once they are alerted, members should immediately start monitoring the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 District 14 repeater and the TEAC 2 repeater (147.28 MHz, (+), PL 100.0) for information concerning the alert and/or mobilization.
- 6.4. Instructions, including frequencies, will be given with directions for RRTs and members to be dispatched to shelters, assembly areas, or other locations as appropriate.
- 6.5. The first priority following mobilization is the establishment of a Net Control station, if one has not already been set up during the Activation phase. NEU Net Control may be handled from a Served Agency location, a mobile unit in route, or other fixed station location depending on availability, requirements and severity of the situation. The Net will be a directed net, meaning that all traffic passes to and from Net Control. If station to station direct communication is deemed necessary, permission should be requested from and granted by Net Control.
- 6.6. Stations should not transmit unless directed to do so by Net Control. 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 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.
- 6.7. Normally, all traffic outside of NEU will be passed to District 14 staff at Transtar or other EOC. Traffic to and from locations external to District 14 will be handled by District 14, often through the Texas Traffic Net System which embraces many types of net operations, using many modes of communication. NEU members are encouraged to become familiar with these Nets and monitor and check-in to gain experience. See the District 14 EMCOMM Plan for details on the TTN.

- 6.8. After being mobilized, RRT(s) should be at their designated sites, or in route, within thirty minutes of mobilization and receipt of instructions.
- 6.9. Tactical control will be handled on the announced primary repeater. The actual location of the Net Control station will be as directed by the NEU EC or designated AEC and as appropriate to the specific emergency situation. All stations should check-in with Net Control as soon as they are operational. Net Control will log all stations on frequency and identify the simplex relay stations in the event that simplex operation is required. The national simplex calling frequency is 146.520 MHz and should **not** be used as a NET frequency. 146.520 MHz should only be used as a calling frequency or simplex frequency to make announcements directing volunteers to other frequencies.
- 6.10. Net Control should, if possible, operate from a "Key Station". In order to be designated a Key Station, the station must have full emergency power capability, and in an actual emergency, the station must have relief operators assigned to ensure that continuous operation over a prolonged period will be sustained.
- 6.11. The primary Key Station for NEU will normally be the Atascocita Volunteer Fire Department Station #2, located at 4000 Atascocita Rd Humble, TX 77346. Backup Key Station will normally be Memorial Herman Northeast Hospital, 18951 Memorial North, Humble, Texas 77338.
- 6.12. Harris County Transtar, Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, call sign N5TRS, is the Primary Key Station for District 14 and is located in the NW Unit.
- 6.13. NEU personnel are NOT authorized to go to the scene of an emergency or disaster without authorization or a request for assistance from the on-scene commander or individual in charge at the site. Mobile stations and assigned personnel may be directed to proceed to assembly areas in the general vicinity to await further instructions and authorization. The assembly areas, if used, will be announced on the net or disseminated prior to the event.
- 6.14. When assembly areas for NEU personnel are required and designated, an Intake Coordinator shall be designated to manage activities at the assembly areas as needed. The Intake Coordinator disseminates instructions and directions to members. 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 the AEC Logistics when the event has been secured. Accurate records of participating ARES personnel are extremely important and must be retained.
- 6.15. 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 Net Control and standby for further instructions. Be courteous and maintain a positive attitude. Always think in terms of how you can 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.

7. MESSAGE HANDLING

- 7.1. The primary mission and sole focus of NEU members in emergency operations is to assist in passing communications. Members should not normally become engaged in other activities at their assigned locations.
- 7.2. Operators must be familiar with and trained in passing messages both in ICS 213 and ARRL Radiogram formats. Net Control must determine what message format is being used for the incident and relay this to all operators.
- 7.3. All written messages within the National Traffic System must be in standard ARRL format using the approved ARRL transmission and receipt protocol and message forms. The appropriate message precedence of Emergency, Priority, Welfare, or Routine, as defined on ARRL FORM FSD-3, must 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.
- 7.4. Formal messages within ICS must be on the ICS 213 message form.
- 7.5. 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 then should the message be sent.
- 7.6. 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.

8. DIGITAL MODES

- 8.1. District 14 and NEU encourage all members to be familiar with and practice operating in digital modes of amateur radio. Specifically, the use of e-mail message traffic over the air plays an essential role in EMCOMM. NEU members should be able to use applications such as Airmail and WinLink 2000 when NEU is activated and mobilized.
- 8.2. Likewise, the use of the Automated Packet Reporting System (APRS) is a valuable tool during events and exercises. Members are encouraged to equip, learn and use APRS with their mobile equipment.
- 8.3. Training in various digital modes is a priority initiative for NEU and will be pursued by the Digital Support Officer over the next six months.
- 8.4. This section of the NEU EMCOMM Plan will be expanded as this effort progresses.

9. ALERT CONDITIONS AND ACTIONS

- 9.1. These alert definitions have been taken from the District 14 ARES EMCOMM Plan and are included in this Plan for convenience. Each has additions to make them more applicable to the NEU while still maintaining the direction and intent of the South Texas Section and District 14 EMCOMM Plans. The word "Level" may be used interchangeably with "Condition" and corresponds to the Transtar Alert Plan, which uses the word "Level".
- 9.2. 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 NEU members.
- 9.3. Depending on the nature of the incident/emergency, any Condition could be triggered and announced at any time, without lower level Conditions having been issued.
- 9.4. This Plan may be activated and/or the NEU mobilized at any of the Conditions listed below. Likewise a NEU Net may be established at any Condition.
- 9.5. **Condition 4 – Awareness.**
 - 9.5.1. 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.
 - 9.5.2. This condition could also be invoked when there is some potential possibility of

civil disorder or terrorism threat.

9.5.3. **NEU Action** - All members should review their unit emergency plan.

9.5.3.1. Liaison stations to monitor the following National Traffic System (NTS) nets and local VHF and UHF communications nets for NEU may be assigned during Condition 4 or a later Condition, depending on the situation:

- 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 B)

9.5.3.2. This EMCOMM Plan may be activated during this or a later Condition.

9.5.3.3. NEU may be mobilized during this or a later condition, depending on the situation

9.5.3.4. An intermittent NEU Net may be established during this or a later Condition with times for daily check-ins and information updates established

9.5.3.5. RRT Leaders should contact each of their Team members to determine their availability and forward this information to the EC and AEC for Operations.

9.5.3.6. RRT Leaders should contact their Served Agency point of contact to establish current liaison, determine their plans and forward this information to the EC and AEC for Operations.

9.6. **Condition 3 – Caution.** A Condition 3 alert is automatically 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 rapidly deteriorate into a more hazardous situation.

9.6.1. An increased threat or an actual occurrence of civil disorder or terrorism could also trigger a Condition 3 Alert.

9.6.2. Weather conditions that would typically initiate a Condition 3 alert would include, but not be limited to the following:

- 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.

9.6.3. **NEU Action** – Review Actions for previous Conditions and ensure they have been accomplished.

9.6.3.1. Think prepared!

9.6.3.2. Your welfare and your family's welfare take priority.

9.6.3.3. Review specifics of this Plan

9.6.3.4. Monitor the District 14 ARES bulletin repeater (147.000 MHz [+] 103.5) and the TEAC 2 repeater (147.28 MHz, (+), PL 100.0)

9.6.3.5. Check email for information bulletins

9.6.3.6. A NEU Net may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

9.6.3.7. RRT Leaders should contact each of their Team members to determine their availability and forward this information to the EC and AEC for Operations, if not already done.

9.6.3.8. RRT Leaders should contact their Served Agency point of contact to establish current liaison, determine their plans and forward this information to the EC and AEC for Operations if not already done.

9.6.3.9. The EC and/or AEC Operations shall review the RRT assignments and, based on Served Agency plans and needs and RRT member availability, may reassign Team members to meet situational needs. Members will be notified of reassignments as soon as possible, via phone, e-mail or other available means.

9.6.3.10. ECs and AECs should monitor the Texas ARES HF nets at not less than three hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert

9.7. **Condition 2 - Alert.** A Condition 2 Alert is automatically 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.

9.7.1. An increased threat or an actual occurrence of civil disorder or terrorism could also trigger a Condition 2 Alert.

9.7.2. Weather warnings, which would include, but not be limited to the following conditions will automatically trigger a Condition 2 Alert:

- High wind warnings with winds in excess of 60 miles per hour.
- High water warnings.
- Tornado warnings.
- Flash flood warnings.
- Winter storm warnings.
- 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.

9.7.3. NEU Action – Review Actions for previous Conditions and ensure they have been accomplished.

9.7.3.1. Take care of your family first

9.7.3.2. Complete all preparation efforts immediately

9.7.3.3. Expect the unexpected.

9.7.3.4. Monitor the 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 bulletin repeater and the TEAC 2 repeater (147.28 MHz, (+), PL 100.0)

9.7.3.5. Monitor any Net frequencies announced on the above listed repeaters.

9.7.3.6. Be aware that the phone tree call up alert and the email alert system will very likely be initiated in a Condition 2 Alert, if not already done.

9.7.3.7. Continue to check email for information bulletins.

9.7.3.8. A full time Net may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

9.7.3.9. Planning and operational aspects of mobilization should be reviewed and refined by the EC and AECs.

9.7.3.10. If not already done in a previous Condition, RRT Leaders should immediately contact each of their Team members to determine their availability and also contact their Served Agency point of contact to determine their plans. Forward this information to the EC and AEC for Operations.

9.7.3.11. If not done in a prior Alert Condition, the EC and AEC Operations contact the RRT leaders, Net Control Station operators, Duty Officers and other key staff to ensure their availability and readiness.

9.7.3.12. The EC and/or AEC Operations shall review the RRT assignments and,

based on Served Agency plans and needs and RRT member availability, may reassign Team members to meet situational needs. Members will be notified of reassignments as soon as possible, via phone, e-mail or other available means.

9.7.3.13. AEC Planning reviews and updates the appropriate served agency Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and ensures that the most current version has been sent to all concerned.

9.7.3.14. Depending on the situation's synoptic overview and anticipated developments, any and all nets may be activated by direction of the EC, the ADEC or the DEC .

9.8. **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 is or may soon 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.

9.8.1. A major accident or environmental incident or an actual or increased possibility of civil disorder or terrorism may trigger an immediate Condition 1 Alert, without any prior Conditions being triggered.

9.8.2. 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.

9.8.3. Only in extreme circumstances will the NEU EC issue a Condition 1 Alert. An example of an extreme circumstance could be the touching down of a tornado in Northeast Harris County with the probability of extensive damage.

9.8.4. A Condition 1 Alert could be triggered by civil disorder, terrorism, or weather condition including, but not limited to the following:

- Extremely high winds approaching Hurricane Category 1 status.
- Tornado sightings or tornado sightings moving toward Harris County.
- Actual flooding.

9.8.5. **NEU Action** – If there is time, review Actions for previous Conditions and ensure they have been accomplished.

9.8.6. This is the highest alert level in the STX, District 14 and NEU ARES and specific actions for NEU members will be determined at the time, depending on the situation.

9.8.7. Given sufficient advance warning, all preparations should have been made by NEU members and they should be ready to respond immediately as directed or

sheltered in place and standing by for future instructions.

9.8.8. Follow instructions for mobilization to Served Agencies or other assignments as directed.

10. EMERGENCY CHECKLISTS

- 10.1. NEU members are encouraged to find, adapt or develop emergency checklists for their use during Plan activation and mobilization. During periods of increased activities, checklists are valuable tools to ensure actions are taken in the correct order and critical actions/items are not overlooked.
- 10.2. Complete checklists have not been included in this initial version of the NEU EMCOMM; however, a prime objective for future versions is to incorporate the work of NEU members in this area and include a comprehensive set of checklists for all members to use.

11. DRILLS AND ALERTS

- 11.1. The previous portions of this EMCOMM Plan have outlined conditions, requirements and procedures that NEU ARES will employ to provide emergency communications to Served Agencies and others during emergency events or incidents. In order to be prepared for these incidents, practice is very important.
- 11.2. Each year in October District 14 ARES and NEU will participate in the ARRL Simulated Emergency Test (SET). Other drills and tests are conducted throughout the year which also provide a good opportunity to hone our skills. The National Weather Service and other entities also run drills and tests and District 14 ARES units may be requested to participate.
- 11.3. NEU members also may participate in public service events when District 14 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.
- 11.4. District 14 ARES and NEU, 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.
- 11.5. NEU ARES conducts a Thursday Night Net at 8:00 PM each week on the TEAC 2 repeater (147.28 MHz, (+), PL 100.0) All NEU members are strongly encouraged to serve as Net Control and Backup Net Control and to provide short training sessions during these weekly nets.
- 11.6. District 14 ARES also conducts a Wide Area Net (WAN) throughout Harris County on every month that has a fifth Sunday. Normally, the WAN starts at 7:00 PM on the fifth Sunday

on a repeater and frequency to be announced. Each Unit rotates Net Control and Backup NC for the WAN. Participation by all NEU members is strongly encouraged since it provides an opportunity to test the capabilities to transmit to and receive signals from repeaters throughout Harris County.

12. READY RESPONSE TEAMS (RRT)

12.1. The Ready Response Teams are the foundation for effective support and operations by NEU. Their primary objective is to provide preeminent client service as a team of qualified emcomm communicators to the specific served agency to which assigned. The secondary objective is to provide back-up support to other RRTs in situations where they will most likely not be called on to support their assigned agency.

12.2. Each member of NEU, including the EC, AECs and Staff Officers, is assigned to a NEU RRT. Teams and assigned members are shown in Appendix C to this Plan and will be updated periodically. Ensure that you have the most recent update each time you review this Plan.

12.3. Personnel assignment to RRT's listed in this Plan are tentative and will probably change depending on the actual situation or event. In addition, the NEU may be requested to provide assistance to other Units in District 14, or District 14 may be asked to deploy members or provide personnel or other Mutual Aid to other agencies or ARES Districts. Normally, any reassignment will be made by the NEU EC or an AEC in his absence. Requests for Mutual Aid outside of the NEU will be handled by the EC or his designated representative, after coordinating with individual members.

12.4. A RRT is ideally composed of two or more licensed, trained and qualified Amateur Radio operators and a RRT Team Leader.

12.5. The Team Leader has the following responsibilities:

- Act as the liaison between the NEU EC and Operations AEC and the served agency
- Ensure that a current copy of the served agency's emergency plan is available to the NEU leadership staff and members.
- Maintain a current listing of each of the team members and their contact information.
- Maintain periodic liaison with their Team members and Served Agency representative.
- During increased alert conditions, establish closer contact with Team members regarding availability for mobilization.
- During increased alert conditions, establish closer contact with Served Agencies to review plans, needs and resources.
- Keep the EC and AEC Operations advised of any special plans, needs or requirements from Served Agencies.

- Advise the EC and AEC Operations of any extended absences (more than a few days) of Team members.
- Develop and maintain a contact and equipment list for each Served Agency location. This list should include names and contact information for Served Agency representatives and addresses and phone/fax/e-mail addresses for the actual site location. Also include data on the equipment installed at the Served Agency. Use the form included as Appendix D to this Plan to maintain this information. Update the form whenever changes occur, but at least every six months, and provide an updated copy to the EC, AEC Operations and the AEC Documentation and Records for consolidation into a master listing.
- Each Team Leader is responsible for maintaining the operating schedule during drills and during an actual emergency. When personnel shortages exist the Team leader will immediately notify the AEC Operations and the AEC Logistics.
- The RRT Team 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.
- If there is no radio equipment at the served agency site, the RRT Team Leader is responsible for obtaining amateur radio equipment to be used when required. This can be done by bringing a “Communications Go Kit” with radio(s), coax, antennas and power source, as applicable, to the particular served agency, and to which each member of the RRT has contributed. There may also be situations where the Served Agency has installed an antenna and coax at the operating position and members bring their own equipment to the site for the operating period. It is the responsibility of the RRT Team Leader to work out these details with the Served Agency and the team members. As always, members of the NEU leadership team and other NEU members are available to help with working out the details of the operation. The AEC Logistics has primary responsibility for assisting the RRT Leaders in determining needs and helping the Served Agencies in the procurement and installation of their owned equipment.
- When NEU is alerted, it is the RRT Team Leader’s responsibility to communicate with the Served Agency as soon as possible, find out what their intended response will be, what their requirements may be and communicate that information to the EC and AEC for Operations.
- It is the RRT Team Leader’s responsibility to ensure that the EC and AEC Operations are kept fully informed as to the Served Agency’s EMCOMM requirements and response to the alert.
- The RRT Team Leader is required to have a working knowledge of the ICS and NIMS

- The RRT Team Leader must be a qualified NEU NCS operator and must serve as Net Control for the NEU Training Net from time to time to maintain NCS operator proficiency.
- It is highly recommended that the RRT Team Leader complete the American Radio Relay League Emergency Communications Course Level and Level II.
- The RRT Team Leader has overall responsibility for their team's performance.
- The RRT Team Leader will be assisted by the NEU EC, AEC Operations and AEC Logistics in locating and recruiting NEU members for their team.
- The RRT Team Leader should have thorough knowledge of the served agency's emergency plan.
- In cases where the RRT team leader is often engaged in business travel, or may be otherwise engaged, one of the team members must be trained to take command during the team leader's absence.
- Each RRT may have designated "Duty Officers" who share that responsibility. These individuals would 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 designation and rotational schedule. If Duty Officers are designated and a rotational schedule established, that information must be available to the AEC Operations, who will ensure its proper dissemination.

12.6. RRT Members -- Team members must train as a unit specifically for a Served Agency. Each RRT is responsible to determine its logistic requirements relating to support, lodging and food. Some served agencies may make all these requirements available, while others may provide only some support. In some cases no support at all will be available. Team members need to be aware of these circumstances and make provisions for their own support as needed. The RRT Leaders will coordinate logistic needs with the AECs for Operations and Logistics.

12.6.1. Each team member should have a general understanding of where each member is during the work week and make arrangements for 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 and tornadoes spawned by tropical weather conditions.

13. Served Agency Site Preparation for Ready Response Teams

13.1. Emergency Operations Centers (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 NEU RRT personnel to be on site and ready to operate within thirty minutes of notification need to make provisions for a permanent station. As a minimum, preinstalled antenna, coax cables and an operating

position where RRT members can hook up their own equipment should be available. A UPS source of power should also be available at the operating site.

13.2. If the RRT Team Leader does not have the type of facility and equipment installed as described above for his team at the served agency, he, or she, will have to improvise. 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.

13.3. Most RRT Team Leaders will conclude that the best minimum situation is for the served agency to provide the antenna(s), coaxial input, a place to operate and an uninterrupted power source. The RRT would then be able to operate using their own radios and back up equipment.

14. Advance Preparations for RRTs

14.1. The advance 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.

15. Education and Training For RRTs

15.1. Team members should 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:

- FEMA ICS and NIMS courses.
- ARRL Emergency Communications Course Level I.

15.2. The Team Leader should complete the ARRL Emergency Communications Courses Level I and Level II, especially if acting as Net Control or as a net manager.

15.3. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of the District 14 ARES and NEU EMCOMM Plans and other published plans, operating instructions and documentation.

15.4. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of their emcomm mission.

15.5. Training, practice and experience in operating all of the equipment at the served agency pertaining to their emcomm mission is essential.

15.6. Demonstrated skills as Net Control in several regular training net sessions are required.

15.7. RRT's should practice getting assigned stations operational in the field within thirty minutes.

15.8. RRT's should participate in a simulated activation designed to test the notifications system.

15.9. Periodic “refresher” training sessions are strongly encouraged to maintain member proficiency.

16. Equipment and Information

16.1. It is strongly suggested that each team member have at least the following information and equipment available to them when activated:

- A laminated wallet sized card containing information on the notification system and key phone numbers and frequencies relating to their specific emcomm mission.
- Personal identification to include FCC license, ARES and RACES badges, and the appropriate Served Agency issued ID cards.
- Seventy-two hour response pack, including water, food, protective clothing/footwear and cash for personal needs.
- A vehicle equipped with a two-meter or dual band mobile radio. Amateur Radio license plates and magnetic identification signs for the doors are desirable.
- A full gas tank. Stop and fill up when in route to the served agency site if possible.
- 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.
- All of DC connectors on equipment to be deployed should be made up with Anderson PowerPole connectors.
- 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.
- Numerous emergency response and “go-kit” checklists are available on the Internet. Members are encouraged to find, modify and use one that meets their specific needs, so that essential items are not forgotten in the event of a short notice response.

17. Relief and Back-up

17.1. All NEU personnel must be aware that they may be called on to fill in for a missing RRT member or to relieve members of RRT that have exceeded a reasonable crew duty time. The

17.2. AEC Operations and the AEC Logistics must be keenly aware of RRT replacement needs during drills and actual emergencies and plan accordingly.

18. Documentation and After Action Reports

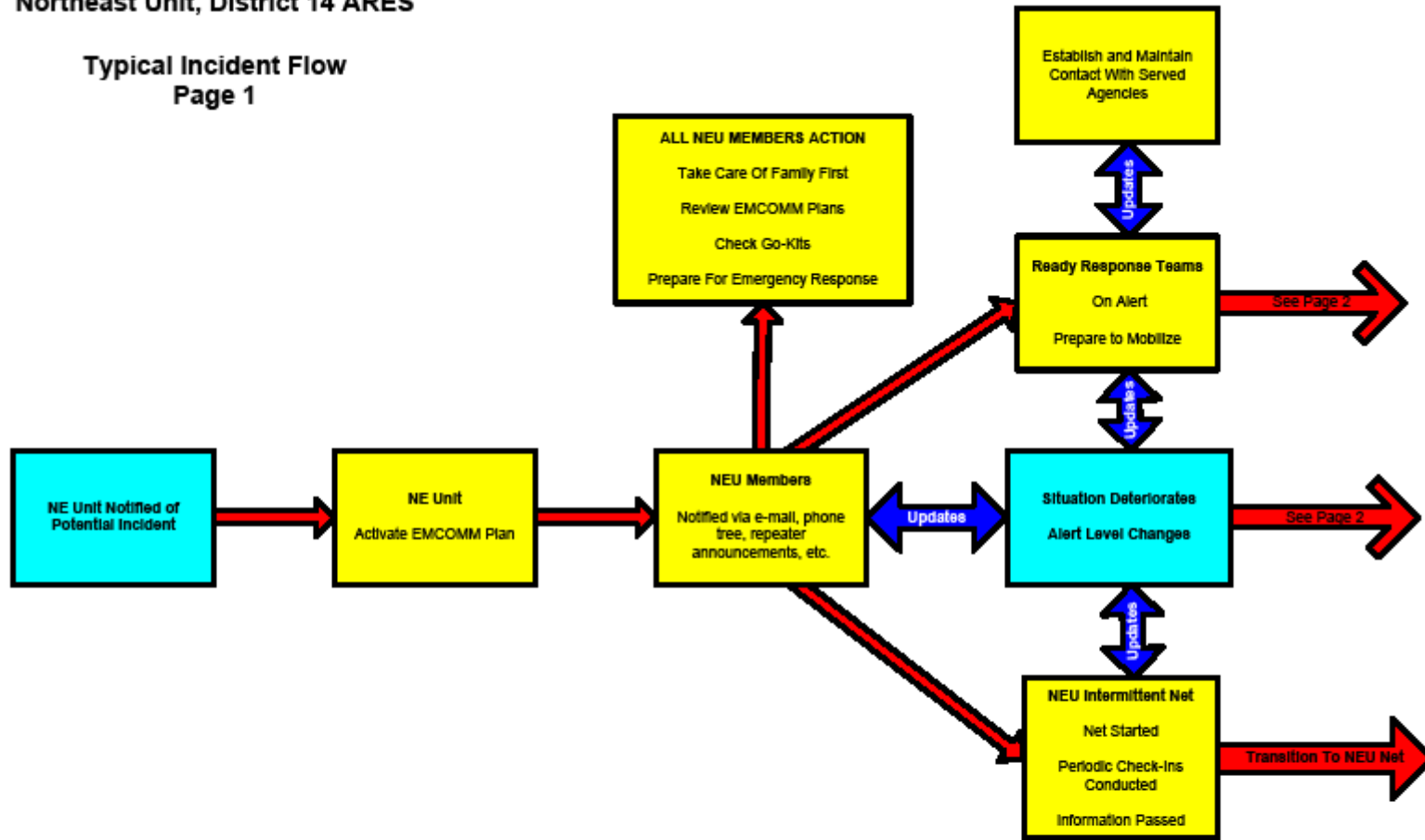
18.1. Documentation of all actions which occur or are taken by members, RRTs, and Net Control during exercises, drills and actual incidents is critical. An After Action Report (AAR) must be prepared following each event. NEU Members, RRTs and Net Control submit their documentation, logs, copies of all messages handled and other pertinent information as a record of the happenings during the event to the AEC, Documentation and Records (AEC-D&R). The AEC-D&R, with the assistance of the EC and other AECs assembles these records into the AAR. A copy of the AAR is submitted to the District 14 ADEC and DEC for their records and a copy maintained in the NEU records files. Electronic versions are preferred whenever possible.

18.2. ICS Forms should be used for all documentation whenever possible and applicable. These Forms are available in both MS Word and Adobe PDF format at http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/ICSResCntr_Forms.htm. Members are encouraged to download a copy of these forms to their computers for future use and print a paper copy as part of their "Go-Kits" or Emergency Response Manuals.

APPENDIX A

Northeast Unit, District 14 ARES

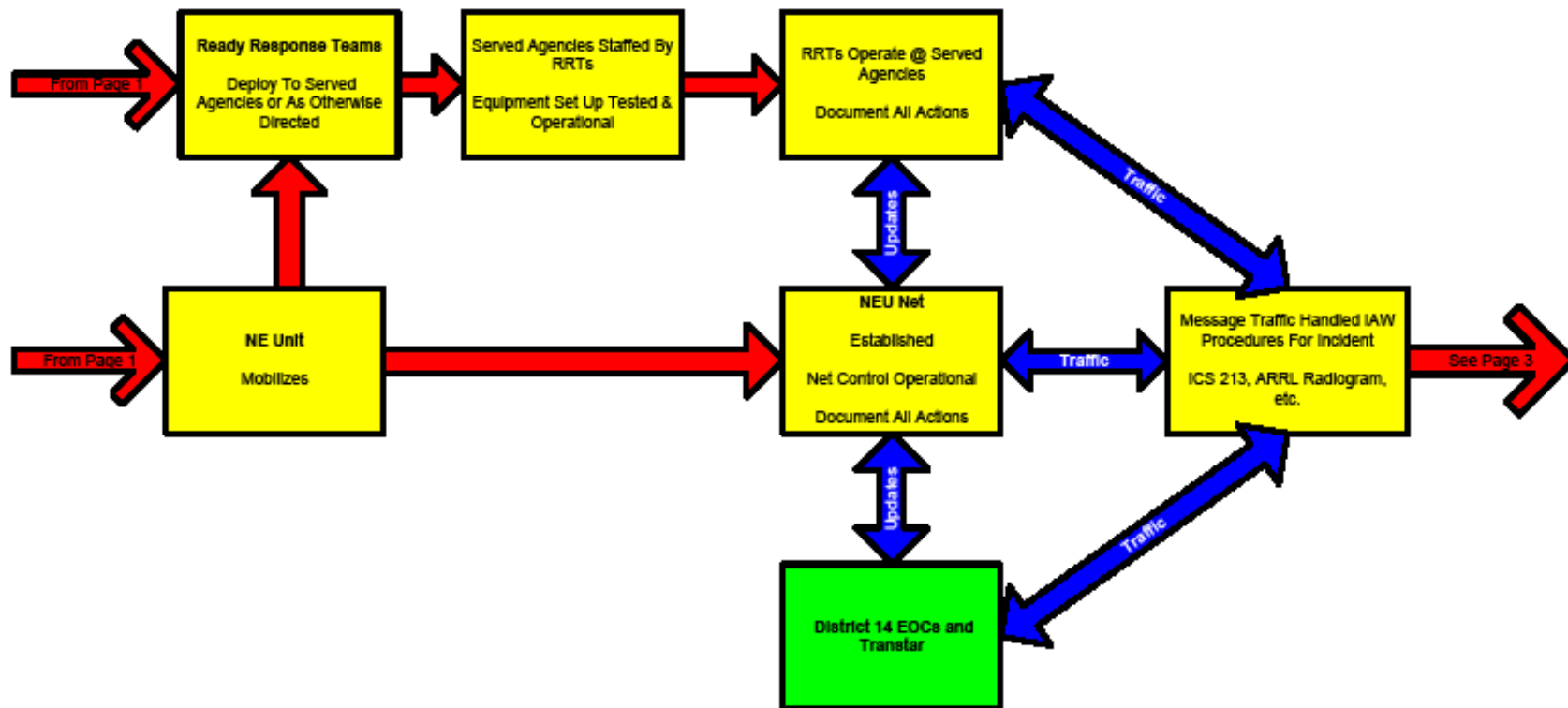
Typical Incident Flow
Page 1



July 28, 2008

Northeast Unit, District 14 ARES

Typical Incident Flow Page 2

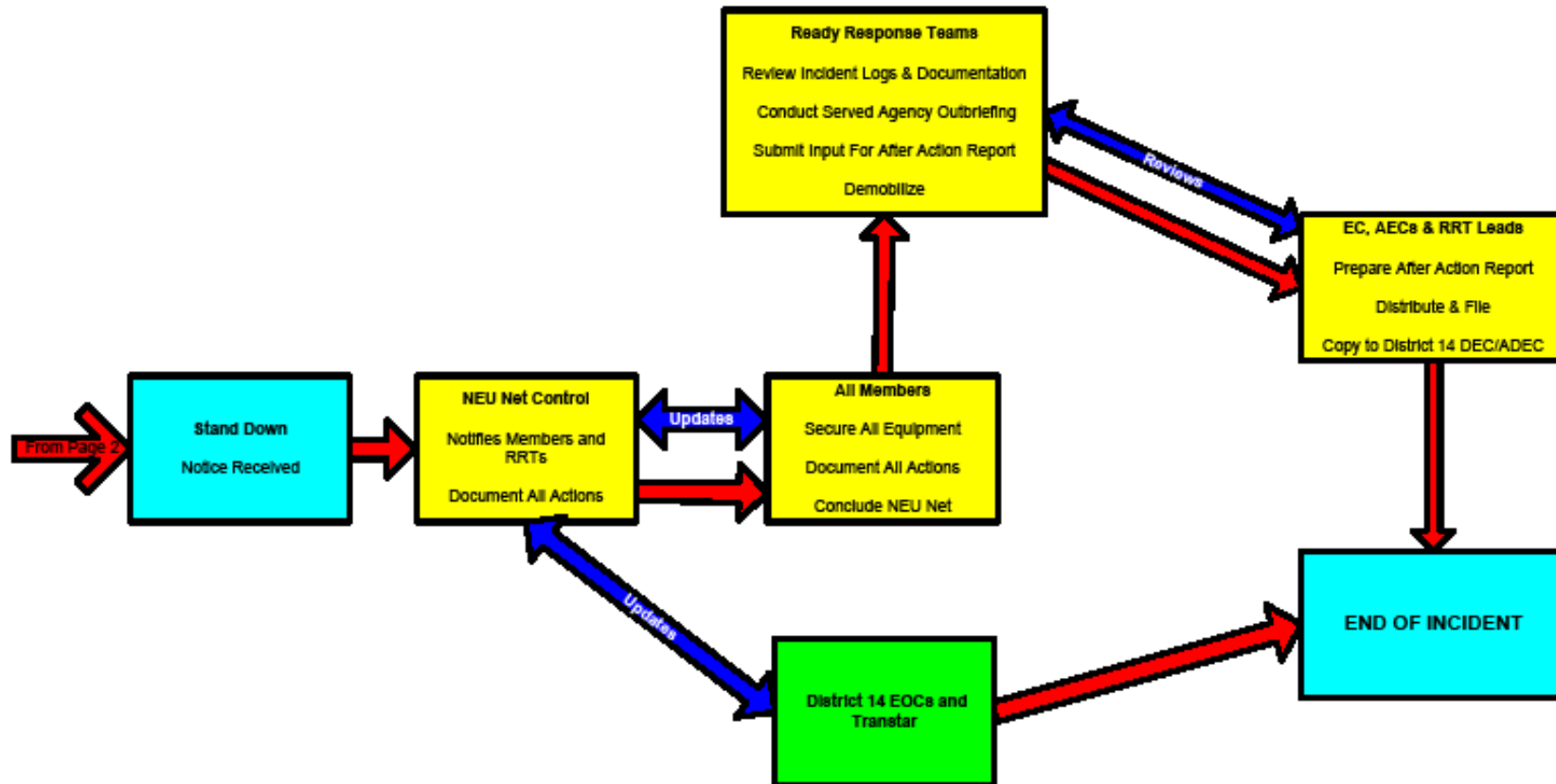


July 28, 2008

Sept 25, 2009

Northeast Unit, District 14 ARES

Typical Incident Flow
Page 3



July 28, 2008

APPENDIX B to NEU EMCOMM PLAN

District 14 ARES® Emergency Communications Plan "VHF/UHF Frequency Guide"

Because of the vast size of Harris County there are few repeaters that can effectively cover the entire County. 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_repeaters.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.

145.170 (-)(123.0) is the back up to the 147.000 repeater.

444.600 (+)(71.9) is the UHF countywide repeater and may be used for other coordinating nets if needed.

District 14 ARES NW Unit (North of I-10 and West of I-45) 146.660 (-)(141.3) 147.000 (+)(103.5) 146.880 (-)(103.5) 446.600 (+)(71.9) 146.440 Simplex 147.440 Simplex 145.070 Winlink 2K	District 14 ARES NE Unit (North of I-10 and East of I-45) 147.280 (+)(100.0) Simplex (if repeater down) 145.430 (-)(none) Simplex (if repeater down) 444.825 (+)(103.5) 443.550 (+)(103.5) 146.410 simplex 28.410 USB 145.070 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	
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) 145.130 (-)(none) 145.370 (-)(123.0) 146.860 (-)(100.0) 146.780 (-)(none) 145.600 simplex 145.700 simplex 145.050 Winlink 2K



APPENDIX C

Northeast Unit, District 14 ARES
 Ready Response Teams
 Sept 25, 2009

SERVED AGENCY	RRT LEADER	RRT MEMBERS	CALLSIGN
Humble Fire Marshall	John Psimas*		KE5MSE
		Robert Polinski	KD5YVQ
H.A.A.M.	Alex Traxler		W2AIT
		Charles Mulraney*	KE5THV
		Laura Mulraney*	KE5QOM
Memorial Herman NE	Richard Driscoll**^		KD5URB
		Susan Comeaux*	KE5LMB
		Aaron Siller*	N5AMS
		Raymond Williams	KC5RQT
Kingwood Medical Center	Earle Findley^		K4MUP
		Frank Hormann**^	KM5I
		Butch Davis	K5LRD
Atascocita FD	Allen Shuff*		W9ON
		Tim Weiss	KE5LMA
		Rick Meehan	KE5VIA
		Hugh Davis	W5FM
C.R.T.F.	Glen Rekeweg		KE5IMZ
		Mark Brocato	KE5HUD
		Joe Gadus*	KD5KTX
		Joseph Gadus*	KE5BVQ
		Retha Gadus	KF5AAT
KOCA-KSA	Chuck Sprick**^		KE5RAD
		Bruce Bayley*	KC5ABR
		David Green	KE5TZW
		Bill Pudil	W7FYJ

XXX* = Badged at MHNE

XXX^ = Badged at KWMC

NOTES:

1. These are general assignments, subject to change for a specific event/incident.
2. Reassignments will be made by the EC and AEC, Operations and AEC, Logistics, based on the availability of members and the situation/plans/needs at the Served Agencies.
3. Certain SA's require that operators be badged by their Agency in order to operate there.
4. Reassignments must take badging and other SA requirements into consideration.
5. RRT Leads for these Agencies should strive to get as many NE Unit members badged as possible, as soon as possible, so maximum flexibility is available during actual incidents.

Appendix D
SERVED AGENCY INFORMATION
Northeast Unit, District 14, ARES

ARES STX DISTRICT 14 NORTHEAST UNIT						
SERVED AGENCY INFORMATION SHEET						
1. GENERAL LOCATION						
Served Agency Name						
Address						
Suite						
City, State						
ZIP Code						
Main Telephone						
Web Site						
2. CONTACT INFORMATION						
Name (Last, First)	Title	Location /Office#	Direct Line	Cellular	e-mail	Primary / Alternate
3. SERVED AGENCY PROFILE						
<i>General description</i> What do this Agency does and why they need ARES? What are their likely needs during an emergency? etc.						
<i>Facilities description</i> How do I get there? Where do I park? Where is the "radio room"? How do I gain access to it? Is there a direct phone line? etc.						
<i>Check-in procedures</i> How do get into the facility? Do I need a badge? Who do I report to? Is the facility subject to lock down? etc.						
<i>Check-out procedures</i> What do I do before I leave? Shut down equipment, lock it? Who do I notify? etc.						
4. COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY						
<i>General description</i> Statement describing capabilities (ie. two UHF/VHF radios with digital capability, one HF radio, two computers & printer)						
Equipment Type	Brand/Model	Bands	Modes	Manual Available?	Password	Notes
5. RRT MEMBERS						
Name (Last, First)	Leader?	Call Sign	Primary Phone	Alternate Phone	e-mail	
Prepared by: First, Last Name & Position				Date:		