

**Southeast Harris County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
(ARES®) Emergency Communications Plan.
A part of the Southeast Emergency Operations Manual**



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**Southeast Harris County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
(ARES®) Emergency Communications Plan.**

Change Log

03-08-11	Added cover page, added change log page, revised primary frequency list paragraph 3.15, emphasis added in paragraphs 11.x, Updated Appendix B, changed "NCS" to "NC", corrected formats and misspellings.

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this plan is to implement Part 97.1 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, and Federal and international treaty law applying to Amateur Radio and specifically to the South East Harris County, Texas ARES®.

Part 97.1 Basis and purpose.

The rules and regulations in Part 97.1 are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

- 1.1.1 Regulation and enhancement of the value of the Amateur Radio Service to the public as a voluntary non-commercial communications service, *particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.* [Emphasis added]
- 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 Southeast Harris County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, (ARES®), hereinafter referred to as SE ARES 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 will govern.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The ARRL South Texas Section is divided into fifteen (15) districts. District 14 is the only district in the South Texas Section containing only one county. District 14 is further divided into four quadrants. Southeast Harris County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is defined as that area within Harris County, Texas, which is South of Interstate Highway 10, and east of Highway 288.
- 2.2 In order to safeguard our volunteers, served agencies and the general public, District 14 Amateur Radio Service (ARES®), Southeast 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.
- 2.3 The primary responsibility of the Southeast Harris County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, (ARES®), SE ARES, is to provide effective and efficient communications 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, in part, 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 B for a list of these Served Agencies.

- 2.3 All drills, training and instruction will be planned and executed to ensure maximum readiness and capability to respond expeditiously and to provide effective and efficient FCC licensed radio operator volunteers for emergency communications whenever the need arises.
- 2.4 SE ARES members are FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service communications duty. All SE ARES personnel are strongly encouraged to obtain a State of Texas Division of Emergency Management State RACES Authorization Unit Number.
- 2.5 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. All SE ARES radio operator personnel are federally licensed, receive no remuneration of any kind for their services, and in most cases, provide the equipment utilized at their own expense.
- 2.6 SE ARES functions under this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual by direction of the SE ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC), who is appointed by the ARRL South Texas Section Manager with recommendation from the ARES® South Texas Section District 14 District Emergency Coordinator (DEC).
- 2.7 As an ARES® volunteer you are working for ARES® and operate within the ARES® guidelines and FCC regulations. You are not an employee of the served agency and although we serve and operate strictly within their operational rules and regulations we 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 sometimes attempt that. ARES does not recruit and train operators for other groups to use for non-ARES purposes.”

If you desire to take on an assignment other than your current ARES® assignment you must clear that with the on-site ARES® leader or supervisor you are currently working with and ensure that a qualified replacement is available to cover your assignment for the remainder of its duration.

3.0ORGANIZATION OF THE SE UNIT

- 3.1 The SE ARES unit functions under this plan under the direction of the Southeast Unit (SEU) Emergency Coordinator (EC), who is appointed by the ARRL District 14 District Emergency Coordinator (DEC).
- 3.2 SE ARES is organized to merge with the overall management template of the Incident Command System, (ICS), and the National Incident Management system, (NIMS). The organizations served by ARES® units across the United States are required to work within the NIMS and ICS. On 23 February 2003, President Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, which required the Homeland Security Secretary to develop and administer a National Incident Management System. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. All communications personnel are most 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 Southeast Unit EC is the chief ARES® official in SE ARES, and is directly responsible to the DEC. The duties of EC require a serious commitment of time and effort by the volunteer who accepts this position.
 - 3.3.1 The EC's duties can be many, varied and complex. No EC can do everything himself. To be effective, he must delegate duties to Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AECs). The EC may appoint as many AECs as are needed to effectively manage and develop an effective organization. AEC appointments do not need approval by any other ARES® official, although as a matter of precedence and deference the SE ARES EC will discuss AEC appointments and request advice and direction from the DEC. In SE ARES all AECs must be members of the ARRL® and have completed the ARRL Emergency Communications Course Level I and FEMA IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800, or agree to complete these courses within twelve months of their appointment. Other emergency communication courses may be identified in the future. SE ARES AECs serve at the pleasure of the EC and their appointments lapse when the EC resigns or is replaced, though any or all of the same individuals may be reappointed by the new EC at that EC's discretion.
 - 3.3.2 The EC organizes and coordinates Amateur Radio communications in SE ARES to accommodate the needs of agencies served and, to merge with the overall productive efforts of ARES District 14, and the South Texas Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®). The SE ARES organizational structure will merge with the overall management and production template of the ICS and NIMS.
- 3.4 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Operations: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of net manager for specific ARES nets, net control station for specific ARES nets, coordination of ARES activities on a specific band, AEC for packet and/or other digital modes, assembly point coordinator, operational assistant to the EC during disasters, coordinator for subdivision of the EC's area of responsibility, team captain for the ARES subgroup(s), mentor other ARES members to encourage their participation.

- 3.5 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Administration: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of recruiting, public relations, personnel records, equipment inventory, training, and reports. Additionally the SE ARES AEC for administration is considered to be the “second-in-charge” should the EC not be available to fulfill required duties.
- 3.6 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Logistics: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of transportation, supplies (food, fuel, water, etc.), equipment (generators, batteries, and antennas), repeater restoration if damaged by the disaster.
- 3.7 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Liaison: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of maintaining contact with assigned agencies, maintaining liaison with the National Traffic System, and maintaining liaison with adjacent ECs.
- 3.8 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) - Planning: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of developing support rosters for support of public service events and during time of disasters.
- 3.9 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Hospital EmComm Support Group: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of supporting the communications needs of the supported hospital(s) during scheduled drills and times of disaster.
- 3.10 Duty Officers: Are responsible for contacting RRTs and other personnel as specifically defined by the operations AEC.
- 3.11 Intake Coordinators: Are responsible for maintaining records of all ARES® personnel checking into an assembly area. They are to record the pertinent information on each individual, including the location to which they have been dispatched. The Logistics AEC is responsible for defining the intake coordinators duties as applicable to the situation.
- 3.12 Net Manager: The Net Manager has overall responsibility for the planning, communications procedural training and operation of all SE ARES NETS, whether they be training NETS, NETS associated with a drill or an actual emergency. The NET Manager reports directly to the Operations AEC. The Net Manager may have one or more assistants. The Net Manager is responsible for the timely and disciplined operation of the SE ARES Training Net, which will be held each Tuesday evening at 2000 hours local time. It is the responsibility of the NET Manager to ensure that NC (net control) operators, and back-up NC operators are assigned for each training net.
- 3.13 At the discretion of the EC, the Operations AEC or the NET Manager, the Training NET may be canceled to accommodate special circumstances such as the regular scheduled NET falling on a holiday, such as Christmas, the 4th of July or other national holiday that would significantly diminish the numbers of SE ARES member who would normally check into the NET.
- 3.14 Members of the SE ARES check into the NET from their mobile stations, portable stations and home stations for practice and training, and in an actual

emergency to pass traffic, provide communications links and to be available for further instructions and direction.

- 3.15 Liaison stations to the following National Traffic System (NTS) nets and local VHF and UHF communications nets will be assigned as necessary:

H.F. Frequencies

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 Frequencies that may be used by SE ARES

146.640 (-)(no tone) **Primary repeater for the SE unit**
145.130 (-)(162.2)
145.290 (-)(103.5) Primary repeater used by city of Pasadena
146.780 (-)(123.0)
146.860 (-)(100.0) **Backup repeater (may be shared with Coast Guard)**
147.000 (+)(103.5) County-wide information and bulletin repeater.
147.260 (+)(162.2)
145.600 simplex **Primary simplex frequency if needed**
145.700 simplex

- 3.16 SE ARES personnel are dispatched to supported agencies and other assignments as required. Supported agencies with Memorandums of Understanding, (MOUs) will have priority for SE ARES resources.
- 3.17 Operators of home stations with extended emergency power capabilities may be requested and coordinated to function in as temporary “Key Stations”, if required. See paragraph 5.2.5.3 for information concerning “Key Stations”.

4.0ACTIVATING THE PLAN

- 4.1 Plan activation is normally the first phase of the SEU mobilization. Plan activation means that the procedures outlined in the EMCOMM are placed into effect. SEU mobilization may or may not be implemented for the incident, depending on the nature of the incident. 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 SEU member 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 email and repeaters.
- 4.2 When the plan activation is announced, members should review the plan requirements and provisions and be familiar with their responsibilities under the plan. SEU members do not report to any Served Agency locations until the SEU is mobilized as described in section 5 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. SEU 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.

- 4.3 Any member of the SE ARES who for any reason believes that a communications emergency exists, or is imminent, should immediately contact the SEU EC or an SEU AEC. The SEU EC or his designated representative will contact the DEC or the ADEC to make the District 14 leadership aware of the situation and receive instruction regarding District action. Members should also monitor the South Texas Section ARES® District 14 information / bulletin repeater, 147.000. This repeater should be monitored for bulletins, announcements and other pertinent information relative to an event, or drill. Activation will occur by the automated ARES® District 14 emergency call up system. The SE ARES phone tree and email notification systems may also be employed.
- 4.4 In the event of an actual emergency, or an impending emergency in which FCC licensed volunteer radio operators, who are ARES® members, could be activated to serve the community, SE ARES will be alerted. The actual alert will normally come through the ARES® District 14 DEC. The automated alert system may be used for the initial alert. The phone tree and email notification systems will also be employed in addition to the automated system. The net frequencies for each of the four quadrants in ARES® District 14, and other vital information will be transmitted on the 147.000 MHz repeater.

5.0 MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

- 5.1 The SE ARES EC, or an AEC will initiate mobilization of SE ARES by direction of the ARES® South Texas Section SEC or ARES® District 14 DEC. Instructions, including frequencies, will be given with directions for stations to be dispatched to shelters, assembly areas or the situation site as appropriate. Net control may be handled from Transtar, a mobile unit in route, or other fixed station location depending on availability, requirements and severity of the situation. Monitor the 147.000 MHz ARES® District 14 bulletin / information repeater for information concerning the alert and/or mobilization.
- 5.2 Ready Response Team Leaders, or their designated duty officer, should be in contact with served agency personnel with regard to that agency's intention. Information on all served agency alert status will be passed to the Operations AEC who will ensure proper dissemination. See Section Thirteen Ready Response Teams (RRTs).
 - 5.2.1 If telephone service is available, the appropriate duty officer, EC or AEC, will also activate the telephone tree and/or the email alert system. The Section or District EC will activate the automated alert system. All SE ARES members should check their email, monitor their phones and cell phones, and monitor the regularly utilized repeater frequencies, especially the District 14 information / bulletin repeater 147.000 MHz.

- 5.2.2 When notification, or knowledge, that a communications emergency exists, members of SE ARES will check into the SE ARES Tactical Emergency Net and remain on frequency for instructions. The repeaters in use by SE ARES will be announced on the 147.000 MHz information / bulletin repeater and on all of the SE ARES repeater frequencies. See paragraph 3.15.
- 5.2.3 Ready Response Teams (RRTs) are activated and should be at their designated sites, or in route, within thirty minutes of the mobilization and receipt of instructions. Each served agency in SE will have a SE ARES Ready Response Team assigned. These teams consist of three to five individuals, including an RRT Leader. Each team has its own pre-written ICS plan for that particular served agency. Upon activation the team enters the pertinent information on their plan and is ready to operate in accordance with the plan. RRTs report to the Operations AEC.
- 5.2.4 Tactical control will be on the announced primary SE ARES tactical repeater. The actual location of the net control station will be as directed by the SE ARES Communication Incident Commander, and appropriate to the specific emergency situation. The net control station will list all stations on frequency, and identify the simplex relay stations in the event that simplex operation is required. SE ARES simplex frequencies are: 145.600 MHz and 145.700 MHz, or as may be designated. The national simplex calling frequency is 146.52 MHz and should not be used as a NET frequency. 146.52 MHz should only be used as a calling frequency or simplex frequency to make announcements directing volunteers to other frequencies.
- 5.2.5 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 the NC and standby for further instructions. Be courteous and maintain a positive attitude. Always think in terms of how can I 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.
- 5.2.5.1. No SE ARES personnel are authorized to go to the scene of an emergency or disaster without authorization, or an invitation, from the on-scene commander, or individual in charge at the site. Mobile stations, and assigned personnel may proceed to assembly areas in the general vicinity to await further instructions and authorization. The assembly areas are Wal-Mart parking lots and HEB parking lots, or other locations, which may be announced on the NET, or disseminated prior to the event.
- 5.2.5.2. When assembly areas are required, and designated, an Intake Coordinator may be dispatched to assembly areas as needed. The Intake Coordinator disseminates instructions and directions to volunteers. The Intake Coordinator, using the appropriate forms in Section Seventeen, 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 on the relief Intake Coordinators and turned over to the Logistics AEC when the event has been secured. Accurate records of participating ARES® personnel are extremely important and must be accurately maintained and retained.

5.2.5.3. In an actual emergency, training exercise or drill, the Net Control Station may operate from a “Key Station”. Key stations may be extensively utilized during any communications emergency or training exercise. In order to be designated a Key Stations, the station must have full emergency power capability, and in an actual emergency the station would have relief operators assigned to ensure that continuous operation over a prolonged period will be sustained.

5.2.6 Key Stations: There are currently two permanently designated Key Stations used by SE ARES. These are:

5.2.5.1. Harris County Transtar, Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, call sign N5TRS, which is the SE ARES Primary Key Station, which is located in the NW quadrant.

5.2.5.2. The Greater Houston Area American Red Cross Chapter, Disaster Command Center, E.J. Hadash, Jr. Communications Room, call sign KD5WHD, which is located in SW quadrant.

6.00 Operations

6.1. All written messages for the NTS must be in standard ARRL® format using the approved ARRL® transmission and receipt protocol and message forms. Formal messages within the ICS must be on the ICS 213 message form. The ARRL® is reportedly revising the ARRL message form to make it completely compatible with the ICS format. See Section Seventeen of this manual for communications forms. See paragraph 7.3.2 of the South Texas Emergency Communications Plan, Appendix T, for information on Winlink 2000.

6.2. 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 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. *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 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.

- 6.3. The appropriate message precedence of Emergency, Priority, Welfare, or Routine, as defined on ARRL® FORM FSD-3, are to be used at all times. 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”** and never abbreviated on the message form.
 - 6.3.1 Stations should not transmit unless directed to do so by the net control station. 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 more expeditious communications because the NC knows who called. It is inappropriate and incorrect procedure on the net to use nonstandard 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.
- 6.4. During an emergency event it is expected that announcements pertaining to the ARES District 14 will be made on the 147.000 MHz repeater. SEU members should monitor 147.000 MHz at the start of each hour to receive any district announcements. At the completion of any district announcements or at 5 minutes after the hour, if there are no announcements, SEU members should switch over to the 146.640 MHz repeater or the designated simplex or alternate repeater and listen for any traffic pertaining to the SEU ARES. If there is no traffic being passed then SEU members are encouraged to switch their radios off until the start of the next hour in order to conserve energy resources.
 - 6.4.1. All SEU stations are urged to relay information when necessary. SEU members should be familiar with reverse functions on their radio equipment in order to pickup nearby stations that may be attempting to operate into a repeater.

7.0 Drills and Alerts

- 7.1 Each year in October SE ARES will participate in the ARRL® Simulated Emergency Test (SET) together with the other quadrants in District 14. SE ARES will also participate in other drills and tests sponsored by Harris County, The National Weather Service and other entities in which SE ARES is requested to participate and provide communications.
- 7.2 SE ARES members are encouraged to participate in public service events even when District 14, or SE ARES, is not participating as a unit. 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.

- 7.3 SE ARES, if requested, will regularly provide public service communications in conjunction with local events, to test the effectiveness of SE ARES communications operations. SE ARES will actively participate in the annual MS-150 and other exercises, such as the CERT Rodeo.
- 7.4 At the discretion of the EC, and with authorization of the DEC, the SE ARES NET will be activated unannounced via the automated alert system, telephone tree, or email system at least once per year.

8.0 Federal Terrorism Threat Level Warning Codes

- 8.1 The federal Department of Homeland Security has created a warning system that represents increasing terrorism threat levels by a Green, Blue, Yellow, Orange and Red color code progression. Since this was first implemented, the warning code level has been changed several times from Yellow to Orange and back again. These colors correspond to Moderate, and High threat levels, respectively. SE ARES members should adopt emergency readiness procedures that correspond to these levels. See the South Texas Section Emergency Plan in Section Eleven of this manual for an explanation of the codes and the actions to be taken by South Texas Section ARES® members.

9.0 NET OPERATIONS

- 9.1 The SEU ARES conducts a Tuesday night net at 8:00 pm local time on the 146.640 MHz repeater (-)(no tone). All SEU members are strongly encouraged to participate in the net, serve as backup net control operators and provide short training sessions during the net.
- 9.2 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 local time on the fifth Sunday on a repeater and frequency to be announced. Participation by all SEU members is strongly encouraged since it provides an opportunity to test the capabilities to transmit and receive signals from repeaters throughout Harris county.
- 9.3 The Texas traffic net system embraces many types of net operations, using many modes of communication. Traffic nets operate around the clock, seven days a week, three hundred sixtyfive days a year on a wide variety of schedules. The basic cluster of Section nets in Texas subscribes to, and functions within, the operating procedures of the National Traffic System (NTS) as well as a variety of special-purpose nets such as the Texas Traffic Net, the ARRL® Information Net, various circuits operating CW, together with a number of other digital modes. In addition, a great many VHF and UHF local or semi-local nets operate 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, and may or may not become subject net control situations. Each of these nets has its own procedures, schedules and operating practices, and many of them shift almost automatically from routine casual operation to emergency mode when the circumstances and situation dictate.

- 9.4 Procedures for any of these nets unless they are explicitly part of the County, District, or Section ARES® program vary widely. Individual participation in almost any well-conducted net in any mode, on any frequency is strongly encouraged and recommended as a way to become familiar with net operating procedures and how different nets function and operate. The discussions below refer to and recommend procedures for ARES® affiliated nets.
- 9.5 It should be noted that most of these procedures work efficiently and effectively for most well disciplined traffic nets or emergency nets. The ARES® North, South and West Texas Sections operate combined traffic nets, which serve all three sections.
- 9.6 The primary daytime HF SSB traffic net is the 7290 Traffic Net, which meets Monday through Saturday from 1000 local through noon Central Time, and Monday through Friday from 1300 to 1400 Central Time on 7,290 KHz.
- 9.7 In an emergency, either or both nets may be activated. When operating in emergency session:
 - 9.5.1. Emergency and tactical traffic will be handled on 7,285 KHz during the daytime and 3,873 KHz at night.
 - 9.5.2. Health and Welfare Traffic will be handled on 7,290 KHz during the day and 3,935 KHz at night.
- 9.8 There are two CW nets that also serve the combined ARES® North, South and West Texas Sections. The Texas CW Net operates daily from 1900 to 2200 Central time on 3,643 KHz. The Texas Slow Speed CW Net operates daily at 2000 Central Time on 3,719 KHz.

10.0 STAGING AREA OPERATIONS

- 10.1. When amateur operators in large numbers augment SE ARES in response to a disaster or emergency one or more staging areas may be established and announced on the 147.000 MHz repeater, or other designated VHF repeater. Incoming amateurs will report to the Intake Coordinator at the designated staging area to be briefed, given directions, and assignments in accordance with their capabilities and matched to the needs for support at that time. The SE ARES member managing a staging area will maintain close liaison with the SE ARES EC, or other designated SE ARES personnel, via Net Control on the Resource Net, or Tactical Net if no Resource Net has been established, to ensure effective use of resources.
- 10.2. The amateur managing the staging area will record the following: operator names, call sign, license class, cell and home phone numbers, capability to provide HF, VHF, UHF and digital modes without assistance, and how long

each operator can operate. The Intake Coordinator or other coordinating individual should note special needs such as food and shelter or other important information on the form. It is important to note how long each volunteer operator is prepared to operate. Forms should be retained and given to the Logistics AEC.

- 10.3. One or more staging areas may be set up at appropriate locations based on the type of emergency response required. Sites should be readily assessable along main routes within, or inbound to the SE Quadrant, that are unlikely to cause any traffic congestion or conflict in any way with sites in use by the County or State. Where available, sites will have the capability to temporarily park up to 20 vehicles without unnecessarily interfering with commercial or institutional activities that may be in progress. Ordinarily schools, churches, or other high volume traffic sites would not be designated as staging areas.
- 10.4. Staging area sites are as follows:
 - 10.4.1. Abandoned shopping centers if at all possible.
 - 10.4.2. Wal-Mart and other large retail parking Lots
 - 10.4.3. Other locations that may be designated during NET operations

11.0 SE ARES Alert Definitions and Increased SE ARES Readiness Conditions.

NOTE: These SE ARES alert definitions have been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan and the South Texas District 14 Emergency Plan. Each has additions to make them more applicable to the SE ARES Emergency Plan while still maintaining the direction and intent of the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. The word *Level* may be used interchangeably with *Condition* and corresponds to the Transtar alert plan, which uses the word "Level".

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 SE ARES.

- 11.1. **Condition 4 - Awareness.** A Condition 4 situation suggests that a higher level of readiness is required. This condition could be triggered by the possibility of a weather watch or the possibility of increased fire threat because of drought conditions. This condition could also be invoked when there is the some potential possibility of civil disruption or terrorism threat.
 - 11.1.1. SE ARES Action - All SE ARES members should review Section 4 of this Emergency Plan.
- 11.2. **Condition 3 - Caution.** A Condition 3 alert is automatically triggered when the National Weather Service or local weather service, issues "Watch" condition, or anytime Harris County Transtar goes to Level 3. In Condition 4 Alert there is no immediate threat to life or property; however, in a Condition 3 Alert it is recognized that conditions may deteriorate into a more hazardous situation. Weather conditions that would normally trigger a Condition 3 Alert may include the following. The possibility of the threat of civil disturbance or

terrorism could also trigger a Condition 3 Alert.

- 11.2.1. Conditions that would typically initiate a Condition 3 alert would include, but not be limited to the following severe weather conditions:
 - 11.2.1.1. Hurricane Watch.
 - 11.2.1.2. High wind advisories with wind velocities in excess of 50 mph.
 - 11.2.1.3. High water watch.
 - 11.2.1.4. Flash flood watch.
 - 11.2.1.5. Tornado watch.
 - 11.2.1.6. Flash flood watch.
 - 11.2.1.7. Winter storm watch.
 - 11.2.1.8. Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties that could escalate into a mutual aid requirement.
- 11.2.2. SE ARES Action – Review and follow instructions in Section 4 of this Emergency Plan. Be prepared. Your welfare and your family’s welfare take priority. SE ARES EC and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All SE ARES members should monitor the District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater (147.00), check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

11.3. **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. An increased possibility of civil disobedience or terrorism may also trigger a Condition 2 Alert. Weather warnings, which would include, but not be limited to the following conditions, which will automatically trigger a Condition 2 Alert:

- 11.3.1. High wind warnings with winds in excess of 60 miles per hour.
 - 11.3.1.1. High water warnings.
 - 11.3.1.2. Tornado warnings.
 - 11.3.1.3. Flash flood warnings.
 - 11.3.1.4. Winter storm warnings.
 - 11.3.1.5. Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties when the DEC there has advised that there may be a requirement for assistance and he, or she, may be requesting mutual aid from District 14.
- 11.3.2. SE ARES Action – Review and follow instructions in Section 4 of this Emergency Plan. Make preparations as described in Section Four of this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual. Be prepared. Expect the unexpected. Family first.
- 11.3.3. SE ARES EC and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All SE ARES members should monitor the District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater (147.000) and check their email for

information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

- 11.3.4. Planning and operational aspects of emergency activation should be reviewed and refined by the SE ARES EC and AECs. Operations AEC and Logistics AEC should be in contact with RRT leaders, the NET Manager, NC operators, Duty Officers and Intake Coordinators to ensure their availability and readiness. Planning AEC should review and update the appropriate served agency Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and ensure that the most current version has been sent to all concerned.
- 11.3.5. Depending on the situation synoptic overview, and anticipated development, the SE ARES NET may be activated by direction of the DEC or EC.
- 11.3.6. All SE ARES members should monitor the NET frequencies announced on the 147.000 MHz District 14 bulletin repeater.
- 11.3.7. All SE ARES members should be aware that the automatic call up and alert system, the phone tree and the email alert system could be initiated in a Condition 2 Alert.
- 11.4. **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 may be threatened. This level of alert will only be issued when there is a situation that has put the region, state or nation in danger.
- 11.5. The South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator or the District 14 District Emergency Coordinator would normally be the ARES® authority that would be authorized to trigger a Condition 1 Alert. Condition 1 Alert will not be automatic. Only in extreme circumstances will the SE ARES EC issue a SE ARES Condition 1 Alert. An example of an extreme circumstance could be the touching down of a tornado in Southeast Harris County with the probability of extensive damage.
- 11.6. Condition 1 Alert - Imminent Danger could be triggered by civil disobedience, terrorism or any of the following, but not necessarily limited to the weather events listed:
 - 11.6.1. Extremely high winds approaching Hurricane Category 1 status.
 - 11.6.2. Tornado sightings or tornado sightings moving toward Harris County.
 - 11.6.3. Actual flooding.
- 11.7. SE ARES Action - This is the highest alert level in the South Texas Section, District 14 and SE ARES. All preparations have been made by all SE ARES members and all SE ARES members are at the ready and standing by for instructions. The automated alert system has been activated. Assuming that there was sufficient warning and time available, it is probable that the telephone tree and email activation systems have also been activated.

- 11.7.1. It is probable that all District 14 ARES® has been activated.
- 11.7.2. Assigned personnel have been activated and are at, or enroute, to Transtar, the Greater Houston American Red Cross Headquarters and Disaster Control.
- 11.7.3. Other personnel have been activated and are at, or enroute, to their assignments.
- 11.7.4. Assigned teams are in standby and making any final preparations.
- 11.7.5. The SE ARES Tactical NET is in operation.
- 11.7.6. The SE ARES Resource NET has been activated.
- 11.7.7. Harris County Transtar is on Level 1 alert status.

12.0 Southeast Harris County ARES® and the National Incident Management System.

- 12.1. In response to the attacks on September 11, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) in February 2003. HSPD-5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improved coordination of Federal, State, local, and private industry response to incidents and described the way these agencies will prepare for such a response. All District 14 ARES® Emergency Coordinators have had some ICS training. The SE ARES Emergency Coordinator and all SE ARES Assistant Emergency Coordinators are required to have ICS training and ARRL® Emergency Communications Training, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Order 5.
- 12.2. Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security announced the establishment of NIMS in March 2004. One of the key features of NIMS is the Incident Command System (ICS).
- 12.3. SE ARES is organized to function within the broad guidelines of the Incident Command System. The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demand of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.
- 12.4. ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations. The ICS is just as applicable to a multi-agency situation as it is to an ARES® communications EmComm operation.
- 12.5. All of the organizations with which SE ARES could be involved in an emergency situation will be operating within an ICS/NIMS organizational

template. All ARES® personnel must have a working knowledge of the ICS/NIMS. The agencies we serve expect all ARES® EmComm personnel to have that working knowledge.

13.0 Ready Response Teams

- 13.1. The primary goal of the Ready Response Team (RRT) is to provide preeminent client service as a team of qualified EmComm communicators for the specific served agency to which it is assigned. When the team arrives on site they are READY, familiar with the needs of the served agency, trained and ready to go to work. When not called upon to support their assigned agency, their secondary objective is to provide backup support to other RRTs.
- 13.2. Each RRT is composed of three to five qualified Amateur Radio operators, including the RRT Leader.
- 13.3. The RRT Leader has the following responsibilities:
 - 13.3.1. Act as the liaison between the entity in operational control and the served agency. Ensure that a current copy of the served agency's emergency plan is available to the unit EC and the unit Operations AEC.
 - 13.3.2. Maintain a current listing for each of the team members including their most recent contact information.
 - 13.3.3. Each Team Leader is responsible for maintaining the team's operating schedule during drills and during actual emergencies. When personnel shortages exist the team leader will immediately notify operations and logistics.
 - 13.3.4. If there is no radio equipment at the served agency site the RRT Leader shall be responsible for making arrangement for Amateur Radio equipment to fulfill the served agency's EmComm requirements. This can be done in the form of a "Communications Go Kit" with radio(s), coax, antennas and power source, as applicable to the particular served agency, which each member assigned to the RRT has contributed to. Or, it may be a situation where the served agency has provided an antenna and coax down to the operation position and members bring their own equipment to the site for the operating period. It is the responsibility of the RRT Leader to work out these details with the team members. As always, members of the District 14 ARES and SEU leadership teams and other members are available to help with working out the details of the operation.
 - 13.3.5. When District 14 ARES is alerted it is the RRT Leader's responsibility to communicate with the served agency, find out what their intended response will be, what their requirements may be and communicate that information to their EC.

- 13.3.6. It is the RRT Leader's responsibility to ensure that the chain of command is fully informed regarding the served agency's EmComm requirements and their intended response to the alert.
 - 13.3.7. The RRT Leader must have a working knowledge of the ICS and NIMS and have completed IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 courses.
 - 13.3.8. The RRT Leader must be a qualified NC operator and must be willing to run the local unit ARES Training Net from time to time to maintain NC operator proficiency.
 - 13.3.9. It is highly recommended that the RRT Leader have completed the ARRL Emergency Communications basic and advanced courses.
 - 13.3.10. The RRT Leader is responsible for the team's training and performance.
 - 13.3.11. The RRT Leader will rely on assistance of the SEU EC, Operations AEC and Logistics AEC in locating and recruiting members for their team.
 - 13.3.12. The RRT Leader should have thorough knowledge of the served agency's emergency plan.
 - 13.3.13. In circumstances where the RRT Leader is unavailable, one, or more of the RRT members shall be trained to take command during absence of the RRT Leader.
 - 13.3.14. Each RRT may have designated "Duty Officers". These individuals 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 rotational schedule. If Duty Officers are designated and a rotational schedule established that information must be available to the Unit's Operations AEC, who will ensure its proper dissemination.
- 13.4. Team members will train as a unit for a specific served agency. Each RRT is responsible for determining its logistic requirements relating to support, lodging and food. Some served agencies may make all these available, while others may provide only some support. In some cases no support will be available. Team members must be aware of these circumstances and make provisions for their own support as needed.
 - 13.5. Each RRT member should have a reasonable understanding of where each of the other RRT members are during the work week and make arrangements for RRT 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.
 - 13.6. Served Agency Site Preparation for RRTs: 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 RRT personnel to be

on site and ready to operate within thirty minutes of notification need to make provisions for a permanent station. *As an unreduceable minimum, preinstalled antennas, coax cables and an operating position where RRT members can connect their own equipment must be available.* Closets and equipment rooms do not make satisfactory RRT operating positions. RRT operating positions should be as close as possible to the served agency's emergency operations center. A UPS source of power must also be available at the operating site.

- 13.7. The RRT Leader will have to improvise if the minimum required EmComm equipment has not been provided by the served agency. 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.

14.0 Education and Training For RRTs

- 14.1. 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 Basic Emergency Communications Course.
- 14.2. The Team Leader should complete the ARRL Emergency Communications Courses Basic and Advanced, especially if acting as Net Control or as a net manager.
- 14.3. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of the District 14 ARES and SEU EMCOMM Plans and other published plans, operating instructions and documentation.
- 14.4. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of their EmComm mission.
- 14.5. Training, practice and experience in operating all of the equipment at the served agency pertaining to their EmComm mission is essential.
- 14.6. Demonstrated skills as Net Control in several regular training net sessions are required.
- 14.7. RRT's should practice getting assigned stations operational in the field within thirty minutes.
- 14.8. RRT's should participate in a simulated activation designed to test the notifications system.
- 14.9. Periodic "refresher" training sessions are strongly encouraged to maintain member proficiency.

15.0 Equipment and Information

- 15.1. It is strongly suggested that each team member have at least the following information and equipment available to them when activated:
 - 15.1.1. A laminated wallet sized card containing information on the notification system and key phone numbers and frequencies relating to their specific EmComm mission.
 - 15.1.2. Personal identification to include FCC license, ARES and RACES badges, and the appropriate Served Agency issued ID cards.
 - 15.1.3. Seventy-two hour response pack, including water, food, protective clothing/footwear and cash for personal needs.
 - 15.1.4. 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.
 - 15.1.5. A full gas tank. Stop and fill up when in route to the served agency site if possible.
 - 15.1.6. A handheld two-meter or dual-band radio, with spare rechargeable or 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.
 - 15.1.7. All of the DC connectors on equipment to be deployed should be made up with Anderson PowerPole connectors.
 - 15.1.8. 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.
 - 15.1.9. 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.

16.0 Relief and Back-up

- 16.1. All SEU 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.
- 16.2. AEC Operations and the AEC Logistics must be keenly aware of RRT replacement needs during drills and actual emergencies and plan accordingly.

17.0 Documentation and After Action Reports

- 17.1. 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. SEU 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 Operations AEC. The Operations AEC, 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 SEU records files. Electronic versions are preferred whenever possible.
- 17.2. 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 Hospitals in southeast Harris County

Name	Phone	Address	City	GPS	coordinates
Memorial Hermann Southeast Hospital	281-929-6100	11800 Astoria Blvd	Houston, Texas	29.58226	95.20855
Bayshore Medical Center	713-359-2000	4000 Spencer	Pasadena, Texas	29.66121	95.18087
Clear Lake Regional Medical Center	281-332-2511	500 Medical Center Blvd	Webster, Texas	29.54026	95.12739
Christus St. John	281-333-5503	2050 Space Park Dr	Nassau Bay, Texas	29.54944	95.08581
Pasadena General Hospital	713-473-1771	1004 Seymour	Pasadena, Texas	29.70262	95.20018
Riverside General Hospital	713-526-2441	3204 Ennis	Houston, Texas	29.73133	95.36006
St. Joseph	713-757-1000	1919 La Branch	Houston, Texas	29.74701	95.36535
Southmore Medical Center Hospital	713-477-0411	906 East Southmore	Pasadena, Texas	29.69090	95.20218
Tri City Regional Hospital	713-473-3311	4040 Red Bluff	Pasadena, Texas	29.68111	95.14993
Bayside Surgery Center	281-487-6111	4001 Preston Ave.	Houston, Texas	29.76132	95.36027
Memorial Hermann Hospital System Emergency Preparedness Amateur Radio Coordinator – KT5BBQ		Charles Lancaster (KT5BBQ) charles.lancaster@memorialhermann.org			

Appendix B Served Agencies for Southeast ARES

- o Harris County
 - Transtar
- o Houston, Pasadena, Beaumont, etc.
 - Emergency Operations Centers
- o Hospitals
 - Memorial Southeast Hospital
- o Designated Shelters
- o Nassau Bay
- o Pasadena EOC
- o Seabrook EOC
- o LaPorte EOC
- o Houston Emergency Center
- o Westbrook Intermediate School
- o Johnson Space Center EOC
- o Baytown EOC
- o Other depending on nature of the event
- o Hobby Airport
- o Ellington Airport

Appendix C

ARRL Policy on Acceptance or Termination of Field Service Volunteers

1. The ARRL is not obligated to accept volunteer service from anyone.
2. The ARRL is not obligated to continue to accept volunteer service from anyone, even if it has accepted such service in the past.
3. The ARRL does not discriminate in accepting volunteer service based on suspect classifications, including race, skin color, nationality, sex, age, sexual orientation, or religion.
4. The ARRL does not require criminal background or credit checks as a precondition to volunteer services.
5. Local Field Service units may conduct searches of public databases when considering whether to accept volunteer services.
6. If local Field Service units which to terminate the volunteer service of any existing member, the ARRL has determined the primary responsibility for notifying the volunteer of the decision to terminate the volunteer's service should lie with the Section Manager, or his designee. This procedure permits a uniform response to be maintained across all Sections. The written communication from the Section Manager, or his designee, should substantially conform to the form provided by the ARRL. The written communication, letter or email, should thank the volunteer for the volunteer's past service and advise the person their service is no longer required. The written communication should not, under any circumstance, state the reason for the decision to terminate the volunteer's service.
7. Local Field Service units may decline to accept volunteer service based on the results of public database searches, provided the decision to decline volunteer service is not based on suspect classifications. However, no reason should be stated, orally or in writing, for the unit's decision not to accept the volunteer service.