

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

[This Emergency Communications Plan is a part of the District 14 (ARES®) Southwest Unit Emergency Communications Plan and Operations Manual]

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To implement Part 97.1 of the FCC regulations, and Federal and international treaty law applying to Amateur Radio and specifically to the District 14 ARES® Southwest Unit.

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 Recognition 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 Harris County, Texas is a part of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®) South Texas Section. The South Texas Section is divided into fourteen (14) districts. District 14 is the only district in the South Texas Section containing only one county. Most districts are comprised of a few to several counties. Harris County is designated South Texas Section ARES® District 14, and it is the only county in District 14. District 14 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, and Highway 288 is the east and west boundary line south of Interstate Highway 10. District 14 (ARES®) Southwest Unit is defined as that area within Harris County, Texas, which is South of Interstate Highway 10, and west of Highway 288.
- 1.3 The primary responsibility of ARES®, District 14 Southwest Unit, hereinafter referred to as SW Unit, 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 and emergency communications, or in the event

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of communications failures to provide the necessary communications links where applicable and possible.

- 1.4 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 Federal Communications Commission licensed radio operator volunteers for emergency communications whenever the need arises.
- 1.5 The following agencies may be served during an emergency situation requiring supplemental communications: all agencies or entities with whom SW Unit has entered into Memorandums of Understanding, (MOUs), and other agencies or entities which may from time-to-time request assistance from SW UNIT. Agencies with MOUs will receive first priority for the resources of SW UNIT.
- 1.6 SW UNIT 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 SW UNIT 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.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In order to safeguard our volunteers, served agencies and the general public, District 14 Amateur Radio Service (ARES®), Southwest 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 SW UNIT members are FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service communications duty. All SW UNIT personnel are strongly encouraged to obtain a State of Texas Division of Emergency Management State RACES Authorization Unit Number.

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- 2.3 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. All SW UNIT 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.
- 2.4 SW UNIT functions under this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual by direction of the SW UNIT 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).
- 2.5 All of District 14 ARES functions within the ICS / NIMS protocol for the planning and execution of all events. All members of the SW Unit are individually responsible to have a working knowledge of the ICS /NIMS.
- 2.6 In accordance with the ICS / NIMS, and absent direction from the DEC, EC, or an AEC functioning with the EC's authority, the first SW Unit member on site represents the SW Unit and functions in accordance with the ICS / NIMS. It is of paramount importance that all SW Unit personnel have a working knowledge the ICS / NIMS.
- 2.7 Where conflict may exist between this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual and the District 14 Emergency Plan or the South Texas Section Emergency Plan those emergency plans will take precedence and this SW UNIT Emergency Plan will be subordinate.
- 2.8 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 some times 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.

2.9 The following is required by the Section Emergency Plan:

The EC is the chief ARES® official in SW UNIT, 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.

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 SW UNIT EC will discuss AEC appointments and request advice and direction from the DEC. In SW UNIT all AECs must have a current District 14 ARES SW Unit ID badge. The ARRL® Emergency Communications Courses are highly recommended. SW UNIT 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.

The EC organizes and coordinates Amateur Radio communications in SW UNIT to accommodate the needs of served agencies and, to merge with the overall productive efforts of District 14 ARES, and the South Texas Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®). The SW UNIT organizational structure will merge with the overall management and production template of the ICS and NIMS.

2.10 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Operations: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the Operations AEC job description in Section Eighteen for the Operations AEC.

2.11 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Administration: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the Administration AEC job description in

Section Eighteen for the Administration AEC.

- 2.12 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Logistics: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the Logistics AEC job description in Section Eighteen for the Logistics AEC.
- 2.13 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Liaison: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the Liaison AEC job Description in Section Eighteen for the Liaison AEC.
- 2.14 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) - Planning: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the Planning AEC job Description in Section Eighteen for the Planning AEC.
- 2.15 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Hospital EmComm Support Group: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities described in the ARES® Hospital EmComm Support Group AEC job Description in Section Eighteen for the HESG AEC.
- 2.16 Duty Officers: Are responsible for contacting RRTs and other personnel as specifically defined by the operations AEC.
- 2.17 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. See Section Thirteen for forms to be used.
- 2.12 Net Manager: The Net Manager has overall responsibility for the planning, communications procedural training and operation of **all** SW Unit NETs, whether they are 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 SW Unit Training Net, which will be held each Wednesday evening at 2000 hours local time. It is the responsibility of the NET Manager to ensure that NCS operators, and back-up NCS operators are assigned for each training net. See Section Fifteen.
- 2.13 At the discretion of the EC, the Operations AEC or the NET Manager,

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the Training NET may be canceled to accommodate special circumstances, such as the regular scheduled NET falling on a holiday, for example: Christmas, the 4th of July or other national holiday that would significantly reduce the SW Unit member NET participation.

- 2.14 Members of the SW Unit may 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 ensure their availability for further instructions and direction.
- 2.15 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 & UHF Frequencies used by SW UNIT

145.170 MHz (-), PL 123 Hz. *
145.190 MHz (-), PL 123 Hz. *
146.940 MHz (-), PL 167.9 Hz. *
147.200 MHz (+), PL 141.3 H *
442.350 MHz (+), PL 103.5 Hz. *
146.56 SW UNIT FM simplex VHF #1.
147.56 SW UNIT FM simplex VHF #2.
144.256 SW UNIT SSB calling frequency.
146.52 National FM simplex calling frequency.
144.200 National SSB calling frequency.
446.000 National FM simplex calling frequency.
432.560 SW UNIT FM simplex UHF #1.

* Memorandum of Understanding for use of the repeater has been agreed to.

Note: The above frequencies are consistent with the VHF and UHF band plans listed in the current edition of The ARRL Repeater Directory; however, these plans are subject to local requirements, which may from time-to-time change. With the advent of D-Star in the Houston area some simplex designated areas of the two meter and

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seventy centimeter bands may be re-coordinated to accommodate D-Star repeater pairs. Never interfere, always be courteous and report the circumstances relating to interference to the SW UNIT Digital / Repeater Restoration AEC. Never use the output of a repeater as a simplex

frequency unless specifically authorized by the repeater trustee, and then only when absolutely necessary. Follow the band plans for all HF, VHF and UHF Amateur Radio bands.

If you are intentionally interfered with on a simplex or repeater frequency ignore the interference. Confrontation is what the interfering station wants. Ignore it, move on and report the circumstances with as much information as possible.

See the Harris County ARES site for the repeater training net schedule. <http://harriscountyares.org/>.

2.12.5 SW UNIT personnel are dispatched to supported agencies and other assignments as required. Supported agencies with Memorandums of Understanding, (MOUs) will have priority for SW UNIT resources.

2.12.6 Operators of home stations with extended emergency power capabilities may be requested and coordinated to function in as temporary "Key Stations", if required. See Section Sixteen, Definitions, for the definition of "Key Station".

3. ACTIVATING THE PLAN

3.1 Any member of the SW Unit who for any reason believes that a communications emergency exists, or is imminent, should monitor the South Texas Section ARES® District 14 information / bulletin repeater, 147.000 MHz (+) PL 103.5 Hz. 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 SW Unit phone tree and email notification systems will also be employed.

3.2 In the event of an actual emergency, or an impending emergency in which FCC licensed volunteer radio operators, who are ARES® members, could be employed to serve the community, SW UNIT 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.

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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 MHz (+), PL 103.5 repeater.

4. MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

The SW UNIT EC, or an AEC will initiate mobilization of SW UNIT 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 served agency EOC, a mobile unit in route, or other fixed station location depending on availability, requirements and severity of the situation. Monitor the 147.000 MHz0 ARES® District 14 bulletin / information repeater for information concerning the alert and/or mobilization.

Ready Response Team (RRT) 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 Seven Ready Response Teams (RRTs).

- 4.1 If telephone service is available, the appropriate duty officer, EC or AEC, will also activate the telephone tree and the email alert system. The Section or District EC will activate the automated alert system. All SW UNIT 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 MHz0 MHz (+) PL 103.5 Hz.
- 4.2 When notification, or knowledge, that a communications emergency exists, members of SW UNIT will check into the SW UNIT Tactical Emergency Net and remain on frequency for instructions. The repeaters in use by SW UNIT will be announced on the 147.000 MHz0 information / bulletin repeater and on all of the SW UNIT repeater frequencies. See paragraph 2.15.
- 4.3 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. **NOTE:** Each served agency in SW has a SW UNIT Ready Response Team assigned. These teams consist of three to five individuals, including an RRT Leader. Each team has its

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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.

- 4.4 Tactical control will be on the announced primary SW UNIT tactical repeater. The actual location of the net control station will be as directed by the SW UNIT 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. SW UNIT simplex frequencies are: 146.56, 147.56, or as may be designated. The national simplex calling frequency is 146.52 and should **not** be used as a NET frequency.
 - 4.5 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 NCS 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.
1. **NO SW UNIT** 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.
 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 Thirteen, 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.

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.

- 4.6 Key Stations: There are currently two permanently designated Key Stations used by SW UNIT. These are:

- 4.6.1 *Harris County Transtar, Homeland Security and Office of Emergency Management, call sign N5TRS, which is the SW UNIT Primary Key Station, which is located in the NWQ.*

- 4.6.2 *The Greater Houston Area American Red Cross Chapter, Disaster Command Center, E.J. Hadash, Jr. Communications Room, call sign KD5WHD, which is located in SWQ.*

5. Operations

- 5.1 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 Twelve and Section Thirteen 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.

- 5.2 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 be can this message be understood, it must also be scrutinized from

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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.

- 5.3 The appropriate message precedence of Emergency, Priority, Welfare, or Routine, as defined on ARRL® FORM FSD-3, see Section Twelve, are to 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.

5.3.1 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 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. Drills and Alerts

- 6.1 Each year in October SW Unit will participate ARRL® Simulated Emergency Test (SET) together with the other Units in District 14. SW Unit will also participate in other drills and tests sponsored by Harris County, The National Weather Service and other entities in which SW Unit is requested to participate and provide communications.

SW Unit members are encouraged to participate in public service

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events even when District 14, or SW Unit, 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.

- 6.2 SW Unit, if requested, will regularly provide public service communications in conjunction with local events, to test the effectiveness of SW Unit communications operations. SW Unit will actively participate in the annual MS-150 and other exercises, such as the CERT Rodeo.
- 6.3 The SW Unit Training NET meets each Wednesday at 2000 hours local time on the designated repeater or simplex frequency. Check the Harris County ARES® website at: <http://harriscountyares.org/dist14sw.htm>, or simply Google Harris County ARES®.
- 6.4 At the discretion of the EC, and with authorization of the DEC, the SW Unit NET will be activated unannounced via the automated alert system, telephone tree, or email system at least once per year.

7. Federal Terrorism Threat Level Warning Codes

7.1 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. SW UNIT members should adopt emergency readiness procedures that correspond to these levels. See the South Texas Section Emergency Plan included in this manual for an explanation of the codes and the actions to be taken by South Texas Section ARES® members.

- 8 **NET OPERATIONS:** 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 sixty-five 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.**

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 In an emergency, either or both nets may be activated. When operating in emergency session:

8.5 Emergency and tactical traffic will be handled on 7,285 KHz during the daytime and 3,873 at night.

8.6 Health and Welfare Traffic will be handled on 7,290 KHz during the day and 3,935 at night.

8.7 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.

9. STAGING AREA OPERATIONS

When amateur operators in large numbers augment SW UNIT 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 SW Unit member managing a staging area will maintain close liaison with the SW Unit EC, or other designated SW Unit personnel, via Net Control on the Resource Net, or Tactical Net if no Resource Net has been established, to ensure effective use of

resources.

9.1 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. See Section Thirteen. It is important to note how long each volunteer operator is prepared to operate. Forms should be retained and given to the Logistics AEC. See Section Thirteen.

9.2 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 SW 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.

9.3 Staging area sites are as follows:

9.3.1 HEB Parking lots.

9.3.2 Wal-Mart Parking Lots

9.3.3 Other locations that may be designated during NET operations

10. SW Unit Alert Definitions and Increased SW Unit Readiness Conditions.

NOTE: These SW Unit alert definitions have been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. Each has additions to make them more applicable to the SW UNIT 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 SW Unit.

10.1 **Condition 4 – Awareness.** 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. This condition could also be invoked when there is

the some potential possibility of civil disruption or terrorism threat.

10.1.1 **SW Unit Action** - All SW UNIT members should review Paragraph 3 of this Emergency Plan.

10.2 **Condition 3 – Caution.** A Condition 3 alert may be triggered by the DEC or EC 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.

10.2.1 Conditions that would typically initiate a Condition 3 alert would include, but not be limited to the following sever weather conditions:

10.2.1.1 Hurricane Watch.

10.2.1.2 High wind advisories with wind velocities in excess of 50 mph.

10.2.1.3 High water watch.

10.2.1.4 Flash flood watch.

10.2.1.5 Tornado watch.

10.2.1.6 Flash flood watch.

10.2.1.7 Winter storm watch.

10.2.1.8 Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties that could escalate into a mutual aid requirement.

10.2.2 **SW Unit Action** – Follow instructions in Paragraph 3 and review paragraph 4 of this Emergency Plan. Be prepared. Your welfare and your family’s welfare take priority. Review Section Four of this Operations Manual. SW Unit 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 SW UNIT members should monitor the District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater (147.000 MHz), check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory

information.

10.3 Condition 2 - Alert. A Condition 2 Alert may be triggered by the DEC or EC when severe weather warnings are issued, 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:

10.3.1.1 High wind warnings with winds in excess of 60 miles per hour.

10.3.1.2 High water warnings.

10.3.1.3 Tornado warnings.

10.3.1.4 Flash flood warnings.

10.3.1.5 Winter storm warnings.

10.3.1.6 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.

10.3.2 SW Unit Action - Follow instructions in Paragraph 3 and review paragraph 4 of this Emergency Plan. Review and make preparations as described in Section Four of this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual. Be prepared. Expect the unexpected. Family first.

10.3.2.1 SW Unit 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 SW UNIT members should monitor the District 14 ARES® bulletin repeater (147.000 MHz) and check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

10.3.2.2 Planning and operational aspects of emergency activation should be reviewed and refined by the SW Unit EC and AECs. Operations AEC and Logistics AEC should be in contact with RRT leaders, the NET Manager, NCS operators, Duty Officers and

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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 toalcon.

- 10.3.2.3 Depending on the situation synoptic overview, and anticipated development, the SW Unit NET may be activated by direction of the DEC or EC.
- 10.3.2.4 All SW Unit members should monitor the NET frequencies announced on the 147.000 MHz MHz District 14 bulletin repeater.
- 10.3.2.5 All SW Unit 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.

10.4 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 extremis.

10.4.1 The South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator or the District 14 District Emergency Coordinator would normally be the only 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 SW Unit SEC issue a SW Unit Condition 1 Alert. An example of an extreme circumstance could be the touching down of a tornado in southwest Harris County with the probability of extensive damage.

10.4.2 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:

Extremely high winds approaching Hurricane Category 1 status.

10.4.2.1 Tornado sightings or tornado sightings moving toward Harris County, or a tornado actually touching down in Harris County.

10.4.2.2 Actual flooding.

- 10.4.3 **SW Unit Action** – This is the highest alert level in the South Texas Section, District 14 and SW Unit. All preparations have been made by all SW UNIT members and all SW Unit 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.
- 10.4.3.1 It is probable that all District 14 ARES® has been activated.
 - 10.4.3.2 Assigned personnel have been activated and are at, or in route, to Transtar, the Greater Houston American Red Cross Headquarters and Disaster Control.
 - 10.4.3.3 Other personnel have been activated and are at, or in route, to their assignments.
 - 10.4.3.4 Assigned teams are in standby and making any final preparations.
 - 10.4.3.5 The SW UNIT Tactical NET is in operation.
 - 10.4.3.6 The SW UNIT Resource NET has been activated.
 - 10.4.3.7 Harris County Transtar is on Level 1 alert status.

11. Southwest Harris County ARES® organizational Structure and Organization Chart.

- 11.1 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

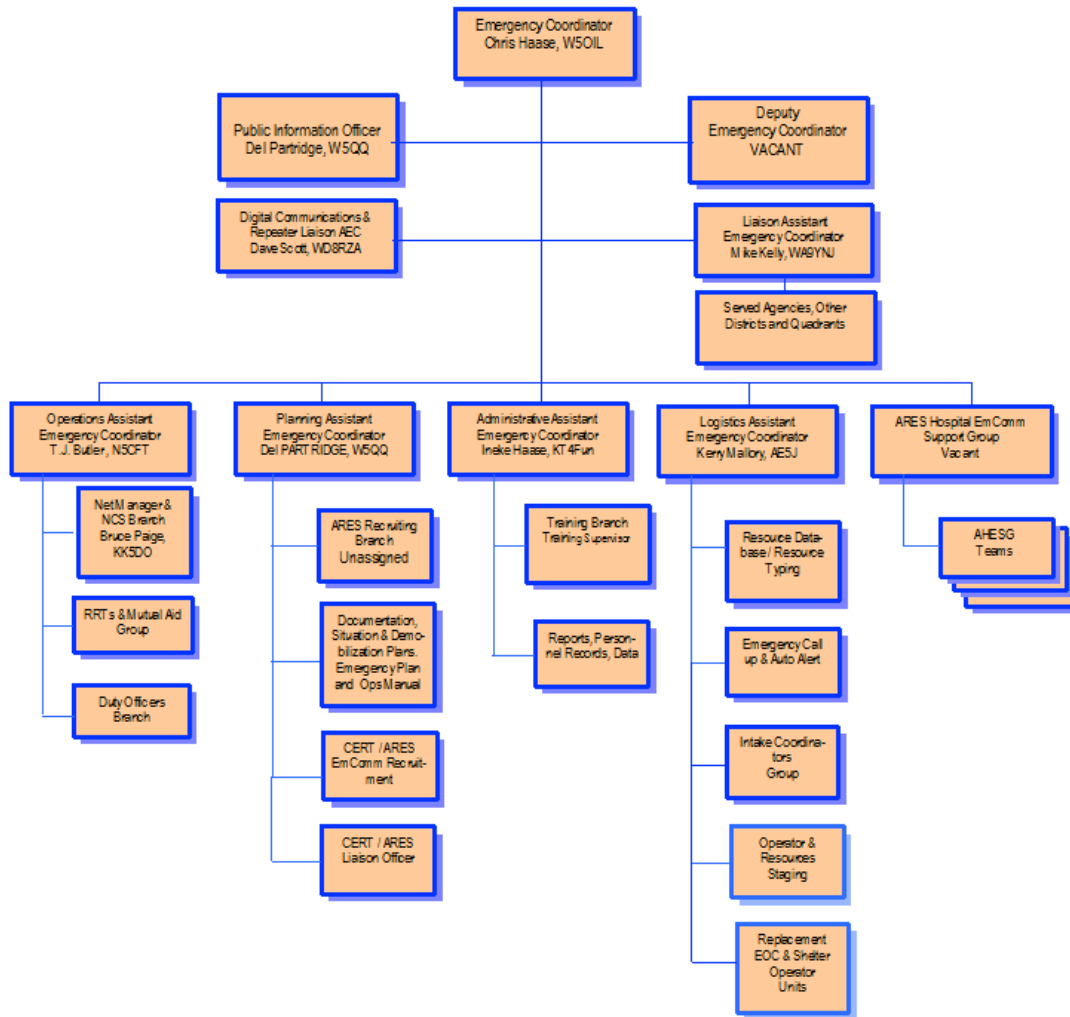
agencies will prepare for such a response. All District 14 ARES® Emergency Coordinators have had some ICS training. The SW UNIT Emergency Coordinator and all SW UNIT Assistant Emergency Coordinators are required to have ICS training and ARRL® Emergency Communications Training, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Order 5.

Section One

- 11.2 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).
- 11.3 SW Unit 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.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 All of the organizations with which SW Unit 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.

Organization Chart District 14 ARES® Southwest Unit (SWU)

SWU is a part of District 14 ARES®, which includes all of Harris County, Texas
District 14 ARES® is one of 14 Districts in the South Texas Section





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 service.
5. Local Field Service units may conduct searches of public databases when considering whether to accept volunteer services.
6. If local Field Service units wish 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 a reason for the decision to terminate the volunteer's service.
7. Local Filed 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's service.