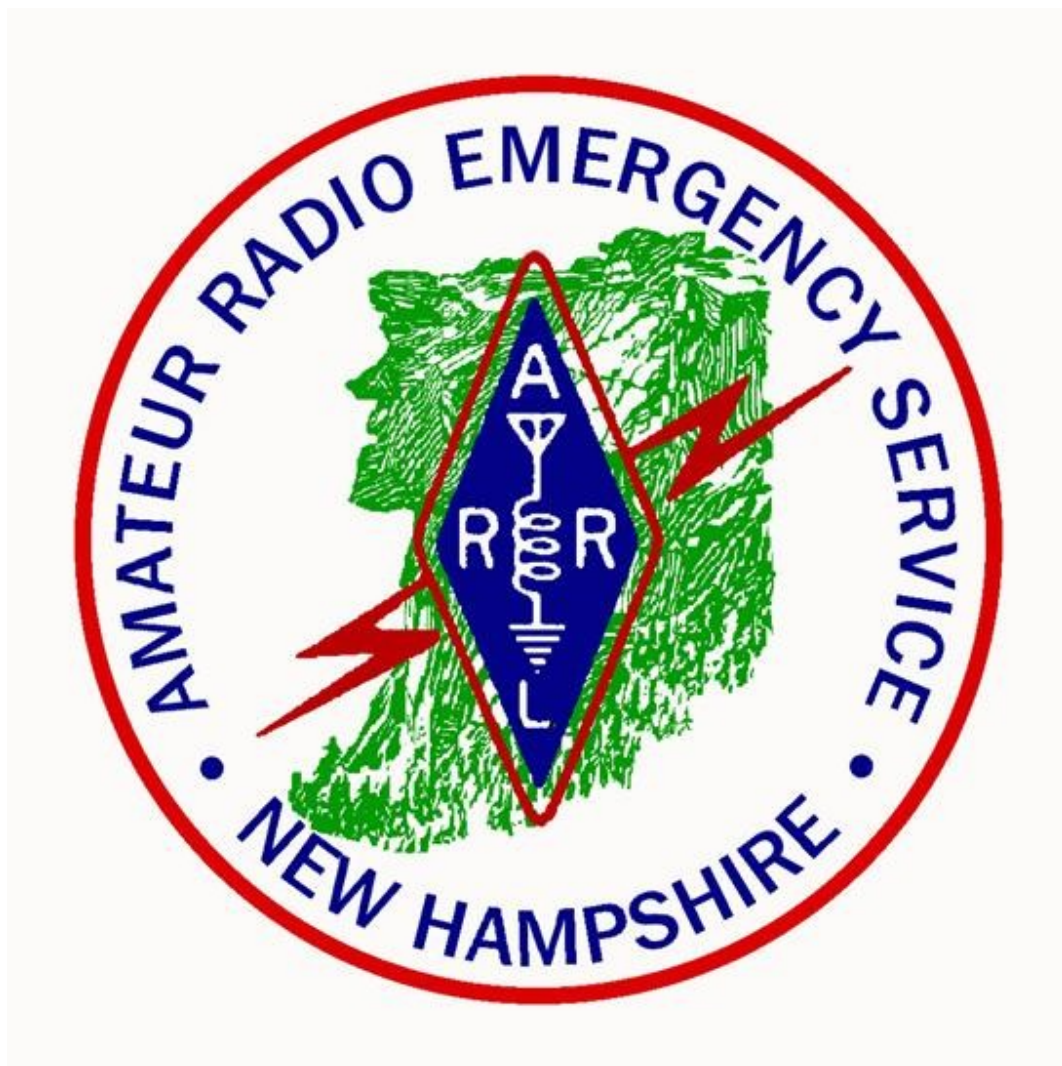


Amateur Radio Emergency Service<sup>®</sup>  
New Hampshire Section

## Emergency Communications Plan



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## **1.0 DEFINITIONS**

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- 1.01 **Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®):** A volunteer organization sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) providing specific communications capabilities in times of emergency. All ARES volunteers are FCC licensed Amateur Radio operators who have registered their abilities and equipment, and have been trained to serve as emergency communicators.
- 1.02 **ARES Net:** Local or Section network operated to handle message traffic for served agencies, or to support ARES operations.
- 1.03 **ARES training nets:** An ARES net held for the purpose of training members in how the network will function when activated during a communications emergency, or to permit distance learning on any relevant subject.
- 1.04 **American Radio Relay League (ARRL):** National membership organization that promotes and supports the Amateur Radio Service in the United States. Membership is open to all full membership is open to those holding a valid Amateur Radio Service license.
- 1.05 **Amateur Radio Service:** As defined in Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission rules and regulations: "voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications."
- 1.06 **Client or Served Agencies:** Governmental or non-profit agencies and organizations with which NH-ARES or the ARRL has formal or informal agreements to serve during a declared or non-declared emergency or event. (See Attachment I)
- 1.07 **Communications Emergency:** Normal agency and/or public communications have been disrupted or overloaded, or additional communication paths have been requested, or a need to provide disaster intelligence exists.
- 1.08 **Disaster Intelligence:** Information regarding the local situation, including but not limited to flooding conditions, power and phone outages, closed or damaged roads, dam failures, downed trees, weather conditions, shelter status, and similar information needed or requested by a served agency. Also see SITREP. "
- 1.09 **ESF-2:** Emergency Support Function 2. Communications support guidelines set forth in the State of New Hampshire's Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with the National Response Plan, which outline the procedures used, and the resources available during an emergency. The New Hampshire Department of Safety, State Police has responsibility for administration of ESF-2.
- 1.10 **Local ARES Groups:** Also called Local Area Groups. The New Hampshire Section's own term for Local ARES subdivisions within the Section. Each group serves a specific operational area of towns and cities, and is managed by an Emergency Coordinator (EC). In other Sections these groups are commonly associated with a particular county. NH-ARES operational areas do not follow county lines. (See Attachments D & H)
- 1.11 **Local Operational Area:** A defined group of towns and cities served by a Local ARES Group.
- 1.12 **New Hampshire Amateur Radio Emergency Service (NH-ARES):** The ARES organization that has responsibility for the emergency communications functions of the ARRL New Hampshire Section.

- 1.13 **New Hampshire Department of Safety, Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM):** The state agency that is responsible for emergency command and control during declared disasters and major emergencies for New Hampshire. HSEM is responsible for administering Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) operations at the state level, and is the immediate liaison agency to NH-ARES.
- 1.14 **New Hampshire Section:** A geographically defined subdivision of the ARRL's field organization. The United States and its possessions are divided into 71 ARRL Sections, each managed by a Section Manager. The New Hampshire Section includes all counties in the state.
- 1.15 **Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES):** An FCC-authorized radio communication service using volunteer licensed Amateurs specifically designed to provide emergency communications to local or state emergency management agencies. RACES is administered by state and local civil authorities and not the ARRL. Operations under RACES can only be conducted by licensed Amateurs who are registered with a government emergency management agency. RACES is used only by the authority of a local or state emergency management agency. Although ARES and emergency management agencies are separate entities, dual membership is encouraged where available. State and local authorities reserve the right to select and approve of those who operate under their authority. The State of New Hampshire RACES Officer is the HSEM-appointed administrator for any State RACES operations. Municipal emergency management agencies may also choose to operate independently under RACES rules.
- 1.16 **Rapid Response Team (RRT):** A group of local Active Members formed to provide rapid deployment for establishing initial local communications links.
- 1.17 **Rapid Emergency Deployment Team (RED Team):** A statewide rapid response team comprised of local RRT members from across the Section formed to provide rapid deployment for establishing initial Section communication links, or backup to any local ARES operational area within New Hampshire, or for special agency assignments.
- 1.18 **Section Leadership/Staff:** The appointed ARES Section officials, including the Section Manager and his or her staff, the SEC, any ASECs, State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team, RED Team, and the ARES Section Net Manager. (See Section 3.0 and Attachment G)
- 1.19 **SITREP:** Abbreviation for situation report. Refers to any formal or informal message format used for tactical disaster intelligence reporting. SITREP message data may vary with agency and purpose.
- 1.20 **State EOC (SEOC) Team:** A small team of ARES Active Members who have been selected by the SEC or a designee, approved by HSEM, and received additional training to operate within the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and other HSEM facilities.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

- 2.01 The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for emergency communication operations by NH-ARES. It describes the networks, and the organization and functions responsible for supporting those networks, and sets standards for message handling and network operations. This document is intended for use by NH-ARES members and as a reference tool for served agency staff.
- 2.02 The purpose of ARES is to provide communication and related services for selected public and private agencies during communications emergencies, and in support of non-emergency public service activities. This may include passing formal written or informal tactical messages, gathering

and reporting disaster intelligence and storm conditions, and other such duties as are requested and agreed upon.

2.03 The operational information contained in this plan is to be used as a guide. It is not the purpose of this document to limit local plans or unnecessarily constrain emergency operations.

### **3.0 NH-ARES OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLES**

3.01 As used in this plan, the titles shown below indicate an operational function which may be held by an administrative appointee or his/her designee.

3.02 **ARES Communication Officer (ACO):** The NH-ARES official who coordinates the response at the Section level during an incident or drill, usually the SEC or his/her designate.

3.03 **Local ARES Coordinator (LAC):** The NH-ARES official who coordinates the response within a local operational area during an incident or drill, usually the EC or his/her designate.

3.04 **Team Leader:** For permanent or ad hoc subgroups assigned to a specific task, the EC or other leader may assign one member to act as a Team Leader.

3.05 **For any other job** simply put the word "event" in front of the usual title. E.g.: "Event Net Manager."

### **4.0 NEW HAMPSHIRE ARES STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COOPERATION**

4.01 HSEM does not maintain a standing RACES program. In the event that a particular emergency requires operation under RACES rules, HSEM may choose to register some or all NH-ARES members as RACES operators for the duration of the emergency.

4.02 Under the guidelines of the State of New Hampshire's ESF-2 protocol, requests for NH-ARES resources to support other state agencies can only be made by designated HSEM staff, usually the Chief of Communications. NH-ARES will not directly contact or offer services to any other state agency.

4.03 When HSEM activates the NH-ARES State EOC Team, they act on behalf of the Governor and at the direction of HSEM. The EOC Team may be asked to staff certain State of New Hampshire Communications positions including operating non-Amateur Radio communications systems, telephone systems or shadow key emergency response operations personnel. EOC Team members are approved by HSEM and advanced HSEM-sponsored training will be required.

### **5.0 EMERGENCY ACTIVATION CLASSIFICATIONS**

5.01 Status 1: Normal everyday operations. No emergency or precipitating condition exists.

5.02 Status 2: A potential for a communication emergency exists. Members should monitor their local ARES net frequencies and email for information on preparing for deployment, and possible activation notices.

5.03 Status 3: An unusual condition or emergency exists that has caused government officials to declare a warning. A communications emergency does not yet exist. Affected ECs will initiate their local ARES net. All members should monitor their local net frequency. Members should make all preparations for possible activation. Members will be asked to check in to their local ARES nets and be prepared to state their availability and resources.

A Section Coordination & Traffic Net (SCTN) may be initiated on an appropriate frequency as circumstances warrant as determined by the ACO. In the case where the SCTN has not yet been initiated and is clearly needed, any EC or his designee may initiate one. Notification will be made to the ACO and to members of NH-ARES by the best available means informing them that the SCTN has been activated. Local ARES leadership will appoint a liaison to check into the SCTN. ECs and/or liaison stations should then monitor the SCTN.

5.04 Status 4: A communication emergency exists and volunteer operators and radio resources have been requested by one or more served agencies. Nets in affected areas should be activated, and if needed, the SCTN, as determined by the ACO. ECs in un-affected areas should monitor the appropriate nets in the event additional assistance is required.

5.05 These status levels are designed to closely resemble those used by NH-HSEM.

## **6.0 SECTION ARES ACTIVATION**

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6.01 The SEC will act as, or appoint, an ACO to manage emergency operations at the Section level.

6.02 The ACO may activate any NH-ARES resources after notification by a client agency or Local Area Group leadership that a communications emergency exists.

6.03 Status 2 activation notifications may be made via email. The Activation Plan (Attachment A) will be used for all Status 3 and 4 activations in addition to email notifications.

6.05 A NH-ARES Section Coordination and Traffic Net will be initiated and maintained for the duration of the emergency. (See Attachments B, C, E)

6.06 Each affected NH-ARES group will appoint a liaison to the Section Coordination Net when a Status 3 or Status 4 activation is declared. (See Attachment E)

6.07 The SM, ACO, or a designee will notify ARRL HQ at the time of activation or as soon as possible.

## **7.0 SECTION ARES DE-ACTIVATION**

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7.01 NH-ARES and all nets associated with the activation will operate until the termination notice is given by the ACO on behalf of the SEC. The termination notice will be given on the Section-wide NH-ARES coordination net and will be relayed to all activated groups. ARRL HQ will be notified as soon as possible.

7.02 If the situation warrants, a Local Area Group can request early termination of operations prior to the Section termination notice being issued. The ACO will evaluate the request, and if appropriate, approve early termination of that group from the activation or drill. Under no circumstances should any NH-ARES group self-terminate from an activation or drill without the approval of the ACO.

7.03 At the conclusion of all NH-ARES activations, Section and local area leadership will meet within seven days to perform and after action review.

## **8.0 LOCAL ARES ACTIVATION AND DEACTIVATION**

8.01 The EC will act as, or appoint, a Local ARES Coordinator (LAC) to manage emergency operations.

8.02 The LAC will activate the local notification plan and open a local net on the assigned repeater or simplex frequency listed in Attachment E.

8.03 Activation of Local Area Group resources may be requested by any served agency, town, city, or county government authorities. Any ARES member who suspects that a communication emergency exists should contact their EC as soon as possible. Any action necessary to immediately protect life or property should be taken first.

8.04 The LAC will contact appropriate authorities and make arrangements for the activation of ARES resources as appropriate.

8.05 The Local Area Group will work independently unless additional outside resources are requested to meet the communications needs of the served agency(s). Additional nets may be activated as required to coordinate the management of resources into, and out of, the affected area, either at the local or Section level, or both.

8.06 If additional resources are required to support operations within their area, the EC will contact the ACO. The ACO will activate additional ARES groups to support activities within the affected area. ECs should request resources directly from other ECs only when all reasonable attempts to reach the ACO have failed, or where imminent danger to life or property exists.

8.07 Under no circumstances should any member self-terminate from an operation or drill without the approval of the responsible Net Control Station.

8.08 The LAC or a designee will notify the ACO and ARRL HQ of all local emergency operations within one hour of activation, or as soon as possible.

8.09 The LAC may terminate operations if the agency being served indicates that ARES support is no longer required, or if ARES resources are depleted and unable to continue operations. If the local net has a liaison to the Section Net, they must obtain permission to secure from the Section Net NCS or from the ACO. This is to ensure that no inbound messages are left undelivered. Both the ACO and ARRL HQ should be notified of deactivation as soon as possible.

## **9.0 STANDARD NET AND MESSAGE HANDLING PROTOCOLS**

9.01 If the type of emergency dictates very rapid communication of brief simple messages directly to recipients, it is permissible to operate in a tactical style and use an informal verbal message format. Messages containing lists or critical details must always be in a written, formal format.

9.02 When messages are unlikely to be delivered immediately or directly to the addressee, they must be written on the ARRL Radiogram or appropriate agency or ICS form. If a form is to be sent via any

mode that is not error-free, or if it will need to be relayed, the full ARRL Radiogram header information must be added to protect message integrity and proper routing.

9.03 All Section Coordination & Traffic Nets will operate as Directed Nets. (See Attachments B & E)

9.04 NH-ARES liaison stations will use specific tactical call signs, such as Sullivan County or State EOC. ”

9.05 Tactical call signs will be used for calling and answering other stations when possible to make it easier to route messages. FCC identification rules must be followed.

9.06 The authenticity of, corrections to, and additions to all messages are the sole responsibility of the originating authority. ARES members are not permitted to alter the content of a message without the authorization of the originating authority. The content of all messages should be considered confidential and never discussed with anyone, even fellow ARES members.

9.07 Privacy and Operational Security: Members will respect the privacy of served agencies, their staff, and clients, and will not discuss privileged or sensitive information with others not directly involved. Members will use extreme care not to transmit or divulge any information that could compromise the agency's operations, the safety of others, or that contains personal or sensitive information. Information regarding deaths must NEVER be transmitted over a voice Amateur frequency or net.

9.08 An ARES operator should report conditions as he observes them. Such observations are considered those of a layperson unless specifically trained, and should be treated in that context.

9.09 ARES club call signs may be used for Winlink addressing. (Attachment I)

## **10.0 NON-COMMUNICATIONS ASSIGNMENTS**

10.01 ARES is organized to provide communications services only. ARES operators on duty are under no obligation to serve in any other capacity. Members who are cross-trained in an agency function that includes a radio communications function may be assigned to perform both.

10.02 Any on-duty member who chooses to serve an agency in a different or dual capacity must first obtain approval from his or her direct ARES supervisor.

## **11.0 ARRL HQ NOTIFICATION AND SUPPORT**

11.01 ARRL headquarters in Newington, CT must be notified by phone, voicemail, or email of all NH-ARES local and Section activations and de-activations. Notification should take place as soon as possible, ideally within one hour, and should be made directly to the staff member responsible for disaster response coordination.

11.02 Periodic Situation Reports (SITREPS) should be sent to ARRL HQ to keep them informed of our operational status, and the progress of the event.

11.03 Requests for ARRL HQ support must be sent in as soon as NH-ARES leadership can reasonably anticipate the need. Requests for HamAid equipment packages must be sent in well before any

storm hits or other factors occur that will end deliveries by Federal Express. All requests must be made by the SM, SEC, or their designate.

11.04 HamAid equipment provided by ARRL HQ will be issued only to a member who agrees to remain in direct or indirect control of the material, and agrees to be accountable for its location and condition.

11.05 HamAid equipment must be returned to ARRL HQ as soon as practical after use, and in the same or better condition than when it arrived.