ARES® EmComm Plan
for
LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Revised September 2020
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ARES® EC for Lee County, FL

AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

EmComm Plan for Lee County Florida

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) in Lee County, FL, is composed of FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who voluntarily register with County Emergency Management for public service communications duty.

1.2 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind.

1.3 ARES® operates under this Emergency Plan at the direction of the ARES® Emergency Coordinator (EC) for Lee County, FL, who is appointed by the ARRL[1] Southern Florida Section Manager in consultation with the ARRL's ARES® Southern Florida Section Emergency Coordinator.

1.4 The EC may appoint as many Assistant ECs as needed for the ARES® Team to function efficiently. An Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) will be appointed by the EC to function as EC in his/her absence.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 This plan provides a written guide with the minimum information ARES® Team Members need in an emergency response. Each response is different and flexibility is necessary to respond appropriately to a given situation.

3. FUNCTION

3.1 The function of the ARES® Team in Lee County, FL, is to furnish primary or supplemental communications in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, when regular communication systems fail or are compromised.

3.2 The following agencies could be served during a communications emergency: Lee County Emergency Management; Lee County Chapter of the American Red Cross; or any government entity requesting communications assistance from the ARES® Team.

3.3 Our intent is to work with the above entities to establish the infrastructure, plans, and procedures to best utilize the capabilities of ARES® to support a potential emergency situation. We do this by working with these entities to establish response plans and procedures, and to coordinate/communicate these plans with local Amateur Radio Operators via ARES® and other Amateur Radio organizations within Lee County.

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[1] ARRL -- *The American Radio Relay League, Inc. -- is the National Organization for Amateur Radio in the US. ARRL sponsors ARES® Teams throughout the United States.*

4. ACTIVATING THE PLAN

4.1   In an emergency in which Amateur Radio might serve the community, Lee County Emergency Management; a ranking government entity official; or the Disaster Chairperson of Lee County American Red Cross shall notify the Emergency Coordinator, who will then activate the ARES® Team.

5. ARES® MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

NOTE: ARES® Team Members are reminded not to "Self-Deploy" if they become aware of an "event" before being given a specific assignment. When ARES® is Officially Activated, Team Members are covered by County Worker's Insurance. Members who "self-deploy" are not covered by Insurance.

5.1   If phone service is available, members will be alerted by phone or a text message sent to those who have cell phones. An auto messaging service, "Everbridge" which is controlled by Lee County Emergency Management, may be utilized.

5.2   As soon as practical after being notified by Emergency Management or other Government Entity that ARES communication assistance is required, the EC or his/her Assistant EC will notify the ARRL Section Manager and the Section Emergency Coordinator of the activation.

5.3   Announcements alerting ARES® Team Members will also be made on the main EOC Repeater and the four Area VHF Amateur Radio Repeaters. (See "ARES® Comm Area Map" in the Appendix for Repeater frequencies.)

5.4   Upon notification that a communications emergency exists, members of the ARES® Team should check-in to their respective Area Net.

5.5   The ARES® EC will designate an operator to serve as EOC Net Control Station (NCS). Control will be from the Lee County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The ARES® EC will work with Lee County Emergency Management to determine what ARES® communication services to activate. In the event the EOC is not useable, net control will be moved to the County's Emergency Response Vehicle or any other location Emergency Management selects.

5.6   Communications with adjacent county ARES® Teams will be established using the Lee County RACES Repeater on 146.685 MHz or on the ARES® Main EOC Repeater 147.165 MHz.

5.7   Communication with other counties and the State EOC can be achieved using the SARNET UHF Analog FM System. (See Appendix for more info.)

5.8   Communications with other counties and the State EOC can also be achieved using Amateur Radio HF. The Florida ARES Net uses 3.940 MHz as primary.

5.9   Where needed, mobile amateur radio units will be activated and dispatched.

6. EOC AND AREA NET CONTROL STATIONS (NCS)

6.1   The ARES® Emergency Net will be called to order by the NCS at the EOC.

6.2   Area Nets will be called to order by their respective NCS. (See ARES® COMM AREAS Map, in the Appendix for Area boundaries and frequency assignments.)

6.3   Members of ARES® will check-in to their Area Nets from their Home or Mobile Station or Pre-Assigned Location and await instructions.

6.4   Area NCS will check-in to the EOC Net and report the status of their Area ARES® members and their availability for deployment.

7. OPERATIONS

7.1   Amateur radio operators are trained communicators. When acting in that capacity, we are not interpreters, evaluators or field commanders. Our function is to transmit messages given to us by responsible officials--precisely as written, without additional comments or edits. *This in no way restricts an operator from being helpful in a situation, as long as that work does not interfere with an operator's communication responsibilities.*

7.2   All formal written messages directed to or originating from the Lee County EOC or any government entity should utilize the appropriate ICS form. All messages must be signed by the originating official, thereby taking responsibility for the content of the message. His/her title must be included with the signature. If the "originator" will not sign, the operator should note their name and title in the log.

   7.4a   An ICS-213 "Standard Message Form" should be used for "Informational Messages."

   7.4b   An ICS-213RR "Resource Request Form" should be used when requesting personnel, equipment or materials. Direct these requests to the Emergency Management Logistics Unit.

   7.4c   All formal written messages, incoming and outgoing should be logged in the ICS-309 Communications Log and a copy of the message retained in paper or PDF.

7.3   Tactical Messages simply delivering or seeking basic information are permitted. A brief description of the message should be noted in the ICS-309 Comm Log.

7.3   All Communications, incoming and outgoing, should be logged in the ICS-309 "Communications Log."

7.4   All station activities, including operator's call signs, startup and shutdown times, and *major* events, should be logged in an ICS-214 "Activity Log."
NOTE: *ICS-214s must be turned in at the end of each shift. Keep a copy for yourself, if possible.*

7.5   Operators are discouraged from transmitting personal observations or opinions, unless specifically requested by a responsible official. This avoids misinterpretation by others who may be listening to the net--for example: News personnel using scanners.

7.6   Operators of home stations who choose to not go to shelters are tasked to operate as "Boots on the ground" information and/or Relay stations and are coordinated by their respective Area Net Control Stations. These operators may also utilize the Survey 1-2-3 App to report conditions in their vicinity, if cell service exists.

8. DRILLS AND TRAINING

8.1   Drills will be held at the discretion of the EC. An annual exercise may be planned and held in conjunction with the ARRL's National Simulated Emergency Test (SET).

8.2   The Activation Procedure should be tested unannounced, with response only to net check-ins, as the EC deems necessary to insure its efficient operation.

8.3   ARES® members will meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month (except November and December) at the Lee County EOC or other designated location.

8.4   A weekly ARES® net will meet each Wednesday at 7pm on the 147.165 MHz, or alternate, repeater. The purpose of these nets is to help maintain readiness and training of ARES® Members and local amateur radio operators.

9. ARES® Communication Systems in Lee County, Florida

9.1   VHF Amateur Radio Frequencies are the "frequencies of choice" for ARES® Emergency Communications in Lee County because most Amateur Radio Operators have "Two Meter analog FM VHF equipment." In addition, UHF Frequencies are utilized for some WinLink operations. (See ICS-205 in the Appendix for Frequency Assignments.)

9.2   Inter-County communications with Charlotte, Hendry and Collier County ARES® will be handled primarily on the Lee County RACES repeater 146.685 (PL 136.5) or on the 147.165 MHz repeater (PL127.3). If either or both repeaters are not functioning then SARNET or another repeater can be chosen.

9.3   Intra-County communications will utilize VHF. If one or more of the repeaters fail, then Simplex frequencies will be utilized. (Refer to ARES® Area Comm Map in the Appendix for Repeater and Simplex Frequencies.)

9.4   WinLink communications (e-mail via amateur radio) will utilize the 145.030 (Server) and 145.010 or 145.090 (Peer to Peer) simplex frequencies. The UHF WinLink Servers on 432.675 (Bonita Springs) or 432.700 (Cape Coral) or 432.750 (Lehigh Acres) may also be utilized. WinLink operators will use the "Forms" templates built into WinLink Express whenever applicable. All WinLink operators are encouraged to keep their WinLink software up to date, but should *always* upgrade their WinLink Express software to the latest version in preparation for an approaching storm or other anticipated activation.

9.5   WinLink E-Mail Service from Lee County to the "outside world" depends on the availability of the Internet. If the Internet is not available at *any* of the WinLink Server sites following a disaster, then HF WinLink using WINMOR, ARDOP or VARA modes should be utilized.

9.6   ARES® has HF Communications equipment at the Lee County EOC. HF (3.940 MHz) can be utilized to communicate with the State EOC if SARNET is not available. HF can also be utilized to pass messages outside the area, as required, in addition to the WinLink system. NOTE: ARES Members are encouraged to invest in HF Portable equipment (transceiver and antenna), if possible.

9.7   ARES® also has transceivers at the Lee County EOC capable of communications on Citizens Band (AM and SSB) and Marine Radio frequencies.

9.8   Although not ARES® equipment, the Lee County EOC Radio Room has a County 800 MHz transceiver and a separate UHF Transceiver that is intended for communication with the Lee Hospital Security System.

9.9   Once coverage tests utilizing D-Star[2], Fusion[3] and DMR[4] have been completed, this plan may be revised to make use of those Systems.

[2] D-Star Digital Technology.   [3] Yaesu Fusion Digital Technology
[4] DMR=Digital Mobile Radio – A Motorola digital mode now utilized by Amateur Radio Operators.

10. National Traffic System (NTS) Messages

NOTE: "Welfare Messages" or "Safe and Well Messages" are not the prime function of ARES®. However, if / when there is a lull in "Disaster Response Traffic" and ARES® Operators have such messages to handle, they should pass them to the appropriate NTS Net on the NTS Repeater frequency.

10.1   The EC will appoint one or more ARES® Liaison representatives to the ARRL NTS (National Traffic System), to the MARS (Military Amateur Radio Service) Nets and to the Area's American Red Cross Chapter.

10.2   Liaison Stations to the NTS Nets and / or MARS Nets will be alerted when appropriate for a disaster response.

10.3   All written messages for the National Traffic System should be in standard ARRL Radiogram format. Message precedence of Priority, Welfare and Routine, as defined on ARRL Guide FSD-3, shall be used on all ARRL Radiogram messages. *See Appendix.*

> **NOTE**: *We always require that messages with an **Emergency** precedence be handled within the ARES Net System.*

10.4 Stations who have traffic to pass to the NTS or MARS Nets should switch to the NTS Repeater frequency, identify themselves as having traffic and then follow the instructions of the NTS Net Control Operator.

10.5 Health and Welfare Messages may also be passed *out of the area* using the WinLink System (either HF or VHF/UHF) at an operator's discretion. WinLink Operators are cautioned not to send H&W Messages to the EOC.

Web Sites for more information
The ARES® in Lee County Web Site is: www.AresRaces-LeeCountyFL.org
The Fort Myers Amateur Radio Web Site is: www.fmarc.net
The ARRL Web Site is: www.ARRL.org

ARRL / ARES Contact Information

ARRL Section Manager
    Barry Porter KB1PA
    561-499-8424

    Assistant Section Manager
    Jeff Beals WA4AW
    561-252-6707

ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator
    John Wells W4CMH
    Cell: 614-359-7161

Lee County ARES® EC and Assistant EC
    EC: Stephen Smith W9GPI
    Cell: 920-251-6249

    AEC (Deputy EC): To Be Named

Also Attached…

Tab 2.
ICS-205 Incident Radio Communications Plan for Amateur Radio in Lee County FL
Zone Map showing Repeater and Simplex Frequencies.

Tab 3.
Listing of Amateur Radio Repeaters in Lee County with a map showing their locations.
And a map of the FLDOT SARNET Amateur Radio Linked UHF Repeater System.

Tab 4.
ARES® Net Operations Procedures

Tab5 5.
ARES® Net Script