Ohio Section
Amateur Radio Emergency Service®
Emergency Coordinator Guidelines
June, 2008

Ohio Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service® Emergency Coordinator Guidelines

Written by Frank Piper – KI8GW, Ohio Section Emergency Coordinator, with the assistance of the following District Emergency Coordinators:
George Henzler – WB8HHZ (District 1)
Gary Clements-K8FRS (District 2)
Ron Moorefield-W8ILC (District 3)
Robert Spratt-N8TVU (District 4)
Jack Sovik-KB8WPZ (District 5)
Jay Bookwalter-KC8GNL (District 6)
Steve Katz-N8WL (District 7)
Jeff Slattery-N8SUZ (District 8)
George "Sonny" Alfman-W8FHF (District 9)
Mathew Welch – KB1LCS (District 10)

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This document will be reviewed and revised on an as needed basis. Updates will be released on the following website:

The Ohio Section ARES® website at http://www.ohioares.org

Ohio Section ARES® Emergency Coordinator Guidelines

Purpose:
The Ohio Section ARES® Emergency Coordinator (EC) Guidelines is a document which compliments the existing ARRL documents: *The Emergency Coordinator's Handbook*, and *The Public Service Communications Manual*, as well as our own *The Ohio Section Emergency Response Plan*. This document does not supersede any of the above listed documents.

It is important to remember, as you read through this document, that each EC must take his or her county's unique operations into consideration. This document is not intended to be a "one size fits all" plan for ARES® operations.

These guidelines provide the needed information for our own Section operations:

1. Provide the ECs of the Ohio Section a uniform set of guidelines for operating his or her own local ARES® groups.

2. Provide the necessary information to allow the EC to set-up Emergency Response Plans for his or her county.

3. Provide information for when to contact the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) to obtain assistance from neighboring counties within their District.

4. Provide information for submission of required reports.

Distribution:
These guidelines will be distributed to all Ohio Section county ECs. Every Assistant Emergency Coordinator should also have a copy of this document in the event he or she needs to step in for the Emergency Coordinator.

"Coordinate"

Function:
    Verb
Inflected Form(s):
    co·or·di·nat·ed; co·or·di·nat·ing
Date:
    1665
Transitive verb 1: to put in the same order or rank 2: to bring into a common action, movement, or condition: harmonize <we need to *coordinate* our schedules>

"Coordination"

Function:
    Noun
Etymology:
    Late Latin *coordination-, coordinatio,* from Latin *co- + ordination-, ordinatio* arrangement, from *ordinare* to arrange — more at ordain
Date:
    Circa 1643

1: the act or action of coordinating 2: the harmonious functioning of parts for effective results

(Source: Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary)

"The Ohio Section of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service prides itself on its ability to operate utilizing Coordination, Cooperation, and Communication. I am so proud of each of our ARES volunteers, who give so much of their time and equipment for the public good, without asking for anything in return. The fellowship and spirit of Amateur Radio shines from each of you!"

 - SEC Frank J. Piper, KI8GW

1. Official Job Description, as outlined by the ARRL

The ARRL Emergency Coordinator is a key team player in ARES® on the local emergency scene. Working with the Section Emergency Coordinator, the DEC and Official Emergency Stations, the EC prepares for, and engages in management of communications needs in disasters. EC duties include:

1. Promote and enhance the activities of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) for the benefit of the public as a voluntary, non-commercial communications service.

2. Manage and coordinate the training, organization and emergency participation of interested amateurs working in support of the communities, agencies or functions designated by the Section Emergency Coordinator/Section Manager.

3. Establish viable working relationships with federal, state, county, city governmental and private agencies in the ARES® jurisdictional area which need the services of ARES® in emergencies. Determine what agencies are active in your area, evaluate each of their needs, and which ones you are capable of meeting, and then prioritize these agencies and needs. Discuss your planning with your Section Emergency Coordinator and then with your counterparts in each of the agencies. Ensure they are all aware of your ARES group's capabilities, and perhaps more importantly, your limitations.

4. Develop detailed local operational plans with "served" agency officials in your jurisdiction that set forth precisely what each of your expectations are during a disaster operation. Work jointly to establish protocols for mutual trust and respect. All matters involving recruitment and utilization of ARES volunteers are directed by you, in response to the needs assessed by the agency officials. Technical issues involving message format, security of message transmission, Disaster Welfare Inquiry policies, and others, should be reviewed and expounded upon in your detailed local operations plans.

5. Establish local communications networks run on a regular basis and periodically test those networks by conducting realistic drills.

6. Establish an emergency traffic plan, with Welfare traffic inclusive, utilizing the National Traffic System as one active component for traffic handling. Establish an operational liaison with local and section nets, particularly for handling Welfare traffic in an emergency situation.

7. In times of disaster, evaluate the communications needs of the jurisdiction and respond quickly to those needs. The EC will assume authority and responsibility for emergency response and performance by ARES® personnel under his jurisdiction.

8. Work with other non-ARES® amateur provider-groups to establish mutual respect and understanding, and a coordination mechanism for the good of the public and Amateur Radio. The goal is to foster an efficient and effective Amateur Radio response overall.

9. Work for growth in your ARES® program, making it a stronger, more valuable resource and hence able to meet more of the agencies' local needs. There are thousands of new Technicians coming into the amateur service that would make ideal additions to your ARES® roster. A stronger ARES® means a better ability to serve your communities in times of need and a greater sense of pride for Amateur Radio by both amateurs and the public.

10. Report regularly to the SEC, as required.

11. Emergency Coordinators are encouraged to earn certification in Level 1 of the ARRL Emergency Communications Course http://www.arrl.org/cce/.

Recruitment of new hams and League members is an integral part of the job of every League appointee. Appointees should take advantage of every opportunity to recruit a new ham or member to foster growth of Field Organization programs, and our abilities to serve the public.

Requirements: Technician or higher class license; Full ARRL membership

2. EC Administrative Duties

The following topics are guidelines for operation within the Ohio section:

a. Monthly and Annual Reporting

Monthly reporting to your District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) is a requirement of your EC duties. These reports are assembled by your DEC, and submitted to the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) who each month prepares a section report to the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). The hours and personnel count submitted with each report gives the ARRL the information it needs to help maintain a presence with the FCC and other key personnel in Washington, DC.

Without these reports, no evidence for the need of our frequencies can be defended!

Filing monthly reports to your DEC may be done with the ARRL Form FSD-212, *Monthly DEC/EC Report*, which may be obtained from the ARRL website (www.arrl.org), or preferably, you may submit the form electronically by using the Electronic FSD-212 form provided on the Ohio ARES® website (http://www.ohioares.org). Once the form is submitted, a copy will be automatically sent to you for your own records. **The deadline for submitting monthly reports to your DEC is the 5th of each month.**

Monthly reports must be sent regardless of any activity completed by your group. Even weekly nets and monthly meetings count towards activity, and must be reported.

Repeated consecutive omissions of monthly reporting may result in the EC being released of his or her duties by the SEC, at the request of the DEC. With no reports, the DEC may assume that NO activity of any sort is being conducted by the EC, resulting in a lack of ARES® operations within that county.

Annually, ECs are required to submit the following year-end reports: The ARRL EC Annual Report (Form C), and the EC Simulated Emergency Test (SET) Report (Form A). These reports can be downloaded from the ARRL. A link to these forms will be provided on the Ohio ARES website. **Deadline for submittal of the annual reports is January 31st of each year**. Copies of the reports are to be sent to the ARRL at the following address:

ARRL HQ, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111 USA

A copy of your report must also be filed with the DEC and SEC.

b. Assistant Emergency Coordinators and Official Emergency Stations

Emergency Coordinators are not expected to perform all the job functions required by ARES® in a solo manner. The EC must appoint a team of Assistant Emergency Coordinators to help manage the required functions of a successful ARES® group. AEC assignments may include, but are not limited to the following responsibilities:

Public Service Events Manager
Engineering Manager (Repeaters, Communication Vans, etc.)
Financial Manager
Membership and Recruiting
Training Manager
Publications Manager
Public Information Officer

As stated in many other ARRL publications, the AEC is an appointed Ad-Hoc position, which requires no approval for appointment (or firing) by the local EC. AEC certificates can be provided by sending a request to the SEC.

One thing to keep in mind is that leadership in ARES® is more than having all the ARRL and FEMA courses. When appointing an AEC, pay attention to that individual's ability to interact with others. Not having the right people skills will affect that AEC's ability to lead a committee, complete tasks, cooperate with served agencies, etc. It is a recommendation of the SEC that all AECs be a minimum of eighteen (18) years of age; to coincide with some served agencies' age requirements.

Official Emergency Station (OES) is an official ARRL field organization appointment made by the SEC and/or SM at the recommendation of the local EC. Guidelines for the OES appointment are listed on the ARRL website at: http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/org/oes.html

c. Delegating Authority When Leaving the Area

If you need to leave your county for an extended period of time for either personal or business related issues (i.e. vacations, business trips, etc). You are required to delegate your EC responsibilities to an AEC, or to the DEC for your district. Inform all parties on a "need to know" only basis of your delegation, the time you will be out of the area, and when you will return. Make sure you inform the DEC as well of your absence. Disasters do not wait for everyone to be in his or her place.

d. Recruitment of Volunteers

There is a lot of information regarding membership recruitment in the *ARRL Emergency Coordinator's Handbook,* but here is a key point for the Ohio Section. When recruiting for ARES, do not limit yourself to recruiting only those in your local club(s). Any and all Amateur Radio operators are eligible for membership, regardless of ARRL or local club affiliation. Utilizing the FCC call sign list is a great way to reach out to all Hams in a given county.

e. ARES® ID Cards

All registered ARES volunteers should carry some form of an ARES ID card. Since 9/11, most EMA and Homeland Security offices are issuing their own ID cards to radio operators. If your county does not supply ID's, please use the ARRL FSD-224 ARES ID card, and make sure each volunteer carries a legal photo ID along with his or her card.

f. Volunteer Rosters

It is the duty of the EC to keep and maintain, either by himself or herself, or a designated Assistant EC (AEC), an accurate and current roster of all ARES® volunteers within his or her county. This roster may be compiled using the standard ARRL form FSD-98, *ARES Registration Form*, or an application form which better suits his or her own county's needs. In either case, the volunteer roster should be built in a format that is easy to use and access by the EC and all AECs, in need of emergency activation. Volunteer rosters should have at the minimum the information asked on ARRL Form FSD-98. Any additional information requested by the EC for the benefit of his or her county's operations may be requested, but should not include any information which could result in any form of identity theft (i.e. SSN, taxpayer ID, Drivers License number, maiden name, etc.).

It is recommended that the EC provide a periodic copy of the volunteer roster to his or her DEC. In the event the DEC is operating in the absence of the EC.

For the sake of volunteer information security, all ARES® volunteer rosters, while built and maintained under the EC, are considered property of the ARRL for only the reason that the roster and any applications on file must be surrendered in their entirety to the DEC or SEC if the EC is released or resigns from his or her duties. No remaining copies are to be kept by the previous EC.

It is the EC's duty to his or her volunteers that ARES® rosters are used in a professional manner, and are never submitted to those ARES® personnel that have no real administrative need for this information.

g. Resolving and Reporting Problems Within Your County

It is under the county EC's authority to resolve any problems that occur within his or her assigned county. The EC may ask for the assistance of the DEC for aid and support, but it is clear that the authority and responsibility of the county issue is the EC's. The EC should keep the DEC advised on any problem(s), so that in the event of requested assistance from the DEC, the DEC is already familiar with the matter. The DEC will then advise the SEC of the situation. The SEC is available at anytime to assist in any and all matters.

Remember: If it's a problem that you are uncomfortable in handling, then pass it to the DEC and SEC. They are here to support you!

h. Resigning Your EC Appointment

Unfortunately, at sometime in our ARES careers we are forced to give up the EC appointment. Work, family, or simply burnout may cause you to make this decision. When that time comes, please follow this plan to ensure a smooth transition of responsibility:

1. Give adequate notice to your DEC, preferably 60 to 90 days' notice if possible.
2. When notifying, provide the name and call sign of the person who you would like to have replace you. If you do not have a recommended replacement, the DEC will start a process to recommend a replacement to the SEC.
3. Be sure to notify all the served agencies in your county of the transition, so they are aware of the transition. Coordinate this with the DEC.
4. Be sure to transfer ALL materials in your possession (including rosters – see Paragraph 2f) to your new EC, and to the DEC.
5. The replacement EC is to be recommended to the DEC. If the DEC has no issues with the prospective EC, a recommendation will be made to the SEC, who will make the appointment through the ARRL. Simply making the change and notifying the DEC and SEC will not be accepted.

3. Meetings, Local Nets & the National Traffic System (NTS)

As an EC, you should conduct periodic meetings for your ARES® volunteers to conduct business face-to-face, hold a program, invite a guest speaker, etc. These meetings are invaluable to allow your volunteers to meet while not under the stress of a public service event, drill, or actual emergency. If there are already club meetings being held in your county, be courteous as not to clash your meetings with those of the other club(s). Also, make sure that your ARES meetings do not add to the burden of Hams having to attend multiple meetings in one month. If there is only one club in your county, ask the club president if you may have a small time slot to discuss ARES topics. Cooperation is the key element in working with all the Hams.

Local on-air nets for your county's ARES® group should be held frequently (weekly or semi-monthly) to allow ARES® volunteers to conduct a weekly check of their equipment, and to conduct business and relay information between the in-person meetings. Nets must allow time for the passing of any formal NTS traffic that may be brought to the net, as the NTS is the backbone for all formal emergency traffic going into or coming from a county in an emergency situation.

4. Public Service Events and Drills

It is essential that ARES® teams remain in a "ready" status. Participating in public service events is one way to practice controlled net procedures. They also provide a means for the public to see that amateur radio is serving a useful purpose in their community.

While public service events are fun, be sure not to "overbook" your ARES® group for more work than they can provide in a reasonable amount of time. Remember that your volunteers also have lives outside ARES®, and that the adage "Too much of a good thing" can sometimes provide negative results, such as burned out volunteers. Appointing a "Public Service Events" AEC will help in that situation, as he or she can oversee the activity level of a group, and make the "go/no-go decision", to participate in an upcoming event.

Use the public service event AEC as your only sole contact for outside groups requesting help. Many times an eager ARES® volunteer may volunteer your group out of good intentions, but is not aware that he or she has just "double-booked" your group for a complete Saturday!

To meet OEMA/FEMA (Ohio Emergency Management Agency / Federal Emergency Management Agency) requirements, many county EMAs will hold annual drills. You as the EC should work with your county EMA to make sure ARES® is involved in some way. Your group has an opportunity to work side-by-side with the public safety officials within your county. Another idea is to appoint an AEC to be a liaison to the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and/or local hospital to help with their local exercises.

ARES® groups should also conduct, at a minimum, an annual drill to ensure all volunteers are in a ready state with go-kits, equipment, etc. Don't overdo these "self-contained" drills.

ARES® is the best "sales team" Amateur Radio has. Getting involved in public events and drills keeps Amateur Radio's usefulness visible to the public.

5. Emergency Communications Plans

Each Emergency Coordinator and his or her planning staff should formulate a written Emergency Communications Plan for their county. The EC should include the DEC in the formulations of these plans. This will allow the DEC to synchronize plans with adjacent counties, develop plans for district–wide agencies, and structure mutual aid.

The agencies and/or organizations you serve, such as EMA, Board of Health, the local Hospital(s), the 911 center(s) and the Regional Medical Response System facilities etc. will require a separate plan, written by or for each of them.

To develop a plan effectively, meet with the agency/organization to determine what its needs and functions are for that facility.

Examine what the communications needs would be for communications from the incident scene to the facility. (i.e. notification of the # and types of patients being sent to the facility, type of chemical involved, general information etc.)

If possible prepare a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) between the facility/organization and your ARES® team clearly outlining what the ARES® responsibilities and duties are and what the facility/organizations responsibilities and duties are.

Within the response plan for each agency/organization include the following:

- A floor plan or map of where the amateur radio equipment is located (or to be located) in each facility.
- A floor plan or map of where amateur radio operators will be stationed while on site.
  (i.e. for hospitals - Facility Command Post or Emergency Operations Center, Emergency Room, Shadow Emergency Room Doctor/Staff, Decontamination Tent, etc.)
- To whom they report
- Where they report
- Rules and procedures operators must follow for operating and being on that site.
- Places operators are allowed access to.
- Places where operators are not allowed access.
- Locations of restroom facilities within the complex
- Locations of lunch rooms, vending machines, place to rest etc.
- A Frequency Plan for:
    1. Primary repeater (including offsets and any tones required)
    2. Secondary Repeater (including offsets and any tones required)
    3. Backup Simplex Frequencies (and any tones required)
    4. On-Site internal communications between on site operators
    5. Digital Network frequencies

This document, when completed, should leave no doubt and no questions unanswered as to what each and every operator's job is at that facility/organization from start to end of the incident.

6. Mutual Assistance and Coordination Between Counties within Your District

Sometime a public service event, drill, or in worse case an actual emergency will consume the ARES® resources (volunteers and equipment) within your county. Planning and coordinating with your neighboring ECs will help ease these problems. Knowing who to contact and when can be confusing. The following guidelines, taken directly from the Ohio Section Emergency Response Plan (OSERP) are to be followed:

OCCURRENCE: **NOTIFY:**
Public Service Events & Local Drills   Notify local ARES® personnel
Emergency in your County   Notify local ARES® Personnel, DEC/SEC
Emergency Spreading to adjacent County   Notify your DEC or SEC and adjacent County EC

When you need assistance notify your DEC and/or SEC

When requesting assistance you will need to know the following information:

- What is the nature of the emergency?
- How many Amateurs may be required?
- How long is assistance estimated to be needed?
- What kind of equipment will be needed?
- What are the physical and weather conditions in which they will be operating?
- To where and to whom do they report?

7. Training for You and Your ARES® Volunteers

Since 9/11/01, ARES® members have been strongly encouraged to become trained in the FEMA courses covering the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The following classes are requested by EMAs for volunteers to be able to work within an EOC:

- IS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS-200 Basic Incident Command System
- IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
- IS-800 National Response Plan (NRP) - An Introduction

These classes are offered free on-line by FEMA at http://training.fema.gov/EMIweb/IS.

ECs should also consider enrolling in the ARRL ARECC Emergency Communications course EC-001. This course does require an out-of-pocket expense by the student (current cost is $45.00 per course for ARRL members). Information and registration for this course is available online at http://www.arrl.org/cce/courses.html.

Links to all the above classes are also listed on the Ohio ARES website.

Ohio Section ARES®
District Map
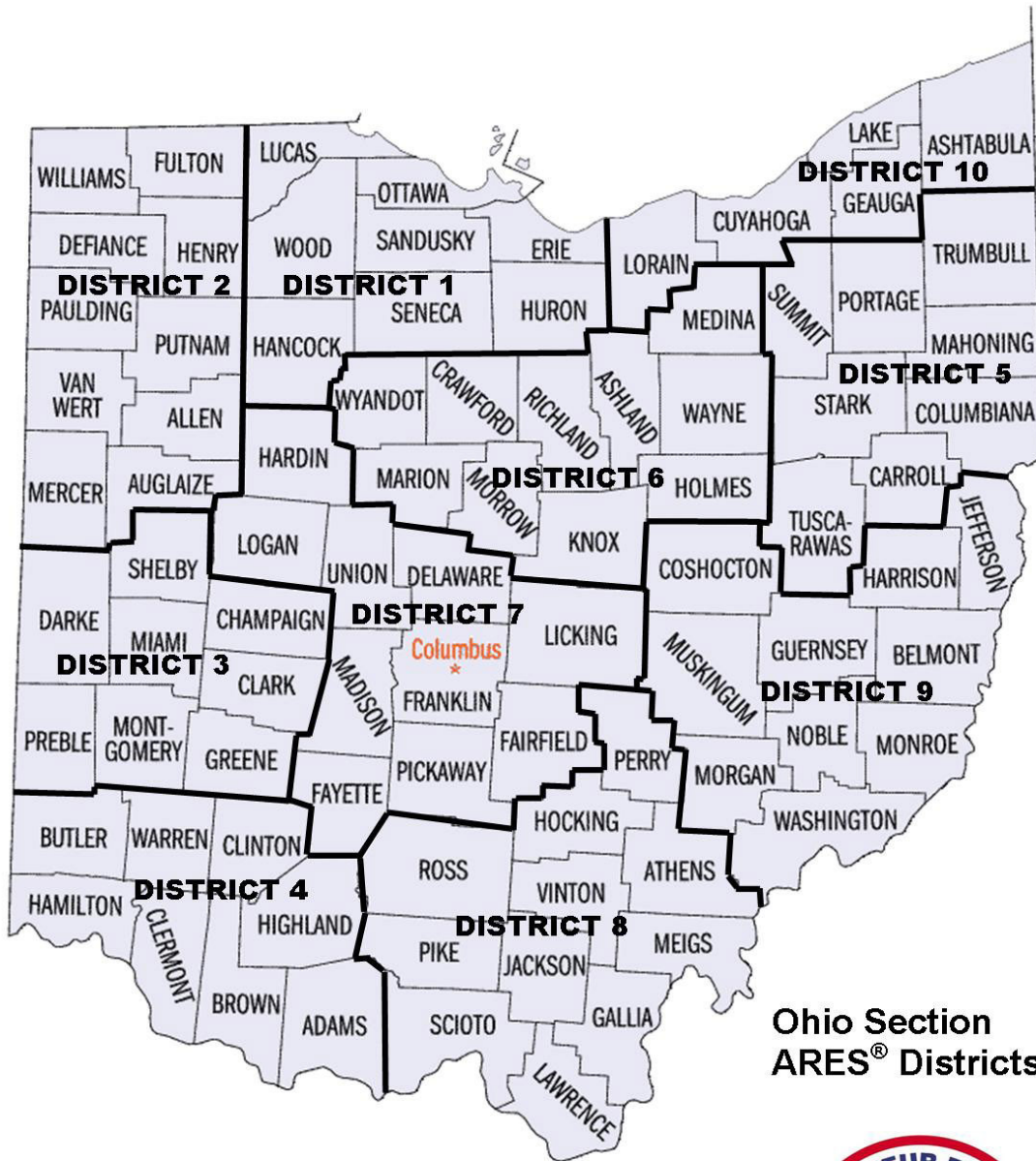
Ohio Section
ARES® Districts

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