

**Jefferson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
District-9 STX Section**

2016

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Jefferson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a field organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). It is composed of FCC licensed amateur radio operators who are trained emergency communicators, volunteering their personal time, skill and equipment, to serve in the public interest. Jefferson Co ARES is focused on providing service to Jefferson County, Texas. Most Amateur Radio operators living within or near Jefferson County are eligible for participation with Jefferson County ARES.
- 1.2** The Jefferson Co ARES functions in this Emergency Communications Plan under the direction of the ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC), District Emergency Coordinator (DEC), and the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC). The EC is appointed by the Section Manager for the STX Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), and depends upon the support of Amateur Radio clubs.
- 1.3** The EC may appoint Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AECs) as needed.
- 1.4** When activated, the EC or AEC performing the activation will become the ARES Officer In Charge (OIC), or will designate an OIC. The OIC will be the final authority within Jefferson County ARES for that emergency incident or public service event.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1** The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the minimum information needed in an emergency. Each emergency incident is different and flexibility is necessary to provide an adequate response.
- 2.2** The primary responsibility of the Jefferson Co ARES is to furnish emergency communications in the event of a natural or manmade emergency when regular communications fail, become inadequate, or overloaded.
- 2.3** Periodic instruction, training and drills shall be carried out to ensure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur emergency communications.

2.4 The following is a list of jurisdictions, government and non-profit agencies that will be served, as requested, in an emergency. Other city, county or state agencies will be served as requested by the emergency management of Jefferson County.

2.4.1 Incorporated cities in Jefferson County.

2.4.2 The unincorporated area or the population of Jefferson County

2.4.3 The American Red Cross

2.4.4 Law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services

2.4.5 Hospitals and nursing homes

2.4.6 The SEC of the STX Section of the ARRL to assist other counties

2.4.7 The State Division of Emergency Management

2.4.8 The Federal Emergency Management Agency

2.4.9 The Salvation Army

2.5 Jefferson County ARES may provide communications support at public events conducted by non-profit organizations in non-emergency situations.

2.6 Jefferson County ARES should support the Skywarn program of the National Weather Service (NWS) when weather conditions warrant. A request from a served agency is not required for Skywarn support.

3. PLAN ACTIVATION

3.1 Any member of Jefferson County ARES who becomes aware that a communications emergency exists, should contact the EC or an Assistant EC, then monitor the primary net frequency of **(145.470) (+) (103.5 Tone)** for activity.

Backup frequencies are:

Voice VHF

147.200 (+) 118.8 tone Port Arthur PD South County Repeater*

146.700 (-) 107.2 tone Bmt ARC Beaumont Events

147.300 (-) 103.5 tone Exxon Mobil Repeater*

146.980 (-) 103.5 tone Devers HAMS repeater

146.520 Simplex National Calling Frequency

146.580 Simplex Primary & Events Frequency

145.560 Simplex Backup Frequency

444.700 (+) 107.2 tone Bmt ARC Beaumont Repeater

444.900 (+) 103.5 tone Exxon Mobil UHF Repeater*

440.725 W5SSV D-Star Repeater

146.020 D-star Simplex Frequency

Digital RMS Packet Nodes

145.010 W5SSV-10

145.010 KC5YSM-10 PAPD

145.010 W5SSV-1 BPT Digipeater

145.010 N5MTX-11 Orange County RMS

145.050 RMS Peer to Peer

145.070 Other Digital Sound Card Modes

Echolink Repeaters

147.200 (+) 118.8 tone Port Arthur PD
147.000 (-) 118.8 tone Jasper Co
146.700 (-) 107.2 tone Beaumont
145.230 (-) 103.5 tone Big Thicket
146.980 (-) 103.5 tone Devers

Local Group HF contact Frequencies

Daytime – 7.240 MHz Times 10:00-2:00-4:00 Night-3.925 time 8:00PM

- 3.2** Jefferson Co ARES members are prohibited from going to the site of any emergency incident unless authorized to do so by Net Control. Net Control will only authorize operators to go to the site of an emergency incident if the appropriate served agency request ARES help at that site. The request, requester name, title, served agency,

NOTE: Currently mobile units may stage near the affected area, in the parking lots of pre-defined staging areas, which some are:

Jefferson Co Amateur Radio Club 923 Boston Ave , Nederland, Texas
Port Arthur Police PD EOC 645 4th St Port Arthur, Texas
Beaumont EOC 700 Orleans 2rd floor Beaumont Texas
Beaumont DDC 7200 Eastex Freeway, Beaumont, Texas
Port Neches FD 606 Magnolia, Port Neches Texas

- 3.3** The EC or Assistant EC shall be notified by telephone or other methods. Including amateur radio or courier, may also be used if needed.
- 3.4** In any emergency in which Amateur Radio is requested to serve, Amateur Radio operators may be alerted by any emergency management coordinator, or state official notifying the EC or Assistant EC. When AECs are notified, they will periodically attempt to contact the EC until successful. The EC or AEC who activates ARES will become the ARES Officer In Charge (OIC). The ARES OIC will document the name, title, and served agency of the requester.
- 3.5** The ARES OIC will be in charge of all ARES operations during any emergency activation. He/she will be the top Jefferson County ARES authority for the event. All ARES participants will take direction from him/her. The OIC may change during the event at the discretion of the OIC or EC.

4. MOBILIZATION

- 4.1** The OIC or designee will first notify Jefferson Co ARES members by activating the net or a telephone tree.
- 4.2** If required to accomplish necessary staffing for the emergency, the OIC, or designee, will transmit on any VHF 144-148 MHz in the Jeff Co ARES area, advising all stations of the ARES activation. Email and cell phone text message may also be used.
- 4.3** Upon notification that a communications emergency exists, members of the Jeff Co Amateur Radio Emergency Service will listen to the frequency and will only check in if they have urgent information or when the Net Control Station (NCS) asks for check-ins on the Jefferson Co ARES Emergency Net. Stations will maintain radio silence, unless they have business with the net.
- 4.4** The highest staffing priority in any emergency incident will be given first to those amateurs registered with the Jefferson Co ARES. Second priority will be members of other ARES groups. Third priority will be amateur radio operators not associated with any ARES group. Assignments will be given to minimize the travel distance.

5. DUTIES OF NET CONTROL AND DEPLOYED STATIONS

- 5.1** OPENING NETS - The Jefferson County Emergency Net will be activated by the Net Control Station, upon instructions from the OIC. Based upon the facts, stations will be fully advised as to the nature of the emergency. Net Control will establish and announce backup frequencies and a backup Net Control station. As appropriate, Net Control will periodically announce that a net is in progress, give brief summaries, and remind users of backup frequencies and backup Net Control, etc.

5.1.1 A minimum of one directed net is required, the Operations Net, and it is conducted on the primary repeater frequency, if it is operational. If it is not operating move to the secondary repeaters or primary simplex frequency (see 3.1).

5.1.2 If necessary, as determined by the incident OIC, additional directed nets may be activated on alternate frequencies (see 3.1) or any available VHF simplex frequencies (144.90-145.10, 146.40-146.58, 147.42-147.57 MHz):

Resource or Logistics – identify and assign stations and equipment

Administration net – coordinate activities of all other nets

Medical net – coordinate first aid or other medical responders, including ambulances

Traffic net – coordinate movement of formal written messages, including NTS liaison if necessary

5.1.3 Liaison stations to section HF emergency and traffic nets may be required. These nets normally operate on the following frequencies:

Emergency & tactical traffic day: (7.285) night: (3.873)

H&W traffic day: (7.290) night: (3.935)

5.2 CHECK-IN STATIONS - Stations will be checked in from their home stations, Mobiles, and portable stations. After they check in, all stations shall stand-by on an assigned frequency for further instructions. An inventory list will be made of operators and their equipment for possible assignment.

5.3 Mobile and portable stations will be dispatched as needed either to a "staging" location or directly to the incident site as determined by the OIC. OIC must notify NCS which agency official, by name and title, requested our deployment. This is in case any deployed units encounter a restricted access situation or other challenges. The exact location of each deployed station will be maintained by the NCS.

5.4 Each incident site will have a designated team of at least two or more Amateur Radio operators who will coordinate amateur communication at their specific deployment site.

5.4.1 Be prepared to be refused entry to the area. Do not attempt to enter the area unless specifically approved to do so by the supervisor. Do not represent yourself as a Red Cross (or other agency) worker unless you are specifically on Red Cross (or other agency) business. Be courteous! If you are denied entry, notify Net Control and wait for further instructions.

5.4.2 Upon arrival at the incident site, identify yourself to the location's supervisor or Incident Commander. Make sure any relief operators are also introduced, and ask the location supervisor or Incident Commander (or designate) to do the same.

5.4.3 Upon entry to the site, set up your equipment and get on the air as quickly as possible. Try to locate near the "action" but stay out of other's way. Start a chronological log of operations, recording all messages and other events affecting communications and/or station operation. Check into the Operations Net, or other net as instructed.

5.4.4 Do not divulge information nor express opinions to any individual, particularly the media. Refer all questions to the site's public information officer.

5.5 If any requested action involves unacceptable risk, the person should NOT take the action. Upon refusal, the person should notify the net control station that he/she will not be performing the requested action, along with a brief statement of their risk assessment.

6. OPERATIONS

6.1 MESSAGES

6.1.1 Formal Messages: Formal messages are those that are written in a standard format. All messages that request material or services, which may require payment or replacement, must be formal messages.

Message Forms: All formal messages must be written in standard ARRL format, unless otherwise directed by the served agency. It is strongly encouraged to restrict messages to 25 words or less, particularly if the message will be relayed multiple times or sent out of the area. Messages over 25 words are much less likely to reach their destination quickly. Operators receiving messages from officials should encourage the officials to produce messages in 25 words or less to ensure prompt and reliable delivery. The served agency representative can create his/her printed message on the Message Forms provided by the radio operator for that purpose.

Message Precedence: The operator must assign the message an ARRL PRECEDENCE, defined on ARRL CD Form 3. This PRECEDENCE will be used on all messages. Any operator receiving messages should check the precedence of messages received for EMERGENCY precedence messages. Anyone giving messages to an operator should check the messages and inform the operator if any of the messages are of EMERGENCY precedence. The person passing the messages should be sure the receiving operator acknowledges this precedence.

Requester name: All FORMAL MESSAGES require the PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY and SITE of the requester. All requests to send ARES operators to a location require PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY and SITE of the requester. These requests should be written down in the net log.

MESSAGES RECEIVED REQUESTING MATERIALS OR SERVICES, WHICH MAY LATER REQUIRE PAYMENT or REPAYMENT OF FUNDS WILL NOT BE TRANSMITTED UNTIL THEY CONTAIN THE PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY AND SITE OF THE REQUESTER.

Save Messages: All operators must save a copy of all formal messages.

6.1.2 Tactical Messages

Tactical emergency messages, such as FIRE, POLICE or Life-or-Death situations do NOT require numbers. These are the highest priority messages. Get the attention of the NCS between transmissions by giving your tactical call sign and saying "emergency traffic." Example: "Shelter Two emergency traffic." When accepting such messages for transmission, require only the following information:

- A. To (Example: Port Arthur Fire Department)
- B. What (Example: Fire truck needed ASAP)
- C. Why (Example: Structure fire)
- D. Where (Example: Jefferson County High School)
- E. Who (Clara Barton, manager, shelter two)

6.2 TRANSMITTING

Stations must not transmit unless invited to do so by the Net Control (NCS).

6.2.1 Exceptions:

- A. Stations with tactical emergency traffic.
- B. As designated in the standard operating procedure for Amateur Radio.

6.2.2 Keep transmissions short and to the point. All stations, including net control, should leave frequent gaps in their transmissions for emergency traffic. Long enough for someone to recognize the gap and announce "emergency traffic."

6.3 COMMUNICATIONS METHODS

Operators should use the most efficient method available to transmit their message. If available and appropriate, use the telephone, cell phone, internet, packet, foot, automobile, etc. The more traffic passed off the air, the more available ham radio is for traffic to and from locations without alternate means of communications.

7. DEMOBILIZATION

- 7.1** The OIC shall be the final authority for demobilization following an emergency incident or net.
- 7.2** Stations shall keep Net Control informed when they have been released from any assignments. They shall report the Name and Title of the person releasing them, and the served agency name to Net Control.
- 7.3** Net Control will enter the message details in the net log.
- 7.4** Released stations should identify their availability for additional assignments and continue to monitor the assigned frequency.

8. TRAINING, TESTS AND ALERTS

- 8.1** An annual test will be conducted during the fall of each year in conjunction with the nationwide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) sponsored by ARRL. Periodic exercises will be conducted in cooperation with local emergency management coordinators.
- 8.2** A training net will be held for the membership beginning at (8 PM) local time each (Wednesday) on the (145.470) (+) (103.5) repeater, or other designated frequency.
- 8.3** At the discretion of the EC, Jefferson Co ARES will sponsor an unannounced activation at least once a year.
- 8.4** A Standard Operating Procedure, detailing emergency response procedures and actions in support of this plan, shall be written.
- 8.5** The Jefferson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Communications Plan and the Standard Operating Procedure shall be reviewed during February of each year to keep this plan current and viable.

9. DEFINITIONS

9.1 ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service – a voluntary field organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). It is composed of FCC licensed amateur radio operators who are trained emergency communicators, volunteering their personal time, skill and equipment, to serve in the public interest, with neither a pecuniary interest nor compensation.

9.2 Emergency – any immediate threat to life or property.

9.3 Disaster - a catastrophic event that exceeds the ability of the community to cope.

9.4 Incident – any communications emergency that occurs without notice.

9.5 Officer In Charge (OIC) – Jeff Co ARES official responsible for all operations when the organization is activated for an incident or public service event.

9.6 Public Service Event – a pre-planned activity for a non-profit organization, used to provide training and experience for ARES members. Examples include a parade, bike race and fun run.

9.7 RACES – Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

9.8 SATERN – Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network

9.9 MARS – Military Auxiliary Radio System