

Sacramento Valley Section

**AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE
MARCH 2004**

Update

SACRAMENTO VALLEY SECTION ARES MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sacramento Valley Section ARRL/ARES is to prepare for and provide emergency communications to both public and private agencies and the general public. The ARES recruits licensed amateur radio operators and maintains rosters of trained, skilled, disciplined and equipped individuals and teams experienced in fixed, mobile and field station operation. This free service is provided in a coordinated and organized manner. Our goal is to provide the best possible emergency communications radio networks capable of handling third party tactical and formal message traffic locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally anytime normal means of communications fail or are overloaded.

PREFACE

This guide is not intended to supersede, replace, or negate any local ARES plans. It is intended primarily for ECs, AECs, DECs, SECs, and others who serve in a leadership capacity. It is recommended, however, that all EMCOMM personnel be familiar with its contents. It is assumed that persons reading this guide are trained, disciplined operators, are familiar with "FCC Part 97" ARRL operating procedures, local emergency plans, and the Incident Command System (ICS).

The A.R.R.L.'s ARES FIELD RESOURCES MANUAL has an excellent guide [Appendix Seven] that will provide additional information on the ARESMAT concept. For FEMA home study courses (including ICS) go to www.fema.gov/EMI/ishome.htm on the Internet.

OPERATIONAL AREA

The Sacramento Valley Section is a 20 county area. District 1: Lassen, Modoc, Siskiyou, Trinity; District 2 Butte, Glenn, Shasta, Tehama; District 3: Colusa, Sacramento, Yolo, Yuba and Sutter; District 4: Alpine, Amador, El Dorado, Sierra, Placer, Nevada, Plumas. It is bordered on the north by the Oregon Section, on the east by the Nevada Section, on the west by the San Francisco Section, and on the south by the San Joaquin Valley Section and East Bay Sections. ARRL and other EMCOMM Officials in adjacent, sections, divisions and states are invited to familiarize themselves with this plan.

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THE AMATEUR RESOURCE

As any EC knows, trained, disciplined, and dedicated volunteer amateur radio operators are in short supply.

Your ARES team could be quickly overwhelmed, even in a relatively minor emergency activation. This guide will help you decide when, and how, to summon assistance.

THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Emergency Coordinator is the leader of the ARES team at the local level. It is his or her role to ensure that the amateur radio operator volunteer resource is utilized to the best advantage. The EC may have any number of AECs. An AEC may function as a liaison person with a "served agency", may provide coordination in a remote locality, or (more typically) is a "specialist" (e.g. digital communications, public information, computers, etc.) Ideally, all AECs will be capable and ready to function as an alternate EC.

The EC has many "bosses". He (or she) works in cooperation with the director or manager of a "served agency" Within the ARES structure, the EC (or "acting EC") reports to the DEC. The DEC reports to the SEC. The SEC reports to the Section Manager. If your immediate superior is not available, report to the person at the next highest level.

An EC may occasionally work under the direction of another EC. (E.g. - when an EC has responded into another ECs jurisdiction with a team of ARES operators.)

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MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL

When an emergency or disaster event requiring auxiliary communications appears imminent, or has occurred, the EC should alert or activate the team immediately. It is better to "scramble" everyone and not be needed, than to be too late. "Denial" that an event may occur, or has occurred, is not uncommon. A so-called "false alarm" provides training, promotes awareness, and will help to evaluate a team's ability to respond.

The same principles apply with reference to summoning outside help. The "we can handle it" syndrome is common. As soon as you suspect that mutual assistance may be needed, notify your DEC or SEC. If agency authorities are reluctant or disagree, you as the EC, may still notify your DEC or SEC that a Mutual Assistance request may be forthcoming. [NOTE: In jurisdictions where the EC is also the RACES Officer, and/or the CDF-VIP HAMCO, this will be relatively easy; but in places where the RO or HAMCO are not coordinating with the ARES, this may be awkward.] ALSO: be sure to notify everyone to "stand down" when the threat or emergency has subsided.

COORDINATING YOUR RESOURCES

As an EC, DEC, or SEC, your primary job is to "coordinate" the amateur radio resource for your area. During an actual event, be sure to THINK...AND PLAN AHEAD. Talk to local officials and attempt to determine what will be needed for emergency or auxiliary communications in 12, 24, 48, 72, or more hours down the road. Develop a plan, and put it into motion.

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The FIRST RESOURCE is the locally registered, trained, and equipped ARES team members. The SECOND RESOURCE is the registered and trained ARES members or a team from a nearby jurisdiction.

The THIRD RESOURCE are the amateur operators who just "show up" This phenomenon, known as "convergence" is common in emergency and disaster situations. These helpers are usually undisciplined and unfamiliar with ARES procedures and the emergency plan; and they often cause more problems than they solve. However, there are exceptions, so it is important that each individual be evaluated and judged on his or her own merits. This can be time consuming, so it is suggested that you delegate that task to an AEC (or possibly a visiting EC.) Those that are selected to work should be given an orientation to the ARES plan and procedures, and be briefed on the incident. Then, they must be registered with ARES and the served agency.

CALLING FOR ASSISTANCE

The maximum shift (work period) should be 12 hours. This includes you! As soon as you decide that outside help will be needed in order to provide relief for your operators, MAKE THE CALL. Follow the "chain of command" and get the "wheels in motion"! If you are unable to contact your DEC, SEC or the SM, it is acceptable to contact a neighboring EC and summon help. But, since the DEC or SEC will be looking at "the larger picture", regarding Mutual Assistance, it is imperative that you notify your DEC, SEC, or SM as soon as possible.

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When you make the call for assistance, inform the DEC or SEC about how long the assistance will be needed.

State the name the agency that they will be serving, the name of the authorizing official, and advise if the agency will be providing meals, sleeping accommodations, and mileage reimbursement. All responding volunteers are required to log times and mileage. Volunteers from outside California must log their odometer readout when they enter the state.

REMEMBER:

1. Only skilled, disciplined, equipped and registered ARES personnel should respond in Mutual Assistance situations; and all personnel should be directed to a command post or staging area to "sign in". If not already registered, every volunteer must be registered with the "served agency", before they are assigned to the field. Be sure to have the registration forms or logs readily available.
2. Responding teams should be given clear directions to the command center or staging area. Inform them of a "talk-in frequency" (it could be shared with operations, but ideally it will be a frequency dedicated to logistics.)
3. As a general rule, an ARESMAT (ARES Mutual Assistance Team) should come with its own leader(s). (The ICS recommends a 1-to-5 ratio). A team may be given a specific task and utilized as a team. Or, individuals may be assigned to work with your team members, or (once oriented to the operation) they may be given independent assignments.

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4. Circumstances usually change rapidly. But, if at all possible, use the outside help you have summoned; and utilize their skills as much as possible. Some may be leaders, others may possess technical skills, computer skills, traffic handling, clerical or other valuable skills.

SCHEDULES

The preferred modes of communication for mutual assistance requests, coordination, and scheduling are telephone and e-mail. In events where these commercial services are inoperable or unavailable, use packet or other amateur digital modes if possible. Voice radio communications are the least preferred for these administrative purposes. "QSTs" ARES bulletins, updates, mobile, and tactical communications are, of course, appropriate on SSB or FM phone.

Nets or schedules are necessary to ensure that the flow of information is maintained, and to manage resources effectively. During events that may require mutual assistance, these recommended schedules be implemented for "command and control".

10 minutes before the bottom of every hour (e.g. 1320 to 1330) a VHF ARES leadership net will convene.

10 minutes after the bottom of every hour (e.g. 1330 to 1340) there will be a HF ARES leadership net.

The "top of the hour" is then available for local nets.
(Please see next page for the designated frequencies)

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**ARES MUTUAL ASSISTANCE FREQUENCIES
(SV SECTION - ALL DISTRICTS)**

Each county's emergency plan will list the designated, frequencies for intra-county communications.

For inter-county "command and control" communications, mutual-aid, and administrative purposes; whether it be operational, or (more likely) logistical, the frequencies listed below are designated for use by ARRL leaders. (AECs, ECs, DECes, SECs, SMs, Official Emergency Stations, Official Relay Stations, and other appropriate EMCOMM traffic.) For local tactical and all routine and welfare traffic please make your contact and move to another frequency when possible. Use simplex whenever possible.

145.45- Red Bluff - District 1 and 2 (north Central Valley). Alternate: 444.950+ (110.9) Red Bluff

146.91- (91.5) - Fredonyer Peak - District 1 and 2 (northeastern CA - Lassen / Modoc).

146.085+ (127.3) MHz Sutter Buttes - District 3 and 4 (south central valley).

3987 kHz (+ or -) LSB is the primary HF frequency.

7232 kHz (+ or -) LSB is the secondary HF frequency.

1982 kHz (+ or -) LSB is the alternate nighttime HF frequency.

NOTE: 3992, 7230, & 1987 kHz are California OES - ACS frequencies.

147.42 MHz FM simplex is the unofficial national frequency for ARES / American Red Cross communications.

147.57 MHz FM simplex has been adopted in some areas as the ARES / SAR frequency
DIGITAL communications will be on normal established channels selected by the digital operators on duty.

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