

Richardson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Johnson County

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Hazardous Winter Weather

Standard Operating Procedure

1. Scope

This document provides specific procedures for amateur radio operators within Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee County to support winter weather operations. Activities supported include:

- Assist motorists traveling in hazardous weather. Weather conditions by responding to calls for emergency assistance, summoning aid for stranded motorists, exchanging traffic hazard information (ie – accidents, traffic backups, blockages, etc).
- Providing storm reports to the National Weather Service in Valley.
- Providing communications in the event of a disruption of electricity or telephone service.

2. Preparation

All amateur radio operators are encouraged to monitor the developing weather situation through forecasts and outlook products provided through local weather sources including:

- NOAA Weather Radio (KWN-41, Shubert, 162.500 MHz)
- Internet Weather Sources
- Local Media (AM/FM Radio, Television).

24 – 48 hours before a potential winter storm, the National Weather Service in Valley will issue a "Hazardous Weather Outlook" which outlines the timing, location, types of weather conditions expected and the probability of occurrence. The NWS periodically updates this statement throughout the day, and amateurs are encouraged to review this product as it is issued on their web page at (<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/oax>) or via NOAA Weather Radio.

3. Activation Procedures

If weather conditions deteriorate (snow, sleet, freezing rain, etc) amateur radio operators are encouraged to monitor the 147.075 Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee County ARES Repeater. The nature of the weather conditions will dictate the type of operation needed, so a full activation of ARES may or may not be needed. If severe conditions dictate a full ARES response, the call chain should be activated. Possible operations and necessary activations are highlighted in the following section.

4. Operational Procedures

4.1 Monitoring to provide motorist assistance

All ARES stations are encouraged to monitor the 147.075 repeater if driving conditions are hazardous but not life threatening or dangerous. Possible situations would be a winter storm watch or winter weather advisory. A net control station may or may not be established, but if the repeater is quiet for an extended period monitoring stations are encouraged to announce their availability with an announcement similar to: "KCØROC monitoring for motorist assistance."

4.2 STANDBY Net Operation

When winter weather conditions become potentially dangerous (winter storm warning, blizzard warning, ice storm warning, etc) a STANDBY net may be considered. The primary purpose of a STANDBY net would be to limit the volume of traffic on the repeater so that requests for assistance and emergency traffic can be handled quickly and efficiently.

Depending on the level of vehicle traffic, it may not be necessary to establish a STANDBY net as few mobiles may be active. Following the "monitoring to provide assistance" section would be sufficient.

During a STANDBY net, the EC, AEC or any trained net control operator should establish net control and perform the following functions:

- Periodically announce that a STANDBY net is in operation.
- Periodically announce that net control is available for motorist assistance, both emergency and non emergency types.
- Request mobile or fixed stations to check in with net control, advising location, weather conditions, and availability to assist with requests for motorist assistance
- Advise stations that the repeater is open for direct station to station calls, but conversations should be kept short or moved to another frequency if necessary.
- Periodically pass along reports of vehicular or traffic hazards to motorists if requested.
- Periodically collect weather reports (ie – visibility, snow intensity, depth, wind damage, etc) for reporting to the National Weather Service or Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee County Emergency Management

4.3 ACTIVE Net Operation

An ACTIVE net may be established if conditions warrant (ie – communications failure, significant ice storm, etc). These types of situations will be addressed in the standard emergency operations plan. However, it is envisioned that an ACTIVE net will usually not need to be established, but rather only monitoring to provide assistance or a STANDBY net will be the norm.

5. Safety Considerations

The priority of all participants, whether fixed or mobile, should be safety. Fixed stations making themselves available to provide motorist assistance should do so from a fixed location with telephone service available. Mobile stations can place calls for assistance through cellular telephone only if no fixed stations are available to provide assistance. Amateur radio operators are discouraged from intentionally "patrolling" roads during hazardous winter weather to provide assistance. This type of activity will likely lead to more calls for assistance, create more headaches for law enforcement/wrecker services, and delay help for others. The intent of this plan is to only place calls for assistance to mobiles in the course of their normal travels.

6. Termination

Participation is terminated when deemed necessary by weather conditions, active stations, or other factors.

7. Preparedness

ARES members should prepare themselves for winter weather operations as follows:

- Providing a source of emergency power for radios in the event of power failure.
- Extra charged batteries
- Keeping abreast of winter weather forecasts