

Tri-State

Amateur Radio Emergency Service

South Eastern Nebraska Amateur Radio Emergency Services

Standard Operating Procedure

1. Scope

This document provides a general plan for amateur radio operators in Southeastern Nebraska to support Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management in a disaster or emergency situation. The information contained in this document is to be used as a general guide to conduct ARES operations.

2. Definitions

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service

AEC – Assistant Emergency Coordinator (Amateur Radio)

EC – Emergency Coordinator (Amateur Radio)

EOC – Emergency Operations Center (Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County)

EMA – Emergency Management Agency (Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County)

3. Pre-Activation Procedure

Amateur radio operators who become aware of a developing emergency situation in which Amateur radio support may be requested should:

- Monitor 147.075 MHz or 443.575 MHz PL 88.5. If the 147.075 or 443.575 repeater is not functional, amateurs should monitor 146.540 MHz.
- Limit non-essential radio traffic to make it easier for other stations to monitor the frequency.

4. Activation Procedure

4.1 Request and Authorization to Activate

Formal activation of an emergency net begins upon the request of Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management or other served agencies. A decision to activate may also be made by the EC or an AEC when it is apparent that an emergency exists or is imminent requiring the utilization of amateur radio. If the EC or an

AEC cannot be reached, any amateur radio operator with these procedures is encouraged to begin operations if the need for assistance is obvious.

4.2 Activation Procedures

The following steps should be taken to activate an amateur radio response to a disaster or emergency:

- Attempt to notify the EC and all AEC's via radio or telephone. The contact information for the EC's and AEC's are included in the reference section of this document.
- Activate the ARES telephone call chain, which is included in the reference section of this document.
- Establish a formal net on 147.075 MHz and notify all amateur radio operators monitoring. Listening amateur radio operators should check in with the net control station. If 147.075 is not functioning, a net should be established on 146.540 MHz.

5. Operational Procedures

5.1 Command and Control

As a guideline, the command hierarchy during an emergency ARES activation is as follows (in descending order):

1. Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management Agency
2. Public Safety Agency being served
3. Relief Agency being served
4. EC, AEC or his designee
5. Net Control station

Decisions should be made at the lowest level. Routine direction should be given by Net Control.

The EC or AEC should provide direction via net control whenever practical. Specific direction may be given by the event coordinator at the request of the requesting agency or organization.

5.2 Net Control Operation

The net control operator has the responsibility of maintaining contact with all participants, and assuring that the requested operations are being carried out. To facilitate this, he should:

- Limit traffic to highest priority if traffic levels are high
- Keep a log of all participants on frequency

- Periodically confirm contact with each participant
- Check progress on individual assignments
- Temporarily redirect specific traffic to alternate frequencies if necessary

5.3 Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management Liaison

When ARES is activated by Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management, an amateur radio operator shall be assigned to operate the amateur radio station at the Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Operations Center (EOC); or at a designated incident command post in the field. The responsibility of this operator will be to pass relevant reports to Emergency Management. Due to the level of activity in the EOC radio room, the liaison should monitor the net and present only relevant traffic to Emergency Management. Emergency Management can then request additional information via the liaison as necessary. This station may also serve as the net control station if needed, however in certain circumstances it may be beneficial to designate a separate amateur station to serve as net control to free up duties of the EMA liaison.

5.4 Served agency/disaster scene liaison

In most situations, an amateur radio operator will be assigned to serve as a liaison with a served agency at the disaster scene or at other locations involved in disaster operations. His/her duties may include:

- Establishment of an amateur radio station at the assigned staging area
- Shadowing officials or emergency units
- Maintaining contact from the scene to net control and/or the EOC
- Requesting assistance for further amateur radio operators and directing their efforts at the scene
- Passing on requests for information or action from the requesting agency
- Passing collected information back to the requesting agency

The served agency/disaster scene liaison should initially report to the scene or agency incident commander for instructions regarding where to establish operations and what support is specifically requested.

5.5 Adjacent County Liaisons

If messages need to be passed into or out of County, amateur radio liaisons with surrounding counties should be established. Liaisons shall operate on a frequency requested by the adjacent county, usually the repeater being used for that county's activity. Selection of liaisons should be made by net control, and should give preference to stations that are capable of operating on (or at least monitoring) both the Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County and adjacent county coordination frequencies simultaneously. The primary frequency for each adjacent county is:
Brown County Ks – 147.180

Otoe – 146.700 linked
Nemaha – 444.225 linked

5.6 Maintaining Emergency Contacts

An amateur radio operator with the capability to request emergency assistance shall be maintained during all activities. Methods to accomplish this (in order of preference) include:

- An amateur radio operator located at the appropriate EOC, Police, Fire or Ambulance dispatch center
- An amateur radio operator shadowing a participating Law Enforcement, Fire or Ambulance member
- An amateur radio operator base station with a telephone
- An amateur radio operator with a cellular telephone
- An amateur radio operator with auto patch capability
- A designated amateur radio operator with access to (drive/walk to) a public telephone

5.7. Staging Area Procedures

Depending on the situation, multiple amateur radio operators may be called to a staging area to support communications and assist the served agency liaison with establishing an amateur radio station and supporting served agency communications needs.

A staging area, where amateur radio operators meet before going to the site of an incident, has many advantages. An organized group may have fewer problems getting through roadblocks, parking may be an issue at the site, people are less likely to get lost, equipment failure is less likely to be a problem, etc. Amateur radio operators are discouraged from going directly to a disaster site unless authorized by net control or by some other prior agreement.

When dispatched to a disaster scene, it is important to follow instructions of the incident commander at the emergency scene. The IC will designate where the amateur radio station will be established and instruct participants on what will be required of them at the scene.

Amateur radio operators should first report to the served agency liaison to receive further instructions upon arrival at a scene.

5.8. Establishing Nets on Alternate Frequencies

Alternate repeaters or simplex frequencies may be established for specific functions (evacuation shelters, health and welfare, specific response agencies) as needed to keep traffic at manageable levels. These alternate nets may be formal or informal (i.e. with or without a net control station).

However, each net shall always designate one station to act as liaison with the coordination net. It is important that the location and function of all participating amateurs be known. Therefore, amateur radio operators should not join these alternate nets unless directed to do so by the net control station on the primary coordination net.

6. Termination

Participation is terminated at the discretion of Richardson, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, Gage County Emergency Management or the served agency. Individual members that wish to terminate early should notify net control so a replacement may be designated.

7. Identification

7.1 Personal Identification

There has been no standard established for identification of amateur personnel at this time. Necessary identification for entry into a restricted area will be provided by the controlling agency.

7.2 Vehicle Identification

There has been no standard established for vehicle identification. However, appropriate magnetic signs or cards placed in the windshield are encouraged. While this identification will not automatically provide access to controlled areas, it will assist other agencies to identify an amateur radio operator when one is needed.

8. Participant Safety

While a disaster situation may require the taking of certain calculated risks in order to accomplish the mission, ARES members are ultimately responsible for their own safety and should take no action that places themselves in jeopardy. In a questionable situation, pull back and report your situation to net control.

9. Liability

Amateurs shall assume that they are operating at their own risk.



