

ARRL Mississippi Section Emergency Operations Plan

15 August 2009

Because of its geographical location the State of Mississippi is repeatedly subject to hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and flooding, as well as other emergency situations. Amateur Radio operators are in a unique position to render critical public service for a number of reasons:

-  Amateurs own their own equipment and have proven HF/VHF communications capability for point-to-point, repeater, and satellite communications using fixed, portable, mobile, and hand-held equipment.
-  Amateurs often have access to independent power sources such battery packs, car batteries, and gasoline-powered generators that can be quickly interfaced with their communications equipment.
-  Amateurs are in many cases geographically decentralized and can fill in the gaps for centralized primary communication systems
-  Amateurs participate in annual emergency communications preparedness exercises such as the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) sponsored Section Emergency Test (SET) and Field Day. Amateurs also participate regularly in local training exercises frequently in support of local emergency management agencies. In addition, Amateurs attend presentations and undertake self-study to improve their emergency preparedness expertise (see Attachment A).

1.0 Amateur Emergency Preparedness Organizations

1.1 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Because of the unique communications capability that can be offered by hams, the ARRL has laid the groundwork for developing an emergency communications response organization through the ARES. This organization consists of licensed amateurs, who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public interest in order to respond to emergency communications requirements. Every licensed Amateur, regardless of having membership in the ARRL or any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve in the public interest during emergency situations.

1.2 Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES). Amateurs can also participate in emergency operations by officially enrolling in RACES, which is administered by local/county/state emergency management agencies with guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A RACES Emergency Service Plan has been signed by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director dated December 20, 2005.

RACES operation is conducted by Amateurs using their own primary station licenses and by using existing RACES stations. The FCC no longer issues new RACES (WC prefix) station call signs. Operating privileges in RACES are dependent upon, and identical to, the class of license held in the Amateur Radio Service. All of the authorized frequencies and emissions allocated to the Amateur Radio Service are also available to RACES on a shared basis; however, in the event the President invokes his War Emergency Powers, Amateurs involved with RACES could be limited to frequencies assigned by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and announced by the Federal Communications Commission. Although RACES was originally based on potential use for wartime, it has evolved over the years to encompass all types of emergencies. Even though RACES and ARES are separate entities, the ARRL advocates dual membership and cooperative efforts between both groups.

1.3 SKYWARN. This program was organized and is sponsored by the National Weather Service (NWS) to provide real time “ground truth” meteorological information to NWS stations that is needed to confirm or supplement information collected by NWS observations, Doppler radar systems, and automated weather stations. Although the NWS primarily relies on information provided by Amateurs participating in SKYWARN Nets during thunderstorm and tornado activity, the Nets could be activated to support other severe weather events or natural disasters. NWS meteorologists often are available to provide storm spotter training to Amateurs as formal classes or as programs during club meetings.

2.0 Mississippi Section Emergency Organization

Amateur emergency operations in Mississippi are coordinated by the Section Manager, Section Emergency Coordinator, District Emergency Coordinators, Emergency Coordinators, Assistant Emergency Coordinators, and Official Emergency Stations as described below:

Section Manager (SM): elected by ARRL members in the Mississippi Section. One of the key SM duties is to ensure that Amateurs in Mississippi are prepared to respond to emergency situations by appointing a Section Emergency Coordinator. If no motivated and capable SEC can be located, the SM is obligated to serve in the SEC position. During regional emergencies (which encompass two or more ARRL sections), the SM will coordinate with other SMs or take the coordination lead in Amateur Radio emergency operations.

Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC): appointed by the SM. The SEC is responsible for overall organization and coordination of Amateur Radio emergency operations in Mississippi including continual maintenance of contact with state emergency management agencies. The SEC is also responsible for locating and appointing motivated and capable District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) in consultation with the SM, preparing the scenario for and conducting the annual Section Emergency Test, and taking charge of section level Amateur Radio emergency operations. During local emergencies he will assist the DEC and county Emergency Coordinators (EC), as requested. If no DEC or EC is available in a given county, the SEC will function in that capacity, as required. The SEC will file a monthly report with the SM based on information derived from monthly DEC reports and other sources. This report should be filed with the SEC no later than the 15th day following the end of the reporting period. Any information that the SEC thinks should be included in the monthly section report should be sent to the SM by the 5th of the month following the end of the reporting period.

District Emergency Coordinator (DEC): appointed by the SEC in coordination with the SM. The Mississippi Section is divided into a number of districts by the SM and SEC in consultation with the DECs which conform to the Mississippi Highway Patrol Districts. These districts are currently made up of counties to which an EC is appointed. The principle function of the DEC is to take charge of Amateur Radio emergency operations when an emergency situation develops that is confined to his district, and secondly, to ensure that each county in his/her district has a motivated and capable EC. The DEC will assist each EC in preparing a local emergency operations plan and in the conduct of local emergency preparedness activities, as well as in actual emergency operations. If no EC is available in a given county, the DEC will serve in that capacity, as required. The DEC will file a monthly report with the SEC based on information derived from monthly EC reports and other sources. This report should be filed with the SEC no later than the 10th day following the end of the reporting period. Any information that the DEC thinks should be included in the monthly section report should be sent directly to the SM by the 5th of the month following the end of the reporting period with a copy furnished to the SEC.

Emergency Coordinator (EC): appointed by the DEC in coordination with the SM and SEC. The ECs jurisdiction may cover a single county or several counties depending on such factors as population distribution (i.e. a metro area), working relationship with emergency management agency officials and Amateurs in adjacent counties, or the fact that an adjacent county may not have a capable and willing candidate to be appointed to the EC position. The EC is responsible for: (a) preparing a local emergency operations plan; (b) coordinating with local emergency management agencies on a regular basis; (c) recruiting ARES members; (d) contacting local repeater owners to determine if their repeaters can be used and/or linked during emergencies; and (e) for conducting local emergency

communications preparedness exercises. When a local emergency does occur, the EC takes charge of operations. The EC will file a monthly report with the DEC based on ARES activity in his/her county. This report should be filed with the DEC no later than the 5th day following the end of the reporting period. Any information that the EC thinks should be included in the monthly section report should be sent directly to the SM by the 5th of the month following the end of the reporting period with copies furnished to the DEC and SEC.

Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC): AECs are selected and appointed by the EC. Each EC may have as many AECs as required to effectively manage the ARES Unit. AEC responsibilities fall under the general categories of: operations, administration, liaison, and logistics. The AEC is strictly a local appointment, and does not require ARRL membership or SM/SEC approval, or notification to ARRL Headquarters.

Official Emergency Station (OES): appointed by the SM upon recommendation by the EC in coordination with the SEC and DEC. An OES is generally more than an ARES member. He or she is capable of operating HF and/or VHF equipment in home, portable, or hand-held situations using emergency power. The OES is prepared for emergency response and has made a deep commitment to emergency preparedness operations through training, securing emergency communications equipment, and pre-planning for participation in emergency operations.

3.0 Amateur Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities

In preparation for responding to emergencies each Amateur in Mississippi is encouraged to:

- Register as an ARES Member with the local EC
- Know who to advise when an emergency situation develops
- Understand operating procedures used by emergency nets by checking in during training or regular sessions
- Participate in emergency preparedness activities such as the SET, Field Day, or local exercises
- Take advantage of presentations by emergency preparedness experts and undertake self-study courses directed toward improving emergency preparedness expertise (see attachment A)
- Understand how to prepare messages in standard format
- Ensure that equipment is ready to operate under emergency conditions
- Keep an emergency deployment check list (ARES Field Resources Manual; Attachment A)

4.0 Amateur Role in Emergency Situations

During emergency situations Amateurs should be prepared to do the following:

- Establish supplemental communications for emergency management agencies as back up for existing primary systems
- Provide primary communications into areas where no other communications exist
- Prepare, send, receive, and deliver official messages as requested by emergency management agencies
- Prepare, send, receive, and deliver health-and-welfare traffic
- Provide meteorological observations, as requested

Amateurs should not be expected to assist with disaster assessment, organize and conduct logistical operations, or assist with shelter management, unless they have been previously trained for these emergency preparedness specialty areas.

5.0 Amateur Radio Emergency Operations in Mississippi

The procedures for Amateur Radio emergency operations for local, district, and section emergencies in Mississippi are described below. In addition the Mississippi Section's role in a regional emergency involving other ARRL Sections is also defined.

5.1 Local Emergency Operations. In that a large majority of emergency situations in which Amateur Radio can be of service are of a local nature, the EC becomes the keystone for conduct of these operations. In preparation for these emergency situations, the EC will

- (a) contact those local agencies that Amateur radio may potentially be able to assist and make them aware of Amateur Radio capabilities and Amateur willingness to assist in emergency situations.
- (b) enlist local Amateurs as ARES members and encourage them to prepare themselves and their equipment to respond to emergency situations at the local, district, section, and regional levels.
- (c) contact local repeater owners to determine if their repeaters are available to be used/linked during emergency situations.
- (d) establish a regular local emergency net (see www.arrlmiss.org for current listing of local nets) and conduct emergency preparedness exercises, possibly in conjunction with the Mississippi Section SET.

- (e) prepare a local Amateur Radio emergency operations plan. This may be nothing more than a list of key personnel to be contacted and repeater frequencies to be used in the event of an emergency situation, but will serve as a starting point for activating an emergency operation. The key point of the plan is that local Amateurs will know who to contact to activate emergency communications and what to do when an emergency situation develops as opposed to being in a situation where everybody says “what do we do now.”
- (f) in the event of a local emergency the EC will mobilize ARES members and simultaneously contact local emergency management agencies to determine if Amateur Radio services can be of assistance. Further, the EC will request activation of repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic, if deemed necessary. In consideration of these responsibilities, the EC will advise the DEC, SEC, and/or SM of the emergency situation (see Attachment B) and request assistance, as needed. During the emergency situation the EC or his designated AEC will direct operations until Amateur Radio services are no longer needed.

Immediately after the emergency situation has concluded the EC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the DEC, who after review, will forward the report to the SEC, and in turn the SM.

5.2 District Emergency Operations. In the event an emergency situation involves the jurisdictions of two or more ECs in his district, the DEC will manage operations through the ECs in the affected counties or directly, as required. The DEC will immediately advise the SEC and SM of the situation, as well as appropriate Amateur Radio Emergency Management Agency Points-of-Contact (POCs) such that the agencies are aware that Amateur Radio Services are available. In the event the POC cannot be immediately contacted, the SM or SEC should be asked to make the contact because the DEC will be involved in other critical aspects of the emergency operation. Further, the DEC will request activation of repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic, if deemed necessary.

When tactical or health and welfare traffic is anticipated at the Section level, the DEC will contact the Section Traffic Manager (STM). The STM will then alert the Managers of the Magnolia Section Net (MSN) and the Mississippi Section Phone Net (MSPN) (see Attachment C), who (or his designee) will be requested to activate and staff the Joint Net with net control stations, as required, for the duration of the emergency. If traffic is anticipated for out of state locations the DEC will advise the STM that liaison stations need to be available between the Joint Net and the National Traffic System (NTS) for both the Daytime and Nighttime cycles, as required.

Immediately after the emergency situation has concluded the DEC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the SEC, who after review, will forward the report to the SM.

5.3 Section Emergency Operations. If the emergency situation affects all or a large portion of Mississippi, the SEC will manage Amateur Radio operations through the DEC's and EC's. The SEC will be responsible for advising the SM and the STM regarding the development of the emergency situation as well as the Managers of the MSN and the MSPN. Further, the SEC will coordinate with emergency management agency POCs, as appropriate, (See Attachment B) and request activation of appropriate repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic.

The Managers of the MSN and the MSPN (or their designees) will be responsible for NCS staffing for the duration of the emergency situation in accordance with the Joint Emergency Operations Procedures (see Attachment C). The STM will ensure that NTS liaison stations are available for both daytime and nighttime NTS cycles. Further, he will notify the following of the emergency situation: the Manager of the Fifth Region Daytime Net (SSB)(Cycles 1 and 2), the Manager of the Fifth Region Nighttime Net (CW)(Cycles 3 and 4) (see Attachment B).

Immediately after the emergency situation has concluded the SEC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the SM, who, after review, will forward the report to ARRL Headquarters.

5.4 Regional Emergency Operations. Because regional emergencies such as hurricanes, floods, and ice storms don't stop at ARRL section lines, the Mississippi Section is party to two memorandums of understanding: one with the sections in the ARRL Delta Division (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee) and another with the Louisiana and South Texas ARRL sections (copies of these MOUs are available from w5xx@arrl.org). By pooling communications resources such as experienced net control stations, traffic handlers, NTS liaison stations, and weather observers, effective communications can be maintained on a 24 hour basis, if need be, thus permitting hams in the affected areas to concentrate on taking care of family needs and to be in a position to respond to local emergency situations.

The SM of the section that is anticipated to be the most impacted by the disaster event will be the SM Coordinator for regional emergency operations. The selection of the SM Coordinator will be by mutual agreement of the Section Managers that are a party to the MOU. The SM Coordinator will be responsible for organizing and staffing a HF tactical phone emergency net. This responsibility most likely will be delegated to someone, who will act as Net Manager. The SM Coordinator will inform ARRL Headquarters of the emergency net's activation. The actual start time of the net will be determined by mutual consent of the Section Managers based on available information. In the event the SM Coordinator is not available, the Section Emergency Coordinator or one of the other SMs will assume coordination responsibilities.

Further, the SM Coordinator will notify the following of the emergency situation: the Manager of the Fifth Region Daytime Net (SSB)(Cycles 1 and 2) and the Manager of the Fifth Region

Nighttime Net (CW)(Cycles 3 and 4) (see Attachment B). He may recruit one of the other SMs, SECs, or STMs to assist with these tasks.

During a regional emergency the following frequencies will be used for the emergency tactical communications nets:

Delta Division MOU: 3890 (night) and 7275 (day)

LA-STEX-MS MOU: 3873 (night) and 7280 (day)

During a regional emergency, the Joint MSN/MSPN Net will operate on 7238 KHz (daytime) and 3862 KHz (nighttime) to handle overflow tactical traffic, welfare traffic, and intra-state traffic, as needed. The Managers of the MSN and MSPN will staff the net according to the Joint Emergency Operation Procedures (Attachment C). The STM will ensure that there is MSN/MSPN liaison with the regional tactical nets.

In addition the RN5 Manager will activate the Gulf Coast CW Guard Net on 3570 KHz (night) and 7111 KHz (day) to handle emergency related traffic (primarily anticipated to be Health/Welfare) and to provide an outlet to the NTS. RN5 daily sessions are at 7:30 PM on 7108 or 3567 KHz and 9:30 PM on 3567 KHz.

DRN5 meets daily at 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM to handle traffic except on Sundays when the first session is at 1:30 PM.

Immediately after the emergency situation has concluded the SM Coordinator will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the ARRL Programs and Services Manager with copies to the other SMs, who are a party to the MOU.

Attachment A: Resource Materials

The documents and links listed below make up the core resources for Amateurs involved in emergency preparedness operations.

- ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Courses Levels 1; see note below. On-line courses are \$50 for ARRL Members and \$85 for non-members (see www.arrl.org/cce). If a course is taken through self-study, the texts are \$19.95 each. The exam can be taken on a pre-arranged basis at a VE Test Session (see www.arrlmiss.org under VE Test Dates). VE Teams normally don't give exams for these three courses so pre-arrangements must be made with the VE Test Team. Note: A new advanced communications course is in development to replace Levels 2 and 3. The expected release date is late 2009.
- FEMA On-Line Courses. These courses are free and include IS-100 – Introduction to Incident Command System, IS-200 – ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents, IS-700 – National Incident Command System (NIMS), An Introduction, and IS - 800 – National Response Plan, An Introduction. Students can register at <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/IS/>
- ARRL Emergency Coordinators Manual. This document is no longer available in hard copy. A down-loadable copy is available from ARRL Headquarters. Contact sewald@arrl.org.
- ARRL ARES Field Resources Manual (\$12.95)
- ARRL Public Service Communications Manual. This document is no longer available in hard copy, but can be downloaded at www.arrl.org/FandES/Field/pscm.
- The ARRL Emergency Communication Handbook (\$19.95)
- Emergency Power for Radio Communications (\$19.95)
- The ARRL Repeater Directory (\$10.95)
- The ARRL Net Directory. This document is no longer available in hardcopy. On-line information about nets is available at www.arrl.org/FandES/field/nets. Using this link searches can be made for local, state, section, wide-coverage, and NTS nets.

- The ARRL Operating Manual (\$29.95)

Documents with prices listed after them can be ordered from the ARRL at 1-888-277-5289 or from the on-line bookstore at www.arrl.org.

Attachment B: Points of Contact for Emergency Operations

Section Manager:

Malcolm Keown, W5XX
64 Lake Circle Drive
Vicksburg, MS 39180
(601) 636-0827 (H)
(601-618-0535 (Cell)
w5xx@vicksburg.com
w5xx@arrl.org

State RACES Officer:

Ron Brown, AB5WF
450 North Canton Club Circle
Jackson, MS 39211
(601) 956-1448 (H)
(601) 278-5968 (cell)
ab5wf@arrl.net

Section Traffic Manager

David Burkes, KB5RCJ
1772 Hickory Grove Road
Starkville, MS 39759
(662) 323-0224 (W)
david@saffairs.msstate.edu

Delta Division ARES Emergency Net

Randy Griffin, K5BOC
19801 Shepard Spring Road
Mountainburg, AR 72946
(479) 650-0375 (H) and cell
k5boc@arrl.net

Fifth Region Daytime Net (SSB) (Cycles 1 and 2)

Leon E. Lessard, Jr., WB5ZED
109A South Roy St.
Picayune, MS 39466-8035
(601) 749-4959
wb5zed@arrl.net

Fifth Region Nighttime Net (CW) (Cycles 3 and 4)

Frank Thrash, W4DLZ
P.O. Box 865
Carrabelle, FL 32322-0865
(850) 745-0399 (H)
w4dlz@yahoo.com

Magnolia Section Manager

Doug Sullivan-Gonzalez, K5DSG
301 Philip Road
Oxford, MS 38655-2017
(662) 915-7109 (W)
(662) 236-4784 (H)
k5dsg@arrl.net

Mississippi Section Phone Net Manger

Russ Tillman, K5NRK
110 Camden Drive
Vicksburg, MS 39183
(601) 634-6398 (H)
(601) 634-4201 (W)
k5nrk@arrl.net

Mississippi/Arkansas CW Traffic Net Manager

Vacant

POC for American Red Cross:

Mike McAlpin
Jackson Red Cross
875 Riverside Drive
Jackson, MS 39202-1138
(601) 353-5442
mcalpinm@usa.redcross.org

POC for Salvation Army

Bill Fiest, WB8BZH
1450 Riverside Drive
Jackson, MS 39202
(601) 969-7560 (W)
(601) 421-1496 (cell)
Bill_Feist@USS.salvation army.org

POC for Corps of Engineers:

Eddie Pettis, N5JGK
1259 Warriors Trail
Vicksburg, MS 39180
(601) 634-2186 (W)
(601) 636-2636 (H)
eddie.pettis@usace.army.mil

POC for SKYWARN - Central Mississippi (Jackson NWS Forecast Office)

Jake Lancaster, KE5KTU
1474 Mount Olive Road
Bolton, MS 39041-9461
(601) 866-2107 (W)
(601) 942-5505 (H)
ke5ktu@arrl.net

District Emergency Coordinators (see listing at www.arrlmiss.org under DEC/EC)

Emergency Coordinators (see listing at www.arrlmiss.org under DEC/EC)

Attachment C

Joint Emergency Operation Procedures

Magnolia Section Net and Mississippi Section Phone Net

3862 KHz

- 1.0 The Magnolia Section Net (MSN) and the Mississippi Section Phone Net (MSPN) under the auspices of the Mississippi Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) conduct daily sessions to train for emergencies. Under normal conditions these two nets operate independently of each other with each having a Net Manager; however, during emergencies, joint operations may be required to effectively expedite the handling of tactical and health/welfare traffic for emergency management and relief agencies. The joint operation will be activated at the request of the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) and the concurrence of the Net Managers.
- 2.0 The joint daily operational rotation cycle will commence at the beginning of the morning session of the MSN. After all traffic has been handled the formal session will conclude, and the Net will go into emergency session. The MSN Net Manager will be responsible for assigning Net Control Stations (NCS) to monitor the frequency in two-hour shifts (or other shift lengths as specified by the MSN Manager) after conclusion of the formal session. In the event traffic needs to be moved off frequency to another net such as a multi-section tactical net or DRN5, the NCS will recruit a liaison station to move the traffic. (Note: The MSN normally meets on 3863 KHz at 6 AM weekdays and 7 AM weekends and Holidays.) However, during joint emergency operation the MSN will meet on 3862 KHz to ensure continuity of operations.)
- 3.0 The MSN will be relieved of operations at the start of the MSPN on 3862 KHz (6 PM). After all traffic is handled the MSPN formal session will conclude, and the Net will go into emergency session. The MSPN Net Manager will be responsible for assigning NCSs to monitor the frequency in two hours shifts (or other shift lengths as specified by the MSPN Manager) after conclusion of the formal session. In the event traffic needs to be moved off frequency to another net such as a multi-section tactical net or RN5, the NCS will recruit a liaison station to move the traffic. Net operations will conclude for the day at the discretion

of the MSPN Manager; however, during periods of high volume emergency traffic the Net may need operate through the night until relieved by the MSN at 6 AM.

4.0 During periods when there is no activity the NCS will announce approximately every ten minutes: “This is (call) net control for the (net name) now in emergency session. Is there any emergency or tactical traffic? Is there any health/welfare traffic? (Handle any traffic). Please keep the frequency clear during quiet periods and monitor for emergency or tactical traffic. Be ready to assist the Net Control Station, as necessary.” The NCS is at liberty to vary this procedure as net operation dictates.

5.0 These Joint Operation Procedures may be modified at anytime with the concurrence of the SEC and the respective Net Managers.

1 July 2006