

Amateur Radio Emergency Service®

ARES® Marion County



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***Emergency
Coordinator***

MISSION STATEMENT

The Marion County ARES® group is a public service organization consisting of licensed Amateur Radio operators living in Marion County and the surrounding area, who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment to provide communications needs for public service events and in times of emergency. Marion County ARES is dedicated to serving the communities within Marion County, working hand in hand with local and state governments, the American Red Cross and other non-profit community service organizations.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

While I do realize that we are all volunteers in this service, there are some training requirements that have to be established. Most of these courses are free, and for the last one, there is a cost for a text book if you want it, and a cost for the written test. These classes are integral for some of our duties and our abilities to work as a part of the National Incident Management System in the event of a major disaster. These courses are as follows:

1. National Weather Service Basic Storm spotter course
2. The following courses are available online at the FEMA website under the Emergency Management Institute, Independent Study section:
 - a. IS-100- Introduction to Incident Command
 - b. IS-200- ICS for single resources and initial action incidents
 - c. IS-700- National Incident Management System (NIMS) an introduction
 - d. IS-800-National Response Framework, an introduction(make sure that you are taking the most current version)
3. ARRL Basic and Intermediate Emergency Communications Course. These are offered through the ARRL website/
4. Either American Red Cross or American Heart Association CPR w/AED and First Aid course.
5. CERT team training

While I realize that this seems like a lot, it can of course be spread out over a period of time. I feel that these classes will give you a firm base to understand what our duties may be depending upon the situation that we are faced with. Also, as you complete these courses, please send me a copy of your certificates, so that I can keep them in a training file in case there is ever a question about your training.

I am also planning on holding meetings once a month. For the most part, these will be evening meetings, but I'm open to trying, say a lunch meeting or a breakfast meeting. If possible, I will try to have training during each meeting, however, there may be times when an additional training session may be needed. When one is scheduled, I will let everyone know well in advance

ARES DUTIES

Our duties as an ARES group will be as varied as our missions will probably be as varied as our missions will probably be. Yes, we will be serving as storm spotters for severe weather. I see us also functioning as communicators in various disaster scenarios whether it be operating in a public shelter after a tornado or earthquake, accompanying a S&R team doing house to searches for survivors. Also some good opportunities for training, as well as PR, will be assisting in public service events, such as the Hannibal Cannibal. Our main duty, however, is to provide supplemental communications for our served agencies when their communications are disrupted or inadequate for the task at hand. At the present time, our main served agency is Marion County Emergency Management. I have done this because I feel that this will allow us to better serve the population by being available for more agencies than if our main agency was, say the American Red Cross. This way if the Red Cross or some other agency needed operators, we would not have to commit all of our personnel to just their operations. The second reason why I have done this, is that it also allows our personnel to be classified not only as ARES but also RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service).

RACES was formed after WWII as a means to allow for communications with and for Civil Defense agencies in the event of a nuclear war or other natural disaster. As time has gone by, ARES was developed, and there have been some similarities between the two groups as well as differences. Both of the groups consist of licensed amateurs who have volunteered and registered themselves and their equipment to function as needed in time of disaster in their communities. ARES can be activated by any organization that we have a Memorandum of Understanding with, while RACES can only be activated by the local, state or federal Civil Defense agency (now called Emergency Management). ARES can communicate with anyone they need to, while RACES can only communicate with other RACES stations. RACES may only train up to one hour per week on any amateur frequency, while ARES can train as long as they need to again on any amateur frequency. The main importance of RACES come about if the President of the United States were to invoke the War Powers Act for any reason. Under this act, **ALL** Amateur Radio operators must immediately cease all operations and shut down their stations. The **ONLY** exceptions to this are amateurs who are operating as RACES, so because of this, I have opted to take this route.

Another important thing to remember is that we fit nowhere in community service until asked. There is **NO** place in emergency communications for "walk-in" operators who show up and say "I'm here, what do you want me to do?" Also remember that if we are called out for emergency operations, that we operate at the pleasure of our served agencies. We are not in charge of a scene & do not give orders, we are there to do what we are asked to do, within reason.

As time progressed, we will have training on working with served agencies, traffic handling, and various other topics that relate to emergency communications. If you are a member of the ARRL, you can go to their website and check out various articles in the QST archives about EmCom. You can also google or internet search for Amateur Radio Emergency Communications and find all kinds of sites on the internet.

In closing, I would like to thank you for volunteering for this service and welcome you to the group. If you know of anyone else who is an amateur and might be interested in joining, bring them along. In the event that we are activated for a weather or other emergency, I will call everyone by phone, if available and advise you of what we have and where to go. As the group grows in size, the notification plan will probably change from a phone tree, but I will be sure to let everyone know what procedure we will follow.