

# AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE (ARES)

**Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)** is a corps of trained amateur radio operator volunteers organized to assist in public service and emergency communications. In the US it is organized and sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) with the goal of providing a means of communication "when all else fails."



## Organizational structure

ARES groups are volunteer amateur radio operators who come together for the common purpose of providing emergency and/or auxiliary communications service to public safety and public service organizations. Most individual ARES units are autonomous and operate locally. Although the Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a program (and trademark) of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) in the USA, the structure is more supportive than directive in nature, providing mostly for mutual aid in the event of large-scale emergencies.

ARES groups are generally organized by city or county and are made up of volunteers from the local area. The only requirements to join ARES are a willingness to serve and a valid amateur radio license.

Groups are organized locally by the person holding the position of *Emergency Coordinator* (EC). The EC maintains full responsibility for organizing the local groups and serving as their leader during operations. The EC is an ARRL member, and is generally the point of contact for those wishing to perform Emergency Communications in their local area. He/She may appoint one or several AECs (Assistant Emergency Coordinator) to oversee certain geographical areas, or specific activities.

The next higher level of coordination is the optional District Emergency Coordinator (DEC). This person coordinates the operation of several local county or city ARES groups and reports to the Section Emergency Coordinator in those sections where the span of control would otherwise be too large. A DEC may have one or more Assistant District Emergency Coordinators serving him or her.

Leading the structure is the Section Emergency Coordinator, or SEC. This person is appointed by the elected Section Manager and is responsible for emergency communications in his/her section. An SEC may have one or more Assistant SECs serving to assist him/her.

## Mutual assistance

ARES in the U.S. has Memorandums of Understanding with disaster organizations including the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Weather Service, and Department of Homeland Security as well as state and local governments. Memorandums of Understanding with the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service, the Salvation Army and others lay out the general guidelines for organization and coordination between agencies in times of emergency. Other Memorandums can be specific or simply state common goals depending on the needs of the organizations.

For more informations see:

General US: <http://www.arrl.org/ares>

General Williamson County: <http://www.wc-ares.org>