ARES and RACES

ARES and RACES are the two largest amateur radio organizations with emergency communications as their specific purpose. You will find one or both active in most communities. Both are strictly amateur radio organizations, although some state and municipal governments are moving from pure RACES to an Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) model which incorporates other radio services in addition to RACES. (A more detailed discussion of ARES, RACES, ACS, and other amateur radio organizations involved in emergency communications was covered in the first section of this manual.)

Dual Membership and Its Advantages

Just as the ARRL recommends dual membership between ARES and RACES, for many of the same reasons *REACT* also recommends that members holding an amateur radio license should register with ARES and RACES if these organizations are active in their community.

Dual membership
- Fosters understanding and cooperation.
- Eases the transitions when one organization is activated before another and when one organization stands down before another, as an emergency grows then subsides.
- Supports best utilization of both personnel and equipment resources.

Persons registering with multiple emergency organizations need to ensure they are not being "double counted" by these organizations in emergency planning. This applies not only to emergency communications groups, but also includes other organizations that would respond to similar situations, such as Red Cross and some other public service organizations.

Working Together

No one organization can do it all. We *will* be working together in any real emergency.

The leaders of *REACT* and the ARRL both actively recognize and support the need to work together.

The decision to be made at the field level isn't whether we will work together – only how.

In addition to *REACT*, there are a number of other radio organizations involved in providing emergency communications for national organizations. Among them are: ARES (ARRL), RACES (civil defense and local governments), SATERN (Salvation Army), SKYWARN (National Weather Service), and MARS (Military Affiliate Radio Service, a Defense Department program managed separately by each of the military services). Each of these is discussed elsewhere in this manual. Also many disaster response organizations such as the Red Cross, Baptist Disaster Services, Adventist Community Services, etc., all generally have amateur radio operators among their volunteers and often have organized these operators to provide communications support.

Both national and local radio organizations are often involved in supporting various emergency response and disaster recovery organizations such as: CERT (Citizens Emergency Response Team), VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters), hospitals and health care agencies, utilities, public service agencies. Some of these operate under the ARES/RACES/ACS structure; the decision is a local arrangement.

Emergency communicators are encouraged to register with more than one organization, depending on their interests, availability, and radio licenses. Persons signing up with more than one organization should declare their primary served agency, the one to which they will respond in the event of a major emergency. During times of non-emergency, they would be able to assist a peer organization in the development of their program, education and training efforts, and special events. If the primary served agency is not activated during a particular emergency, the individual is free to report to any agency needing assistance. For example, if an operator is enrolled in SKYWARN but the emergency is a railroad accident, the operator may be dispatched to assist the local hospital. Enrolling in *REACT* and other organizations makes the process of reassignments more orderly and efficient by having a structure and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in place ahead of time.

Leadership - The function of true leadership at all levels in each organization is to accomplish the organization mission. For all emergency communications organizations, that mission is to support the needs of the community. This requires that everyone work to eliminate any "us vs. them" thinking and minimize bruised egos when multiple communication groups interact.

Quality leaders recognize that the overall goal is to move the messages to the final destination in a timely and usable manner. This is accomplished via teamwork and at times requires give-and-take to accomplish multiple goals. The culture of quality and professional leadership is established not during the event, but before the event. The membership should participate in leadership development, and communicate these values to members and non-members alike.

Minimizing bruised egos when multiple communication groups interact is done via MOUs and understanding amongst the leadership *before* an emergency develops. Effective operating procedures call for each organization to maintain a roster, noting which persons are signed up on a primary basis to work with that group. The choice of the primary served agency is up to the individual operator, as he or she is in the best position to determine both interest and availability given his or her training, work, home, and family situation.

Each agency determines which frequency(ies) they will monitor for calls, and notifies other agencies and nets which frequencies are being monitored for this incident. Frequencies for net operations should be coordinated on an area basis among the leadership and worked out ahead of time. The leadership must keep in mind that no emergency is perfect and variations in the arrangements are expected as adjustments are made due to the situation, the condition of equipment, propagation, operators, and agencies involved.

Remember overall objectives, priorities, and decisions must be made by the ICS command team. The Incident Commander should be clearly identified and changes should be noted and communicated as the situation evolves. Each response organization conducts its operations in accordance with the overall priorities and procedures established by the Incident Commander.

The focus is to align communications to anticipate and keep pace with the changes in overall emergency operations as indicated by the command team. Quality leadership in the communications groups recognize this and will coordinate their efforts among the groups to assure coverage and continuity.

Different kinds of emergencies will create different needs and will often involve having a different organization serving as the lead agency. The scope of the situation will also impact on the selection of lead agency and the lead agency may change as a situation develops. An emergency might start out with the local fire department providing the Incident Commander (IC); as the incident develops, responsibility for the incident might transfer to the County Emergency Management Agency, then the State Emergency Management Agency; finally as the incident winds down, the government agencies might secure their operations, but the Red Cross, Salvation Army, or other voluntary relief organizations may still be running shelters or feeding operations for the incident.

Typical Lead Agency for Emergency Situations	
Situation	**Lead Agency**
Fire, Rescue, Hazmat, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)	Fire Department
Criminal Incident	Police, FBI, ATF
Natural Disaster	Local/County/State Government, as delegated by the mayor, managing director, Office of Emergency Services, Civil Defense, etc.
Recovery from Transportation Mishap	National Transportation Safety Board
Maritime Emergency	Coast Guard
Community Relief	American Red Cross

September 2017