

Lee County EmComm Plan: Concept of Operations. By KD5BJ

When the Lee County Judge and the Office of Emergency Management requests communications assistance, LeeCARES and other county ARES groups as needed will activate for service. LeeCARES infrastructure includes private equipment, LeeCARES Mobile Units, and equipment installed in the County EOC.

The LeeCARES organizational structure includes nets, training programs and exercises, cooperative planning with agencies to learn their needs, and the services of trained operators.

The ARES field organization is designed to support as fully as possible, upon request, any and all emergency response and disaster relief organizations. In doing so, ARES retains its own identity and organizational structure, personnel and physical infrastructure while providing communications support. Officials of emergency and disaster response agencies who desires LeeCARES assistance should contact the LeeCARES EC.

The ECs or their designated representatives are the only persons who may authorize the activations of the registered ARES members in the area. The EC can contact other counties ECs, or the DEC, or the SEC, for assistance. Officials may also contact DEC, SEC, if the County EC or his delegate cannot be reached in a reasonably timely manner.

When a LeeCARES member becomes aware of an actual or potential need for ARES, all efforts should be made to contact the EC or an assistant EC. Only when an EC or delegated representative cannot be contacted in a reasonable time, should the EC of Williamson County ARES, who is also the DEC, or the SEC be contacted in that order.

LeeCARES members should monitor their local resource ARES net, on the 147.22 repeater, or the Texas ARES HF net, on 3.873, for more information and instructions. As a reminder the 3.873 frequency is the one where weekly HF STX ARES nets are held every Monday at 1930.

Of course, ARES members are prohibited from self-deploying.

Communications Emergencies.

Communications emergencies take two general forms, they fail or they are inadequate to handle the information volume, or not fully operational for immediate needs because of hardware or software failures.

Amateur Radio is being increasingly used also as a force multiplier to extend limited public resources even when existing communication systems are fully operational. Examples are operators, if properly trained in flash flood safety, reporting gauge reading of a rising river, instead of positioning there a first responder, or using SKYWARN trained amateurs to qualify weather reports.

How can we ARES support OEM? Aubury Holmes with the WC OEM and IMT Region 6 leader, who recently deployed to Florida, answered this question by saying to have procedures and working relationship. Next step is to fill a role locally as needed or evolve in a different role as needed. We might be asked not to do just radios. Be able to take on where we can take on, and train train, train. Training is paramount

LeeCARES Response.

Locally, the LeeCARES EC identifies the communications needs and priorities of the served agencies, then assign and direct ARES resources to address that need. The EC will also coordinate support with the Williamson County ARES EC when necessary and with the DEC if further assistance is required.

The staffing priority in any emergency incident will be given first to those who are registered with ARES. Lower priority will be amateur radio operators not associated with any ARES group. Assignments will be made to minimize the travel distance.

When responding to assist other counties ARES, LeeCARES members are prohibited from traveling to the site of any emergency incident beyond their immediate area unless authorized to do so by an EC, DEC, SEC, or their designated representative, such as the net control station of a resource net. Locally or remotely, LeeCARES members will only be authorized to go to the site of an emergency incident after the appropriate served agency requests ARES help at that site.

Finally, LeeCARES Member Safety

If any requested action involves unacceptable risk, the person should NOT take the action. Upon refusal, the person should notify the net control station that they will not be performing the requested action, along with a brief statement of their risk assessment. There is not any ARES assignment which is so important that it cannot be done safely.

This concludes tonight training, this is KD5BJ back to net.

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