



**Clackamas County Oregon
Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Communication Plan**

October 2006

Table of Contents

Section Title Page

1.0 Purpose	
2.0 Background	
3.0 Definitions	
4.0 ARES leadership positions	
5.0 CARES operational information	
6.0 Emergency operations classifications	
7.0 Clackamas Co ARES – Emergency Manager Cooperation	
8.0 CARES Local Plan Integration	
9.0 Local level ARES Activation	
10.0 State level ARES Activation	
11.0 Deactivation and Reporting Unit Status	
12.0 Net and message handling protocols	
13.0 Training	
14.0 General information	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.01 The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the minimum information that would be needed in an emergency. Each emergency's need is different, and flexibility to provide an adequate response to each emergency is a necessity.

1.02 The purpose of Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is to provide emergency communications and related services for public and private agencies during communications emergencies; and to support non-emergency public service activities when regular communications fail or are inadequate.

1.03 The purpose of Clackamas County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES) is to provide a dedicated and trained group of volunteers to assist and support Clackamas County with communications assets during a time of need.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.01 The ARES® is the emergency branch of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Organization. The Amateur Radio Service is authorized under Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission's rules as a "voluntary non-commercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications." ARRL facilitates emergency communications through its Field Organization in general and ARES in particular. ARES operates under the direction of the Section Manager, an elected position within the Field Organization. There are 71 sections in the United States and its possessions. The State of Oregon is comprised of one section.

2.02 It is the intention of this plan to provide guidelines for training and usage of amateur radio volunteer communicators. The Oregon Section ARES® organizations recognize the role of the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) to government agencies as auxiliary communications links during times of emergency. It is also the intention of this plan to recommend a standard for training and preparation of ARES® operators as required, to assist with the needs of the state and local government communications.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.01 ARES Group: Clackamas Amateur Radio Emergency Services (CARES) is the Clackamas County ARES organization. Each local city sub-group of CARES serves specific towns and/or cities, and is managed by an Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC). Specific CARES staff duties are also managed by an Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC)

3.02 ARES NET: Networks operated to handle message traffic for served agencies, coordinate activities as needed and to support ARES operations within Clackamas County. The CARES net will also be operated for training purposes on a regular basis. The net is held each Sunday at 1900 hours local time on 147.12+. CARES sub-units also have their assigned frequencies for their nets. The city nets are required to be activated on the first Sunday of each month and can be activated at the discretion of the AEC at any other time. All CARES frequencies, including sub-units, can be found on the CARES web page at:
<http://www.clackamasares.com/>

3.03 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES): A volunteer organization sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) to provide communications in times of emergency. All ARES volunteers are FCC licensed Amateur Radio operators, who have registered their capabilities and equipment and have been trained to serve as emergency communicators.

ARES is a registered ARRL trademark. All Clackamas County ARES personnel are registered with the Clackamas County Emergency Manager's Office.

3.04 American Radio Relay League (ARRL): National membership organization that promotes and supports the Amateur Radio Service in the United States. Membership is open to all – full membership is open to anyone who holds a valid Amateur Radio Service license.

3.05 Amateur Radio Service: As defined in Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission rules and regulations: "voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications."

3.06 Client or "Served" Agencies: Governmental or non-profit agencies and organizations with which CARES, or the ARRL, has formal agreements to serve during a declared or non-declared emergency or event.

3.07 Clackamas County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES): The ARES organization that has responsibility for emergency communications within Clackamas County Oregon and works with the Clackamas County Emergency Manager's Office during emergencies, public service events, and training situations.

3.08 Clackamas County Emergency Manager (EM): The county agency that is responsible for emergency command and control during declared disasters and major emergencies for Clackamas County. The EM is also responsible for administering Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) operations.

3.09 Clackamas County: A geographically defined subdivision of the state of Oregon. Oregon is divided into 36 counties; an ARES Emergency Coordinator manages each county.

3.10 RACES: (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) An FCC-authorized radio communication service used by volunteer licensed Amateurs, which is specifically designed to provide emergency communications to local or state emergency management agencies. Operations under RACES can only be conducted by licensed Amateurs who are registered with a government emergency management agency. RACES is administered by civil authorities and not the ARRL. RACES is used only by the authority of a local or state emergency management agency. Although ARES and emergency management agencies are separate entities, dual membership is encouraged. State and local authorities reserve the right to select and approve of those who operate under their authority by screening background checks, requiring certain training, and participation in exercises. The Clackamas County Emergency Manager appoints the Clackamas County RACES Radio Officer (RO).

3.11 Rapid Response Team (RRT): A group of CARES members formed to provide rapid deployment to establish initial communications links within the county during a time of need.

3.12 ARES Mutual Assistance Team (ARES-MAT): A mutual assistance team comprised of CARES RRT members from across the county formed to provide rapid deployment for establishing initial communication links, backup to any ARES jurisdiction within the state of Oregon or as requested by ARES command elements.

3.13 Official Emergency Station (OES) - is a recognized operator whose station has a base station that can operate independently of commercial power, and has mobile capability. The SEC makes this appointment.

4.0 ARES LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

4.01 Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) - an ARES communicator who assists an EC. This person is appointed by the EC.

4.02 District Emergency Coordinator (DEC): An ARES leadership official who has the responsibility for a District within an ARES Section. There are six (6) ARES Districts within the state of Oregon. The SEC appoints this person.

4.03 Emergency Coordinator (EC) - an ARES communicator who has leadership responsibility for an ARES group within a specific county. The SEC appoints this person with recommendations from the DEC.

4.04 Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC): ARRL leadership official who is appointed by the Section Manager to oversee ARES operations in the Section. The SEC is the primary point of contact for client agencies of OR-ARES.

4.05 Section Manager (SM): Elected official of the ARRL responsible for the operation of a section, in this case the Oregon Section.

5.0 CARES OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

5.01 CARES operational call-sign is the FCC issued call of KD7ZDO. The EC or the call-sign trustee will authorize the use of this call-sign for operational use, if it is not used in the amateur radio room at the Clackamas County EOC.

5.02 During any operation CARES will provide communications links using 2m & 440 FM voice on multiple frequencies, 2m packet, 40m & 80m HF to include the use of NVIS capable antennas. CARES has an off-site CW capability with a 2m link to the EOC if that mode is needed.

5.03 In a time of emergency, bad propagation, or other undefined circumstances, a secondary amateur radio site may be activated to insure proper communications coverage to meet mission requirements.

6.0 EMERGENCY ACTIVATION CLASSIFICATIONS

6.01 Level 1: A potential for a communication emergency exists. Members should monitor their local ARES net frequencies and email for information on preparing for the anticipated condition, and possible activation notices.

6.02 Level 2: An unusual condition or non-declared emergency exists that has caused government officials to declare a warning. Affected ECs will initiate the local ARES net, and ARES District will initiate a district wide net on an appropriate frequency. All CARES members should continue to monitor their local net. ECs and/or liaison stations should monitor District and Section UHF, or HF frequency. Members should make all preparations for possible activation. Members will be instructed to check in to their local ARES nets and be prepared to state their availability and resources. Local ARES leadership will appoint a liaison to check into the statewide HF net.

6.03 Level 3: The highest state of alert. A communication emergency exists and volunteer operators and radio resources have been requested. (Example: Governor declares a "State of Emergency") the County Emergency Manager may choose to activate ARES or only call in EM-registered operators. At this class of emergency,

management of resources may be transferred to EM. Only members who are registered with EM may participate in operations at EM or served agency facilities.

7.0 CLACKAMAS COUNTY ARES – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

7.01 In Clackamas County, ARES and state/local emergency management agencies Amateur Radio/RACES operations are separate entities that are designed to work together seamlessly. CARES operators have received additional training as determined by the civil authority with which they are registered.

7.02 When an emergency is declared by Clackamas County that requires the activation of EM registered radio operators, they act on behalf of the Emergency Manager's Office and at the direction of EM. Those ARES operators who were previously qualified to work at any served agency location may be asked to switch roles. These operators may be asked to man certain designated specific Clackamas County communications positions including operating non-Amateur Radio communications systems, telephone systems or shadowing key emergency response operations personnel. This position will require advanced EM-sponsored training. Under the guidelines of ESF-2, a EM request for ARES resources is to be made by the Director of Emergency Management (or designee) to the CARES Emergency Coordinator.

8.0 LOCAL PLAN INTEGRATION

8.01 All CARES sub-groups' plans are to be integrated with the CARES plan and must be submitted to the EC with the revision date marked on each page. Plans should be reviewed quarterly to insure accuracy.

8.02 Webpage updates and links shall be checked frequently to insure that the information provided is current, accurate, and will meet the need of those using the webpage. All CARES web pages shall be cross linked to insure dissemination of needed information

8.03 Each city sub-unit shall maintain current personnel contact information with the EC and designated CARES staff personnel. It is the responsibility of those not in a city sub-unit to insure that the EC is kept up to date on their contact information

9.0 LOCAL ARES ACTIVATION

9.01 Any Amateur who suspects that a communication emergency exists should contact their EC as soon as possible. Any immediate action necessary to protect life or property should be taken first.

9.02 The EC, or designee, will contact appropriate authorities and authorize the activation of their group as appropriate.

9.03 The EC, or designee, will activate the local notification plan and initiate a local net on the assigned repeater or simplex frequency.

9.04 The EC will act as, or appoint, a Local ARES Coordinator (LAC) to manage emergency operations.

9.05 The local ARES group will work on its own unless additional outside resources are required to meet the communications needs of the served agency(s). Additional nets may be required to coordinate the management of resources into, and out of, the affected area. This activity shall be coordinated with the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC)

CARES Communication Plan – 10/06

9.06 The EC will contact the DEC should additional resources be required to support served agencies within their jurisdiction. It will be the responsibility of the DEC or a designee to activate additional ARES groups to support activities within the affected area.

9.07 If the activation is confined to their local area, it will be the responsibility of the EC to de-activate the local operations as the conditions warrant. Under no circumstances should any CARES sub-group self-terminate from an activation or drill without the approval of the responsible EC.

9.08 The EC or a designee will notify the District Emergency Coordinator of all local emergency operations within eight hours of activation, but as soon as possible depending on operational necessity.

10.0 STATE ARES ACTIVATION

10.01 Level I activations may be made via email. The Activation Plan (Attachment A) will be used for all Level 2 and 3 activations.

10.02 The EC may activate CARES after notification by a client agency, or by District ARES leadership, that a communications emergency exists.

10.03 The EC will act as, or appoint, an Assistant Communications Officer (ACO) to manage emergency operations at the county level.

10.04 CARES district coordination net will be initiated and maintained for the duration of the emergency.

10.05 Each affected county ARES group will appoint a liaison to the statewide HF net when Level 2 or Level 3 activation is declared.

11.0 DEACTIVATION AND REPORTING STATUS

11.01 CARES and all nets associated with the activation will operate until the termination notice is given by the ACO on behalf of the EC. The termination notice will be given on the county ARES coordination net and will be relayed to all activated groups.

11.02 If the situation warrants, an ARES group can request to terminate operations prior to the CARES termination notice being given by the ACO. The ACO will evaluate the situation, and if appropriate, permit early termination from the activation or drill. Under no circumstances should any CARES group self-terminate during an activation or drill without the approval of the ACO.

11.03 The EC shall file an After Action Report (AAR), with the DEC and the SEC, within 72 hours of demobilization from an incident. Each CARES unit involved with an incident should arrange for an operational critique within 48 hours after stand-down from an incident. Bring your log files and notes for discussion. The critique meetings are not for placing blame for problems or singling out anyone for criticism. They serve as a means of discovering what worked and what didn't and to discuss how problems can be avoided in the future. Those who performed their jobs well will also be recognized. At no time is a critique session to be used for disciplinary action of an individual. Personnel problems are the responsibility of the EC and DEC and will be handled directly by them.

12.0 NET AND MESSAGE HANDLING PROTOCOLS

12.01 If the type of emergency dictates very rapid communication of brief messages directly to recipients, it is permissible to operate in a “tactical” style and use an informal verbal message format.

12.02 When messages are not to be delivered immediately or directly to the addressee, they must be written on the appropriate ARRL or agency form and sent with an appropriate mode. If messages are to be sent via the ARRL National Traffic System, or the Winlink 2000 system, the ARRL Radiogram format must be used. If an agency form is to be sent via any mode that is not error-free, or if it will need to be relayed, the ARRL Radiogram header must be added to assure message integrity. For modes with forward error correction (packet, Pactor) the “check” is not required.

12.03 All nets will operate as Directed Nets.

12.04 CARES liaison stations will use specific tactical call signs, such as “Estacada Fire” or “Milwaukie EOC.”

12.05 Tactical call signs will be used where appropriate to make it easier to direct communications. FCC identification rules must be followed as outlined in ARRL ARECC Level I and under Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission's rules.

12.06 The authenticity, correction, and additions of all messages are the sole responsibility of the originating authority. ARES operators are not permitted to alter the content of a message without the authorization of the originating authority. The content of all messages shall be considered confidential.

12.07 A radio operator should report conditions as he observes them. Such observations are considered those of a layperson and should be treated in that context.

12.08 ARES club or sub-unit call signs may be used for Winlink, packet, or other digital mode addressing.

13.0 TRAINING

13.01 The statewide ARES leadership/coordination and/or traffic nets will be exercised at 20:00 (local) on the last Tuesday of each month on 3.993.5 and if propagation requires, the net will move to 7228.0 at 1905 hours local time.

13.02 CARES members are required to participate in ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communication Certification courses to ensure that members are qualified to assist in an emergency. Specific ARECC certification requirements for each position or level are listed on the CARES web page at: <http://www.clackamasares.com/>. Additional course material can be found at: <http://www.arrl.org/cce/>

13.03 CARES members are required to participate in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Incident Command System (ICS) certification courses to ensure that members are qualified to assist in an emergency. Specific ICS certification requirements for each position and level of participation are listed on the CARES web page at: <http://www.clackamasares.com/>. Additional course material can be found at: <http://www.arrl.org/cce/> and at: <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is700.asp>

13.04 Clackamas County ARES nets shall be established according to the published plans on their assigned or backup frequencies unless directed to do otherwise. The list of Clackamas County ARES frequencies can be found on the CARES web page at: <http://www.clackamasares.com/>.

13.05 County, District, and Section training plans will be exercised and reviewed on an annual basis. Plans will be updated as necessary to meet operational needs, equipment updates, and served agency needs and requirements.

13.06 Additional tests, drills, nets, and training will be carried out as directed by the individual ECs and DECs. These sessions allow tailoring of training requirements to the specific needs of the areas and served agencies. Consideration should be given to the needs of adjacent areas for maintaining a high state of readiness for mutual aid support. It is recommended that neighboring counties and districts be invited to participate in any exercises held on a district or section-wide basis.

13.07 Should on-air training contain a disaster simulation scenario, the words “this is a drill” must be used, at the beginning and end of each transmission for the duration of the drill, and periodically during transmission of long messages, regardless of the transmission mode.

13.08 All training should prepare members to effectively implement the communications plan and be able to provide effective communications support when called upon.

13.09 The current CARES annual training schedule can be found at the CARES web page at:
<http://www.clackamasares.com/>

14.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

14.01 The information contained in this plan is to be used as a guide. It is not the intent of this document to limit any other plans or make specific operational goals or requirements. However, any conflicts between this plan and any local or regional plan must be reconciled and approved by the EC.

14.02 CARES is organized to provide communications services only. ARES operators on duty are under no obligation to serve in any other capacity. ARES operators who are cross-trained in an other agency function that also requires communications may be assigned to perform both communications and agency functions. Any operator who chooses to serve an agency in a different or dual capacity must first seek approval from his or her direct ARES supervisor before leaving ARES operations.

14.03 Membership: Any licensed Amateur over the age of 18; 16 if a parent is a CARES member, may apply for membership in CARES. Certain leadership positions are restricted to ARRL members. In accordance with ARRL policy, CARES leadership may accept or reject any application with or without cause. Applicants shall be required to undergo a criminal background check before providing services to served agencies and being registered with the Clackamas County Emergency Manager’s Office as an emergency services worker.