

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

**Overview:**

The State of Mississippi is repeatedly subject to hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, and flooding, as well as other emergency situations. Amateur Radio operators are in a unique position to render critical public service for several reasons: Amateurs own their own equipment and have proven HF/VHF communications capability for point-to-point, repeater, and satellite communications using fixed, portable, mobile, and hand-held equipment.

**Mission:** It is the mission of the Mississippi Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) to serve as the coordinating point for Amateur radio operators and their served agencies in the event of a communications emergency.

ARES is a national level volunteer organization whose purpose is to serve the public by providing licensed, certified, and competent Amateur Radio communications to federal, state, county, and local government agencies, as well as to nonprofit disaster relief organizations.

The primary activity of ARES is to provide emergency communications during disasters or significant events such as severe weather (hurricanes, flash-floods, ice storms), power failures, large area events (parades, marathons, races, walks, bicycle tours), etc. During an event, ARES will supplement public service communications or in stand in the place of primary normal communications when other channels become unavailable. ARES will operate before, during, and after major disasters. Amateurs participate in annual emergency communications preparedness exercises such as the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) sponsored Section Emergency Test (SET) and Field Day. Amateurs also participate regularly in local training exercises frequently in support of local emergency management agencies. In addition, Amateurs attend presentations and undertake self-study to improve their emergency preparedness expertise.

### **1.0 Amateur Emergency Preparedness Organizations**

**1.1 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES).** Because of the unique communications capability that can be offered by Hams, the ARRL has laid the groundwork for developing an emergency communications response organization through the ARES. This organization consists of licensed Amateurs, who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public interest to respond to emergency communications requirements. Every licensed Amateur, regardless of having membership in the ARRL or any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve in the public interest during emergency situations.

**1.2 Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES).** Amateurs can also participate in emergency operations by officially enrolling in RACES, which is administered by local/county/state emergency management agencies with guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A RACES Emergency Service Plan has been signed by the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director dated December 20, 2005.

RACES operations are conducted by Amateurs using their own primary station licenses and by using existing RACES stations. Operating privileges in RACES are dependent upon, and identical to, the class of

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

license held in the Amateur Radio Service. All the authorized frequencies and emissions allocated to the Amateur Radio Service are also available to RACES on a shared basis; however, in the event the President invokes his War Emergency Powers, Amateurs involved with RACES could be limited to frequencies assigned by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and announced by the Federal Communications Commission. Although RACES was originally based on potential use for wartime, it has evolved over the years to encompass all types of emergencies. Even though RACES and ARES are separate entities, the ARRL advocates dual membership and cooperative efforts between both groups.

**1.3 SKYWARN.** This program was organized and is sponsored by the National Weather Service (NWS) to provide real time “ground truth” meteorological information to NWS stations that is needed to confirm or supplement information collected by NWS observations, Doppler radar systems, and automated weather stations. Although the NWS primarily relies on information provided by Amateurs participating in SKYWARN Nets during thunderstorm and tornado activity, the Nets could be activated to support other severe weather events or natural disasters. NWS meteorologists often are available to provide storm spotter training to Amateurs as formal classes or as programs during club meetings.

## **2.0 Mississippi Section Emergency Organization**

Amateur emergency operations in Mississippi are coordinated by the Section Manager, Section Emergency Coordinator, District Emergency Coordinators, Emergency Coordinators, Assistant Emergency Coordinators, and Official Emergency Stations as described below:

**Section Manager (SM):** elected by ARRL members in the Mississippi Section. One of the key SM duties is to ensure that Amateurs in Mississippi are prepared to respond to emergency situations by appointing a Section Emergency Coordinator. If no motivated and capable SEC can be located, the SM is obligated to serve in the SEC position. During regional emergencies (which encompass two or more ARRL sections), the SM will coordinate with other SMs or take the coordination lead in Amateur Radio emergency operations.

**Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC):** appointed by the SM. The SEC is responsible for overall organization and coordination of Amateur Radio emergency operations in Mississippi including continual maintenance of contact with state emergency management agencies. The SEC is also responsible for locating and appointing motivated and capable District Emergency Coordinators (DEC) in consultation with the SM, preparing the scenario for and conducting the annual Section Emergency Test, and taking charge of section level Amateur Radio emergency operations. During local emergencies, he will assist the DEC and county Emergency Coordinators (EC), as requested. If no DEC or EC is available in each county, the SEC will function in that capacity, as required. The SEC will file a monthly report with the SM based on information derived from monthly DEC reports and other sources. This report should be filed with the SM no later than the 8th day following the end of the reporting period.

**District Emergency Coordinator (DEC):** appointed by the SEC in coordination with the SM. The Mississippi Section is divided into several districts by the SM and SEC in consultation with the DECS which conform to the Mississippi Highway Patrol Districts. These districts are currently made up of counties to which an EC is appointed.

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

The principle function of the DEC is to take charge of Amateur Radio emergency operations when an emergency develops that is confined to his district and to ensure that each county in his/her district has a motivated and capable EC. The DEC will assist each EC in preparing local emergency operations plan and in the conduct of local emergency preparedness activities, as well as in actual emergency operations. If no EC is available in each county, the DEC will serve in that capacity, as required. The DEC will file a monthly report with the SEC based on information derived from monthly EC reports and other sources. This report should be filed with the SEC no later than the 5th day following the end of the reporting period. Any information that the DEC thinks should be included in the monthly section report should be sent directly to the SM by the 8th of the month following the end of the reporting period with a copy furnished to the SEC.

**Emergency Coordinator (EC):** appointed by the DEC in coordination with the SM and SEC. The ECs jurisdiction may cover a single county or several counties depending on such factors as population distribution (i.e. a metro area), working relationship with emergency management agency officials, and Amateurs in adjacent counties, or the fact that an adjacent county may not have a capable and willing candidate to be appointed to the EC position.

The EC is responsible for:

- a) Preparing a local emergency operations plan
- b) Coordinating with local emergency management agencies on a regular basis
- c) Recruiting ARES members
- d) Contacting local repeater owners to determine if their repeaters can be used and/or linked during emergencies; and conducting local emergency communications preparedness exercises

When a local emergency does occur, the EC takes charge of operations.

The EC shall file a monthly report with the DEC based on ARES activity in his/her county. This report should be filed with the DEC no later than the 2nd day following the end of the reporting period. Any information that the EC thinks should be included in the monthly section report should be sent directly to the SM by the 8th of the month following the end of the reporting period with copies furnished to the DEC and SEC.

**Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC):** AECs are selected and appointed by the EC. Each EC may have as many AECs as required to effectively manage the ARES Unit. AEC responsibilities fall under the general categories of: operations, administration, liaison, and logistics. The AEC is strictly a local appointment, and does not require ARRL membership or SM/SEC/DEC approval, or notification to ARRL Headquarters.

**Official Emergency Station (OES):** appointed by the SM upon recommendation by the EC in coordination with the SEC and DEC. An OES is generally more than an ARES member. He or she is capable of operating HF and/or VHF equipment in home, portable, or handheld situations using emergency power. The OES is prepared for emergency response and has made a deep commitment to emergency preparedness operations through training, securing emergency communications equipment, and pre-planning for participation in emergency operations.

### **3.0 Amateur Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities**

In preparation for responding to emergencies each Amateur in Mississippi is encouraged to:

- Register as an ARES Member with the local EC
- Know who to advise when an emergency develops
- Understand operating procedures used by emergency nets by checking in during training or regular sessions
- Participate in emergency preparedness activities such as the SET, Field Day, or local exercise
- Take advantage of presentations by emergency preparedness experts and undertake self-study courses directed toward improving emergency preparedness expertise (see attachment A)
- Understand how to prepare messages in standard format
- Ensure that equipment is ready to operate under emergency conditions
- Keep an emergency deployment check list (ARES Field Resources Manual; Attachment A)

### **4.0 Amateur Role in Emergency Situations**

During emergency situations Amateurs should be prepared to do the following:

- Establish supplemental communications for emergency management agencies as back up for existing primary systems
- Provide primary communications into areas where no other communications exist
- Prepare, send, receive, and deliver official messages as requested by emergency management agencies
- Prepare, send, receive, and deliver health-and-welfare traffic
- Provide meteorological observations, as requested. Amateurs should not be expected to assist with disaster assessment, organize and conduct logistical operations, or assist with shelter management, unless they have been previously trained for these emergency preparedness specialty areas

### **5.0 Amateur Radio Emergency Operations in Mississippi**

The procedures for Amateur Radio emergency operations for local, district, and section emergencies in Mississippi are described below. In addition, the Mississippi Section's role in a regional emergency involving other ARRL Sections is also defined.

**5.1 Local Emergency Operations.** In that a large majority of emergency situations in which Amateur Radio can be of service are of a local nature, the EC becomes the keystone for conduct of these operations. In preparation for these emergency situations, the EC will:

- a) Contact those local agencies that Amateur radio may potentially be able to assist and make them aware of Amateur Radio capabilities and Amateur willingness to assist in emergency situations.
- b) Enlist local Amateurs as ARES members and encourage them to prepare themselves and their equipment to respond to emergency situations at the local, district, section, and regional levels.
- c) Contact local repeater owners to determine if their repeaters are available to be used/linked during emergency situations.

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

- d) Establish a regular local emergency net (see [www.arrlmiss.org](http://www.arrlmiss.org) for current listing of local nets) and conduct emergency preparedness exercises, possibly in conjunction with the Mississippi Section SET.
- e) Prepare a local Amateur Radio emergency operations plan. This may be a list of key personnel to be contacted and repeater frequencies to be used in the event of an emergency but will serve as a starting point for activating an emergency operation. The key point of the plan is that local Amateurs will know who to contact to activate emergency communications and what to do when an emergency develops as opposed to being in a situation where everybody says, "what do we do now."
- f) In the event of a local emergency the EC will mobilize ARES members and simultaneously contact local emergency management agencies to determine if Amateur Radio services can be of assistance. Further, the EC will request activation of repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic.
- g) The EC will advise the DEC, SEC, and/or SM of the emergency (see Attachment B) and request assistance, as needed.
- h) During the emergency, the EC or his designated AEC will direct operations until Amateur Radio services are no longer needed.
- i) After the emergency has concluded the EC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the DEC, who after review, will forward the report to the SEC, and in turn the SM.

**5.2 District Emergency Operations.** In the event an emergency involves the jurisdictions of two or more ECs in his district, the DEC will manage operations through the ECs in the affected counties or directly, as required.

The DEC will immediately advise the SEC and SM of the situation, as well as appropriate Amateur Radio Emergency Management Agency Points-of-Contact (POCs) such that the agencies are aware that Amateur Radio Services are available. In the event the POC cannot be immediately contacted, the SM or SEC should be asked to make the contact because the DEC will be involved in other critical aspects of the emergency operation. Further, the DEC will request activation of repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic, if deemed necessary.

When tactical or health and welfare traffic is anticipated at the Section level, the DEC will contact the Section Traffic Manager (STM):

1. The STM will then alert the Managers of the Magnolia Section Net (MSN) and the Mississippi Section Phone Net (MSPN) (see Attachment C) of the activation and then ask them to staff the Joint Net with net control stations, as required, for the duration of the emergency.
2. If traffic is anticipated for out of state locations, the
  - a. DEC will advise the STM that liaison stations need to be available between the Joint Net and the National Traffic System (NTS) for both the Daytime and Nighttime sessions.
3. Immediately after the emergency has concluded the DEC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the SEC, who after review, will forward the report to the SM.

**5.3 Section Emergency Operations.** If the emergency affects all or a large portion of Mississippi, the SEC will manage Amateur Radio operations as follows:

1. The SEC will be responsible for advising the SM and the STM regarding the development of the emergency as well as the Managers of the MSN and the MSPN. The SEC will coordinate with

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

emergency management agency POCs, as needed, (See Attachment B) and request activation of appropriate repeaters/links to accommodate emergency traffic.

2. The SEC will advise the Net Managers of the MSN and the MSPN (or their designees) will be responsible for NCS staffing for the duration of the emergency in accordance with the Joint Emergency Operations Procedures (see Attachment C).
3. The STM will ensure that NTS liaison stations are available NTS sessions. Further, he will notify the following of the emergency. The Manager of the Fifth Region Daytime Net (SSB), and the Manager of the Manager of the Central Area Digital Hub (see Attachment B).
4. Immediately after the emergency has concluded the SEC will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the SM, who, after review, will forward the report to ARRL Headquarters.

**5.4 Regional Emergency Operations.** Because regional emergencies such as hurricanes, floods, and ice storms don't stop at ARRL section lines, the Mississippi Section is party to a memorandum of understanding with the other sections of the ARRL Delta Division (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee) (a copy of this MOU is available from MS Section Manager).

By pooling communications resources such as experienced net control stations, traffic handlers, NTS liaison stations, and weather observers, effective communications can be maintained on a 24-hour basis permitting Hams in the affected areas to concentrate on taking care of family needs and to be able to respond to local emergency situations. The SM of the section that is anticipated to be the most impacted by the disaster event will be the SM Coordinator for regional emergency operations.

The selection of the SM Coordinator will be by agreement of the Section Managers that are a party to the MOU. The SM Coordinator will be responsible for organizing and staffing a HF tactical phone emergency net. This responsibility will be delegated to the Delta Division ARES manager or his assistant Net Manager. The SM Coordinator will inform ARRL Headquarters of the emergency net's activation.

The actual start time of the net will be determined by mutual consent of the Section Managers based on available information. In the event the SM Coordinator is not available, the Section Emergency coordinator or one of the other SMs will assume coordination responsibilities. Further, the SM Coordinator will notify the following of the emergency: The Manager of the NTS Fifth Region Daytime Net (SSB) and the Manager of the Central Area Digital Hub (see Attachment B). The SM Coordinator may recruit one of the other SMs, SECs, or STMs to assist with these tasks.

During a regional emergency, the Delta ARES Emergency Net will be activated under the provisions of the Delta Division MOU: 3890 (night) and 7275 (day). During a regional emergency, the Joint MSN/MSPN Net will operate on 7238 KHz (daytime) and 3862 KHz (nighttime) to handle overflow tactical traffic, welfare traffic, and intra-state traffic, as needed.

The Managers of the MSN and MSPN will staff the net according to the Joint Emergency Operation Procedures (Attachment C). The STM will ensure that there is MSN/MSPN liaison with the Delta ARES Emergency Net. The National Traffic System operates the Daytime Region 5 Net (DRN5) (SSB) and the Manager of the Central Area Digital Hub. These Nets will handle primarily Health/Welfare Traffic. DRN5

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

meets daily at 1025 AM on 7280 and on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In the summer RN5 uses 7108 for both sessions. Digital in-state traffic point-to-point center frequencies are 7079.9 (USB)(Daytime) and 3595.9 (USB)(Nighttime). These frequencies have been coordinated with the Louisiana Section for common use.

**5.4.1 Digital Operations:** The HF Digital NTS is encouraged for use with NTS type messages. Winlink 2000 is encouraged for destinations with email addresses. This may include HF and VHF with RMS Express. Winmor will be the primary mode for Winlink 2000 use. Digital modes such as RTTY, PSK-31, etc. and modes that do not have error checking are not encouraged due to their ability to receive errors without realizing the transmitted message has changed.

VHF packet peer to peer and packet gateway traffic will be handled on 145.010. VHF FM operation can be handled on 146.52 simplex (national simplex frequency) for an initial contact with incoming mobiles during an incident. Once contact has been established, operation should be moved to another simplex frequency or a local repeater. This procedure will be used to accommodate incoming mobiles who are not aware of active repeater frequencies or PL tones. Immediately after the emergency has concluded, the SM Coordinator will prepare a written report of emergency operations activity for the ARRL Field Organization Supervisor.

**End of Report**

For questions concerning this document, please contact the undersigned:

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ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

**Attachment A: Resource Materials**

The documents and links listed below make up the core resources for Amateurs involved in emergency preparedness operations.

ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications On-Line Courses. The ARRL offers two online EMCOMM Courses: “Introduction to Emergency Communications” (EC-001) and “Public Service and “Emergency Communications Management for Radio Amateurs” (EC-016). See [www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog](http://www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog) .

*FEMA On-Line National Incident Management System Independent Study Program.* See <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp> . Many of the courses are pre-requisites for the ARRL Courses.

*The ARRL Digital Technology for Emergency Communication Course (Self Study CDROM)*

*ARES E-Newsletter.* To subscribe you must be logged into the ARRL Web Site. Click “Edit Your Profile” at the top center of the page. Click select “Edit E-mail Subscriptions”. Select “The ARRL E-Newsletter” and then save your changes.

*ARRL Emergency Coordinators Manual.* This document is no longer available in hard copy. A downloadable copy is available from ARRL Headquarters.

*ARRL ARES Field Resources Manual* (available electronically from the SEC)

*ARRL Public Service Communications Manual.* This document is no longer available in hard copy but can be downloaded at [www.arrl.org/FandES/Field/pscm](http://www.arrl.org/FandES/Field/pscm) .

*Amateur Radio Public Service Handbook*

*Emergency Power for Radio Communications*

The ARRL Repeater Directory

The ARRL Net Directory. This document is no longer available in hardcopy. On-line information about nets is available at [www.arrl.org/arrl-net-directory-search](http://www.arrl.org/arrl-net-directory-search). The Net Directory on the Mississippi Section Website ([www.arrlmiss.org](http://www.arrlmiss.org)) is probably more up to date. Documents with them can be ordered from the ARRL at 1-888-277-5289 or from the on-line bookstore at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

**Attachment B:**

Points of Contact for Emergency Operations are available at [www.arrlmiss.org](http://www.arrlmiss.org)

District Emergency Coordinators, Emergency Coordinators, and Assistant Emergency Coordinators (see listing at [www.arrlmiss.org](http://www.arrlmiss.org) under DEC/EC) Emergency Coordinators (see listing at [www.arrlmiss.org](http://www.arrlmiss.org) under DEC/EC)

ARRL Mississippi Section  
Emergency Operations Plan  
(Revised 2 February 2018)

**Attachment C:**

Joint Emergency Operation Procedures Magnolia Section Net and Mississippi Section Phone Net 3862 KHz

1. The Magnolia Section Net (MSN) and the Mississippi Section Phone Net (MSPN) under the auspices of the Mississippi Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) conduct daily sessions to train for emergencies. Under normal conditions these two nets operate independently of each other with each having a Net Manager; however, during emergencies, joint operations may be required to effectively expedite the handling of tactical and health/welfare traffic for emergency management and relief agencies. The joint operation will be activated at the request of the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) and the concurrence of the Net Managers.
2. The joint daily operational rotation cycle will commence at the beginning of the morning session of the MSN. After all traffic has been handled the formal session will conclude, and the Net will go into emergency session. The MSN Net Manager will be responsible for assigning Net Control Stations (NCS) to monitor the frequency in two-hour shifts (or other shift lengths as specified by the MSN Manager) after conclusion of the formal session. In the event traffic needs to be moved off frequency to another net such as a multi-section tactical net or DRN5, the NCS will recruit a liaison station to move the traffic. (Note: The MSN normally meets on 3862.5 KHz at 6 AM weekdays and 7 AM weekends and Holidays. However, during joint emergency operation the MSN will meet on 3862 KHz to ensure continuity of operations.)
3. The MSN will be relieved at the start of the MSPN on 3862 KHz (6 PM - summer; 5:30 PM - winter). After all traffic is handled the MSPN formal session will conclude, and the Net will go into emergency session. The MSPN Net Manager will be responsible for assigning NCSs to monitor the frequency in two hours shifts (or other shift lengths as specified by the MSPN Manager) after conclusion of the formal session. In the event traffic needs to be moved off frequency to another net such as a multi-section tactical net or RN5, the NCS will recruit a liaison station to move the traffic. Net operations will conclude for the day at the discretion of the MSPN Manager; however, during periods of high volume emergency traffic the Net may need operate through the night until relieved by the MSN at 6 AM.
4. During periods when there is no activity the NCS will announce approximately every ten minutes: *"This is (call) net control for the Mississippi ARES Emergency Net now in emergency session. This is a joint operation between the Magnolia Section Net and the Mississippi Section Phone Net. Operation will commence each day at 0600 with the start of the Magnolia Section Net and continue until the band shortens to the point that statewide communication is not possible. At that time, the Mississippi ARES Emergency Net will move to 7238 until the band lengthens in the afternoon at which time the Net will return to 3862 or at 6 PM which is the start of the Mississippi Section Phone Net Session. Is there any emergency or tactical traffic now? Is there any health/welfare traffic? (Handle any traffic). Please keep the frequency clear during quiet periods and monitor for emergency or tactical traffic. Be ready to assist the Net Control Station, as necessary."* The NCS is at liberty to vary this procedure as net operation dictates.
5. The Joint Operation Procedures may be modified at any time with the concurrence of the SEC and the respective Net Managers.