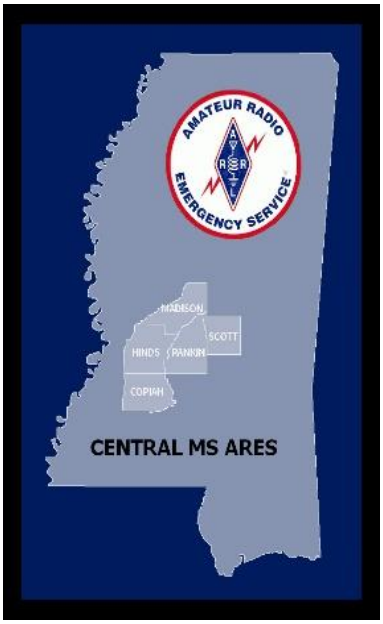
Central Mississippi Amateur Radio Emergency Service



Website: msares.com
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Serving the emergency communications needs of Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Scott, and Copiah Counties

Member Handbook

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Authority

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of Amateur Radio licensees who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

ARES is a part of the field organization of the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for amateur radio.

Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind.

The ARES operates under the supervision of the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL) Field Services and Radiosport Manager or his/her designee. It operates to serve both governmental and non-governmental agencies through "Memorandums of Understanding;" non-binding letters explaining the roles and responsibilities of participating parties at the national and section levels.

ARES Mission Statement

"The Amateur Radio Emergency Service, a program of the ARRL, offers to its partners at all levels, trained Amateur Radio Service licensees who are skilled in the use of a wide range of emergency and disaster communications techniques and who are committed to supporting our partner's missions in service to the public."

ARES Vision Statement

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), a program of ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, is composed of organized, trained, and identified Amateur Radio operators who augment and support vital communications on behalf of the public through partner agencies and organizations during emergencies and disasters. The Amateur Radio Emergency Service, through its volunteer radio communicators, strives to be an effective partner in emergency and disaster response, providing public service partners at all levels with radio communications expertise, capability, and capacity."

Responsibility

By enabling EchoLink, linking repeaters and utilizing Winlink, NBEMS and voice and digital modes on HF and VHF/UHF frequencies, we provide service to a broad local area as well as to the state and region during normal times; however, the primary responsibility of CMSARES is to furnish communications in the event of a natural or man-made disaster where regular communications fail or are inadequate.

The responsibility of the ARES operator is to move messages to specified parties by any combination of means available such as phone, fax, internet, VHF/UHF or HF voice and digital communications. In keeping with this concept our philosophy is “use it until you lose it” but because of the vulnerability of normal communications infrastructure, our primary resource for emergency communications is RF based and is the focus of our preparations.

CMSARES provides service to the Rankin County Emergency Operations Center, the National Weather Service SKYWARN program, the MS Digital Emcomm Group (MSDEG), and any other government agency or non-governmental organizations (NGO) requesting assistance if resources permit.

CMSARES Leadership

Central Mississippi Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CMSARES), a part of the Central Mississippi Amateur Radio Association. is comprised of licensed amateur radio operators in five counties: Hinds, Madison, Rankin, Copiah, and Scott. Information about the history and founding of CMSARES is available on our website at msares.com.

CMSARES functions under the direction of a local Emergency Coordinator (EC) appointed by the Section Manager (SM) in consultation with the Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC). Because of the nature of CMSARES, an Emergency Coordinator for each county served may be appointed; however, the EC-Operations has responsibility for overall leadership and guidance of the group. The EC-Training is considered the second-in-command and, in the absence, or vacancy of the EC-Operations may assume those duties.

ECs may appoint assistants (AECs) to assist with specific tasks. AECs do not assume authority of an EC in his absence as AECs are strictly local appointments made by the EC. Only the Section Manager in consultation with the SEC may appoint an EC.

CMSARES leadership is comprised of:

- EC- Operations/overall leadership
- EC- Training
- AEC- Webmaster/Winlink Net
- AEC-Training
- AEC- Digital Net Manager
- AEC- Net Management
- AEC- Technical Advisor
- Public Information Officer
- EOC Liaison

Succession

If a vacancy occurs among the ECs, the remaining ECs may consult with the Section Manager about a replacement and choose a replacement from among the members by unanimous vote. The senior EC will submit an agreed upon candidate to the Section Manager for approval and appointment.

Membership

Membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization is not required to join ARES: however, ARRL membership is required for leadership appointments.

Central MS Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CMSARES) is part of the Central MS Amateur Radio Association (CMSARA); therefore, membership in CMSARA is highly encouraged. You do not have to be a licensed amateur to attend meetings of CMSARA; however, only licensed amateurs are eligible for membership in ARES. Applications for CMSARA are available at centralmsham.club. Applications for CMSARES are available at msares.com.

All amateur radio licenses will be verified. Applications for CMSARES with false or misleading statements will be rejected for consideration.

Entry level Technician classes are offered by Central MS Amateur Radio Association when there is sufficient demand. Testing for all license classes is conducted by CMSARA on the second Saturday of each month at Crossroads of Life Church located at 6775 Siwell Rd. in Byram, MS. Registration procedures for the tests are found on centralmsham.club. Email reminders are sent out to all members who provide their contact information.

We meet at the Rankin County Emergency Operations Center located at 601 Marquette Rd. in Brandon, MS on the second Tuesday of each month immediately following the 7pm meeting of Central MS Amateur Radio Association. You do not have to be a licensed amateur to attend. Each meeting includes a presentation on a topic relevant to ARES as well as a question/answer session and an opportunity for mentoring.

ARES has 3 levels of training, allowing participants to enter at a basic level and to advance to a higher level if desired.

Level 1
Primarily for those new to Amateur Radio as well as those who do not desire a leadership position. Training introduces the participant to ARES and the fundamentals of emergency communications as well as how to conduct themselves while serving in the field or during an activation. At this level participants can participate in activations from their home. Participants may remain at this level or advance to a higher level depending on their desires.

Level 2
Participants at this level are eligible for activation in the field and may be assigned to our served agencies. Participants must complete the following courses: ARRL's EC-001 *Introduction to Amateur Radio Emergency Communications* (free*),* FEMA IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, and IS-800 (all are free). Participants should also take advantage of advanced training to increase their skills. Some recommended courses include Basic/Advanced Storm Spotting, Basic First Aid/CPR.

Level 3
Participation at this level prepares one to take on a leadership position such as EC, ADEC, DEC, ASEC, and SEC and other designated positions. Additional training courses must be completed including ARRL's EC-016 *Emergency Communications for Management,* along with FEMA's Professional Development Series of courses including IS-120, IS-230, IS-240, IS-241, IS-242, IS-244, and IS-288. Completion of IS-300 and IS-400 is also encouraged.

NIMS/ICS courses are required to familiarize ARES members with NIMS/ICS procedures and policies and to provide an understanding of the Incident Command System. It is important to understand how NIMS/ICS functions and the role we play in a disaster response.

Central MS ARES has training requirements in addition to those listed above. For a complete list, download the *Mississippi ARES Training Quick Check List* at msares.com. Taskbooks, which verify completion of requirements for each level can be downloaded at msares.com. ECs will sign Taskbooks as requirements are completed.

Members at all levels are required to download and become familiar with the following:

- GroupMe phone app
- ARES Manual
- ARRL ARES Plan
- ARES Field Resources Manual
- ARRL ARES Training Task Book
- MSARES Training Quick Check List
  (All are available at msares.com)

All CMSARES members are expected to observe the following:

- Download the appropriate GroupMe app, or other such apps as determined by the leadership to be used for notifications and activations.
- Regularly participate in drills, training, exercises, meetings, and activations and respond in a timely manner to all texts, calls, Standby Notifications and Activations.
- Abide by all rules and regulations of the FCC, ARRL, and CMSARES.
- All members should immediately notify the EC-Operations and EC-Training of any changes to Call Sign. License Class, address, and contact information or name change due to marriage.

Regardless of the level at which one chooses to serve, some basics are encouraged for all including:

- One or more backup power sources for equipment. We recommend sufficient power to run communications equipment for at least three days. Sources of power may be a generator, batteries, or solar power.

Regardless of the system, it should be readily available, batteries should be charged and tested periodically, and fuel should be available for generators. Operators should practice using their backup power sources to ensure they are working properly and to maintain familiarity with the system

- A go-kit for community events such as marathons and bike races, and deployment to areas away from home. Ideas for what to include in a go-kit are available in the ARES Field Resources Manual as well as many on-line sources. The kit should include equipment necessary for its intended use.
- When operating at a community event or a deployment, the image you present determines how you and ARES are perceived; therefore, you should dress in a manner appropriate for conditions expected and which projects a professional appearance.
- Clothing should include an ARRL approved deployment vest and baseball cap identifying you as an Emergency Communicator.(available at arrl.org)
- Members should download and maintain a sufficient supply of forms frequently used for training and activations including the following forms found at ARRL.org:

Radiogram and ARRL Recommended Precedences, and Message Handling Instructions can be found on the Emergency Operations Plan on msares.com.

ICS 213 Form/Instructions
ICS 214 Form/ Instructions
Storm Spotter Reports
Central MS ARES Radio Net Log
Net Report Form

Also recommended for quick reference
www.arrl.org
Communicating with Other Hams which includes:
Q Signals
ITU Phonetic Alphabet

FSD-220 which includes;
Communications Procedures
The R-S-T system
UTC Time Conversion Chart

Wilderness Protocol….tcares.net/the-wilderness-protocol/

Training Standards and Requirements

Drills, training, and instruction are conducted to ensure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur emergency communications when the need arises. Training for activation includes instruction and practice in ARES net procedures, traffic handling, storm spotter reporting and voice and digital communications. Winlink and NBEMS free software are used for digital training. Training Nets are used to improve skills and to prepare for Activation. In addition, we mentor members in areas where they need assistance.

CMSARES participates in the Simulated Emergency Test held annually to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in Amateur Radio emergency preparedness as well as to demonstrate amateur radio to our served agencies and the public. All members are encouraged to participate.

We also participate in ARRL's annual Field Day to highlight amateur radio's capabilities to the public. Participation is encouraged.

Many ARES served agencies now require ARES participants to be trained to a degree that would qualify them to assume any position to which assigned; therefore, ARES has instituted a national system for qualifying, certifying and credentialing to insure consistent training for all levels of ARES. These standards are outlined in the ARRL ARES PLAN and should be reviewed by all members.

ECs will sign Task books, (downloadable at arrl.org) to verify completion of requirements for each level.

Although we use a combination of the latest technology to conduct operations, recruit and maintain contact with members during normal times, our training focus is on RF communications due to the vulnerability of regular communications infrastructure.

In many instances we will activate our **Emergency Net** in response to impending severe weather or circumstances which overload landline telephone and cell phone service, but do not interrupt other systems. Our primary response for such times will utilize VHF/UHF voice communications. If circumstances dictate, we may also use VHF NBEMS and/or HF Winlink Gateways for digital comms.

In instances which disable not only normal communications but also repeaters and internet service or which involve widespread power outages, our response will be based on HF voice and digital communications. For digital comms we will use a combination of Winlink VARA (primary) or ARDOP, (alternate), Peer2Peer, and HF NBEMS. Our communications plan will outline the frequencies and protocol to be used.

Members interested in the digital modes should download the FLDIGI, FLMSG, AND FLAMP suite of free software available www.W1hkj.com and the free Winlink Global Email available at Winlink.org. and participate in training using these modes. VARA, with ARDOP as alternate and Peer2Peer will be the standard used for Winlink messaging; however, telnet, which uses the internet can be used until your digital station is operable.

MESSAGES

As ARES operators our primary job is to move messages.

Message types fall into two categories: (1) Tactical / informal (2) Formal / written

Tactical: Unstructured messages originated by an operator to typically cover status, progress, or situational information. Examples: weather status, resource or logistics needs, search and rescue operations, damage assessment, security, road closures, mutual assistance coordination, or command communications.

Formal: Structured messages using a written ARRL and ICS standardized forms. Incident Command System (ICS) forms are used because our served agencies use these documents as part of their standard protocol and doing so makes it much easier for us to work together.

During an activation, the most used forms will be the Radiogram, and the ICS 213-General Message Form. During a severe weather event, the Storm Spotter Report, a National Weather Service form, will be used. Members should become familiar with these forms and practice using them on our weekly training nets. Instructions for using these forms can be found at msares.com.

Points to Remember

- All ***written*** messages shall be in standard ARRL or ICS format
- All ***written*** messages must be signed by the official originating them, with their title, taking responsibility for their contents.
- Message precedence of **EMERGENCY, Priority**, and **Routine** as defined by the ARRL form FSD-3 shall be used on all ***written*** messages.
- When working with served agencies we will have to handle messages using their preferred forms in lieu of or in addition to NTS Radiograms
- ARES is responsible for delivery and tracking of messages sent on behalf of our partners
- ARES members should become familiar with and use multiple digital messaging protocols

Written messages should be delivered as written except that the word count may be corrected if incorrect.

When normal communications are down or overloaded, messages may be passed using RF by voice or digital modes. In many instances tactical traffic using voice mode will be preferable and tactical callsigns may be utilized; however, station identification by FCC rules will still be followed.

Advantages of Voice mode:

More practical for mobile and portable operations
Greater availability of operators
Faster communications for tactical or command communications
More readily understood by untrained members of the public
Allows direct official-to-official and phone patch communications

Advantages of Digital modes

Greater speed than some other modes
Use of error detection/correction by some modes improves accuracy
Some data modes offer store-and-forward capability to move messages via automatically controlled relay points
Less interference in most amateur bands

Duties of Net Control Stations when passing Formal/Informal messages

Record incoming and outgoing activity on appropriate forms
Retain a copy of all logs
Deliver messages and replies to intended recipients
Handle and file messages according to established protocol
After the net, submit the Net Report and any necessary accompanying forms to the Net Manager at NetManager@MSARES.com

HIPPA ACT

During a disaster or emergency, you may be asked to transmit patient information via amateur radio. While it is not the role of the radio operator to determine what is and is not permitted under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA), it is appropriate for the operator to remind the originator of the message that there can be no expectation of privacy of information sent via amateur radio and that encryption is not permitted under FCC rules and regulations. If you are ordered to pass this type of sensitive information, be sure to document the circumstances, the name/position of the originator and the substance of your discussion about it.