



**The Highland Lakes ARES®
Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Emergency Communications Plan**

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Highland Lakes Amateur Radio Emergency Service (HLARES) unit is composed of FCC-licensed amateur radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public communications service especially in times of man-made or natural emergencies. They have agreed to receive training in emergency communications and procedures.
- b) Under Federal regulations, the contents of messages handled by amateur radio are not divulged to unauthorized persons and such public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. However, such messages are not encrypted and should never be considered secure communications.
- c) The HLARES functions in this EMERGENCY PLAN under the direction of the HLARES Emergency Coordinator (EC), currently, Rik Chapman, K5RIK, who is appointed by the South Texas Section Manager (SM) of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®) with the support of the Highland Lakes Amateur Radio Club (HLARC). Safety is our first priority. We never advise placing anyone in any position of danger.
- d) The EC may appoint Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AEC) sufficient to function efficiently.

2) PURPOSE

- a) The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the minimum information that would be needed in an emergency. Each emergency is different and flexibility is a necessity to provide an adequate response. No plan can anticipate all possible emergency needs so common sense and a safety orientation is required in all activities.
- b) The primary responsibility of the HLARES is to furnish emergency communications in the event of a natural or a man-made disaster when regular communications fail or become inadequate. An emergency consists of a threat to life or property.
- c) Drills, training, community service events, practice nets, and instruction shall be carried out to ensure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur emergency communications.

- d) The following jurisdictions/agencies shall be served, upon their request, in an emergency (see Paragraph 4 g below for AEC assignments):
 - (1) Incorporated Jurisdictions in HLARES area including Burnet and Llano County, Texas.
 - ii) The Unincorporated Area or Populations under the authority of the County Judges and the Burnet and Llano County Offices of Emergency Management. Today this includes:
 - (1) Burnet County TX, including local shelters at the Burnet and Marble Falls High Schools, Herb Darling, EM
 - (2) Llano County TX, Ronald Moore, EM
 - iii) The American Red Cross (Travis County/Central Texas)
 - iv) The Salvation Army SATERN group.
 - v) Law Enforcement and Fire Departments. Today this includes:
 - (1) Burnet County Sheriff's Department, Captain Jim Barho
 - (2) Marble Falls Fire Department, Chief
 - (3) Horseshoe Bay Fire Department, Chief James Fiero
 - vi) Hospitals and Nursing Homes. Today this includes:
 - (1) Seton Highland Lakes Hospital, Burnet, EM
 - (2) Llano Memorial Hospital, Rodney Lott, EM
 - vii) The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), EM
 - viii) The District Emergency Coordinator, South Section of the ARRL, when surrounding counties request assistance under ARES Mutual Assistance Team (ARESMT).
 - ix) The State of Texas Division of Emergency Management, Kevin Lemon EM.
 - x) The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

3) PLAN ACTIVATION

- a) Any member of the HLARES, who becomes aware that a communications emergency may exist, should contact the EC or any AEC and monitor the assigned VHF net repeater frequency of 146.660 MHz (tone 88.5) for activity. Depending upon circumstances, the telephone call-up tree should be activated. Any served agency may contact the EC, Rik Chapman (cell: 512-845-1199, pager: 512-205-0510 or any member of HLARES and request communications support at any time.
- b) If local telephone service is available, the EC and/or Assistant EC's and members shall be notified by telephone or by any other means available using the call-up plan provided to members in a separate document.
- c) In any emergency in which amateur radio is requested to serve, amateur radio operators may be alerted by any City/County Emergency Management Coordinator, Red Cross, or State official notifying the EC. In the event the EC is unavailable, an AEC or other HLARES member shall be notified. The AEC will attempt to notify the EC periodically.

4) **MOBILIZATION**

- a) The EC or AEC will notify ARES members by using telephone, VHF/FM communication on the HLARES repeater frequency, email, and/or paging systems or any other legal means. If telephone service is available, the HLARES telephone call-up plan will be activated. If telephone service is not available, notification will be by radio and/or runner, as necessary.
- b) The EC, or operator designated by him, will transmit on the VHF 2-Meter repeater or the back-up frequency, in turn, advising all stations of the ARES activation and request that all operators switch to the ARES frequency for further instruction.
- c) Upon the awareness or notification that a communications emergency exists, members of the HLARES should check-in on the HLARES Emergency Net and maintain radio silence. The first member of HLARES to check in will act as NCS until relieved.
- d) Mobile and Portable units will be activated. See Para 5.7
- e) The EC will assume NET CONTROL as soon as available or delegate another operator to act as Net Control Station (NCS) on the repeater or other frequency to be determined by the EC. Control will be established at whichever EOC is activated by the Emergency Management Coordinator of the jurisdiction involved with the emergency. Only VHF equipment will be used at the EOC unless the EC sees a need for other frequency utilization. This restriction is to reduce interference and operator fatigue. HF stations will be established as needed at a location(s) away from the disaster site at the residence of an ARES operator. HF stations will have a 146.660 MHz link with the EOC and will utilize 20, 40 and 75 meter bands for long range communications into the "7290 Traffic Net", (on 7290 kHz) or the "Texas Traffic Net" (on 3873 kHz.), the Hurricane Net (on 14.325 kHz) or other outlets that are available for the handling of Health and Welfare type traffic. Packet operation and/or WinLink 2000 will be used whenever possible to expedite message handling and hard-copy printouts.
- f) Operators with pre-assigned operating positions/locations shall contact the EC/AEC to determine if they should proceed to their operating locations immediately or standby on the primary net frequency for further instructions.
- g) Today AEC assignments are: Burnet County, Mike Warner, K5JIN; Seton Highland Lakes Hospital, Angie Sierra, KE5HIR; Llano Memorial Hospital, Jim Dear, K5HWH; Marble Falls, Chuck Dear, KB5YKJ; Horseshoe Bay, Malcolm Robertson, W5RME; Kingsland, Sherry Musgrove, WA5SYU. All others contact Rik Chapman, K5RIK.

5) **DUTIES OF NET CONTROL STATION, (NCS)**

a) **OPEN The NET**

The HLARES Emergency Net will be activated by the Net Control Station. Based upon the facts, stations will be fully advised as to the nature of the disaster.

b) **CHECK-IN STATIONS**

- i. Stations will be checked in from their home stations, mobiles, portable stations, and handheld radios. All stations shall standby for further instructions.
 - ii. Preassigned station operators will be deployed to their agencies as safety conditions allow and needs are determined by agencies being served.
 - iii. Operators of hand-held portables will be advised to save batteries by switching them off while in hearing distance of a non-battery operated unit.
 - iv. Mobile operators will be given a reminder to re-fuel if possible and run engines only when necessary.
 - v. Stations operating from gasoline-powered generators will be reminded to arrange for continuous fuel supply.
 - vi. An inventory list will be made of operators and equipment for possible assignment as relief operators.
- c. HF liaison stations will be assigned to the Texas Traffic Net or Texas ARES net both on 3873 kHz or to the 7290 Traffic Net on 7290 kHz. depending upon whether it is day or night. If possible, a liaison on 2 meters will be assigned to HF liaison stations for maintaining contact with EOC NCS on the assigned VHF frequency.
- d. The Emergency Medical Service of HLARES is coordinated with a countywide Emergency Plan.
- i. If a request for assistance is received, HLARES will furnish 2 meter operators as needed and as available
 - ii. A 2-meter repeater will be designated by the EOC HLARES NCS and/or the HLARES EC.
- e. The NCS will establish other nets as conditions dictate, on various frequencies, for handling Welfare type traffic.
- i. An incoming and outgoing traffic system will be established with mobile runners.
 - ii. NCS operator, deployed HLARES responders, liaison station relief shift schedules shall be developed when 24-hour operation is needed. These shifts will be 8-hour (maximum) shifts.
- f. NCS operators on each net are requested to wear headphones with noise canceling microphones whenever possible while serving at the EOC, Sheriff's Office or other agencies to prevent audible interference to other services and to prevent them from interfering with our nets, thus avoiding unnecessary repeats of messages.
- g. Mobile and portable units will be dispatched as needed. The location of each will be noted at all times by the NCS. These mobile units and hand held units will not normally be assigned to fixed stations, but will be dispatched to serve as mobile or portable units only. When assigned to act as relief operator at an HF station or VHF fixed station. Then the

mobile or portable unit will not be used. The fixed station equipment will be used instead.

- h. When there is an electrical power outage at the home of an Operator and there is no alternate power source, the operator will be assigned as relief operators where emergency power is available in order to effectively use every operator.

6. OPERATIONS

1.0 Messages

a. Formal Messages

Definition:

Formal messages are those, which request material or services, which may require payment or replacement.

Message Forms:

All formal messages must be written in standard ARRL format or ICS 213 format depending upon the served agency requirements. The served agency representative can create their message on the Message Forms provided by the ARES radio operator for that purpose.

Message Precedence (where used):

The Operator must assign the message ARRL PRECEDENCE, defined on ARRL CD Form 3. This PRECEDENCE will be used on all messages.

Signature:

All formal messages **require** the signature and title of the originator. Messages received requesting materials or services, which may later require payment, **will not be transmitted** until signed with the title shown.

Message Retention:

All Operators must save his/her copy of all such messages.

b) Tactical Messages

Tactical Emergency messages, such as fire, police or Life-or-Death situations **do not** require numbers.

These are first priority messages and we use "Break, Break!" to get attention of the NCS, between transmissions. When accepting such messages for transmission, require only the following information:

To (Example: Kingsland Fire Station)

What (Example: Pumper)

Why (Example: Structure fire)

Where (Example: High School)

Who (Example: Name)

c) TRANSMITTING

Stations do not transmit unless invited to do so by the Net Control (NCS).

1. Exceptions:

- (a) Stations having Emergency traffic
- (b) To recheck into the net after having been directed by NCS to pass traffic on a different frequency.

- Keep transmissions short and to the point.

7) DRILLS, TESTS AND ALERTS

- a) An annual test will be conducted each year whenever possible in conjunction with the nationwide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) sponsored by ARRL. Periodic exercises will be conducted in cooperation with the various HLARES(r) Emergency Management Coordinators.
- b) The HLARES Training Net will be held at 2030, local time, every Sunday night, on the 146.660 MHz repeater.
- c) At the discretion of the EC, HLARES will be activated unannounced at least once a year for training and evaluation.

- d) The HLARES Amateur Radio Emergency Service Plan and Standard Operating Procedure shall be reviewed annually with updates as necessary to keep this plan current and viable

Signed:

X: *Rik Chapman*

Rik Chapman, Ph.D, K5RIK@arrl.net
HLARES Emergency Coordinator

January 1, 2008

