

**Memorandum of Understanding
between the
Sarasota Emergency Radio Club
and
The Sarasota County Auxiliary Communications Service**

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to state the terms of a mutual agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the Sarasota Emergency Radio Club (SERC) and the Sarasota County Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS). This document will serve as a framework within which ACS will have access to SERC owned and operated N4SER repeater stations in support of the Sarasota County Emergency Communications functions.

Background

ARES

As established under Federal Communications Commission's Rules and Regulations (47 C.F.R. Part 97), a primary responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service is the rendering of public service communications for the general public, particularly in times of emergency when normal communications are not available. Using the Amateur Radio Service frequencies, Amateur Radio operators have been serving the general public, both directly and through governmental and relief agencies, for more than 50 years. To this end, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for radio amateurs, organized the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES).

RACES

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is an emergency service function defined under Part 97 of the FCC rules. RACES is a special service of the Amateur Radio Service that provides radio communications to local, county, or state civil preparedness agencies during periods of local, regional, or national civil emergencies. All of the authorized frequencies and emissions allocated to the Amateur Radio Service are also available to RACES on a shared basis. In the event that the President of the United States invokes his War Emergency Powers, RACES operators, using specially authorized amateur radio frequencies, may be the only Amateur Radio Operators permitted on the air.

Organization of ACS

ACS is a combination of the ARES and RACES programs in Sarasota County. This effectively combines the two separate programs into one and enables ACS to respond to any communications emergency with the same group of amateur radio operators, insuring Continuity of Operations (CONOPS) as the situation changes. The mission of

ACS is to establish an emergency communications reserve supported by unpaid (volunteer) staff. It is the purpose of ACS to support any and all public service communications systems in event of failure, overload or other problems that might jeopardize their usefulness and purpose, provide access to FCC amateur radio service frequencies during times of emergencies, maintain communications equipment in an on-going state of readiness, set up and staff at locations as specified in the current operations plan, activate a minimum level of support whenever ACS is alerted to a potential or existing emergency, provide operators for all necessary positions to sustain operations as long as the EOC is activated, handle message, information, command and liaison "traffic" as is required for any communications needed in an emergency or threat of an emergency, and conduct such training and familiarization events as shall accomplish all of the above.

Organization of SERC

SERC, founded in 1976, exists as an association of persons commonly interested in the Amateur Radio Service. SERC is an ARRL Affiliated club. It is the purpose of SERC as stated in its constitution and bylaws, to further the education and cooperation of all members, to promote fraternalism and operator proficiency, educate the public and encourage the development of new amateurs and members, assist in emergencies and with public welfare and safety, promote amateur radio through public service participation, conduct meetings to promote radio knowledge and greater cooperation between members, and coordinate use of the radio frequencies allocated by the Federal government in the best interest of all amateurs residing within the jurisdiction of the club, and to conduct club programs and activities as to advance the general interest and welfare of amateur radio in the community.

SERC will provide its repeater stations for emergency communications organizations on an as needed basis. SERC operates several systems on the 2-meter amateur radio band with excellent coverage of Sarasota County. These repeater systems currently operate under the FCC callsign of N4SER on the coordinated frequency pairs of:

145.130 MHz (transmit) / 144.530 MHz (receive) with no PL tone.

146.730 MHz (transmit) / 146.130 MHz (receive) with a PL tone of 100.0 Hz.

147.390 MHz (transmit) / 147.990 MHz (receive) with a PL tone of 100.0 Hz.

Recognition

SERC recognizes that ACS is an organization of approximately 30 amateur radio operators that, in turn, is recognized by the County of Sarasota as their official Amateur Radio partner organization.

ACS recognizes SERC as the exclusive owner and operator of the N4SER repeater stations. SERC provides all repeater station maintenance, and ensures accessibility of

the system by the Amateur Radio community.

Method of Cooperation

For the communications resources of SERC and ACS to be coordinated and used to the fullest advantage during disasters and emergencies, and to the extent permitted or required by law and regulation, SERC and ACS have agreed to the following:

1. SERC agrees to allow ACS to assume operational control of the SERC repeater station(s) during times requiring disaster communications as described above. Operational control is defined as using the repeater station to communicate by running an informal (without Net Control Station) or directed (with Net Control Station) net.
2. When contacted by the ACS Radio Officer, or Deputy Radio Officer, SERC will make a reasonable attempt to have a control operator on frequency during an ACS activation.
3. A SERC Control Operator as requested by ACS will monitor the technical aspects of repeater operation, making any necessary adjustments or changes to the operation of the radio station as can be achieved remotely such as:
 - a. Temporarily disabling any VoIP links on the SERC repeater(s), where that capability exists.
 - b. Turning the repeater off if it is in any danger of failure that would preclude further operation later, while notifying the ACS NCS with as much notice as possible so the net may be moved to another frequency.
 - c. Turning the repeater off if it is malfunctioning or in the presence of malicious interference which precludes proper operations with the same notification as in b. above.
 - d. Making any changes necessary to allow the repeater to operate in accordance with any/all FCC regulations and good radio practice.
4. If additional repeater frequency capacity is needed, upon request by Emergency Management personnel, the ACS Radio Officer, or Deputy ACS Radio Officer, SKYWARN activities operating on a SERC repeater will be curtailed or moved elsewhere.
5. ACS agrees to the following stipulations while using the SERC repeater station:
 - a. During ACS activation, all reasonable efforts will be made to make contact with the SERC President to notify him/her of the impending, imminent, or on-going use of the repeater. However, emergency use of the repeater to save life and/or property will

always come first, regardless of the status of notification (in such an instance, notification will occur as soon as is reasonable). Notification attempts may be made over the air, via telephone, via email, or in person and should continue until all methods are exhausted or contact is made.

b. For an ACS training exercise, ACS agrees to contact the SERC President to request the use of the SERC repeater(s) at least 5 days prior to the training exercise, and such permission will be granted assuming there are no other scheduled events for the repeater during the drill's expected duration. During a training exercise, ACS agrees to make all reasonable efforts to allow SERC members to utilize the repeater simultaneously with the exercise. During a drill, this will take the form of allowing SERC members to make calls on the repeater simultaneously with drill radio traffic. Both ACS and SERC members agree to keep transmissions short in concert with good on-air Amateur Radio practice so both groups may communicate efficiently.

6. SERC and ACS agree to maintain liaison so that there may be the closest possible cooperation in emergency communications planning and coordination.

7. The callsign used for the repeater system shall be at SERC's discretion at all times. SERC agrees to maintain their repeater system coordination with the current recognized repeater coordination group for the area.

8. During activation, ACS will conduct the net using best practice standards and procedures.

9. Following each incident requiring an activation of the repeater system, ACS will provide the SERC President, by email, an after incident report which will include, but not be limited to, a brief description of the incident, times of activation and closure of the incident, callsigns and locations of those involved in the net (if available).

10. SERC will reasonably maintain the SERC repeater station. Additionally,

a. SERC cannot be held liable for failure of the repeater system, whether or not the failure is caused by emergencies described above.

b. ACS agrees that SERC cannot be required to effect repairs to restore communications on short notice during an activation or event.

c. ACS agrees that it will not expect any SERC member to be put in physical danger to effect repairs to the repeater station.

d. SERC agrees to maintain the repeater station within the constraints of members

availability to effect repairs.

11. SERC members interested in providing emergency communications, are encouraged to join ACS.
12. ACS and/or SERC members who have not met Federal, State, and local training requirements (attached to this document), may operate from non-governmental facilities.
13. The Red Cross Chapter House is non-governmental facility, therefore SERC will be asked to staff the Red Cross Chapter House radio room, on a primary basis, during activations, or if required, during training exercises, or communications drills. ACS will assist SERC in the latter staffing, if adequate ACS resources are available.
14. ACS members who have met the Federal, State, and local training requirements (attached to this document), will staff governmental facilities or assignments.
15. If additional manpower is required, ACS may ask SERC to help recruit additional assistance from it's membership.
16. For logistical and accountability purposes, all amateur activities conducted in support of Sarasota County entities must be coordinated through ACS.
17. SERC and ACS agree to make this agreement available to their membership so all Amateur Radio Operators in each organization understand the MOU between the two groups. This availability can take the form of publication on the Internet, or any other method deemed appropriate by each organization.

The intent of this MOU is not to serve as a legally binding document. Rather, it should serve as a set of guidelines for good Amateur Radio practice and sufficiently serve the needs of both groups to determine how to conduct themselves prior to, during, and after a communications emergency or regional disaster where the SERC repeater station(s) have been utilized.

This MOU shall take effect upon signature by the SERC President and ACS Radio Officer at the time of signature and shall remain in effect for five years from the date of signature. This agreement may be terminated by either organization with 30 days prior written notice to the other organization.

Ronald Wetjen

5/15/10

Ronald Wetjen, WD4AHZ
ACS Radio Officer

Date

Albert Powell

5/1/10

Albert Powell, KI4YEH
SERC President

Date

Here are the requirements for amateur radio operators to belong to the Florida State Emergency Response Team (FLSERT).

These requirements are in compliance with the requirements of the Department of Homeland Security and of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and apply to all potential disaster responders, volunteer and professional.

The listing below merely identifies the various categories of potential responders as they apply to amateur radio. ARES membership is preferred and recommended but is not an absolute requirement.

We also have added the EMCOMM training of the American Radio Relay League. This is not in the DHS/FEMA guidelines but is a League recommendation and one that is being applied in nearly all states in the Country.

Any person not meeting these requirements by the dates specified in the attached letter will not be eligible for deployment, participation, reimbursement, liability protection, etc.

Operators that will be deployed locally only or operating at home stations:

**ARRL EC-001 Level 1 Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
NIMS IS 100 Introduction to Incident Command System, I-100
NIMS IS 700 National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction.**

Operators likely to be deployed away from their County, ARRL or ARES Officials at the local level (AEC, EC, RACES Officer), Gateway Station Operators, Local EOC Station Operators or Liaisons:

**ARRL EC-001 Level 1 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
ARRL EC-002 Level 2 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
NIMS IS 100 Introduction to Incident Command System, I-100
NIMS IS 200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Assessments
NIMS IS 700 National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction.**

ARRL or ARES Leadership at the District Level, Deployed Operators with Management or Supervisory Assignments, State or Federal EOC Liaisons:

**ARRL EC-001 Level 1 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
ARRL EC-002 Level 2 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
ARRL EC-003 Level 3, Revision 2, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
NIMS IS 100 Introduction to Incident Command System, I-100
NIMS IS 200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Assessments
NIMS IS 700 National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction.**

:

Plus, in FY 07, ICS 300, Intermediate ICS

ARRL or ARES Leadership at the Section, Division or National Level, State or National ESF-2 Representatives:

**ARRL EC-001 Level 1 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
ARRL EC-002 Level 2 Amateur Radio Emergency communications
ARRL EC-003 Level 3, Revision 2, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
NIMS IS 100 Introduction to Incident Command System, I-100
NIMS IS 200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Assessments
NIMS IS 700 National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction.**

: FEMA IS 800.A National Response Plan (NRP) An Introduction

Plus, in FY 07, ICS 300, Intermediate ICS and ICS 400, Advanced ICS

**Additional information on those courses can be found at:
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>**

**The background on the EMCOMM courses is at:
<http://www2.arrl.org/cce/courses.html>**

In addition to the listed NIMS courses, there are a number of other programs that would benefit the amateur radio response to disasters on the FEMA websites.

I am not familiar with the requirements of other communications agencies such as the MARS groups, the REACT groups, etc., but am familiar with the requirements for volunteer firefighters, EMT's, Church group members, Red Cross and Salvation Army members, Civil Air Patrol, etc., and the amateur radio requirements are not as strict as most of the requirements of those agencies.

County agencies can do what they want for local volunteers but they are facing the same requirements we are and if a local agency is not compliant, it will detrimentally affect their funding so I suspect that all Florida Counties will soon be in compliance.

And, as we have stated, if the financial burden for obtaining any of this training is overwhelming to any individual or group; there are mechanisms in place to assist with the cost of the course and the textbooks.

Of particular interest and directly applicable to your question below and the comments you have received, is the NIMS FAQ's page at http://www.fema.gov/txt/emergency/nims/5_common_faqs.txt. Note especially the first question, repeated below:

Who has to take NIMS and ICS training?

All federal, state, local, tribal, private sector and non-governmental personnel with a direct role in emergency management and response must be NIMS and ICS trained. This includes all emergency services related disciplines such as EMS, hospitals, public health, fire service, law enforcement, public works/utilities, skilled support personnel, and other emergency management response, support and volunteer personnel, as follows:

Entry Level

- * FEMA IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction
- * ICS-100: Introduction to ICS or equivalent

First Line, Single Resource, Field Supervisors

- * IS-700, ICS-100 and ICS-200: Basic ICS or Its equivalent

Middle Management: Strike Team Leaders, Division Supervisors, EOC Staff, etc.

*** IS-700, IS-800 NRP, ICS-100, ICS-200 and in FY07, ICS-300**

Command and General Staff; Area, Emergency and EOC Managers

*** IS-700, IS-800, ICS-100, ICS-200 and in FY07, ICS-300 and ICS-400**

Attached is a copy of a letter describing the NIMS system written by DHS to the Governor's of the 50 States. Of particular interest to us is the final paragraph of the letter:

In order to receive FY 2006 preparedness funding, the minimum FY 2005 compliance requirements described above must be met. Applicants will be required to certify as part of their FY 2006 grant applications that they have met the FY 2005 NIMS requirements. Additional information about NIMS compliance and resources for achieving compliance will be forthcoming from the NIC.

This has the potential for creating some dissention in the amateur ranks but our hands are tied, we have no choice but comply and consequently, amateur operators that want to participate in ARES or RACES activities, or in any emergency function or role, must also comply. However, I am sure that the amateur radio community in Florida recognizes their roles in the emergency management function and see the need for an overall management strategy. Their proven dedication and efforts in the past will surely overcome any future obstacles or difficulties.

1. Incident Name Frequency/Function (Page 1)		2. Operational Period (Date / Time) From:		INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ICS 205-OS	
3. BASIC RADIO CHANNEL USE					
SYSTEM / CACHE	CHANNEL	FUNCTION	FREQUENCY	ASSIGNMENT	REMARKS
SERC - Sarasota	SAR-1	County wide	146.730 MHz PL 100	Primary - SKYWARN Backup - Red Cross, Shelters Damage Assessment	Red Cross - Damage Assessment Red Cross - Shelters Damage Assessment - loc. specific
SERC - Laurel	SAR-2	County wide	145.130 MHz	Primary - Red Cross, Shelters Damage Assessment Backup - SKYWARN	Red Cross - Damage Assessment Red Cross - Shelters Damage Assessment - loc. specific
NPARC - North Port	SAR-3	Quadrant / Local	147.120 MHz PL 136.5	NPOD, Damage Assessment Administration, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific
	SAR-4	Simplex	146.580 MHz	As needed	
SERC - Sarasota	SAR-5	County wide	147.390 MHz PL 100	Primary - TFIT, PSN, NPOD Admin., Mutual Aid, Staging Backup - CERT	Primary EOC operations
ACS - Sarasota	SAR-6	Quadrant / Local	443.550 MHz PL 100	NPOD, Damage Assessment Administration, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific
	SAR-7	Simplex	146.520 MHz	As needed	
K4TAP - Sarasota	SAR-8	County wide	442.300 MHz PL 82.5	Primary - CERT Backup - TFIT, PSN, NPOD Admin., Mutual Aid, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific
K4TAP - Murdock	SAR-9	County wide	444.600 MHz PL 82.5	Primary - CERT Backup - TFIT, PSN, NPOD Admin., Mutual Aid, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific Liaison with Charlotte County
K4TAP - Bradenton	SAR-10	County wide	444.875 MHz PL 151.4	Primary - CERT Backup - TFIT, PSN, NPOD Admin, Mutual Aid, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific Liaison with Manatee County
4. Prepared by: (Communications Unit)			Date / Time		
Ron Wetjen, WD4AHZ ACS Radio Officer			01/07/10 16:30		
INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN		June 2000		ICS 205-OS	

1. Incident Name Frequency/Function (Page 2)		2. Operational Period (Date / Time) From:		INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ICS 205-OS	
3. BASIC RADIO CHANNEL USE					
SYSTEM / CACHE	CHANNEL	FUNCTION	FREQUENCY	ASSIGNMENT	REMARKS
ACS - Venice	SAR-11	Quadrant / Local	443.750 MHz PL 100	NPOD, Damage Assessment Administration, Staging	NPOD - location specific Damage Assessment - loc. specific
NI4CE - Verna	WCF-1	West Central Florida Section wide	145.430 MHz PL 100	Administration, Mutual Aid	
		West Central Florida Section wide	3.911 MHz	Administration	Official use only
		West Central Florida Section wide	7.281 MHz	Administration	Official use only
		North Florida Section State wide	3.950 MHz	Administration	Official use only Liaison with State EOC
		North Florida Section State wide	7.254 MHz	Administration	Official use only Liaison with State EOC
		Hurricane Watch Net	14.325 MHz		Official use only Liaison with National Hurricane Center
Winlink		Gateway	145.090 MHz		EOC Gateway WC4EM-10
MARS			MARS HF		Military Auxiliary Radio System
4. Prepared by: (Communications Unit) Ron Wetjen, WD4AHZ ACS Radio Officer				Date / Time 01/07/10 16:30	
INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN			June 2000	ICS 205-OS	