

Mecklenburg County ARES®

Where Do We Fit In?

Amateur radio operators have been a communication resource in emergency situations ever since the advent of two way radio. Someone once described hams as “communication commandos.”

To the agencies we serve, ARES volunteers are an immediately available communication lifeline. Essentially, our job is to send messages from point A to point B when there are no other means of do so speedily or effectively. Amateurs call this “sending traffic”, the traffic being important messages.

Amateurs have the equipment, the skills, and the frequencies necessary to create expedient emergency communication networks under poor conditions. They are licensed and pre-authorized for national and international communication. These capabilities are essential to restoring communications when a disaster occurs.

Hams have the ability to rapidly enlarge their communication capacity to meet growing needs in an emergency, something that commercial and public safety systems cannot do. Many of the skills are the same ones used in everyday ham activities.

Checking into your local nets trains you to effectively link your station into a communication network and it also helps you to learn the skills necessary to participate in directed communication nets. But that is only part of the training an ARES volunteer needs to effectively perform communications for a served agency. Learning how to pass traffic is also needed.

It is helpful, in the learning process, to monitor your local traffic net to learn the procedures used to send formal message traffic. A net that handles traffic for this region is the Central NC Traffic Net meeting every day at 9:30 PM on the 146.820- (94.8) repeater in Wilkesboro. If you need training in passing traffic or just need to brush up on your skills then this is an excellent net.

We will have training in handling traffic on this net in the next few weeks. Simulated traffic will be sent from one training operator to another and everyone will have a chance to send simulated traffic. I have tentatively scheduled this training to occur on November 6th.

To prepare for this training please download the ICS-213 message form which is available on the net in numerous places and on the Mecklenburg ARES Yahoo group, in the file section. You don't need to be a member of the Yahoo group to access these files. Along with the message form there are instructions on how to properly fill out the form. A message passing training scenario will be added in a few days to give you a little back ground before we have the actual training here on the Mecklenburg ARES Net.

I will also be scheduling some traffic passing training sessions in the near future. The training sessions will most likely occur in conjunction to regularly scheduled Amateur Radio club meetings. I will announce the times and dates at least a week before the training sessions occur.

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