Mecklenburg County ARES©

ARES Field Resource Manual 2

Presenter comments are in blue italic

Principles of Repeater Operation

1. Use minimum power. Otherwise, especially in heavily populated areas, you run the risk of keying more than one repeater, thus causing unnecessary interference. Low power also conserves batteries. *(Use the least amount of power to accomplish reliable communications)*
2. Use simplex, whenever possible. ARRL recommends 146.52 MHz, but it's a good idea to have at least one other simplex channel available. Use a gain antenna at fixed locations for simplex operation. *(The Simplex frequencies used by Meck. ARES are 147.580 and 147.505. Some deployed stations may be within Simplex communication distance of each other)*
3. Observe the "pause" procedure between exchanges. When it is your turn to transmit, after the transmitting station stands by, count to two or three before pressing your transmit switch. This gives others with urgent traffic a chance to check in. *(Always remember that stations with Emergency Traffic have the highest priority and we should always leave pauses so they can get their messages through)*
4. Listen much, transmit little. Announce your presence on a repeater when you are certain of being able to assist in an emergency, and don't tie it up with idle chatter. *(This is especially important during times of disaster when every minute may cost lives)*
5. Monitor your local ARES net frequency when you are not otherwise busy. *(The primary ARES frequency in this county is the 145.940 repeater with the 145.290 repeater as the primary backup.)*
6. Think before you talk. Stick to facts, control your emotions. Remember, during an emergency is the time when you are most apt to act and speak rashly. Anyone with an inexpensive public service band receiver can monitor.
7. Articulate, don't slur. Speak close to your mike, but talk across it, not into it. Keep your voice down. In an emergency situation you may get excited and tend to shout. Talk slowly, calmly—this is the mark of an experienced communicator. *(I always emphasize that everyone should speak clearly and slowly – It reduces the need for repeating messages or other important info)*

Principles of Disaster Communication *(This section assumes that a Directed Net has been established)*

1. Keep transmissions to a minimum. In a disaster, crucial stations may be weak. All other stations should remain silent unless they are called upon. If you're not sure you should transmit, don't.
2. Monitor established disaster frequencies. Many ARES localities and some geographical areas have established disaster frequencies where someone is always (or nearly always) monitoring for possible calls. *(Again, the primary ARES frequency in Meck County is the 145.940 repeater with the 145.290repeater as the primary backup.)*
3. Avoid spreading rumors. During and after a disaster situation, especially on the phone bands, you may hear almost anything. Unfortunately, much misinformation is transmitted. Rumors are started by expansion, deletion, amplification or modification of words, and by exaggeration or interpretation. All addressed transmissions should be officially authenticated as to their source. These transmissions should be repeated word for word, if at all, and only when specifically authorized.
4. Authenticate all messages. Every message which purports to be of an official nature should be written and signed. Whenever possible, amateurs should avoid initiating disaster or emergency traffic themselves. We do the communicating; the agency officials we serve supply the content of the communications.
5. Strive for efficiency. Whatever happens in an emergency, you will find hysteria and some amateurs who are activated by the thought that they must be sleepless heroes. Instead of operating your own station full time at the expense of your health and efficiency, it is much better to serve a shift at one of the best-located and best-equipped stations, suitable for the work at hand, manned by relief shifts of the best-qualified operators. This reduces interference and secures well-operated stations.
6. Select the mode and band to suit the need. It is a characteristic of all amateurs to believe that their favorite mode and band is superior to all others. The merits of a particular band or mode in a communications emergency should be evaluated impartially with a view to the appropriate use of bands and modes. There is, of course, no alternative to using what happens to be available, but there are ways to optimize available resources.
7. Use all communications channels intelligently. While the prime object of emergency communications is to save lives and property (anything else is incidental), Amateur Radio is a secondary communications means. Normal channels are primary and should be used if available. Amateurs should be willing and able to use any appropriate emergency channels—Amateur Radio or otherwise—in the interest of getting the message through.
8. Don't "broadcast." Some stations in an emergency situation have a tendency to emulate "broadcast" techniques. While it is true that the general public may be listening, our transmissions are not and should not be made for that purpose. *(ARES only passes message traffic unless specifically directed by Local Authorities to do otherwise)*
9. NTS and ARES leadership coordination. Within the disaster area itself, the ARES is primarily responsible for emergency communications support. The first priority of those NTS operators who live in or near the disaster area is to make their expertise available to their Emergency Coordinator (EC) where and when needed. For timely and effective response, this means that NTS operators should talk to their ECs before the time of need so that they will know how to best respond.