

Tyler County ARES Training Communication Organizations April 2, 2015

RACES

RACES is a radio communication service, conducted by volunteer licensed amateurs, designed to provide emergency communications to local or state civil-preparedness agencies. It is important to note that RACES operation is authorized by emergency management officials only, and this operation is strictly limited to official civil-preparedness activity in the event of an emergency-communications situation.

Difference between ARES and RACES

Undeclared emergency – ARES

Emergency or disaster officially declared by a state or federal authority – RACES

ARES/RACES Cooperation

Although RACES and ARES are separate entities, the ARRL advocates dual membership and cooperative efforts between both groups whenever possible for an ARES group whose members are all enrolled in and certified by RACES to operate in an emergency with great flexibility. Using the same operators and the same frequencies, an ARES group also enrolled as RACES can "switch hats" from ARES to RACES and RACES to ARES to meet the requirements of the situation as it develops. For example, during an "undeclared emergency," ARES can operate under ARES, but when an emergency or disaster is officially declared by a state or federal authority, the operation can become RACES with no change in personnel or frequencies.

This organizational structure is still not well understood and practiced in parts of the United States. Where ARES and RACES still exist separately, emergency officials will have to determine the situation in their own area. Where there is currently no RACES, it would be a simple matter for an ARES group to enroll in that capacity, after a presentation to the civil-preparedness authorities. In cases where both ARES and RACES exist, it is possible to join both or to be involved in either. As time progresses, the goal would be the merger into one strong organization, with coordination between ARES and RACES officials using the same groups of amateurs. This dual-hatted approach is currently in place in many parts of the United States.

The National Traffic System

The National Traffic System plan is a means for systematizing amateur traffic handling facilities by making a structure available for an integrated traffic facility designed to achieve the utmost in

two principal objectives: rapid movement of traffic from origin to destination, and training amateur operators to handle written traffic and participate in directed nets.

These two objectives, which sometimes conflict with each other, are the underlying foundations of the National Traffic System.

ARRL offers a database of national traffic nets. You can search by category, frequency, band, day of the week, time, etc.

<http://www.arrl.org/arrl-net-directory-search>

Skywarn

Often referred to as the "eyes and ears" of the National Weather Service (NWS), SKYWARN is the organization of trained spotters and communicators who voluntarily watch, track and report unusual weather activity.