

ARES®/RACES Plan of Operations

1. Introduction

1.1 The Prince William County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Service® (ARES®) and the Prince William County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), referred to as **PWCARES**, is a joint cadre composed of FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service communications duty.

1.2 Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind.

1.3 The Prince William County ARES®/RACES cadre functions under this Plan of Operation and the direction of the ARES® Emergency Coordinator of Prince William County.

1.4 The EC may appoint additional Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AEC) or assistant RACES Officers as needed for ARES®/RACES to function efficiently.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the information that would be needed to properly prepare for and react to an emergency. Because each emergency is different, flexibility is required to provide an adequate response in each situation.

2.2 The primary responsibility of Prince William County ARES®/RACES is to furnish communications in the event of a disaster or communications emergency when other communications fail or are inadequate.

2.3 The following agencies could be served during a communications emergency: **Prince William County** government; the independent cities of **Manassas** and/or **Manassas Park**; the **American Red Cross** of the National Capital Region; **Novant Health**, Prince William, including Heathcoate;

Sentara, Northern Virginia (Potomac Hospital), including Lakeridge, and other facilities; FEMA; other ARES®/RACES teams requesting support; other agencies, organizations as well as groups not listed here and requesting assistance.

3. Definitions

Bolded definitions are specific to ARES® and Amateur Radio operations.

3.1 Status Definitions. The following status levels have been defined:

Normal: Normal is the day-to-day status of the ARES® team. ARES® members are assumed to be going about their normal activities and an activation could take 2 - 4 hours to call up a team. Even during a normal status, members are expected to have their go-kits in a prepared state, although last minute items may not be included.

Stand-by: Stand-by status is a pre-call up mode. Members are assumed to have all last minute items on hand or already packed, batteries may still be on the charger. A rapid shift to Active should be anticipated.

Active: Prince William County ARES® is in active call up. Nets are being organized or are active. The EC team is in communications with the associated agency and deployment is imminent or underway. Go-kits are packed, batteries and supplies are loaded. The active state will last through the final demobilization.

3.2 Other Definitions (in alphabetical order)

CERT: **Community Emergency Response Team(s)**. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Not to be confused with the **CERT®** which is the Computer Emergency Response Team, tasked with providing responses to cyber security issues and is associated with Carnegie Mellon University or the Department of Homeland Security's **US-CERT team**.

DHS: **Department of Homeland Security**. Created in reaction to the September 11, 2001 attacks, DHS is the Cabinet-level agency tasked with preventing terrorist attacks within the United States,

reducing America's vulnerability to terrorism and minimizing the damage from potential attacks and natural disasters.

EC Team: The EC Team is composed of the Emergency Coordinator and the Assistant Emergency Coordinator(s) (AEC) in Prince William County. During an emergency, in the absence of the Emergency Coordinator, the AEC designated shall take initial control and establish a rotation of Coordinators to facilitate management of the incident.

ECIC: The EC-in-Charge. This is the member of the EC Team currently on-duty.

EOC: Emergency Operations Center. This is usually defined as Prince William County's EOC, located at mid-county or where established by the county. Each City as well as each hospital in the county also has an EOC. These EOCs will be defined where they differ from the county EOC.

ESF: Emergency Support Function. The ESFs provide the structure for coordinating Federal interagency support for a Federal response to an incident. They are mechanisms for grouping functions most frequently used to provide Federal support to States and Federal-to-Federal support, both for declared disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act and for non-Stafford Act incidents. **PWCARES called out in ESF 2, ESF 5 ESF 8, ESF 15, and ESF 17, and can be called on to support any of the other ESFs in time of need.**

FEMA: **Federal Emergency Management Agency**. Originally the only federal agency tasked with providing support during natural disasters, FEMA is now part of DHS and continues to provide training and programs for managing and coping with disasters.

Home-based: Those members of PWCARES that are generally unable to deploy to a location, but have a functioning station at home and are in position to act as liaison, NCS or in some other purpose.

ICP: Incident Command Post. The on-site command post.

ICS: Incident Command System. The ICS is a management system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management. A basic premise of ICS is that it is widely applicable. It is used to organize both near-term and long-term field-level operations for a broad spectrum of emergencies, from small to complex incidents, both natural and manmade. ICS is used by all levels of government - Federal, State, local, and tribal - as well as by many

private-sector and nongovernmental organizations. ICS is also applicable across disciplines. It is normally structured to facilitate activities in five major functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics, and finance and administration.

MedComm: MedComm is the Northern Virginia Regional Hospital Coordinating Center (RHCC)/ EMS Activation Protocol. As part of this protocol, Amateur Radio has been designated as a backup radio system in the event of an emergency. In cooperation with other Emergency Coordinators and RACES officers in the National Capital Area, the **simplex frequency of 146.445 MHz** has been identified as the inter-hospital frequency when MedComm is active.

NCS: Net Control Station. During a formal net, the NCS is in charge of all traffic and communications occurring on the net. All traffic is to pass through the NCS station as managed. The NCS is also the chief record keeper in the form of logs of all traffic on the net during the operational period.

NCS Period: Every effort will be made to keep an ARES® Net Control operational period to no more than 4 hours.

NIMS: National Incident Management System. A system to provide a consistent nationwide approach to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity (from Presidential Directive HSPD-5 and the [National Incident Management System](#) directive) posted at NIMS Resource Center

NTS: National Traffic System. NTS is both a method for passing messages into and out of the area and is used to define the structure of the message. Formal NTS traffic will follow the guidelines of the ARRL for the standard [Radiogram form](#) and the associated Field Service Documents (FSDs). All members of PWCARES are **expected** to know and understand all aspects of NTS traffic handling.

NRF: National Response Framework. The National Response Framework presents the guiding principles that enable all response partners to prepare for and provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies - from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe. The Framework establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response.

OES: Official Emergency Station. Any station that has registered with the ARRL and has met the requirements for an OES as set forth.

ORS: Official Relay Station. Any station that has registered with the ARRL and has met the requirements for ORS as set forth.

Official Emergency Stations and Official Relay Stations are functionally the same, but serve different purposes. OESs are primarily dedicated to ARES® functions while ORSs are dedicated to NTS functions. Under PWCARES, both are recognized as vital to the overall success of the mission and are to be utilized where possible. All members of PWCARES are encouraged to register as an OES/ORS if they meet the requirements.

Operational Period: Prince William County defines an operational period as 12 hours, from 7 to 7.

Operator Period: Every effort will be made to keep an ARES® operator period to no more than 6 hours.

RHCC: Northern Virginia Regional Hospital Coordinating Center. The responsibilities of the NoVA RHCC is to coordinate with EMS personnel to ensure the timely and appropriate distribution of patients to Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance member facilities, including both acute-care hospitals and freestanding emergency care centers; and to improve the communication between field personnel and receiving hospitals.

SET: Simulated Emergency Test. Every year in October, the ARRL encourages ARES® teams to participate in a SET. The purpose is to simulate, as closely as possible the issues and events that might occur during a real emergencies. The SET can be conducted in conjunction with emergency management agencies but does not have to. While it should simulate a real emergency, a SET can be a table top or field exercise.

Skywarn: The Skywarn network is a team of amateur radio operators and frequencies who have received special training from the National Weather Service in spotting and reporting severe weather. All members of PWCARES are encouraged to become Skywarn spotters. PWCARES is affiliated with the [Sterling Weather Office Skywarn Team](#).

Traffic: Traffic refers to amateur radio communications. This can be in either tactical (informal) or written (formal/NTS/ICS-213) form.

PWCARES utilizes ICS-213 for all formal traffic unless the traffic is destined for the ARRL National Traffic System.

VEN/x: The Virginia Emergency Net(s) are a series of predesignated frequencies to be utilized in the event of state-wide communication emergencies. Each network is dedicated to a specific mission and purpose and identified by an alphabetic letter following the slant. Most emergency phone operations take place on the VEN/A, also known as the Old Dominion Emergency Network (ODEN). Management of the VEN is controlled by the Section Emergency Coordinator and the Section Traffic Manager.

VOAD: Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster: As part of Volunteer Prince William, this sub-group is a collection of volunteers that only respond to support a disaster. The VOAD may be local in Prince William or regional.

4. Membership

4.1 Qualification: The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) is a voluntary organization of licensed radio amateurs who have registered their capabilities and equipment for providing emergency communications in the event of natural disaster, when regular communications fail or are inadequate. With the exception of the Emergency Coordinator, ARRL membership is NOT required for registration. Registration does not require possession of any specially designed equipment. All amateurs can be of assistance to ARES. Because the appointment of the position of Emergency Coordinator is an **ARRL Section** appointment, the Emergency Coordinator must at least be a member in good standing of the ARRL

4.2 Registration: All Amateurs wishing to be part of PWCARES shall register their intention with the EC. A renewal of this interest shall occur yearly to remain a member in good standing. Those wishing to be a member of PWCARES should complete the [application form](#) and submit it as instructed.

4.3 Background Check: Providing information for an [NCIC](#) background check is optional. Failure to provide this information or being unable to pass the check will prevent an operator from accessing certain facilities that may require a completed background check as a prerequisite for access. There is no charge for this check and it is performed by Prince William County. You will need to fill in the [Personal Release Information \(PDF\)](#) form and have it notarized. Because of this requirement,

David Lane, KG4GIY, is a Virginia Notary Public and able to perform this service without charge to the Amateur Community.

4.4 **ID Cards:** ID Cards shall be issued, identifying the operator as a member of PWCARES. The card shall include a recent photograph of the operator, current call sign, name and a date of expiration. Other data may be included as needed or requested

5. Activation of the Plan

5.1 **No ARES® member is to deploy without explicit instructions to do so.** In the event of activation, manpower needs will be communicated to the Logistics NCS station, located on the repeater furthest from the incident. Every attempt will be made to deploy personnel to a location closest to their location, and/or to match their training with the need.

5.2 Upon notification from an authorized representative of a served agency, the plan will be activated. If no notice is given and it is apparent that a disaster or communications emergency is imminent or existing, the EC Team shall contact the served agencies offering ARES® support and activate the action plan if a need is indicated.

5.3 Automatic Activation

5.3.1 Severe Weather. Because severe weather can strike without warning, automatic activation of this plan can occur under the following conditions:

5.3.1.1 **Watches:** When the **National Weather Service (Sterling)** issues a watch for severe thunderstorms, tornados, hurricanes, or ice storms in the local area, ARES® members are to check their gear and where needed, pick up any last minute items. No further activity is required.

5.3.1.2 **Warnings:** When the **National Weather Service (Sterling)** issues a warning for severe thunderstorms, tornados, hurricanes, or ice storms, the plan is assumed to be activated and members are to move to a *stand-by* status. Further, because of the potential for loss of normal communications, members are encourage to tune their radios to either 146.970 - or 147.240 +.

5.3.1.3 **Termination:** A termination of the Watch or Warning shall constitute a termination of status, **unless** continuation is warranted as a result of the severe weather, at which time the EC Team will stand down the ARES® cadre at the end of service.

5.3.2 County Triggers.

5.3.2.1 **EOC Activation:** In the event of a full or partial activation, a page is sent out to those ESF groups that have been activated. In the event of such a notification, PWCARES will move to a *stand-by* status unless specifically activated. The activation will be for the duration of the event. Notification will be through PWCAN (text), and email for a stand-by notification and PWCAN (text), email, and repeater for activation.

5.4 Call up of members in support of this plan shall be by all means available, including but not limited to telephone, email, text messages, and repeater alerting.

5.5 Upon notification, members will check into the net frequency assigned by the EC Team for instruction and deployment locations.

5.6 The EC Team will assign net control (NCS) duties as required. NCS will be operated from a station secured from the incident, preferably where commercial power is available. NCS stations should be certified as Official Emergency Stations as appropriate. At no time will the NCS be physically located at the EOC (including Potomac Hospital, Prince William Hospital, PWC EOC, Manassas City EOC, Manassas Park City EOC, and Red Cross, or Shelter location) or the Incident Command Post (ICP). The NCS sole duty shall be controlling the net they are assigned to. Instructions issued by the NCS shall be assumed to originate with the member of the EC Team in Charge (ECIC)

5.7 Where practical, the ECIC shall have a shadow (operator) to handle radio operations, including the coordinator at the ICP and EOC.

6. Operations

6.1 **All traffic on the net shall give way to EMERGENCY traffic, whether formal or tactical.**

6.2 Operator Period: Members should be prepared to operate for no less than a six hour period. Depending on the nature of the event, a maximum 12-hour period may be required. Where possible, operators will be released to return to their homes between shifts.

6.3 Liaison Stations: During any emergency, liaison stations will be required. OES/ORS shall check in with the logistics net, reporting their status and availability. Stations already in contact with surrounding jurisdictions are also encouraged to check in with the logistics net.

6.3.1 Liaison shall be established as soon as possible with the following agencies/nets, depending on the status of the incident:

- *Cities:* Manassas and Manassas Park
 - *Hospitals:* Prince William and Potomac Hospital
 - ◇ *VEN/A:* the Virginia State Emergency Net, voice and digital
 - ◇ *Skywarn:* serving the National Weather Service
 - ◇ *Other Agencies :* including **CERT, VOAD**
 - ◇ *Surrounding counties:* as needed to provide support and request aid and may include hospitals.
 - ◇ *Maryland Region:* as needed to provide support and request aid
 - ◇ *Liaison stations* shall be located in a similar manner as net control stations - as far from the incident as possible.

6.4 RACES: In the event of a formal RACES activation, the team shall subordinate themselves to the authority of the Emergency Manager or designee that has requested RACES support as detailed in [47 CFR Part 97.407](#). The ECIC becomes the RACES Officer at that point and may designate an ECIC to manage any ARES® needs.

6.5 Logging: All ARES® personnel shall log significant events, message traffic and other items of interest and import. The NIMS standard shall be followed and ICS form 214a (Individual log) shall be used unless otherwise directed by the ECIC. Each member shall include at least 5 blank pages in their go-kit at all times. Plain paper may be used for follow-on logging in the event a member exceeds the number of pages carried.

6.5.1 WebEOC: Where access is available, members will log all their activities, including traffic and significant events into WebEOC as soon as possible. At the EOC, a cadre member will act as the logger.

6.5.2 The ECIC shall maintain a list of significant events on in WebEOC, or, lacking access, on ICS form 214, including the name and call sign of all operators, the beginning and end of each shift, and the duty station of each person.

6.5.3 All logs are to be turned in at the end of the operation, or as requested. At the conclusion of the incident, all logs shall be turned over to the EC. Key data from an event not captured in

WebEOC shall be transcribed as directed. All logs and data are part of the official legal record and must be submitted.

6.6 **Traffic:** All formal traffic shall be logged. Traffic will be transmitted in the form received from the issuing agency. All members shall be proficient in the use of **ICS-213** as well as ARRL **radiograms** and have at least five of each for reference in their go-kit. Blank paper may be substituted for forms as required.

6.6.1 All formal traffic shall include the signature and title of the sender (where appropriate) who originated it, thus taking responsibility for the message and its contents.

6.7 **ICS Forms:** All ARES® members shall be familiar with the following additional ICS forms: 205, 205a. All ECs/NCS shall also be familiar with 201-204, 211, 216, 217.

6.8 Media Relations: **ARES® team members are not to speak to the media.** General Media enquiries are to be directed to the ARES® or Section PIO if present. In a coordinated activation, all media inquiries are to be directed to the media relations liaison or public information office (PIO)/joint information center (JIC) of the served agency(s). In an activation, without a media relations liaison, all media inquiries are to be directed to the ECIC or the EC.

6.9 **Radios:** The EOC, Prince William and Potomac Hospitals are stocked with radios and antenna positions. At the EOC, there are three antenna positions, located in the Auxiliary Communications Room. At Potomac Hospital there are two antenna positions located in the first educational room in the Hyland Building. At Prince William Hospital, there are two antenna positions located in the Volunteer Center. Currently, the EOC and Potomac Hospitals are equipped with Icom IC-2820 dual-band (no D-Star) radios. Prince William Hospital and Heathcote are currently equipped with Yaesu FT-8800 dual-band radios in each location. All locations include an Alinco DM-330VM power supply per radio. The power supplies are sufficient to run up to two radios should it be required. The EOC is further equipped with a Kenwood TS-870 and power supply, and a pair of Kenwood TMV7A. These radios are also compatible for use with fldigi via the mini-din port on the back of the radios.

6.9.1 **Quick Reference Cards:** **Quick Reference Cards** for the Icom and Yaesu radios have been created and members are expected to have a copy with them and be familiar with the material on them. All members are encouraged to review the manuals and make themselves familiar with the radios at all locations as soon as possible and refresh their knowledge as appropriate.

6.9.2 **Monitoring:** Most of the cache radios at the EOC and the Hospitals are dual-transmit/dual-receive, the term radio means one side rather than the entire transceiver. During a call up, one radio at the EOC should be monitoring the Logistics Net. As sites are activated, one radio at each location should be monitoring the Operations Net. If the hospitals are activated, and MedComm becomes necessary, a radio at the hospitals should be tuned to MedComm. The EOC may bring up MedComm if directed. Liaison stations may be assigned to monitor other

networks as needed with traffic being reported over the primary operations network.

6.9.3 Equipment Failure: In the event of a repeater failure, all stations are to monitor the **OUTPUT** frequency of the repeater for instructions on where to change to. It is the responsibility of the NCS to move the frequency but coordination with the ECIC may be requested or may be required if all repeaters are currently in use. Should a radio fail at a shelter or other site and a spare is not available locally, the ECIC or Logistics AEC can order a spare sent from current inventory or make a request to the cadre for a spare radio to be delivered.

6.9.4 Missed Check-ins: An operator or operating position that misses two consecutive roll calls or check-ins during an activation shall be deemed inoperable and replacement equipment and operators will be dispatched after coordination with the ECIC.

6.10 Site Operations Most sites are *weapon free zones*. If you are deployed, and carry a weapon, please ensure to check it appropriately before entry. It is the operator's responsibility to know how to get to key locations within Prince William County. This includes but is not limited to the **EOC, the hospitals (Novant (Prince William), Sentara (Potomac), and their satellites at Heathcote (Novant), Lakeridge (Sentara) and any others designated or needed to be supported), the pre-designated shelters (Battlefield HS, Stonewall Jackson HS, and Freedom HS), Eastern and Western District Police Departments, Manassas Police and Manassas Park Police, Sudley North Government Center, Ferlazo Government Center, and the Health Department facilities.** Key locations will generally be indicated by their inclusion in the Quick Reference and Operations documents.

6.10.1 Arrival: Upon arrival, the operator is to check in with the head of site as indicated in the activation instructions. If they are the first operator on site, they are to establish the operating position and contact the NCS on the Operations Net as directed.

6.10.2 Relief & Replacement: If they are relieving an operator, they should be briefed by the outgoing operator on all issues still pending as well as any information that is necessary to their ability to operate.

6.10.3 Movement: If a site official asks the operator to move, the operator should do so as expediently as possible. When possible, please notify NCS that you are moving and the reasons for the move and notify NCS when you have relocated and are operational again. NCS will inform the ECIC of the move and the reasons for it and the ECIC will include this in the debrief information to the EC for future planning.

6.11 Digital Operations: PWCARES has adopted **fldigi** as the primary digital mode for passing digital traffic. This does not preclude the use of other technologies, such as packet, or **BBHN** but it is currently the go-to technology.

6.11.1 VHF Configuration: Those operators with fldigi will establish VHF communications on **146.475 (PWCARES VHF 2)**, using **operations mode MT-63 2KL (2000L)**. Operators have the

choice of using any supported operating system, but are expected to know how to configure and get their selected operating system on the air. A quick reference guide of operations will be developed focusing initially on the Windows operating system.

6.11.2 **Message Configuration:** PWCARES has standardized on ICS-213, so flmsg should be configured to use the ICS-213 template by default. Ad hoc messages may also be sent as needed.

7. Deactivation, Demobilization and Post Operations

7.1 **SShift Change:** At the end of each shift and at the end of each ICS Operations Period, each participant shall be debriefed by the ECIC. This debrief may be written or oral and shall include original logs from the shift for record keeping and legal purposes.

7.1.1 **ECIC Change:** At the end of each shift and at the end of each ICS Operations Period, the ECIC shall debrief and be debriefed by the served agency as required.

7.2 **Demobilization:** Upon notification from a representative of the activating agency or at the request of the ECIC, operations may be deactivated.

7.2.1 **Notification:** Notification of deactivation shall come from the ECIC as formal traffic. Notification shall be made to all stations, including liaison stations through whatever communication channels are available. Nets shall be secured in an orderly manner based on reduced need. Confirmation of deactivation shall be routed to the ECIC and the EC.

7.2.3 **Accomplishment:** Demobilization may be accomplished by any means available at the time of the deactivation. Dissemination of deactivation shall be commensurate with the communications paths available at the time.

7.2.3 **Reporting:** It is the responsibility of the ECIC to gather a report of operational details related to their portion of the operation. These details shall include, but are not limited to:

- Description of event or activity, including a list of participants and their operational locations, shift times, assigned duties, and duties performed.

- An activity log for each location and from each Net Control Station for each net and location. This log shall include:
 - A listing of what went well and what needs improvement
 - A discussion of how to correct deficiencies for the next operation
 - A discussion of lessons learned
 - Annotation of ancillary items, as appropriate, including such things as personnel conflicts, accidents involving personal injury, damage or loss of personal property, illness, etc.
 - Notation of any property moved or removed from the operating position to facilitate communication functions
- A message log for each location and from each Net Control Station. This may be combined with the activity log.

7.3 After Action Report: It is the responsibility of the Emergency Coordinator to compile the operational details into a final after action report to be made available to the general membership no more than 72 hours after the cessation of activity. This written report shall be subject to amendment and update as needed. Serious deficiencies and training issues shall be dealt with at the first opportunity.

8. Drills, Tests, and Alerts

8.1 Required Training

8.1.1 Federal and county regulations require the following certifications by all members of the PWCARES cadre:

IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS)

IS-100 Incident Command System

IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents

IS-800 National Response Framework

8.1.2 The Emergency Coordinator shall obtain certification in ICS course 300 (Intermediate ICS) and ICS course 400 (Advanced ICS) as soon as reasonably possible.

8.1.3 Members of the leadership team and other identified individuals are encouraged to obtain ICS course 300 (Intermediate ICS) and ICS course 400 (Advanced ICS).

8.2 **NIMS/ICS/NRF** All ARES® members are required to be familiar with the National Incident Management System and have completed IS-700 (Introduction to National Incident Management System) within six months of joining the cadre. Further, all members are required to have completed IS-100 (Incident Command System) and IS-200 (ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents) and IS-800 (National Response Framework) within one year of joining the cadre. Refresher training is encouraged as required. All members of the leadership team are required to have completed ICS 100/200 within two months of their appointment and are required to complete IS-800 within six months of appointment. Members of the leadership team are encouraged, but not required to take IS-300 and IS-400 as offered by Prince William County or surrounding jurisdictions as their schedules permit. The EC shall have completed both IS-300 and IS-400 as soon as practical upon appointment to the position.

8.3 All team members are required to learn the forms related to the Incident Command System. At the very least, [213 - General Message](#), [214 - Unit Log](#), [214a - Individual Log](#), and [205 - Incident Radio Communications Plan](#) should be understood and used by all members.

8.4 All team members are encouraged to practice their skills. Training in the NTS system can be obtained by participating in the [Northern Virginia Traffic Net \(NVTN\)](#) which is held nightly on 147.300. All members are encouraged to practice sending formal traffic at least 4 times per year.

8.5 Prince William County ARES® will supply public safety communications in conjunction with local events to test the deployment and operational capabilities of its members and to provide a service to the community. This may be in conjunction with local clubs as required.

8.6 Four times per year there will be a call up. This call up will be unscheduled and will constitute a test of the communications tree.

8.7 When possible, Prince William County ARES® will operate a Field Day station from the Prince William County EOC as part of a yearly test of facility. This test will occur with the concurrence of the Prince William County Emergency Manager or designee.

8.8 When possible, Prince William County ARES® will test fixed stations at least yearly.

8.9 An annual simulated emergency test will occur. It may be conducted in October in conjunction with the ARRL Simulated Emergency Test and the SET may be localized or conducted in cooperation with surrounding teams.

8.10 Additional training opportunities may become available as specific needs and personnel interests develop.

8.11 Training shall include classroom study, field exercises and may include audio-visual material developed specifically for such purposes and made available by sponsoring organizations.

8.12 Any relevant training undertaken by members should be reported to the EC for tracking purposes. A list of pre-approved training will be posted at the beginning of each year. Other training may be approved by the EC as required or relevant and will be posted on the [Training page](#).

9. Regional Support

9.1 Prince William County ARES® may be called upon to support activities in surrounding jurisdictions. The call for support may be an informal request for help from a neighboring EC, or a formal request from the Section Emergency Coordinator.

9.2 At no time should help offered to neighboring jurisdiction impact ongoing operations.

9.3 In the event of a regional activation, the EC in the affected jurisdiction shall have overall authority for deploying resources.

9.4 CERT Support. Prince William County, the City of Manassas, and the City of Manassas Park have standing Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). These team's primary mission is to provide aid and comfort to members of their community and the County at large in times of large scale disasters or other situations that over utilize county emergency resources.

9.4.1 In the event that normal communication channels are unavailable, CERT members have been directed to utilize ARES®.

9.4.2 Communications through the ARES® system will occur in these ways:

9.4.2.1 Indirect. The EC Team will identify those ARES® members that are generally home-based to act as liaison stations for the CERT Teams. Communications will be by FRS/GMRS radios (with the CERT Teams) or by other method, including face-to-face. Traffic will then be relayed to the appropriate agency through normal ARES® channels.

9.4.2.2 Direct. CERT members that are licensed Amateur Radio operators shall be trained in the protocols and operating procedures used by PWCARES and shall be considered part of the overall system. These CERT members shall not be considered part of PWCARES for ARES® activation purposes unless they so choose to register with PWCARES.

9.5 All ARES® members shall become familiar with CERT forms, especially the message form and other data transmission forms. Where possible, collected data will be sent by digital data.