

EMCOMM Overview



Introduction to Emergency Communications





EmComm Overview

What is Emergency Communications?

Disaster Emergency Communications is a specialized field within the broader field of emergency communications

EmComm covers all technical means and modes for public safety agencies at all levels of government to perform their routine, daily communications.

Amateur Radio operators can assist with maintaining operability and interoperable communications before, during, and after declared emergencies, disasters, or planned Special Events.



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What is Our Role?

What Makes a Good Communications Volunteer?

The common attributes that all effective volunteers share are a desire to help others without personal gain of any kind, the ability to work as a member of a team, and to take direction from others.



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What is Our Role?

Where Do You Fit In?

Hams have the ability to rapidly enlarge their communication capacity to meet growing needs in an emergency, something commercial and public safety systems cannot normally do.

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.

Many of the skills are the same ones that are used in everyday ham activities.



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What is Our Role?

What You Are Not!

You are not a “First Responder.”

You have no authority.

The only decisions you can make are whether to participate or not, and those affecting your own personal health and safety.

When the agency you are supporting runs short of personnel it is not your job to fill the void!

You are not in charge, you are there to temporarily fulfill the needs of the agency whose communications system is unable to do the job. They tell you what they need and you do your best to comply.



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Who do we work for?

We work for both government and non-government organizations

The relationship between the volunteer and the served agency can vary greatly from agency to agency, and even within an agency.

“Memorandums of Understanding” MOU’s, “Statements of Understanding” SOU’s, “Statements of Affiliation” SOA’s are in place with many served agencies, i.e. DHS, FEMA, American Red Cross, The Salvation Army (SATERN), REACT, state and local Emergency Management and SKYWARN.



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Who do we work for?

The job you will be asked to do will vary with the agency you serve:

- **American Red Cross**
- **Emergency Management communications support**
- **Hospital communications support**
- **Forest fire communications support**
- **Search and rescue**
- **SKYWARN support for the National Weather Service**



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Who do we work for?

Training requirements may vary based on the Agency:

- **Red Cross specific training**
- **FEMA NIMS courses**
- **Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) training**
- **SKYWARN training for the National Weather Service**
- **ARRL training**



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ARES vs RACES

The ARES organization is a part of the ARRL. It has a hierarchy from national to the local level. You can join ARES and participate in organizational activities at any level – assuming you have the qualifications.

ARES personnel can be active at anytime and may participate in many non-emergency public service activities, such as marathons, walks, etc.

RACES is a communications service that Amateur operators can volunteer to perform for government agencies under very specific conditions, per FCC regulations

RACES is like joining the National Guard where you are only active during drills or when activated by your government command.



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SKYWARN

Not officially part of ARES but usually coupled with our activities is the National Weather Service (NWS) SKYWARN Program

In most years, thunderstorms, tornadoes and lightning caused hundreds of injuries and deaths and billions in property and crop damages. To obtain critical weather information, the NWS established SKYWARN® with partner organizations

Volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports of severe weather to the NWS

The main responsibility of a SKYWARN® spotter is to identify and describe severe local storms.



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Getting Involved

Contact your local representative and join the organization(s): ARES, SKYWARN, CERT, RACES, etc.

Start your training

Attend local forums and exercises

Participate in local nets

Volunteer to be a net controller

Volunteer to assist non-emergency activities, including at other clubs

Contact your local EMA, establish a working relationship and work toward establishing an MOU