SEMINOLE ARES/RACES GROUP

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (12/21/2005 K4FUY)

1. SAFETY FIRST

If any action requested involves risk, the person should NOT take the action and should notify Net Control that he/she will not be performing the action requested, along with a statement of the risk assessment.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group is composed of FCC licensed amateur radio operators who are trained emergency communicators, volunteering personal time, skill and equipment to serve in the public interest.

2.2 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group functions in this Emergency Communications Plan under the direction of the Seminole ARES/RACES Group Emergency Coordinator (EC). The EC is appointed by the Northern Florida Section Emergency Coordinator of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

2.2 The EC may appoint Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AEC's) as needed.

2.3 The EC may appoint Duty Officers (DO's), whose primary duty is to activate the Seminole ARES/RACES Group if needed.

2.4 When activated, the EC or DO performing the activation will become the ARES/RACES Officer In Charge (OIC), or will designate an OIC. The OIC will be the final authority within the Seminole ARES/RACES Group for the event.

2.5 When activated, the Seminole ARES/RACES Emergency NET uses the call sign N1FL and the net control operator must have FCC privileges for the frequencies he/she is using.

3. PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of this plan is to provide a written guide containing the minimum information needed in an emergency. Each emergency is different and flexibility is necessary to provide an adequate response.

3.2 The primary responsibility of the Seminole ARES/RACES Group is to furnish emergency communications in the event of a natural or a man made emergency when regular communications fail or become inadequate or overloaded.

3.3 Drills, training and instruction shall be carried out to ensure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur emergency communications.

3.4 Following is a list of jurisdictions/agencies that will be served, as requested, in an emergency. Other city and/or state agencies will be served as requested by the Seminole County Office of Emergency Management.

3.4.1 The Incorporated jurisdictions within Seminole County, (Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Lake Mary, Longwood, Oviedo, Sanford, and Winter Springs).

3.4.2 The unincorporated areas or populations under the authority of the Seminole County Office of Emergency Management.

3.4.3 The American Red Cross

3.4.4 Sheriff, Police and Fire Departments within Seminole County.

3.4.5 Hospitals and Nursing Homes within Seminole County

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3.4.6 The District Emergency Coordinator of the East Central District of the Northern Florida Section of the ARRL when requested by surrounding counties needing assistance.

3.4.7 The State of Florida Division of Emergency Management

3.4.8 The Federal Emergency Management Agency / Department of Homeland Security

3.4.9 The Salvation Army

3.4.10 National Weather Service, Melbourne FL.

3.5 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group may provide volunteer communications support for other public events in non-emergency situations.

3.6 Seminole ARES/RACES Group runs the Seminole County Skywarn Net when weather conditions warrant, using net control operators who have completed Skywarn training. No request from a served agency is needed.

4. ACTIVATION PLAN

4.1 Any member of the Seminole ARES/RACES Group who becomes aware that a communications emergency exists, should contact the EC or an AEC and monitor the Resource NET on the Primary VHF frequency of 147.165 MHz (+600 KHz; 103.5 PL), 442.750 MHz (+5.0 MHz, 103.5 PL) for activity. Backup frequencies are 146.460 MHz simplex, 147.285 MHz (+600 KHz; 103.5 PL) repeater, and 145.150 MHz (-600 KHz; 103.5 PL) repeater.

4.2 Operators are forbidden to go to the site of any emergency event unless authorized to do so by Net Control with the knowledge of the Officer In Charge. Net Control will only authorize operators to go to the site of an emergency event if the appropriate served agency requests ARES/RACES help at that site. The request, requester name, title, served agency, and time should be documented in the Event Log.

4.3 The EC or Assistant EC shall normally be notified by telephone. Other methods including amateur radio or courier may be used if needed.

4.4 In any emergency in which amateur radio is requested to serve, amateur radio operators may be alerted by any agency listed in paragraph 3.4 – 3.4.10 or State official notifying the EC or AEC. The AEC will continuously attempt to contact the EC. The EC or AEC who activates ARES will become the ARES Officer In Charge (OIC). The ARES OIC will document the name, title, and served agency of the requestor in the Event Log and notify the District Emergency Coordinator of the activation request.

4.5 The ARES Officer In Charge (OIC) will be in charge of all ARES operations during any emergency activation. He/she will be the top Seminole County ARES authority for the event. All ARES participants will take direction from him/her. The OIC may change during the event at the discretion of the OIC or EC.

5. MOBILIZATION

5.1 The OIC or designee will notify ARES/RACES Members by using the Seminole County Emergency Notification System. This is the preferred means of contact when several operators are required to support an activation.

5.2 If required to accomplish necessary staffing for the emergency, the OIC or designee will transmit on both VHF 144-148 MHz and UHF 420-450 MHz repeaters, in turn, advising all stations of the ARES activation. E-mail may also be used when appropriate.

5.3 If necessary, the Telephone Tree will be activated. If telephone service is not available, notification will be by radio and/or runner, as necessary.

5.4 Upon notification that a communications emergency exists, Members of the Seminole ARES/RACES Group will listen to the Resource Net frequency and will only check in if they have urgent information or when the Net

when requested by surrounding counties needing assistance.

3.4.7 The State of Florida Division of Emergency Management

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5.3 If necessary, the Telephone Tree will be activated. If telephone service is not available, notification will be by radio and/or runner, as necessary.

5.4 Upon notification that a communications emergency exists, Members of the Seminole ARES/RACES Group will listen to the Resource Net frequency and will only check in if they have urgent information or when the Net

Control Station (NCS) asks for checkins. Stations will maintain radio silence, unless they have business with the net. Stations that are not available for assignment should not check into the Net.

6. DUTIES OF NET CONTROL STATION, (NCS)

6.1 OPEN NETS

The Seminole ARES/RACES Group Resource Net will be activated by the Net Control Station. Based upon the facts, stations will be fully advised as to the nature of the emergency. Net Control will establish backup frequencies and a backup NCS station. As appropriate, Net Control will periodically announce that a Net is in progress, give brief summaries, and remind users of backup frequencies and backup Net Control Operators, etc..

6.2 CHECK IN STATIONS

Stations will be checked in from their home stations, mobiles, and portable stations. All stations shall stand by for further instructions. An inventory list will be made of operators and equipment for possible assignment as relief operators.

6.3 Mobile and portable stations will be dispatched as needed either to a "Staging" location or directly to the incident site as determined by the OIC. OIC must notify NCS which Agency Official, by name and title, requested our deployment should our deployed units encounter a restricted access condition or other challenges. The location of each will be noted at all times by the NCS.

6.4 Each site will have a designated Communications Supervisor (CS) who will coordinate amateur communication at their specific deployment site.

7 OPERATIONS

7.1 MESSAGES

7.1.1 Formal Messages: Formal messages are those which are written in a standard format. All messages which request material or services which may require payment or replacement must be formal messages.
Message Forms: All formal messages must be written in standard ARRL format unless otherwise directed by the served agency.
It is strongly encouraged to restrict messages to 25 words or less, particularly if the message will be relayed multiple times or sent out of the area. Messages over 25 words are much less likely to reach their destination quickly.
Operators receiving messages from officials should encourage the officials to produce messages in 25 words or less to ensure prompt and reliable delivery.
The served agency representative can create his/her printed message on the Message Forms provided by the radio operator for that purpose.
Message Precedence: The operator must assign the message an ARRL PRECEDENCE, defined on ARRL Form FSD-218 (see Appendix A). This PRECEDENCE will be used on all messages.
Any operator receiving messages should check the precedence of messages received for EMERGENCY precedence messages.
Anyone giving messages to an operator should check the messages and inform the operator if any of the messages are of EMERGENCY precedence. The person passing the messages should be sure the receiving operator acknowledges this precedence.
Requester name: All FORMAL MESSAGES require the PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY and SITE of the requester.
All requests to dispatch operators to a location require PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY and SITE of the requester. These requests should be written down in the Net Log.
MESSAGES RECEIVED REQUESTING MATERIALS OR SERVICES WHICH MAY LATER REQUIRE PAYMENT WILL NOT BE TRANSMITTED UNTIL THEY CONTAIN THE PRINTED NAME, TITLE, SERVED AGENCY AND SITE OF THE REQUESTER.
Save Messages: All operators must save a copy of all formal messages.

7.1.2 Tactical Messages

Stations that are not available for assignment should not check into the Net.

6. DUTIES OF NET CONTROL STATION, (NCS) 6.1 OPEN NETS The Seminole ARES/RACES Group Resource Net will be activated by the Net Control Station. Based upon the facts, stations will be fully advised as to the nature of the emergency. Net Control will establish backup frequencies and a backup NCS station. As appropriate, Net Control will periodically announce that a Net is in progress, give brief summaries, and remind users of backup frequencies and backup Net Control Operators, etc. .

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7.1.2 Tactical Messages

Tactical Emergency messages, such as FIRE, POLICE or Life-or-Death situations DO NOT require NUMBERS. These are first priority messages and we use "Break, Break!" to get attention of the NCS, between transmissions. When accepting such messages for transmission, they require only the following information:

A. To (Example: Seminole County Fire/Rescue)
B. What (Example: Pumper truck needed ASAP)
C Why (Example: Structure fire)
D. Where (Example: Lake Mary High School) [provide address and cross street whenever possible]
E. Who (Lt. Joseph Olson, Seminole County Fire/Rescue)

7.2 TRANSMITTING
Stations must not transmit unless invited to do so by the Net Control Station (NCS).

7.2.1 Exceptions:
A. Stations having emergency traffic
B. As designated in the standard operating procedure.

7.2.2 Keep transmissions short and to the point.
All stations, including Net Control, should leave frequent gaps in their transmissions for emergency traffic. (Long enough for someone to recognize the gap and call "BREAK BREAK.")

7.3 TACTICAL CALL SIGNS
Tactical Call Signs (examples "EOC", "AEOC" etc.) may be use and/or assigned at the discretion of Net Control. These call signs may be used but the operator using the tactical call sign shall identify by his FCC issued call sign within a 10 minute time frame or when the transmission exchange is concluded.

7.4 COMMUNICATIONS METHODS
Operators should use the most efficient and appropriate method available to transmit their message.
If available and appropriate, use the telephone, cell phone, FAX, internet, digital modes, voice, foot, automobile, etc. The more traffic passed off the air, the more available Amateur Radio is for traffic to/from locations without alternate means of communications.

7.5 DIGITAL MODES
Digital modes (packet, APRS, WL2K etc) may be used based upon available resources at the discretion of the Officer In Charge.
Local available digital paths include:
Florida FPAC Network: www.fadca.org/fpacnet.html
SEDAN node: SNFD KD4MWO-12 Sanford, 145.770 MHz
APRS: 144.390 MHz
WL2K PMBO:
  N1FL-10, 145.070 MHz, Seminole EOC
  AI4KM-10, 145.070 MHz, Altamonte Springs EOC
  N3PPC-10, 145.070 MHz, Sanford
  W8EHH-10, 145.070 MHz, Winter Garden
  N4PLZ-8/9 407277, 145.070 MHz, Orlando LAN
  N0IA-8/9 386335, 144.910 MHz DeLand LAN
  N0IA-10, 144.910 MHz, Deltona
  N4ZZO-10, 144.910 MHz, DeBary EOC

8. DRILLS, TESTS AND ALERTS
8.1 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group will attempt to participate in the annual nationwide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) sponsored by ARRL but regardless will hold at least an annual SET exercise of our own.

8.2 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group Training Net will be held at 8 PM, local time, the first Monday of each month on 146.460 MHz Simplex and each following Monday on the 147.165 MHz (+600 KHz; 103.5 PL) repeater.

These are first priority messages and we use "Break, Break!" to get attention of the NCS, between transmissions. When accepting such messages for transmission, they require only the following information: A. To (Example: Seminole County Fire/Rescue) B. What (Example: Pumper truck needed ASAP) C Why (Example: Structure fire) D. Where (Example: Lake Mary High School) [provide address and cross street whenever possible] E. Who (Lt. Joseph Olson, Seminole County Fire/Rescue)

7.2 TRANSMITTING Stations must not transmit unless invited to do so by the Net Control Station (NCS).

7.2.1 Exceptions: A. Stations having emergency traffic B. As designated in the standard operating procedure.

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7.5 DIGITAL MODES Digital modes (packet, APRS, WL2K etc) may be used based upon available resources at the discretion of the Officer In Charge. Local available digital paths include: Florida FPAC Network: www.fadca.org/fpacnet.html SEDAN node: SNFD KD4MWO-12 Sanford, 145.770 MHz APRS: 144.390 MHz WL2K PMBO:

N1FL-10, 145.070 MHz, Seminole EOC AI4KM-10, 145.070 MHz, Altamonte Springs EOC N3PPC-10, 145.070 MHz, Sanford W8EHH-10, 145.070 MHz, Winter Garden N4PLZ-8/9 407277, 145.070 MHz, Orlando LAN N0IA-8/9 386335, 144.910 MHz DeLand LAN N0IA-10, 144.910 MHz, Deltona N4ZZO-10, 144.910 MHz, DeBary EOC

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This NET may be linked to the 442.750 MHz (+5.0 MHz, 103.5 PL) repeater and/or to Echolink. Currently, the Training Net is connected to Echolink via K1KWG-L.

8.3 A Standard Operating Procedure detailing emergency response procedures and actions shall be written in support of the current Northern Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Plan.

8.4 The Seminole ARES/RACES Group Emergency Communications Plan and the Standard Operating Procedure shall be reviewed annually with updates as necessary to keep this plan current and viable.

Appendix A
Precedences (reference ARRL Form FD S-218)

The precedence will follow the message number. For example, on cw 207R or 207 EMERGENCY. On phone, "Two Zero Seven, Routine (or Emergency)."
EMERGENCY--Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of stricken populance in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be *very rare*. On cw, RTTY and other digital modes this designation will always be spelled out. When in doubt, *do not* use it.
PRIORITY--Important messags having a specific time limit. Official messages not covered in the Emergency category. Press dispatches and other emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency. Notifications of death or injury in a disaster area, personal or official. Use the abbreviation P on cw.
WELFARE--A message that is either a) an inquiry as to the health and welfare of an individual in the disaster area b) an advisory or reply from the disaster area that indicates all is well should carry this precedence, which is abbreviated W on cw. These messages are handled *after* Emergency and Priority traffic but before Routine.
ROUTINE--Most traffic normal times will bear this designation. In disaster situations, traffic labeled Routine (R on cw) should be handled *last*, or not at all when circuits are busy with Emergency, Priority or Welfare traffic.

Handling Instructions (Optional)

HXA--(Followed by number) Collect landline delivery authorized by addressee within...miles. (If no number, authorization is unlimited.)
HXB--(Followed by number) Cancel message if not delivered within...hours of filing time; service originating station.
HXC--Report date and time of delivery (TOD) to originating station.
HXD--Report to originating station the identity of station from which received, plus date and time. Report identity of station to which relayed, plus date and time, or if delivered report date, time and method of delivery.
HXE--Delivering station get reply from addresses, originate message back.
HXF--(Followed by number) Hold delivery until....(date).
HXG--Delivery by mail or landline toll call not required. If toll or other expense involved, cancel message and service originating station.
For further information on traffic handling, consult the Public Service Communications Manual or the ARRL Operating Manual, both published by ARRL.

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Created: July 15, 2000 ; K4FUY
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