VOLUSIA COUNTY
AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

VOLUSIA ARES DEPLOYMENT MANUAL

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DEPLOYMENT MANUAL

Hospital and shelter operations are two of many responsibilities that the Volusia Amateur Radio Emergency Services (VOL ARES) provides for Volusia County. This manual has been developed to hopefully make your job a lot easier. It provides each Amateur Radio Operator with procedures and advice from the moment that they are activated until the time they secure from the shelter. Each Amateur Radio Operator should keep a copy of this manual with them when assigned to a shelter.

This manual will consist of the following:

- Activation procedures
- En route to the Assignment
- Entering the Assigned Location
- Locating and setting up your station
- Operating Procedures
- Sending Traffic
- Maintaining a Radio Log
- Operator Liability
- Operator Don'ts
- Leaving the Assignment

ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

When Volusia County activates the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and requires the assistance of VOL ARES, the Emergency Coordinator will be notified. The EC will then notify the Assistant Emergency Coordinators and all VOL ARES members using a "phone tree" and announcements on local repeaters. If a hurricane is expected, all VOL ARES members should monitor the 147.240 repeater for updates.

Once the county has activated VOL ARES, a "Resource" net will then be activated on the 146.865 (-600, no PL tone) repeater. The purpose of this net is to assign operators to hospitals, shelters and anywhere else the EOC has tasked VOL ARES to provide back-up communication. The Resource Manager will also provide directions to locations (if time permits), and direct any outside amateur volunteers and untrained VOL ARES members to a training and registration point. If operators check into the 147.240 repeater, they will be directed by the "Operations" net control to go to the "Resource" net on 146.865. You must check into this net even if you have been pre-assigned to a location.

EN ROUTE TO THE ASSIGNMENT

Once you receive your assignment, make sure you know where your assigned hospital/shelter is located. Do not rely on the "Resource" net to get your directions. Net control will most likely be busy assigning other tasks. You should have a map of Volusia County in your vehicle for

directions. A map and list of hospital and shelter locations has been made available on www.volusiaares.org website.

Stay on the "Resource" net until you arrive at the hospital/shelter. While en route, net control may require you to go to another location if necessary. You may also need to report traffic activity such as accidents and/or traffic jams. This information will be reported to the proper authorities.

Once you arrive at the shelter, you must notify net control that you have arrived and you need to secure from the net.

ENTERING THE SHELTER

When you arrive at the shelter, do not immediately carry your equipment with you until you have located the shelter manager, and found the room in which you will be operating. Sometimes, shelter managers are not familiar with the exact location of the operating position. If you do not know where to set up your equipment, ask the shelter manager where the Amateur Radio antenna/coax is located. It should be in the teacher's lounge or the cafeteria manager's office. When in doubt, look for a tall VHF antenna outside of a building or structure.

If operating from a hospital or local city EOC, equipment should already be installed.

Once you enter the hospital or shelter, you must sign in and let the person who is doing the registration know that you are the Amateur Radio Operator and that you need to see the hospital/shelter manager. Remember to carry your County-issued badge with you. When you locate the manager, introduce yourself and hand them the "Shelter Managers Letter." Be prepared to answer any questions they may have.

Find out from the shelter manager if there is a back up generator. If they are using a portable generator, ask if you can tap into it.

Ask the shelter manager if they can find you a runner. This person does not have to be a member of the shelter staff. It can be an evacuee, but the person must be over 18 years old.

Suggest to the shelter manager that they assign only one person (besides themselves) to send messages. This will keep things organized and it will prevent duplicate messages being sent.

LOCATING AND SETTING UP YOUR STATION

Once you have located the area where you need to set up, look for the antenna coax. When possible, VOL ARES will provide a guide to each shelter with photos of the antenna coax location and information about the coax connectors prior to deployment.

Some schools have a box on the wall with only a connector visible; others have the coax in the ceiling. If the coax is in the ceiling, do not attempt to get it down. Go to the shelter manager and ask to have a maintenance worker to pull the coax out of the ceiling. Be prepared for the

worst. Have a backup antenna and plenty of coax in the event that you or the shelter manager cannot locate the coax. When setting up your station, always keep safety in mind.

After you have located the antenna coax, go to your vehicle and get your equipment. Don't be afraid to ask for help if needed. You may have to make several trips and asking for help will save you time.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

The nets will be directed nets and you must always follow the directions and instructions of net control.

Each Amateur Radio Operator will be assigned a tactical call specific to the hospital, shelter or location to which they have been assigned.

Once you are set up, go to the "Operations" net on 147.240 (+600 Tone 123.0). When you first check in identify yourself with your call sign followed by your shelter name. Thereafter, use a tactical call sign when calling net control. For example, "Operations, Shelter 1," or "Operations, Halifax, Port Orange."

Each Amateur Radio Operator should familiarize themselves with the ICS-205 Radio Communications Plan chart located at the www.volusiaares.org website. This is important in order to be aware of back up frequencies, packet nodes, WL2K nodes and D-Star repeaters that can be utilized for passing traffic to the serve agency or to VOL ARES partners.

If you want to speak with someone else on the net, ask control for permission to take the other station off the net to another frequency.

Please keep casual chatter to an absolute minimum to allow for emergency & priority traffic. Operators should maintain net discipline, and speak only requested to do so by Operations, the served agency or in case of an emergency.

Never leave the net frequency or walk away from your radio without telling Control.

Use AC power as long as possible. When the power goes out, use your back up power source. Let net control know that you have lost power at your shelter. You will be directed by net control to turn off your radio and check in every hour. This time period may change depending on the situation. Remember to use the minimum power necessary to maintain effective communications to lengthen your battery life.

SENDING MESSAGES

Always have the shelter manager put all messages in writing (except for emergency traffic). Log all traffic in your radio log. Use the formats below when sending messages.

1. Emergency Traffic - Never use the NTS or ICS-213 formats. Use the standard emergency "Mayday, Mayday." All routine traffic should cease immediately and remain off the air until the frequency is reopened by Control. When acknowledged by net control, give your tactical call sign, and type of emergency.

When passing Emergency Traffic, do not disclose personal information or, in the case of injuries, the exact nature of those injuries over the air unless specifically requested to do so by EOC or emergency services staff.

2. Priority Traffic - Whenever a served agency makes a request for materials and manpower, this must be sent as Priority Traffic using the ICS-213 format. ONLY HOSPITAL/SHELTER AND OTHER SERVED AGENCY STAFF SHOULD ORIGINATE PRIORITY TRAFFIC.

Notify net control that you have Priority Traffic. Example, "Operations, Shelter 1 with Priority Traffic." Operations will direct you to another repeater or tell you to call your station. When giving the quantity that is needed, use "figures" rather than saying the quantity. For example, if you need 24 meals, do not ask for twenty-four, ask for "figures" 24 meals. This will prevent any misunderstandings. Make sure the person making the request prints and signs their name on the ICS-213 form. (This form can be found on the www.volusiaares.org website.)

Remember, if the staff member does not sign a request, you must send the message anyway. For the signature on the message put "No signature". It will be up to the Emergency Support Function station to decide whether or not to accept the request.

If the Amateur Radio Operator has packet or D-Star capability, send the message direct to the VOL ARES member at the Volusia County EOC.

3. Routine Traffic - Contact net control and let them know you have Routine Traffic and who is it for (EOC, other shelter, EVAC, etc.). They will instruct you what to do next. Priority traffic is a general information or request. (Shelters full, what next? Can we open our shelter?, etc ...) You must assign a message number to this message for your log. This way if needed, we can refer back using that number. Then pass your traffic at normal talk speed.

If the Amateur Radio Operator has packet or D-Star capability, send the message direct to the VOL ARES member at the Volusia County EOC.

4. Health & Welfare Traffic – During quiet times, shelter evacuees may request that health & welfare traffic be passed to family members or vice versa. Amateur Radio Operators can pass & receive such traffic to the Volusia County Traffic Net or Neighborhood HamWatch partners using the ARRL format. Unless using a dual band radio, operators should first notify Operations that they will be off the net frequency passing Health & Welfare Traffic.   Such transmissions should be limited to ten minutes so that the operator can check back into the net in case priority or routine traffic is standing by to be passed to the specific operator's location. If not, the operator can resume passing Health & Welfare Traffic every ten minutes.

MAINTAINING A RADIO LOG

All Amateur Radio Operator activities must be documented from the time you first check into a hospital/shelter until you are released. Operators should log the following activities:

1. Checking in and out of the net.

2. Sending any traffic. Note the message number, time and date.

3. Received messages. Note the message number, time, date and name of sender.

4. Specific instructions from the hospital/shelter manager or staff.

A log sheet attached at this end of this document and can also be found on the www.volusiaares.org website. It is very important to document every activity. If questions are raised after the event, the Emergency Coordinator can refer back to the logs and answer any questions. All logs should be sent to the EC upon completion of the activation.

When in doubt, log it! Do not ask net control if something should be logged.

LIABILITY

Amateur Radio Operators are covered under the Volusia County's workman's compensation plan only if they:

1. are deployed at the request of Volusia County's Emergency Management Director;

2. are injured while performing duties for which they have be trained for– communications;

3. are injured performing tasks, other than communications, requested by Volusia County EOC and approved by the EC.

All other activities are not covered. If you volunteer to do other tasks, you will do so as an evacuee and not as a VOL ARES member. Should you be injured performing such tasks, you will not be covered by workman's compensation

OPERATOR DON'TS

Don't argue with the hospital/shelter manager, staff and evacuees. If you have a problem with a staff member or an evacuee, contact the shelter manager. If you have a problem with a shelter manager, contact the EC or an AEC and describe the nature of the problem. The EC will then either advise you or will contact EOC officials.

Don't do other tasks. Unless requested by the EOC and approved by the EC, you are only to provide backup and emergency communication. The shelter staff and shelter evacuees will handle all other tasks. This is for liability reasons. If you decide to do other tasks without the EC's approval, you will be doing this task as a non-VOL ARES member and will not eligible for workman's compensation benefits. You must check out from the net wile performing the unauthorized task and check back into the net when done.

Don't bring weapons or knives to the hospital or shelter. It is illegal to bring any type of weapons on school property including firearms, stun guns, knives, etc. You are not exempt from any laws. VOL ARES forbids any member to carry any type of concealed weapon during any activation or any activity.

Don't bring any type of alcoholic beverage to the hospital/shelter. VOL ARES forbids any member to possess alcoholic beverages during any activation or any activity. Any VOL ARES that arrives at a location under the influence of alcohol will be escorted from the hospital/shelter, and will immediately have their County credential and membership in VOL ARES revoked.

Don't bring any type of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia to the hospital/shelter. VOL ARES forbids any member to possess any type illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia during any activation or any activity. Any VOL ARES that arrives at a location under the influence of an illegal substance will be escorted from the hospital/shelter, and will immediately have their County credential and membership in VOL ARES revoked.

Don't allow any non-amateur to operate your station unsupervised. VOL ARES allows Third Party Priority & Routine Traffic only if an Amateur Radio Operator is manning a station. A non-amateur can only operate your station without a control operator unless life and property are at risk. If it is necessary for a non-amateur to operate your station and pass Third Party Traffic, notify the you must first get approval from the EC.

Don't assume. We are to provide facts not assumptions. Many people listen to us including county officials, media and the general public. Information that is assumed could cause panic and chaos. Only report the facts. If you are not sure, get confirmation.

Don't gossip, spread rumors or express opinions (on or off the air). You don't know who is listening to us and we do not want to offend anyone that works for our served agency.

LEAVING THE SHELTER

Clean up the area where you were stationed. Make it look like you were not even there.

Put all documents in your envelope. Put the name of the shelter on the envelope.

Check in to the resource net and notify net control that you are returning to your home location.

Break down your station.

Check out with the shelter manager.

Check in with the Resource Net when you start your return home in your vehicle.

Upon arrival at your destination, check out of the Resource Net. This will be your official end of service time.

<p style="text-align:center">**HOSPITAL/SHELTER MANAGER'S LETTER**</p>

Date: _____, 201___

Amateur Radio Operator: _____

The above named Amateur Radio Operator has been assigned to your shelter to provide back-up and emergency communications to the Volusia County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In the event that all communications fail or if it is difficult to contact the EOC, your Amateur radio operator will be able to pass your messages. When sending a message, please do the following:

   1. Put all messages in writing - (Except emergency messages)

   2. Sign and date all messages -

   3. Make the message as short as possible - (25 words or less)

Please provide the name of the individual authorized to send messages to your Amateur Radio Operator. This will help prevent confusion and duplication of messages. Also advise whom the operator can approach in the event you are busy with other issues.

If it is possible, please try to assign your operator a "runner". When messages come from the EOC to your shelter, the "runner" will deliver the messages to you. This way the Amateur Radio Operator will be at their station to receive and pass more messages. This person does not have to be a shelter staff member. For example, the person can be an evacuee. This person, however, must be over the age of 18.

If your shelter has any type of generator, the Amateur Radio Operator would like be able to tap into it to power his/her radio and computer. This will ensure that the Amateur Radio Operator will be continuously on the air.

Your Amateur Radio Operator is there to provide only radio communications. They are not to do other tasks due to liability reasons per instructions by the Volusia County EOC. If the Amateur Radio Operator volunteers to do other tasks besides communications (Amateur Radio), they are doing this as an evacuee and not as a Volusia ARES member.

On behalf of the Volusia County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

   Sincerely,

   Stephen Craft, W1SGC
   Volusia County ARES, Emergency Coordinator