



Safety Plan
Emergency Operations

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to define a plan to allow Hillsborough ARES/RACES personnel to operate in a safe manner during an emergency event such as a Hurricane, Flood, Mass Casualty Event, Toxic Substance Release, or other critical event such as described in the Hillsborough County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan:

<https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/library/hillsborough/media-center/documents/emergency-management/hillsborough-county-cemp.pdf>

The onset of such events is often not well defined in advance.

Responsibility:

It shall be the responsibility of the Safety Officer or their designee to:

Ensure this plan is up to date.

Monitor all events and event locations to assess any safety related issues.

~~Ensure the First Aid Kit contains adequate supplies by re-stocking as necessary.~~

~~Ensure sufficient First Aid Kits are available for planned deployment sites.~~

Provide recommendations on contents of personal First Aid Kits.

It shall be the responsibility of all members of Hillsborough ARES/RACES to:

Follow the safety guidelines in this document, and as directed by the Safety Officer (or their designee).

Notify the Safety Officer (or their designee) or site manager regarding any unsafe situation or injury.

It shall be the joint responsibility of the Training Officer (or their designee) and the Safety Officer (or their designee) to ensure that all members are trained regarding the guidelines contained in this document.

Background:

The full details of the procedures followed during an emergency are documented in the following:

Evacuation Shelter Operator Checklist:

<https://hillsboroughares.org/downloads-2/evacuation-shelter-operator-checklist/>

Hillsborough County ARES/RACES Communications Plan:

<https://hillsboroughares.org/downloads-2/arrl-wcf-comms-plan/>

In general terms, the Department of Emergency Management may request support from ARES/RACES in an Emergency. ARES/RACES may be asked to participate in the operation of Emergency Support Function #2, Communications.

In this circumstance, the activation status of the organization may be elevated. In summary:

Activation Level 4 (Green, Normal Operations): No ARES/RACES activation is in progress or projected, normal radio operations.

Activation Level 3 (Yellow, Alert): ARES/RACES Officials have been notified by one or more served agencies that Amateur Radio Communicators may be needed in the near future. No time-frame is associated with this alert level. ARES/RACES Members should check their equipment and supplies for possible deployment. Members should stay tuned to the assigned emergency frequencies for further news and developments.

Activation Level 2 (Orange, Standby): There is a high probability of a full ARES/RACES activation. ARES/RACES Members should have their READY KIT available at all times. Approximate time-frames are associated with this level. Members should prepare to deploy to assignments or staging areas for assignment. Nets are established and will pass information on as it becomes available. The Public Safety Operations Center (PSOC) may be in partial activation and PSOC Staff should respond accordingly.

At Activation Level 2, members may be deployed to provide Net Control or oversight of radio communications at the Public Safety Operations Center, or to provide sectional area Net Control Station radio communications support such as deployment to an Emergency Operations Center or to other sites designated for such sectional area support.

Activation Level 1 (Red, Activate): ARES/RACES Members will proceed to their assignments or to staging areas for assignments. Nets begin full operation. Available ARES/RACES Members will check into their assigned nets upon arrival at their assignments. Situation reports will be passed to the Section Emergency Coordinator by the Emergency Coordinator every 4 hours. Full emergency communications protocols have been implemented. The PSOC will be in full activation and all Operations Center Staff should respond accordingly.

At Activation Level 1, ARES/RACES members may be deployed to Evacuation Shelters, Point of Distribution Centers, or other locations to provide emergency radio communications.

General Hazard Assessment and Action Plan:

All members of ARES/RACES should follow the following guidelines during an emergency event:

All members will deploy with their Task Books (<https://arrl-nfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Florida-ARES-Training-Task-Book-2020-R1.pdf>), ARES/RACES ID, and RF exposure calculations, if required.

Pre-arrival:

Prior to deploying to an assigned site, members should be in contact with the Department of Emergency Management or the ARES/RACES Radio Room Net Control Operator in order to receive their deployment assignments. Upon receipt of the assignments, the member will move from their Home Site to their assigned locations. The increased level of stress and desire to rapidly deploy can cause increased probability of accidents and errors. Care must be taken to maintain safety awareness during this process.

In no case should members self-deploy to any site without receiving a specific deployment assignment from ARES/RACES. Such assignments can be made by phone, text message, email, or by a Net Control Station at the PSOC ARES/RACES radio room.

Arrival at the Deployment Site:

Upon arrival, the members should perform a visual assessment of the environment to identify any hazards. Care must be taken to maintain safety awareness during this process. Upon arrival to the deployment site, all members shall check in with the EC designated Team Lead and the Evacuation Center Manager. The ICS 211 document will be completed (<https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx>).

Conduct a survey of the operational site to include:

- Be aware of any power lines and make sure any erected structure is 1.5 times the height of the structure away from the power line (e.g. structure is 10 ft tall, power lines should be at least 15 ft away from the base of the structure).
 - Identify any possibility of flooding in the operational area (e.g. area is in a depression or a draw).
 - Identify any structure or vegetation that is not sturdy and may fall.
 - Identify multiple egresses from the area (foot and/or vehicle).
 - Identify any other conditions that would pose a hazard to people or equipment in the area.
- If any hazardous/unsafe conditions exist they should be mitigated or another site should be considered.

During Setup of Equipment:

- Be aware of the surroundings to make sure the planned operation can be accomplished in a safe manner.
- Be aware of individuals who are not ARES/RACES members and if necessary, advise them to take safety precautions pertinent to the operation.
- Make sure all radio-related equipment, electrical connections, and runs of cable/wire are secure and do not pose a safety risk with regard to electrical shock, fire, fall/trip, or RF Exposure.
- Before going operational in any emergency event involving radio communications, the operator of the radio must have performed a safety check according to ARRL RF Emissions Safety Guidelines with completion of the RF exposure calculations, and have it on hand prior to the event. RF exposure calculations are not required when using a handheld radio. RF Exposure Calculator is available at <http://arrl.org/rf-exposure-calculator#>.

-Make sure to mark any guy wires or hanging cables with high visibility tape and mark the RF safe area around any erected antennas.

During the Operation:

After arrival and equipment set up, members should establish radio contact with their assigned Net Control Station.

ARES/RACES members should continuously monitor the environment for any unsafe situations. The member should immediately make sure personnel are safe and notify the Safety Officer (or their designee) and the site manager if any unsafe situations are identified. If needed, the Safety Officer (or their designee) or the site manager will decide a course of action to address the issue.

During the emergency operation, members should be aware that emergency communications can cause elevated stress. The combination of increased stress with the lack of sleep, lack of nourishment, and dehydration can lead to the increased possibility of accidents and errors. A sleep and meal schedule should be established at each site. All members should not work more than 12 hours without an 8-hour period of sleep before or after, and at least two meal breaks during the 12-hour work time. Water should be readily available at each work station. When possible, members should work in pairs or teams. Individual members should monitor other members to make sure everyone is following the sleep and meal requirements. Significant deviations from the above guidelines should be reported to the Safety Officer (or their designee).

ARES/RACES members should monitor other members and non-members with whom they come in contact for signs of injury as well as any signs of sunburn, dehydration, heat stroke/heat shock and other symptoms. See below for more details.

Remedial/Treatment Actions:

Good Samaritan laws protect individuals offering aid to others as long as they do not try to go beyond their training. All ARES/RACES members are encouraged to take First Aid and CPR/AED training. A First Aid Guidance document is available to aid the member.

Good Samaritan Laws

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0768/Sections/0768.13.html

Good Samaritan - Cardiac Arrest

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0768/Sections/0768.1325.html

If EMS has been notified, an ARES/RACES member should stay in contact with EMS and with the individual for observation until EMS arrives. In any case, if the individual has lost consciousness or is unresponsive, EMS will be called.

Individuals who have sustained an electric shock should not be moved. If possible, the power to the circuit should be turned off remotely from an accessible switch. Do not touch electrical wires or cables in this situation. EMS must be immediately notified.

If an individual appears in distress and the member is not sure what to do, contact EMS immediately.

Describe the symptoms of distress to the EMS operator and follow their instructions.

In any situation involving an injury, the Safety Officer (or their designee) and the site manager must be immediately notified.

Stand Down Operations:

When members have been given the order to Stand Down and secure their stations, the members can take down their equipment and prepare for departure. While doing this the members should:

-Be aware of the surroundings to make sure the planned operation can be accomplished in a safe manner.

-Be aware of individuals who are not ARES/RACES members and if necessary, advise them to take safety precautions pertinent to the operation.

-Make sure all radio-related equipment, electrical connections, and runs of cable/wire are secure and do not pose a safety risk with regard to electrical shock, fire, fall/trip, or RF Exposure.

IF TOLD TO SHUTDOWN BY NET CONTROL REPORT TO SITE MANAGER. IF UPON INFORMING THE SITE MANAGER YOU ARE TOLD TO CONTINUE UNTIL HE/SHE TELLS YOU TO SHUTDOWN DO NOT ARGUE WITH SITE MANAGER. SAY YES SIR AND REPORT BACK TO THE NET CONTROL. FILL OUT ICS 221 OR WHATEVER THEY HAVE TO CHECKOUT AT DEPLOYMENT SITE

Relocation to Home Site:

Movement from the assigned deployment site to the Home Site must be taken with care due to the possibility of fatigue. In situations where members do not feel safe to travel, additional rest may be necessary prior to relocation.

After Action Follow Up:

After the conclusion of an event, the Safety Officer or their designee will provide a written or verbal report to the Hillsborough ARES/RACES Emergency Coordinator.