

ARES, Calhoun County SC Tactical Communications Plan

Overview

This document describes the tactical communications plan for ARES in Calhoun County, SC. It lists the actions to be taken by ARES members when a disaster strikes or is imminent. It also lists the methods of communications available to ARES members in Calhoun County, SC.

Document Information

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Abbreviations

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service

ARRL – Amateur Radio Relay League

AUXC – Auxiliary Communicator

AUXCOMM – Auxiliary Communications

EC – Emergency Coordinator

EMA – Emergency Management Agency

EMD – Emergency Management Division

EMS – Emergency Medical Services

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

ICS – Incident Command System

RACES – Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

SC – South Carolina

SCEMD – South Carolina Emergency Management Division

NWS – National Weather Service

References

- ARRL ARES
 - <https://www.arrl.org/ares>
- AUXCOMM

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- <https://www.cisa.gov/safecom/comu-training-resources>
- FEMA ICS Forms Website
 - <https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx>
- SC ARES Website
 - <https://ares-sc.org>
- SC ARES/RACES Tactical Plan V4.7D, published February 15, 2024
 - <https://ares-sc.org/tactical-communications-plan/>

ARES Members, Calhoun County EMA Volunteers, SCEMD Volunteers

It is important to understand the difference between being an ARES member, being a volunteer for the Calhoun County EMA and being a volunteer for the SCEMD.

You may fall into one or more of these categories. If you do, then you will have to decide your priorities during a disaster.

If you want to become a volunteer for any of the following, please contact and consult with the appropriate people to find out their current needs regarding emergency communications.

ARES Members

ARES members are capable of providing emergency communications to organizations such as:

- The public
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Local government agencies
- And other organizations, as needed

ARES members have completed several FEMA, NWS and ARRL courses.

ARES members have completed the ARES registration form and have submitted it to their county's ARES EC.

ARES members keep and maintain the ARRL's ARES Training Plan Task Book.

When a disaster is imminent, ARES members in Calhoun County, SC are expected to follow the instructions in this document.

Calhoun County EMA Volunteer

Calhoun County EMA volunteers are trained and have been vetted by the Calhoun County EMA Director.

When you become a Calhoun County EMA volunteer, the director will assign you to one or more duties so that you will know what you may be called upon to do and what training you will be expected to complete. Some of the duties may include:

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- Amateur radio emergency communication (HF, VHF, UHF, Winlink, etc)
- Palmetto 800 radio operator
- LGR radio operator
- Satphone operator
- Palmetto EOC application entry operator
- Damage assessment
- Shelter communications

The Calhoun County EMA director or an Incident Commander, or their designee, will activate you when you are needed. Your assignment and location for that disaster or incident will be given at that time. Remember, do not self-deploy!

Your activation may require you at a remote location such as a fire department, EMS station, police department, Sheriff's department or a shelter. Most times, if you are activated to a remote location, your role will be to provide communications back to the County EOC or to SCEMD.

In some cases, the Calhoun County EMA may direct the Calhoun County ARES EC to prepare ARES members for service for the county.

SCEMD Volunteers

Volunteers for the SCEMD provide emergency communications for or at the State EOC or other location specified by the SCEMD management.

A SCEMD volunteer must be a trained Auxiliary Communicator (AUXC).

SCEMD volunteers must be vetted by SCEMD.

During disasters, each County EOC establishes communications with the State EOC.

The State EOC may call upon ARES and other ham radio operators to try to establish communications with specific locations during disasters.

Preparations for disaster

All ARES members in Calhoun County, SC should be ready for disasters.

First make sure that you and your family have a plan for when disaster strikes. This emergency plan should include:

- What action each family member must take
- Shelter location dependent upon the type of disaster
- How to communicate with each other if you get separated
- Go to kits (24 hour and 72 hour)

Make sure to have your emergency communications equipment ready to use at all times. This includes:

- Keeping your cell phone charged and on at all times.

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- Keeping contact information (phone number and email address) in your phone up to date at all times. The following contacts are important:
 - Immediate family members
 - Calhoun County ARES EC
 - ARES members in Calhoun County, SC
 - If you can, create a group called Calhoun County ARES so you can send group text messages.
 - Calhoun County EMA Director (if you are a Calhoun County EMA volunteer)
 - SCEMD contact (if you are a SCEMD volunteer)
- Having the “Calhoun County EMA, SC” app installed and configured correctly on your phone.
 - Under Notification Settings in the app, enable all Push Channels.
 - Make sure your phone will allow notifications from this app all the time.
- Having signed up for “Calhoun CodeRED” alerts.
 - In the “Calhoun County EMA, SC” app:
 - Select “Resources”
 - Select “Calhoun CodeRed Sign Up”
 - If prompted, select “Visit Website”
 - Follow the instructions in the “HOW TO SIGN UP” section.
 - Note: Enter your address and other information correctly. It is very difficult to get it changed once you have signed up.
- Keeping the Zello app on your phone configured for the “Calhoun Cnty W4CEM” channel.
- Keeping your VHF/UHF mobile/handheld radios charged and programmed. At a minimum, the following channels must be programmed into your radio:
 - 147.4200 MHz, Simplex Coordinating Frequency
 - 146.6700 MHz, AD4U repeater, St Matthews, SC
 - 146.8800 MHz, SCHEART repeater, Orangeburg, SC
- Keeping your HF transceiver ready to communicate with:
 - 3.9900 MHz LSB for SC ARES HF emergency traffic and nets
 - 3.9935 MHz LSB as the alternate SC ARES HF emergency traffic and nets
 - 7.2320 MHz LSB as the alternate SC ARES HF emergency traffic and nets
 - Winlink communications (requires computer interface)
- Keeping your laptop charged and ready at all times for:
 - Winlink communications
 - CAT and data communications with your radios

Actions to take when disaster is imminent

This section describes the actions that ARES members in Calhoun County, SC should take when a disaster strikes or is imminent.

Before we begin, remember this: DO NOT SELF-DEPLOY! Doing so will put your life and the life of others in harm's way. Stay in your home or a safe place until activated.

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First, make sure you, your family and home are safe! You and your family are first priority!
Implement your family's emergency plan.

When you and your family are safe, and if you are available to assist in emergency communications then, proceed with the following steps.

1. Have your cell phone ready to answer calls and receive text messages.
 - a. If you are a member of Calhoun County ARES, the EC will try to use this method first to put you on alert.
 - b. If you are a Calhoun County EMA volunteer, the director will try to use this method first to activate you if needed.
 - c. Don't call the Calhoun County EMA director, Calhoun County EOC or SCEMD.
 - i. They are busy preparing for or are handling the disaster!
2. Start monitoring the "Calhoun Cnty W4CEM" channel on Zello.
 - a. If you do not hear any communications over that channel, announce yourself to let others that may be listening know that you are available.
 - b. If you hear communications, then at the appropriate time, announce yourself.
 - c. If the Calhoun County ARES EC is available, that person will be monitoring it.
 - d. The Calhoun County ARES EC will try to contact ARES members via this method first.
 - e. Refrain from chit-chat conversations on this Zello channel during disasters!
3. Start monitoring the AD4U repeater (146.6700 MHz). We will typically start an emergency net when a disaster is imminent.
 - a. If you do not hear any communications on the AD4U repeater, announce yourself and see what replies you get. This will let you know that the repeater is operational and will let others that are listening know that you are monitoring.
 - i. Announce yourself by saying "This is xxx monitoring" where xxx is your call sign.
 - b. If the Calhoun County ARES EC is available, that person will start an emergency net.
 - c. If the emergency net is running, then check in at the appropriate time.
 - d. If the emergency net is not running and if you have been trained to be the emergency net controller for Calhoun County, then start the emergency net.
 - e. The Calhoun County EOC and/or State EOC may join the net.
 - f. Follow the instructions of the net controller!
 - g. Refrain from chit-chat conversations on the AD4U repeater during disasters!
4. If the AD4U repeater is down, not responding or you are unable to communicate with it, change to the Simplex Coordinating Frequency (147.4200 MHz).
5. If you have the ability to monitor two channels, start monitoring the SCHEART repeater in Orangeburg (146.8800 MHz).
 - a. During a disaster, the SCHEART repeaters will be linked together and will be managed by the State EOC.
 - b. If the SCHEART repeater in Orangeburg is down, try another SCHEART repeater.
 - c. Refrain from using the SCHEART during disasters but, be ready to follow instructions given by the Calhoun County EOC or State EOC over the SCHEART repeater.
6. Start monitoring the SC ARES HF net on 3.9900 MHz.

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- a. If the net is running, check-in at the appropriate time.
 - b. If the net is not running, tune around because they may have had to change the frequency.
 - i. Try 3.9935 MHz. The net may have been moved to that frequency.
 - ii. Also try 7.2320 MHz. The net may have been moved to that frequency.
 - c. Do not start a net. Typically, SCEMD will start a net.
7. If you are a Calhoun County EMA volunteer and the Calhoun County EMA director or his designee, activates you, then follow that person's instructions and follow your training.
- a. You, being a Calhoun County EMA volunteer, takes precedence over ARES during disasters.
 - b. If you are a SCEMD volunteer and have accepted an activation from SCEMD, then you should decline the activation request from Calhoun County EMA.
8. If you are a SCEMD volunteer and are activated then, follow their instructions and follow your training.
- a. If you have already accepted activation of the Calhoun County EMA, then you should decline the activation request from SCEMD.

Be ready to submit a situational report of your current situation and location at any time during the disaster. This may be requested on ICS Form 209 or ICS 213.

You should keep a communication log of any traffic you handle on ICS Form 309.

You should keep a log of your activity on ICS Form 214.

These instructions help us to be ready for disasters. The Calhoun County ARES EC will create various exercises to keep us prepared.

Methods of communication

The following lists the methods of communication that will be used during disasters or when disaster is imminent. They are listed in order of descending priority.

- Mobile phone and text messaging.
- Zello channel "Calhoun Cnty W4CEM"
 - Used to establish informal communications between ARES members. It helps to see who is available.
 - The Calhoun County EOC may monitor this channel during disasters.
- AD4U Repeater
 - This is the repeater that Calhoun County will use as their Tactical Repeater.
 - This is where the emergency net for Calhoun County ARES will be held.
 - Formal communications will occur between ARES members, County EOC and State EOC.
 - RX Frequency: 146.6700 MHz
 - TX Frequency: 146.0700 MHz
 - TX Tone: 156.7 Hz
 - Mode: Narrow-band analog FM

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- Simplex Coordination Frequency
 - This will be used when the AD4U repeater is down.
 - It will also be used by those who cannot communicate with the AD4U repeater.
 - Frequency: 147.4200 MHz
 - Mode: Narrow-band analog FM
- SC ARES HF Net
 - This is SC ARES state-wide emergency HF net frequency.
 - Frequency: 3.9900 MHz
 - Alternate Frequency: 3.9935 MHz
 - Alternate Frequency: 7.2320 MHz
 - Mode: LSB
- Winlink
 - This will be the preferred method of sending ICS forms over the radio between the County EOC and State EOC.
 - ARES members will use it to also help the public contact their relatives during a disaster to let them know their situation.
 - Possible modems: Vara HF, Vara FM, Telnet

Please learn and be ready to use any of the above methods of communication.