Fort Bend County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
(ARES®) Emergency Communications Plan.
Current version: July 8, 2023
Revised to include Appendix B
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1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this plan is to implement Part 97.1 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, and Federal and international treaty law applying to Amateur Radio and specifically to the Fort Bend County, Texas ARES®. Part 97.1 Basis and purpose. The rules and regulations in Part 97.1 are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:

> **1.1.1** Regulation and enhancement of the value of the Amateur Radio Service to the public as a voluntary non-commercial communication service, *particularly with respect to providing emergency communications. [Emphasis added]*

1.2 In addition, this Plan expands on, supplements and supports the ARRL® South Texas Section ARES® and District 1 Emergency Communications Plans (EMCOMMs). These higher-level Plans are incorporated into this plan by reference. All Fort Bend County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, (ARES®), hereinafter referred to as Fort Bend ARES® members should have a copy of these plans and be familiar with their contents and requirements. Portions of higher level plans are included in this plan for convenience. In the event of conflicts, the provisions of the higher-level plan will govern.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The ARRL South Texas Section is divided into fifteen (15) districts. District 1 is the comprised of the seven counties: Fort Bend, Montgomery, Chambers, Liberty, Brazoria, Waller and Galveston.

2.2 The primary responsibility of the Fort Bend County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, (ARES®), Fort Bend County, is to provide effective and efficient communications in the event of a natural disaster or emergency involving any major threat to life or property, to supplement normal communications, or in the event of communications failures to provide the necessary communication links where applicable and possible. Communications support is provided, in part, by pre-assigned Ready Response Teams (RRT) who maintain contact with Served Agency representatives and are trained to operate equipment installed at Served Agency locations. Equipment has been installed in some Agency facilities; however, in others, equipment must be brought in by the assigned Ready Response Team. See Appendix A for a list of these Served Agencies.

2.3 Deleted

2.4 All drills, training and instruction will be planned and executed to ensure maximum readiness and capability to respond expeditiously and to provide effective and efficient FCC licensed radio operator volunteers for emergency communications whenever the need arises.

2.5. Fort Bend County members are FCC-licensed Amateur Radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and equipment for public service communications duty. All Fort Bend County ARES® personnel are strongly encouraged to obtain a State of Texas Division of Emergency Management State RACES Authorization Unit Number.

2.6. Under Federal regulations, Amateur Radio public service communications are furnished without compensation of any kind. All Fort Bend County radio operator personnel are federally licensed receive no remuneration of any kind for their services, and in most cases, provide the equipment utilized at their own expense.

2.7. Fort Bend County functions under this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual by direction of the Fort Bend County Emergency Coordinator (EC), who is appointed by the ARRL South Texas Section Manager with recommendation from the ARES® South Texas Section District 1 District Emergency Coordinator (DEC).

2.8. As an ARES® volunteer you are working for ARES® and operate within the ARES® guidelines and FCC regulations. You are not an employee of the served agency and although we serve and operate strictly within their operational rules and regulations, we are not their employees. The following statement has been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan and is pertinent to this issue:

"*When ARES® operators are assigned to a duty post anywhere, they remain an ARES® operator for the full length of the ARES® assignment. That operator is responsible directly to the EC and Assistant ECs, and to no one outside of the ARES® organization. The officials of a served agency must never be permitted to take control of ARES® operators assigned to them, or to absorb them into their own organization, though they may sometimes attempt that. ARES® does not recruit and train operators for other groups to use for non-ARES® purposes.*"

If you desire to take on an assignment other than your current ARES® assignment you must clear that with the on-site ARES® leader or supervisor you are currently working with and ensure that a qualified replacement is available to cover your assignment for the remainder of its duration.

3.0 ORGANIZATION OF THE FORT BEND COUNTY UNIT

3.1 The Fort Bend County ARES® unit functions under this plan under the direction of the Fort Bend County Emergency Coordinator (EC), who is appointed by the ARRL District 1 District Emergency Coordinator (DEC).

3.2 Fort Bend County ARES® is organized to merge with the overall management template of the Incident Command System, (ICS), and the National Incident Management system, (NIMS). The organizations served by ARES® units across the United States are required to work within the NIMS and ICS. On 23 February 2003, President Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, which required the Homeland Security Secretary to develop and administer a National Incident Management System. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. All communications personnel are most strongly encouraged to take FEMA courses IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800, which describe the Incident Command System, National Incident Management System and The National Response Plan.

3.3 The Fort Bend County EC is the chief ARES® official in Fort Bend County ARES®, and is directly responsible to the DEC. The duties of EC require a serious commitment of time and effort by the volunteer who accepts this position.

> **3.3.1**. The EC's duties can be many, varied and complex. No EC can do everything himself. To be effective, he must delegate duties to Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AECs). The EC may appoint as many AECs as are needed to effectively manage and develop an effective organization. AEC appointments do not need approval by any other ARES® official, although as a matter of precedence and deference the Fort Bend County ARES® EC will discuss AEC appointments and request advice and direction from the

DEC. In Fort Bend County ARES®, all AECs must be members of the ARRL® and have completed the ARRL Emergency Communications Course Level I and FEMA IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800, or agree to complete these courses within twelve months of their appointment. Other emergency communication courses may be identified in the future. Fort Bend County ARES® AECs serve at the pleasure of the EC and their appointments lapse when the EC resigns or is replaced, though any or all of the same individuals may be reappointed by the new EC at that EC's discretion.

3.3.2. The EC organizes and coordinates Amateur Radio communications in Fort Bend County ARES® to accommodate the needs of agencies served and, to merge with the overall productive efforts of ARES® District 1, and the South Texas Section of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®). The Fort Bend County ARES® organizational structure will merge with the overall management and production template of the ICS and NIMS.

3.4. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Operations: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of net manager for specific ARES® nets, net control station for specific ARES® nets, coordination of ARES® activities on a specific band, AEC for packet and\or other digital modes, assembly point coordinator, operational assistant to the EC during disasters, coordinator for subdivision of the EC's area of responsibility, team captain for the ARES® subgroup(s), mentor other ARES® members to encourage their participation.

3.5. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Administration: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of recruiting, public relations, personnel records, equipment inventory, training, and reports. Additionally, the Fort Bend County ARES® AEC for administration is considered to be the "second-in-charge" should the EC not be available to fulfill required duties.

3.6. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Logistics: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of transportation, supplies (food, fuel, water, etc.), equipment (generators, batteries, and antennas), repeater restoration if damaged by the disaster.

3.7. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Liaison: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of maintaining contact with assigned agencies, maintaining liaison with the National Traffic System, and maintaining liaison with adjacent ECs.

3.8. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) - Planning: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of developing support rosters for support of public service events and during time of disasters.

3.9. Assistant Emergency Coordinator (AEC) – Hospital EmComm Support Group: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, those duties and responsibilities of supporting the communications needs of the supported hospital(s) during scheduled drills and times of disaster.

3.10. Duty Officers: Are responsible for contacting RRTs and other personnel as specifically defined by the operations AEC.

3.11. Intake Coordinators: Are responsible for maintaining records of all ARES® personnel checking into an assembly area. They are to record the pertinent information on each individual, including the location to which they have been dispatched. The Logistics AEC is responsible for defining the intake coordinators duties as applicable to the situation.

3.12. Net Manager: The Net Manager has overall responsibility for the planning, communications procedural training and operation of all Fort Bend County ARES® NETs, whether they be training NETS, NETS associated with a drill or an actual emergency. The NET Manager reports directly to the Operations AEC. The Net Manager may have one or more assistants. The Net Manager is responsible for the timely and disciplined operation of the Fort Bend County ARES®

Training Net, which will be held each Monday evening at 1930 hours local time with the exception of the third Monday of the month. It is the responsibility of the NET Manager to ensure that NC (net control) operators, and back-up NC operators are assigned for each training net.

3.13. At the discretion of the EC, the Operations AEC or the NET Manager, the Training NET may be canceled to accommodate special circumstances such as the regular scheduled NET falling on a holiday, such as Christmas, the 4th of July or other national holiday that would significantly diminish the numbers of Fort Bend County ARES® member who would normally check into the NET.

3.14. Members of the Fort Bend County ARES® check into the NET from their mobile stations, portable stations and home stations for practice and training, and in an actual emergency to pass traffic, provide communications links and to be available for further instructions and direction.

3.15. Liaison stations to the following National Traffic System (NTS) nets and local VHF and UHF communications nets will be assigned as necessary:

                        H.F. Frequencies
                        3.873 MHz Night Emergency Net
                        7.285 MHz Day Emergency Net
                        3.935 MHz Night Health and Welfare Net
                        7.290 MHz Day Health and Welfare Net
                        7.0925 MHz Day Digital
                        3.5925 MHz Night Digital

                        VHF and UHF Frequencies that may be used by Fort Bend County ARES®
                        145.490 (-) (123.0) **Primary repeater for Fort Bend County**
                        444.525 (+) (123.0) **Backup repeater**
                        442.350 (+) (131.8) Alternate repeater- Northern part of the County
                        145.050 Winlink 2000 for digital communication @ KD5HAL
                        145.050 KD5HAL-10 RMS Gateway
                        146.580 **Primary simplex frequency**
                        147.580 **Secondary simplex frequency**

3.16. Fort Bend County ARES® personnel are dispatched to supported agencies and other assignments as required. Supported agencies with Memorandums of Understanding, (MOUs) will have priority for Fort Bend County ARES® resources.

3.17. Operators of home stations with extended emergency power capabilities may be requested and coordinated to function in as temporary "Key Stations", if required. See paragraph 5.2.5.3 for information concerning "Key Stations".

4.0 ACTIVATING THE PLAN

4.1 Plan activation is normally the first phase of the Fort Bend County mobilization. Plan activation means that the procedures outlined in the EMCOMM are placed into effect. Fort Bend County mobilization may or may not be implemented for the incident, depending on the nature of the incident. For example, this plan may be activated if a hurricane enters the Gulf of Mexico and appears to be headed for our area. Activating the plan will alert Fort Bend County members of the need to review the plan, start preparing for bad weather and notify them to more closely monitor events and modes of communications such as email and repeaters.

4.2 When the plan activation is announced, members should review the plan requirements and provisions and be familiar with their responsibilities under the plan. Fort Bend County members

do not report to any Served Agency locations until the Fort Bend County is mobilized as described in section 5 of this plan. Mobilization might not be called until after an event or incident has occurred. An example might be a hurricane impacting Fort Bend County. Fort Bend County members might "ride-out" the hurricane in their homes or other locations and not be alerted to report to Served Agencies until the storm has passed, normal power and communications have failed and recovery operations begin.

4.3 Any member of the Fort Bend County ARES® who for any reason believes that a communications emergency exists, or is imminent, should immediately contact the Fort Bend County EC or a Fort Bend County AEC. The Fort Bend County EC or his designated representative will contact the DEC or the ADEC to make the District 1 leadership aware of the situation and receive instruction regarding District action. Members should also monitor the South Texas Section ARES® District 1 information / bulletin repeater, 145.490. This repeater should be monitored for bulletins, announcements and other pertinent information relative to an event, or drill. Activation will occur by the ARES® District 1 emergency call up system. The Fort Bend County ARES® phone tree and email notification systems may also be employed.

4.4 In the event of an actual emergency, or an impending emergency in which FCC licensed volunteer radio operators, who are ARES® members, could be activated to serve the community, Fort Bend County ARES® will be alerted. The actual alert will normally come through the ARES® District 1 DEC. The phone tree and email notification systems will also be employed in addition to the automated system. The net frequencies for ARES® District 1, and other vital information will be transmitted on the 145.490 MHz repeater.

5.0 MOBILIZATION PROCEDURE

5.1 The Fort Bend County ARES® EC, or an AEC will initiate mobilization of Fort Bend County ARES® by direction of the ARES® South Texas Section SEC or ARES® District 1 DEC. Instructions, including frequencies, will be given with directions for stations to be dispatched to shelters, assembly areas or the situation site as appropriate. Net control may be handled from Fort Bend County EOC, a mobile unit in route, or other fixed station location depending on availability, requirements and severity of the situation. Monitor the 145.490 MHz ARES® District 1 bulletin / information repeater for information concerning the alert and or mobilization.

5.2 Ready Response Team Leaders, or their designated duty officer, should be in contact with served agency personnel with regard to that agency's intention. Information on all served agency alert status will be passed to the Operations AEC who will ensure proper dissemination. See Section Thirteen Ready Response Teams (RRTs).

    5.2.1 If telephone service is available, the appropriate duty officer, EC or AEC, will also activate the telephone tree and or the email alert system. All Fort Bend County ARES® members should check their email, monitor their phones and cell phones, and monitor the regularly utilized repeater frequencies, especially the District 1 information / bulletin repeater 145.490 MHz.

    5.2.2 When notification, or knowledge, that a communications emergency exists, members of Fort Bend County ARES® will check into the Fort Bend County ARES® Emergency Net and remain on frequency for instructions. Fort Bend County ARES® will announce on the 145.490 MHz information / bulletins and on all of the Fort Bend County ARES® repeater frequencies. See paragraph 3.15.

    5.2.3 Ready Response Teams (RRTs) are activated and should be at their designated sites, or in route, within thirty minutes of the mobilization and receipt of instructions. Each

served agency in Fort Bend County will have a Fort Bend County ARES® Ready Response Team assigned. These teams consist of three to five individuals, including an RRT Leader. Each team has its own prewritten ICS plan for that particular served agency. Upon activation, the team enters the pertinent information on their plan and is ready to operate in accordance with the plan. RRTs report to the Operations AEC.

5.2.4 Tactical control will be on the announced primary Fort Bend County ARES® tactical repeater. The actual location of the net control station will be as directed by the Fort Bend County ARES® Communication Incident Commander, and appropriate to the specific emergency situation. The net control station will list all stations on frequency, and identify the simplex relay stations in the event that simplex operation is required. Fort Bend County ARES® simplex frequencies are: 146.580 MHZ and 147.580 MHz, or as may be designated. The national simplex calling frequency is 146.52 MHz and should not be used as a NET frequency. 146.52 MHz should only be used as a calling frequency or simplex frequency to make announcements directing volunteers to other frequencies.

5.2.5 Anticipate that in the confusion that inevitably occurs during the early stages of an emergency, you may be refused admittance to an area to which you have been dispatched. Be courteous. Attempt to explain. Follow the orders of the person in charge, or the official with whom you are in contact. Call the NC and standby for further instructions. Be courteous and maintain a positive attitude. Always think in terms of how can I make this work to the best advantage of the mission? Tact and diplomacy work extremely well. Be part of the solution and do not become a part of the problem.

> **5.2.5.1**. No Fort Bend County ARES® personnel are authorized to go to the scene of an emergency or disaster without authorization, or an invitation, from the on-scene commander, or individual in charge at the site. Mobile stations, and assigned personnel may proceed to assembly areas in the general vicinity to await further instructions and authorization. The assembly locations, will be announced on the NET, or disseminated prior to the event.

> **5.2.5.2**. When assembly areas are required, and designated, an Intake Coordinator may be dispatched to assembly areas as needed. The Intake Coordinator disseminates instructions and directions to volunteers. The Intake Coordinator, using the appropriate forms in Section Seventeen, will maintain an accurate and clearly legible record of all who have checked in and the location(s) to which they have been dispatched. This record will be passed on the relief Intake Coordinators and turned over to the Logistics AEC when the event has been secured. Accurate records of participating ARES® personnel are extremely important and must be accurately maintained and retained.

> **5.2.5.3**. In an actual emergency, training exercise or drill, the Net Control Station may operate from a "Key Station". Key stations may be extensively utilized during any communications emergency or training exercise. In order to be designated a Key Stations, the station must have full emergency power capability, and in an actual emergency the station would have relief operators assigned to ensure that continuous operation over a prolonged period will be sustained.

5.2.6 Key Stations: There is currently one permanently designated Key Station used by Fort Bend County ARES®.

> **5.2.6.1**. Fort Bend County Emergency Management, call sign KD5HAL, is the Fort Bend County ARES® Primary Key Station, which is located in Richmond, Texas.

6.0 Operations

6.1. All written messages for the NTS must be in standard ARRL® format using the approved ARRL® transmission and receipt protocol and message forms. Formal messages within the ICS must be on the ICS 213 message form. The ARRL® is reportedly revising the ARRL message form to make it completely compatible with the ICS format. See Section Seventeen of this manual for communications forms. See paragraph 7.3.2 of the South Texas Emergency Communications Plan, Appendix T, for information on Winlink 2000.

6.2. All messages must include the signature and title of the official originating the message. The official signing the message assumes full responsibility for the message content. When drafting a formal message, the criteria must be more than, "can this message be understood". The final check and criteria must be not only can this message be understood, it must also be scrutinized from the perspective of, "can this message be misunderstood?" Only then should the message be sent. Never change the text of a message without written permission of the person that drafted the message. If the message does not look correct and the authorizing person directs you to send the message, even after you have pointed a possible error, then send the message exactly as the originator wrote it. Always ensure that originators of message traffic to be sent over Amateur Radio circuits understand that Amateur Radio is not a secure mode of transmission.

6.3. The appropriate message precedence of Emergency, Priority, Welfare, or Routine, as defined on ARRL® FORM FSD-3, are to be used at all times. The first initial of the precedence, as in "P", W and R abbreviations are used for Priority, Welfare and Routine, respectively. Emergency is always written out as "EMERGENCY" and never abbreviated on the message form.

6.3.1 Stations should not transmit unless directed to do so by the net control station. Stations with pertinent information for the net such as updates on situational information should break the net with the pro-words "recheck", "info", "relay", or their call sign as appropriate. Call sign is preferred, and facilitates more expeditious communications because the NC knows who called. It is inappropriate and incorrect procedure on the net to use nonstandard phonetics, or to transmit only the words "net control" when attempting to be recognized by the net control station. It is appropriate for a station with emergency traffic, or emergency information, to break the net at any time by transmitting the station call sign with the words emergency traffic. Alternatively, a station may transmit the pro-word "break" two times in succession, as in "Break Break" which means that the transmitting station has an emergency. Use of the station's call sign with the word Emergency is preferred. Refrain from using the word "break" unless you have an emergency.

6.4. During an emergency event, it is expected that announcements pertaining to the ARES® District 1 Fort Bend County will be made on the 145.490 MHz repeater. Fort Bend County members should monitor 145.490 MHz at the start of each hour to receive any district announcements.

6.4.1. All Fort Bend County stations are urged to relay information when necessary. Fort Bend County members should be familiar with reverse functions on their radio equipment in order to pick up nearby stations that may be attempting to operate into a repeater.

7.0 Drills and Alerts

7.1 Each year Fort Bend County ARES® will participate in the ARRL® Simulated Emergency Test (SET). District 1 Fort Bend County ARES® will also participate in other drills and tests sponsored by Fort Bend County, The National Weather Service and other entities in which Fort

Bend County ARES® is requested to participate and provide communications.

7.2 Fort Bend County ARES® members are encouraged to participate in public service events even when District 1, or Fort Bend County ARES®, is not participating as a unit. These public service events frequently provide realistic training in real life situations, enable the participants to acquire valuable experience and promote ARES® and Amateur Radio to the general public.

7.3 Fort Bend County ARES®, if requested, will regularly provide public service communications in conjunction with local events, to test the effectiveness of Fort Bend County ARES® communications operations.

7.4 At the discretion of the EC, and with authorization of the DEC, the Fort Bend County ARES® NET will be activated unannounced via the automated alert system, telephone tree, or email system at least once per year.

8.0 Federal Terrorism Threat Level Warning Codes

8.1 The federal Department of Homeland Security has created a warning system that represents increasing terrorism threat levels by a Green, Blue, Yellow, Orange and Red color code progression. Since this was first implemented, the warning code level has been changed several times from Yellow to Orange and back again. These colors correspond to Moderate, and High threat levels, respectively. Fort Bend County ARES® members should adopt emergency readiness procedures that correspond to these levels. See the South Texas Section Emergency Plan in Section Eleven of this manual for an explanation of the codes and the actions to be taken by South Texas Section ARES® members.

9.0 NET OPERATIONS

9.1 The Fort Bend County EMROG/ARES® conducts a Monday night net at 7:30 pm local time except the second Monday of the month on the 145.490 MHz repeater (-) (123.0 tone). All Fort Bend County members are strongly encouraged to participate in the net, serve as backup net control operators and provide short training sessions during the net.

9.2 The Texas traffic net system embraces many types of net operations, using many modes of communication. Traffic nets operate around the clock, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days a year on a wide variety of schedules. The basic cluster of Section nets in Texas subscribes to, and functions within, the operating procedures of the National Traffic System (NTS) as well as a variety of special-purpose nets such as the Texas Traffic Net, the ARRL® Information Net, various circuits operating CW, together with a number of other digital modes. In addition, a great many VHF and UHF local or semi-local nets operate every day, and in just about every mode authorized by the FCC. These include repeaters, which by their inherent nature, may be defined as nets, and may or may not become subject net control situations. Each of these nets has its own procedures, schedules and operating practices, and many of them shift almost automatically from routine casual operation to emergency mode when the circumstances and situation dictate.

9.3 Procedures for any of these nets unless they are explicitly part of the County, District, or Section ARES® program vary widely. Individual participation in almost any well-conducted net in any mode, on any frequency is strongly encouraged and recommended as a way to become familiar with net operating procedures and how different nets function and operate. The discussions below refer to and recommend procedures for ARES® affiliated nets.

9.4 It should be noted that most of these procedures work efficiently and effectively for most well-disciplined traffic nets or emergency nets. The ARES® North, South and West Texas

Sections operate combined traffic nets, which serve all three sections.

9.5 The primary daytime HF SSB traffic net is the 7290 Traffic Net, which meets Monday through Saturday from 1000 local through noon Central Time, and Monday through Friday from 1300 to 1400 Central Time on 7,290 KHz.

9.6 In an emergency, either or both nets may be activated. When operating in emergency session:

9.6.1. Emergency and tactical traffic will be handled on 7,285 KHz during the daytime and 3,873 KHz at night.

9.6.2. Health and Welfare Traffic will be handled on 7,290 KHz during the day and 3,935 KHz at night. 9.7 There are two CW nets that also serve the combined ARES® North, South and West Texas Sections. The Texas CW Net operates daily from 1900 to 2200 Central time on 3,643 KHz. The Texas Slow Speed CW Net operates daily at 2000 Central Time on 3,719 KHz.

10.0 STAGING AREA OPERATIONS

10.1. When amateur operators in large numbers augment Fort Bend County ARES® in response to a disaster or emergency, one or more staging areas may be established and announced on the 145.490 MHz repeater, or another designated repeater. Incoming amateurs will report to the Intake Coordinator at the designated staging area to be briefed, given directions, and assignments in accordance with their capabilities and matched to the needs for support at that time. The Fort Bend County ARES® member managing a staging area will maintain close liaison with the Fort Bend County ARES® EC, or other designated Fort Bend County ARES® personnel, via Net Control on the Resource Net, or Tactical Net if no Resource Net has been established, to ensure effective use of resources.

10.2. The amateur managing the staging area will record the following: operator names, call sign, license class, cell and home phone numbers, capability to provide HF, VHF, UHF and digital modes without assistance, and how long each operator can operate. The Intake Coordinator or other coordinating individual should note special needs such as food and shelter or other important information on the form. It is important to note how long each volunteer operator is prepared to operate. Forms should be retained and given to the Logistics AEC.

10.3. One or more staging areas may be set up at appropriate locations based on the type of emergency response required. Sites should be readily assessable along main routes within, or inbound to Fort Bend County, that are unlikely to cause any traffic congestion or conflict in any way with sites in use by the County or State. Where available, sites will have the capability to temporarily park up to 20 vehicles without unnecessarily interfering with commercial or institutional activities that may be in progress. Ordinarily schools, churches, or other high-volume traffic sites would not be designated as staging areas.

10.4. Staging area sites are as follows:

10.4.1. Abandoned shopping centers if at all possible.

10.4.2. Wal-Mart and other large retail parking Lots

10.4.3. Other locations that may be designated during NET operations

11.0 Fort Bend County ARES® Alert Definitions and Increased Fort Bend County ARES® Readiness Conditions.

NOTE: These Fort Bend County ARES® alert definitions have been taken from the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. Each has additions to make them more applicable to the Fort Bend County

ARES® Emergency Plan while still maintaining the direction and intent of the South Texas Section Emergency Plan. The word Level may be used interchangeably with Condition and corresponds to the Fort Bend County EOC alert plan, which uses the word "Level". Most natural occurring emergencies follow some recognizable build-up period during which actions can be taken to achieve a state of maximum readiness. These readiness conditions are used as a method of increasing the alert posture of Fort Bend County ARES®.

11.1. Condition 4 – Awareness. A Condition 4 situation suggests that a higher level of readiness is required. This condition could be triggered by the possibility of a weather watch or the possibility of increased fire threat because of drought conditions. This condition could also be invoked when there is some potential possibility of civil disruption or terrorism threat.

    11.1.1. Fort Bend County ARES® Action - All Fort Bend County ARES® members should review Section 4 of this Emergency Plan.

11.2. Condition 3 – Caution. A Condition 3 alert is automatically triggered when the National Weather Service or local weather service, issues "Watch" condition, or anytime Fort Bend County EOC goes to Level 3. In Condition 4 Alert there is no immediate threat to life or property; however, in a Condition 3 Alert it is recognized that conditions may deteriorate into a more hazardous situation. Weather conditions that would normally trigger a Condition 3 Alert may include the following. The possibility of the threat of civil disturbance or terrorism could also trigger a Condition 3 Alert.

    11.2.1. Conditions that would typically initiate a Condition 3 alert would include, but not be limited to the following severe weather conditions:

        11.2.1.1. Hurricane or Tropical Storm watch.

        11.2.1.2. High wind advisories with wind velocities in excess of 50 mph.

        11.2.1.3. High water watch.

        11.2.1.4. Flash flood watch.

        11.2.1.5. Tornado watch.

        11.2.1.6. Flash flood watch.

        11.2.1.7. Winter storm watch.

        11.2.1.8. Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties that could escalate into a mutual aid requirement.

    11.2.2. Fort Bend County ARES® Action – Review and follow instructions in Section 4 of this Emergency Plan. Be prepared. Your welfare and your family's welfare take priority. Fort Bend County ARES® EC and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three-hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All Fort Bend County ARES® members should monitor the District 1 ARES® bulletin repeater (145.49), check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

11.3. Condition 2 - Alert. A Condition 2 Alert is automatically triggered by severe weather warnings or anytime that Fort Bend County EOC issues a Level 2 Alert. A weather warning is issued when hazardous weather is observed or imminent. An increased possibility of civil disobedience or terrorism may also trigger a Condition 2 Alert. Weather warnings, which would include, but not be limited to the following conditions, which will automatically trigger a Condition 2 Alert:

    11.3.1. High wind warnings with winds in excess of 60 miles per hour.

        11.3.1.1. High water warnings.

        11.3.1.2. Tornado warnings.

11.3.1.3. Flash flood warnings.

11.3.1.4. Winter storm warnings.

11.3.1.5. Similar conditions in adjacent or nearby counties when the DEC there has advised that there may be a requirement for assistance and he, or she, may be requesting mutual aid from District 1.

11.3.2. Fort Bend County Action – Review and follow instructions in Section 4 of this Emergency Plan. Make preparations as described in Section Four of this Emergency Plan and Operations Manual. Be prepared. Expect the unexpected. Family first.

11.3.3. Fort Bend County ARES® EC and AECs monitor the Texas ARES® HF net at not less than three-hour intervals beginning at 1900 local time each evening during the alert. All Fort Bend County ARES® members should monitor the District 1 ARES® bulletin repeater (145.490) and check their email for information bulletins. NET may be activated for roll call and to pass advisory information.

11.3.4. Planning and operational aspects of emergency activation should be reviewed and refined by the Fort Bend County ARES® EC and AECs. Operations AEC and Logistics AEC should be in contact with RRT leaders, the NET Manager, NC operators, Duty Officers and Intake Coordinators to ensure their availability and readiness. Planning AEC should review and update the appropriate served agency Incident Action Plans (IAPs) and ensure that the most current version has been sent to all concerned.

11.3.5. Depending on the situation synoptic overview, and anticipated development, the Fort Bend County ARES® NET may be activated by direction of the DEC or EC.

11.3.6. All Fort Bend County ARES® members should monitor the NET frequencies announced on the 145.490 MHz District 1 bulletin repeater.

11.3.7. All Fort Bend County ARES® members should be aware that the automatic call up and alert system, the phone tree and the email alert system could be initiated in a Condition 2 Alert.

11.4. Condition 1 Alert – Imminent Danger. A Condition 1 Alert is triggered by actual weather conditions or severe weather warnings when the danger to personal property and life may be threatened. This level of alert will only be issued when there is a situation that has put the region, state or nation in danger.

11.5. The South Texas Section Emergency Coordinator or the District 1 District Emergency Coordinator would normally be the ARES® authority that would be authorized to trigger a Condition 1 Alert. Condition 1 Alert will not be automatic. Only in extreme circumstances will the Fort Bend County ARES® EC issue a Fort Bend County ARES® Condition 1 Alert. An example of an extreme circumstance could be the touching down of a tornado in Fort Bend County with the probability of extensive damage.

11.6. Condition 1 Alert – Imminent Danger could be triggered by civil disobedience, terrorism or any of the following, but not necessarily limited to the weather events listed:

11.6.1. Extremely high winds approaching Hurricane Category 1 status.

11.6.2. Tornado sightings or tornado sightings moving toward Fort Bend County.

11.6.3. Actual flooding.

11.7. Fort Bend County ARES® Action – This is the highest alert level in the South Texas Section, District 1 and Fort Bend County ARES®. All preparations have been made by all Fort Bend County ARES® members and all Fort Bend County ARES® members are at the ready and standing by for instructions. Assuming that there was sufficient warning and time available, it is probable that the telephone tree and email activation systems have also been activated.

11.7.1. It is probable that all District 1 ARES® has been activated.

11.7.2. Assigned personnel have been activated and are at, or enroute, to Fort Bend County

11.7.3. Other personnel have been activated and are at, or enroute, to their assignments.

11.7.4. Assigned teams are in standby and making any final preparations.

11.7.5. The Fort Bend County ARES® NET is in operation.

11.7.6. Fort Bend County EOC is on Level 1 alert status.

12.0 Fort Bend County ARES® and the National Incident Management System.

12.1. In response to the attacks on September 11, President George W. Bush issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5) in February 2003. HSPD- 5 called for a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and identified steps for improved coordination of Federal, State, local, and private industry response to incidents and described the way these agencies will prepare for such a response. All District 1 ARES® Emergency Coordinators have had some ICS training. The Fort Bend County ARES® Emergency Coordinator and all Fort Bend County ARES® Assistant Emergency Coordinators are required to have ICS training and ARRL® Emergency Communications Training, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Order 5.

12.2. Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security announced the establishment of NIMS in March 2004. One of the key features of NIMS is the Incident Command System (ICS).

12.3. Fort Bend County ARES® is organized to function within the broad guidelines of the Incident Command System. The Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demand of sing e or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

12.4. ICS has considerable internal flexibility. It can grow or shrink to meet different needs. This flexibility makes it a very cost effective and efficient management approach for both small and large situations. The ICS is just as applicable to a multi-agency situation as it is to an ARES® communications EmComm operation.

12.5. All of the organizations with which Fort Bend County ARES® could be involved in an emergency situation will be operating within an ICS/NIMS organizational template. All ARES® personnel must have a working knowledge of the ICS/NIMS. The agencies we serve expect all ARES® EmComm personnel to have that working knowledge.

13.0 Ready Response Teams

13.1. The primary goal of the Ready Response Team (RRT) is to provide preeminent client service as a team of qualified EmComm communicators for the specific served agency to which it is assigned. When the team arrives on site, they are READY, familiar with the needs of the served agency, trained and ready to go to work. When not called upon to support their assigned agency, their secondary objective is to provide backup support to other RRTs.

13.2. Each RRT is composed of three to five qualified Amateur Radio operators, including the RRT Leader.

13.3. The RRT Leader has the following responsibilities:

13.3.1. Act as the liaison between the entity in operational control and the served agency. Ensure that a current copy of the served agency's emergency plan is available to the unit EC and the unit Operations AEC.

13.3.2. Maintain a current listing for each of the team members including their most

recent contact information.

13.3.3. Each Team Leader is responsible for maintaining the team's operating schedule during drills and during actual emergencies. When personnel shortages exist the team, leader will immediately notify operations and logistics.

13.3.4. If there is no radio equipment at the served agency site the RRT Leader shall be responsible for making arrangement for Amateur Radio equipment to fulfill the served agency's EmComm requirements. This can be done in the form of a "Communications Go Kit" with radio(s), coax, antennas and power source, as applicable to the particular served agency, which each member assigned to the RRT has contributed to. Or, it may be a situation where the served agency has provided an antenna and coax down to the operation position and members bring their own equipment to the site for the operating period. It is the responsibility of the RRT Leader to work out these details with the team members. As always, members of the District 1 ARES® and Fort Bend County leadership teams and other members are available to help with working out the details of the operation.

13.3.5. When District 1 ARES® is alerted it is the RRT Leader's responsibility to communicate with the served agency, find out what their intended response will be, what their requirements may be and communicate that information to their EC.

13.3.6. It is the RRT Leader's responsibility to ensure that the chain of command is fully informed regarding the served agency's EmComm requirements and their intended response to the alert.

13.3.7. The RRT Leader must have a working knowledge of the ICS and NIMS and have completed IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 and IS-800 courses.

13.3.8. The RRT Leader must be a qualified NC operator and must be willing to run the local unit ARES® Training Net from time to time to maintain NC operator proficiency.

13.3.9. It is highly recommended that the RRT Leader have completed the ARRL Emergency Communications basic and advanced courses.

13.3.10. The RRT Leader is responsible for the team's training and performance.

13.3.11. The RRT Leader will rely on assistance of the Fort Bend County EC, Operations AEC and Logistics AEC in locating and recruiting members for their team.

13.3.12. The RRT Leader should have through knowledge of the served agency's emergency plan.

13.3.13. In circumstances where the RRT Leader is unavailable, one, or more of the RRT members shall be trained to take command during absence of the RRT Leader.

13.3.14. Each RRT may have designated "Duty Officers". These individuals function as the served agency contact. Each RRT leader, based on the requirements of the served agency and the needs of the RRT, will determine their rotational schedule. If Duty Officers are designated and a rotational schedule established that information must be available to the Unit's Operations AEC, who will ensure its proper dissemination.

13.4. Team members will train as a unit for a specific served agency. Each RRT is responsible for determining its logistic requirements relating to support, lodging and food. Some served agencies may make all these available, while others may provide only some support. In some cases, no support will be available. Team members must be aware of these circumstances and make provisions for their own support as needed.

13.5. Each RRT member should have a reasonable understanding of where each of the other RRT members are during the work week and make arrangements for RRT members on vacation, out of town on business, or when out of commission because of an illness or family emergency. This is

particularly critical during the period from 1 June through 1 November when this area can be subject to tropical weather.

13.6. Served Agency Site Preparation for RRTs: EOCs, such as fire stations, police stations, City EOCs, etc., with pre-installed radio equipment are critical to the success of the RRT concept. Served agencies that expect RRT personnel to be on site and ready to operate within thirty minutes of notification need to make provisions for a permanent station. As an unreducible minimum, preinstalled antennas, coax cables and an operating position where RRT members can connect their own equipment must be available. Closets and equipment rooms do not make satisfactory RRT operating positions. RRT operating positions should be as close as possible to the served agency's emergency operations center.

13.7. The RRT Leader will have to improvise if the minimum required EmComm equipment has not been provided by the served agency. The extent of that improvisation will depend on the served agency's commitment to utilizing Amateur Radio EmComm operators as a back-up source of emergency communications.

14.0 Education and Training for RRTs

14.1. Team members should develop their own training syllabus designed to be consistent with the requirements of the served agency. Well in advance of any anticipated emergency, all team members should complete the following training:
• FEMA ICS and NIMS courses.
• ARRL Basic Emergency Communications Course.

14.2. The Team Leader should complete the ARRL Emergency Communications Courses Basic and Advanced, especially if acting as Net Control or as a net manager.

14.3. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of the District 1 ARES® and Fort Bend County EMCOMM Plans and other published plans, operating instructions and documentation.

14.4. All team members should be familiar with and have a clear understanding of their EmComm mission.

14.5. Training, practice and experience in operating all of the equipment at the served agency pertaining to their EmComm mission is essential.

14.6. Demonstrated skills as Net Control in several regular training net sessions are required.

14.7. RRT's should practice getting assigned stations operational in the field within thirty minutes.

14.8. RRT's should participate in a simulated activation designed to test the notifications system.

14.9. Periodic "refresher" training sessions are strongly encouraged to maintain member proficiency.

15.0 Equipment and Information

15.1. It is strongly suggested that each team member have at least the following information and equipment available to them when activated:

> **15.1.1**. A laminated wallet sized card containing information on the notification system and key phone numbers and frequencies relating to their specific EmComm mission.
> **15.1.2**. Personal identification to include FCC license, ARES® and RACES badges, and the appropriate Served Agency issued ID cards.
> **15.1.3**. Seventy-two-hour response pack, including water, food, protective

clothing/footwear and cash for personal needs.

15.1.4. A vehicle equipped with a two-meter or dual band mobile radio. Amateur Radio license plates and magnetic identification signs for the doors are desirable.

15.1.5. A full gas tank, stop and fill up when in route to the served agency site if possible.

15.1.6. A handheld two-meter or dual-band radio, with spare rechargeable or alkaline battery packs, rubber duck antenna, telescoping whip, twenty-five feet RG-58 or mini-8 feed line, ribbon J-Pole antenna and earphone headset in a fanny pack, shoulder carry bag or back pack.

15.1.7. All of the DC connectors on equipment to be deployed should be made up with Anderson PowerPole connectors.

15.1.8. Two-meter or dual band mobile radio, magnetic mount gain antenna, fifty feet of coaxial cable and a switching power supply in a portable carrying case or bag.

15.1.9. Numerous emergency response and "go-kit" checklists are available on the Internet. Members are encouraged to find, modify and use one that meets their specific needs, so that essential items are not forgotten in the event of a short notice response.

16.0 Relief and Back-up

16.1. All Fort Bend County personnel must be aware that they may be called on to fill in for a missing RRT member or to relieve members of RRT that have exceeded a reasonable crew duty time.

16.2. AEC Operations and the AEC Logistics must be keenly aware of RRT replacement needs during drills and actual emergencies and plan accordingly.

17.0 Documentation and After-Action Reports

17.1. Documentation of all actions which occur or are taken by members, RRTs, and Net Control during exercises, drills and actual incidents is critical. An After Action Report (AAR) must be prepared following each event. Fort Bend County Members, RRTs and Net Control submit their documentation, logs, copies of all messages handled and other pertinent information as a record of the happenings during the event to the Operations AEC. The Operations AEC, with the assistance of the EC and other AECs assembles these records into the AAR. A copy of the AAR is submitted to the District 1 ADEC and DEC for their records and a copy maintained in the Fort Bend County ARES® records and files. Electronic versions are preferred whenever possible.

17.2. ICS Forms should be used for all documentation whenever possible and applicable. These Forms are available in both MS Word and Adobe PDF format at http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/ICSResCntr_Forms.htm. Members are encouraged to download a copy of these forms to their computers for future use and print a paper copy as part of their "Go-Kits" or Emergency Response Manuals.

Appendix A

Served Agencies for FORT BEND COUNTY ARES®
o Fort Bend County
o Office of Emergency of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
o Others depending on nature of the event
Appendix B

Interoperability with Galveston and Brazoria Counties in District 1

• The 145.11 (-) 123.0 pl has been designated as a common repeater for Fort Bend, Galveston and Brazoria Counties as an interoperability/mutual aid frequency. This repeater should be monitored during an activation for traffic.

• Additional repeaters that can be used to contact Brazoria County directly are:

	INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN		Incident Name Oct 6, 2018 Drill				Date/Time Prepared 10/5/18 17:00		Operational Period Date/Time 10/6/2018 9:45 AM to 11:00 AM		
Ch #	Function	Channel Name/Trunked Radio System Talkgroup	Assignment	RX Freq N or W	RX Tone/NAC	TX Freq N or W	Tx Tone/NAC	Mode A, D or M	Remarks		
1	Net Control	N9QXT	Local	147.1800	141.3	147.7800	141.3	A	Linked to 443.400 Pearland and 147.380 Freeport		
2	Inter County	KA5QDG	Comm to GC EC	145.1100	CSQ	145.5100	123	A	Alvin		
3	Backup Net	N5KJN	Pearland	443.4000	141.3	448.4000	141.3	A	Pearland linked to 147.180		
4	Backup Net	KA5VZM	Freeport area	147.3800	141.3	147.9800	141.3	A	Freeport linked ot 147.180		
5	Tactical	KA5VZM	Tactical	444.9000		449.9000		D	DMR - Brazoria County talkgroup		
5	Command	KA5VZM	Command to SOC secondary	444.9000		449.9000		D	DMR - Texas Statewide talkgroup		
7	Tactical		Tactical	146.5800	CSQ	146.5800	CSQ	A	Simplex		
8	Tactical		Tactical	147.5800	CSQ	147.5800	CSQ	A	Simplex		
9	Tactical		Tactical	441.0750	CSQ	441.0750	CSQ	A	Simplex		
10	Tactical		Tactical Day	7.2850		7.2850		A	SSB Emergency & Tactical Day		
11	Tactical		Tactical Night	3.8730		3.8730		A	SSB Emergency & Tactical Night		
12	Tactical		Health & Welfare Day	7.2900		7.2900		A	SSB Health & Welfare Day		
13	Tactical		Health & Welfare Night	3.9350		3.9350		A	SSB Health & Welfare Night		
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											
20				Incident Location				Brazoria County Texas			
Prep ared				County State Latitude Longitude							

The convention calls for frequency lists to show four digits after the decimal place, followed by either an "N" or a "W", depending on whether the frequency is narrow or wide band. Mode refers to either "A" or "D" indicating analog or digital (e.g. Project 25) or "M" indicating mixed mode. All channels are shown as if programmed in a control station, mobile or portable radio. Repeater and base stations must be programmed with the Rx and Tx reversed.

ICS 205 Excel

INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS 205), Adapted for FDA

1. Incident Name: Galveston County Repeater List		2. Date/Time Prepared: Date: 10/3/2018 Time: 20:30		3. Operational Period: Date From: 10/3/2018 Date To: TBD Time From: TBD Time To: TBD	

4. Incident communication information:/ Frequency list for the SET

Incident Assigned Position	Frequency	Offset	Tone	Other Method (s) of Contact (pager, email, radio, etc.)	Remarks
Galveston County WR5GC	145.41	Minus	131.8		Located in Dickinson
Galveston County WR5GC	447.225	Plus	131.8		Located in Dickinson
Tidelands Amateur Radio Society - VHF	147.140	Plus	167.9		Located in Texas City
Tidelands Amateur Radio Society - UHF	442.025	Plus	167.9		Located in La Marque
Galveston Repeater	146.900	Minus	123.0		Located in La Marque
Galveston Repeater	146.680	Minus	103.5		Located at UTMB in Galveston
Galveston UHF Repeater	443.275	Plus	103.5		Located in Galveston
Moody Gardens VHF Repeater	147.300	Plus	123.0		Located at Moody Gardens in Galveston
Moody Gardens UHF Repeater	442.150	Plus	123.0		Located at Moody Gardens in Galveston
Clear Lake Shores VHF	145.390	Minus	123.0	Linked to 147.300 repeater in Galveston	Located in Clear Lake Shores
Clear Lake Shores UHF	442.375	Plus	103.5		Located in Clear Lake Shores
Jamaica Beach	444.800	Plus	103.5		Located in Jamaica Beach

5. Special Instructions:

6. Prepared by (Communications Unit Leader): Name: Curt Tallman		Signature:	
ICS 205	IAP Page _____	Date/Time: 10/2/2018 @ 0700	

Updated by FDA 2/2011

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