

BUCHANAN COUNTY ARES

Emergency Operations Plan

Standard Operation Guideline

1. Scope

This document provides a general plan for Amateur Radio Operators within Buchanan County to support an emergency situation. A detailed guideline for specific emergencies may be defined in a separate Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG). The information contained in this plan is to be used as a guide. It is not the intent of this plan to limit the action of an operator who is on site and best able to assess the prevailing conditions.

2. Definitions

ARES - Amateur Radio Emergency Service

AEC - Assistant Emergency Coordinator

EC - Emergency Coordinator

EOC - Emergency Operations Center (Buchanan County)

ICS - Incident Command System

BCEMA - Buchanan County Emergency Management Agency

SOG - Standard Operating Procedure

3. Pre-Activation Procedure

Amateurs who become aware of a developing emergency situation, in which Amateur Radio support may be requested, should:

Monitor 145.330 MHz with 103.5Hz CTCSS tone

4. Activation Procedure

4.1 Request to Activate

A request to activate an Amateur Radio response may be made by:
Contacting the Buchanan County EC or AEC.

4.2 Authorization to Activate

Formal activities begin upon the request of any public agency. A decision to activate may also be made by the EC or an AEC when it is apparent that an emergency exists or is imminent. If the EC or an AEC cannot be reached, any Amateur familiar with these guidelines is encouraged to begin operations if the need for assistance is obvious.

4.3 Activation Procedure

The following steps should be taken to activate an Amateur Radio response to an emergency:

Attempt to notify the EC and all AECs via radio or telephone.

Establish a formal net on 145.330 and notify all amateurs monitoring. Listening Amateurs should check in with net control only if requested.

Activate the telephone call tree if it appears that maximum resources will be needed.

5. Operational Procedures

5.1 Command and Control

The command hierarchy is as follows (in descending order):

Buchanan County Emergency Management

Public Safety Agency being served

Relief Agency being served

EC, AEC or his designee

Net Control station

Decisions should be made at the lowest level. Routine direction should be given by Net Control. The EC or AEC should provide direction via net control whenever practical. Specific direction may be given by the event coordinator at the request of the requesting agency or organization.

5.2 Net Control Operation

The net control operator has the responsibility of maintaining contact with all participants, and assuring that the requested operations are being carried out. To facilitate this, he should:

Limit traffic to highest priority if traffic levels are high.

Keep a log of all participants on frequency.

Periodically confirm contact with each participant.

(This helps spot dead HT batteries, or other communications problems.)

Check progress on individual assignments (e.g. what locations or pumps have been checked).

Temporarily redirect specific traffic to alternate frequencies if necessary.

5.3 Buchanan County Emergency Management Liaison

There should be a person located at Emergency Management (a different person than Net Control) to pass relevant reports to Emergency Management. Due to the level of activity in the EOC radio room, the liaison should monitor the net and present only relevant traffic to Emergency Management. Emergency Management can then request additional information via the liaison as necessary.

5.4 Agency Liaison/Event Coordinator

There should be an Amateur Radio operator assigned as liaison with each served agency or organization. His duties are to:

Plan staging areas

Prepare general information for participants,

Select a net control operator (if a net is established specifically to support the organization's activities),

Assign locations for participants or delegate that responsibility to net control,

Pass on requests for information or action from the requesting agency,

Pass collected information back to the requesting agency.

5.5 Adjacent County Liaisons

Liaisons shall operate on a frequency requested by the adjacent county, usually the repeater being used for that county's activity. Selection of liaisons should be made by net control, and should give preference to stations that are capable of operating on (or at least monitoring) both the Buchanan County and adjacent county coordination frequencies simultaneously. The primary frequency used by each adjacent county is:

Fayette County – 147.345 MHz

Blackhawk County – 146.940 MHz

Benton County - 145.230 MHz

Linn County - 146.745 MHz

Delaware County - 147.300 MHz

5.6 Maintaining Emergency Contacts

An Amateur with the capability to request emergency assistance shall be maintained during all activities. Methods to accomplish this (in order of preference) are as follows:

An Amateur located at the appropriate EOC, Police, Fire, or Ambulance dispatch center.

An Amateur shadowing a participating Police, Fire or Ambulance member.

An Amateur base station with a telephone.

An Amateur with a Cellular Telephone.

5.7 Staging Procedures

A staging area, where hams meet before going to the site of an incident, has many advantages. An organized group may have fewer problems getting through roadblocks, parking may be an issue at the site, people are less likely to get lost, equipment failure is less likely to be a problem, etc. The ideal staging area is outside the affected area, easy to find, and near a main road leading to the affected area. In a large emergency, the resource net control team may have a member at the staging area, checking people in and out, and making sure that they have sufficient batteries, gasoline, food, water, clothing, sleeping bags, etc. The location of this staging area should be selected after consultation with other groups. Amateurs are discouraged from going directly to a disaster site unless authorized by net control or by some other prior agreement.

5.8 Establishing Nets on Alternate Frequencies

Alternate repeaters or simplex frequencies may be established for specific functions (e.g. evacuation shelters, health and welfare, specific response agencies) as needed to keep traffic to manageable levels. These alternate nets may be formal or informal (i.e. with or without a net control station). However, each net shall always designate one station to act as liaison with the coordination net.

It is important that the location and function of all participating Amateurs be known. Therefore, Amateurs should not join these alternate nets unless directed to do so by the net control station on 145.330 MHz.

5.9 Resource Management

One person should be responsible for handling resource requests and tracking resource assignments. Resources tracked are both human and Amateur provided property. Stations shall check in and out of assignments with him. Normally, this function will be performed by 145.330 net control. However, if the resource management activity exceeds the capability of net control, there should be an additional Amateur designated for this function, preferably operating from the EOC station console.

Note that this function does not attempt to manage resources at a specific incident. This is the responsibility of the Incident Commander. The Amateur resource management function exists to manage the distribution of Amateur resources between multiple incidents plus agencies functioning outside an established Incident Command System (ICS).

6. Termination

Participation is terminated at the discretion of the requesting agency. Individual members that wish to terminate early should notify net control so a replacement may be designated.

7. Identification

7.1 Personal Identification

There has been no standard established for identification of Amateur personnel at this time. Necessary identification for entry into a restricted area will be provided by the controlling agency.

7.2 Vehicle Identification

There has been no standard established for vehicle identification. However, appropriate magnetic signs or cards placed in the windshield is encouraged. While this identification will not automatically provide access to controlled areas, it will assist other agencies to identify an Amateur when one is needed.

8. Security and Access

Certain situations may require Amateur participation within an area or facility that has been closed to public access. In these situations, a staging area should be established outside the perimeter, but close to an access control point. One Amateur should act as liaison to the officer in charge at the access control point. The liaison's function would be to identify the Amateur requesting entry, and issue any necessary identification.

9. Participant Safety

While a disaster situation may require the taking of certain calculated risks in order to accomplish the mission, ARES members are ultimately responsible for their own safety and should take no action that places themselves in jeopardy. In a questionable situation, pull back and report your situation to Net Control.

10. Liability

Amateurs shall assume they are operating at their own risk.