AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

Emergency Operations Plan

For the

MELBOURE REGION EMERGENCY NET

Brevard County, Florida

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SECTION ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 The Melbourne Region Emergency Net (MREN) of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is made up of FCC licensed amateur radio operators who have voluntarily registered their capabilities and/or equipment for emergency communications duty. The MREN is administered by the Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society (PCARS), and on behalf of all licensed ARES members in Melbourne Region in Brevard County.

1.2 In accordance with FCC regulations, the contents of messages handled by amateur radio are not divulged to any unauthorized persons. These communications are furnished without direct control over all transmissions on amateur frequencies. Brevard County ARES functions without any form of compensation. Federal regulations also provide that licensed amateurs shall exert as communications support for the county and state government is concerned. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES also provides communications support for the county, state, and federal government.

1.3 Brevard County ARES also provides backup communications for the American Red Cross and for other organizations when requested. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) also provides communications support for the county, state and federal government.

1.4 The Brevard County ARES operates through an Emergency Coordinator (EC), who is appointed by the South Florida Section Communications Manager (SCM), of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

1.5.1 The ARRL Section Manager, through the Brevard County EC, appoints Assistant Emergency Coordinator(s) (AEC) and Official Emergency Stations (OES's).

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this plan is to provide written guidelines with the information required by amateur radio operators volunteering in an emergency.

2.2 The mission of the MREN is to provide radio communications during emergency or disaster situations when regular/normal communications are disrupted, fail or are inadequate.

2.3 Drills, training and instructions will be carried out from time to time to ensure readiness to respond quickly in providing effective amateur radio emergency communications whenever an emergency may arise.

2.4 The following agencies may be served during an emergency: American Red Cross, Office of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Department,Police Departments, Fire Departments, Forestry Service, Hospitals, Salvation Army, or any other government agency or organization that requests assistance, with the direct approval of the EC or his designee. Such communications will be provided within the limitations of equipment and personnel and the EC reserves the right to establish priorities as may be necessary.

3. Activation Of The Plan

3.1. Any member of the MREN or ARES, who, for any reason, suspects that a communications emergency exists, should monitor the 146.610 MHz repeater for

instructions and assignments. If this repeater is not in service, the 146.850MHz repeater or simplex frequency 146.580 MHz will be utilized, in that order.

3.2 The MREN does not currently have a Telephone Alert Plan to alert ARES members. In the event of an emergency, during which the ARES may be of service to the community, any responsible official of Brevard County Emergency Management or any other agency listed in Para.2.4, may activate the county ARES by notifying the EC or AEC or in their absence, their designated replacement.

4. Emergency Operations

4.1 ARES members, upon becoming aware that an emergency exists involving ARES, should monitor the appropriate Frequency(s):
a. 146.610 MHz repeater to receive instructions or assignments. This is the primary (Tactical) net frequency.
b. 146.850 MHz repeater will be assigned as needed by the AEC for Melbourne Region.
c. Other repeaters or simplex frequencies may also be assigned, as needed, during an emergency when all other repeaters are out of service or busy. In particular 146.580 MHz is designated as a primary simplex frequency for the MREN and amateurs are encouraged to memorize and use this frequency for general simplex use during normal operations.

4.2 The MREN Net Control will operate from one of the following locations:
a. During minor, localized emergencies: the PCARS club station, the home station of the EC, AEC or an OES acting as net control or a mobile communications unit, when activated and assigned.
b. During county-wide or regional disasters when the Brevard County Office of Emergency Management is in command, the MREN Operations Center at the PCARS club station building on 1980 Hughes Rd. Melbourne will be activated. (Emergency power will normally be available at this location).
c. In the event that the PCARS club station is unusable, during hurricanes, the MREN Operations Center will operate from the amateur radio room at Holmes Regional Medical Center on Hickory St. Melbourne.

4.3 The AEC for Melbourne Region or an appointee will be the net control station (NCS) manager, unless another station is designated by him. Where the PCARS club station is in use as the Operations Center, the AEC will normally function as the Net Manager (NM) and he will appoint other experienced operators as the NCS's.

4.4 Information concerning the nature of an emergency and the extent of MREN involvement, will be transmitted to all active members as it becomes available and is updated, when possible via Situation Reports (SITREPs).

4.5 Mobile and portable units will be dispatched, within the limits of personnel and equipment, as needed, to locations throughout the area. These locations may be hurricane shelters, hospitals, fire stations, or other locations necessary to support emergency communications.

4.6 MREN members should report en-route to, and upon arrival at, the assigned locations. They should continue to monitor, but notify the NCS, if it is necessary to leave or if relief is needed. Otherwise, transmissions should be made only at the request of the NCS, or for emergency or priority traffic, initiated by the official in charge at that location.

4.7 All *formal* traffic should be via the standard FEMA form ICS-213 unless the NCS directs otherwise. All formal traffic must be signed by the official who originated the traffic, including the official's title, and by the person who takes responsibility for the traffic. Third parties must give their name and official title.

4.8 Liaison contact will be maintained (by the MREN Operations Center) on the following net frequencies:

a. Brevard County EOC on 147.135R MHz (T107.2 tone squelch) with 444.525 MHz (T103.5 444.525 MHz (T103.5 tone squelch) as secondary.

b. Space Coast American Red Cross Headquarters on 147.36R MHz, with 146.94R as a secondary and 145.19R as the tertiary.

c. South Florida ARES uses 3940kHz This is unlikely to be required by the MREN.

4.9 For information only, the county may use the following freqs. for out of county traffic,

a. North Florida ARES on 3950 or 7275kHz
b. State ARES on 3990.5 or 7253.5kHz
c. Florida Midday Traffic Net on 7247kHz

4.10 Due to changes in our society and the need to protect the vulnerable, particularly the young, aged and handicapped, government and non-government agencies now require simple background checks for both employees and volunteers who may come into contact with those persons e.g. in a shelter or refuge. These checks are simple and are generally limited to criminal records and should not cause concern. If you have not had a background check contact your EC or AEC for forms and instructions. Information required is usually limited to name, address and driver license number. Both the information and results are kept confidential. The lack of a background check may limit your access to some locations where you may be needed.

5. Drills, Alerts and Tests

5.1 An annual test will be conducted at the discretion of the EC in conjunction with the nationwide Simulated Emergency Test (SET) program. In addition to, or in lieu of the SET, the MREN will, upon request, participate in emergency or disaster drills sponsored by the Brevard County Emergency Management, or other local government or non-government agencies, as approved by the EC or his designee.

5.2 At the discretion of the EC, the MREN can be activated unannounced once per year, for an emergency preparedness test or emergency simulation test.

5.3 The Melbourne Region Emergency Net (MREN) operates every Thursday at 19.00 hours local, on the 146.610 MHz repeater for exercise purposes, passing of information and the handling of traffic.

5.4 County Emergency Net Frequencies:

a. North Brevard Emergency Net on 146.910 MHz(tone 107.2) . Sec 145.490 MHz.

b. Central Brevard Emergency Net on 145.370 MHz(tone 156.7). Sec 146.880 MHz(no tone).

c. Melbourne Region Emergency Net on 146.610 MHz. Sec 146.850MHz. 146.580MHz Simplex.

d. South Brevard Emergency Net on 147.255 MHz.(tone 107.2) Sec 444.325 MHz(tone 107.2).

Schedules are subject to change at the discretion of the net managers.

6. Emergency Alert Levels

6.1 No specific alerting procedure is in place for the MREN. Members should monitor the PCARS repeater on 146.610 MHz or its alternate whenever they become aware that a potential exists for an emergency activation. This may be by Broadcast radio, TV announcement, National Weather Service radio, or word of mouth. If a situation arises, the MREN net control station will be activated and an announcement will be made and advice on the status given, with the following alert conditions:

6.2 Alert Level One - STANDBY - a potential emergency exists. A hurricane may be approaching the area, or there is the possibility of a tornado, flood, wildfire, or other natural or man-made emergency.

6.2.1 Monitor designated frequencies for information and assignments.

6.2.2 Monitor local radio and television stations for advisories. Local radio/TV media will broadcast information issued to them by the county EOC, the National Weather Service, the EC or the Public Information Officer (PIO).

6.2.3 Secure your home and take care of the plans for your family or dependents.

6.2.4 Charge batteries, assemble radio and personal equipment that would be taken with you. Have a full tank of gas in your vehicle.

6.2.5 Be ready to respond.

6.3 Alert Level Two - PRIMARY MOBILIZATION

6.3.1 A Hurricane is imminent or an event has occurred requiring an activation of ARES assets - shelters are opening, an evacuation begins.
In addition to the instructions in Para. 6.2.:

a. Designated members report to MREN Operations Center for NCS duty.

b. Designated members report to primary shelters.

c. Remainder of members standby for relief at primary shelters or assignment to secondary shelters as they are opened.

6.3.2 Limited or local emergency - tornado, explosion, fire, plane crash, chemical spill, flood etc.
a. Designated members report to MREN Ops Center or locations assigned by the AEC or NCS.

6.4 Alert Level Three - FULL EMERGENCY CONDITION - Hurricane is upon us or other serious emergency is in progress.

6.4.1 All volunteers are on standby status at their assigned location (Shelter), for the duration of the emergency or until releaved.

6.4.2 Emergency traffic only, repeaters and assigned simplex frequencies are closed to all but necessary emergency traffic on the MREN and other area nets.

6.4.3 Simplex frequencies will be assigned for tactical traffic as needed. Assignment of frequencies will be by the EC, AEC, or Net Manager (NM). The NM will normally be the EC or AEC or designee.

6.5 Alert Level Four – AFTERMATH or MITIGATION Phase.

6.5.1 Assist as necessary with cleanup.

a. Assist government agencies as necessary to supplement their communications and / or substitute for inoperable equipment.
b. Assist with damage assessment.

6.5.2 Deliver messages to and from outside areas.

SECTION TWO

7. Initial Preparation

7.1 What to do first, in case of an emergency.

7.1.1 Check that you and your family are safe and secure before you respond as an MREN volunteer.

7.1.2 Check that your property is secure before you respond as an MREN volunteer.

7.1.3 Monitor the 146.610 MHz repeater.

7.1.4 Follow the instructions you receive from the MREN NCS on 146.610 MHz.

7.2 Initial action checklist

The net control station and/or MREN Net Manager on the designated emergency net will provide additional instructions, including information on frequencies used or other resource and tactical nets. Normally, a resource net will enroll volunteers and provide information on how you can assist.

7.2.1 Be prepared to operate. Check all equipment and connections. Including downloading and copying Form ICS-213 and the Communications Log form ICS 309 from the PCARS web page. See Paras. 11.1 and 11.5.

7.2.2 Check-in with your assigned contact. Deploy to assignment with your "GO-KIT".

7.2.3 Obtain tactical call sign for your location/assignment, if required.

7.2.4 Initiate the Communications Log or ICS 309. This is a log of dates and times of various events you performed while activated. Log any formal traffic sent or received, and other significant events. Make and file a copy of all formal traffic messages.

7.2.5 Enter assigned frequency(s) on log sheet and on emergency/frequency plan.

7.2.6 Use a formal message form when a precise record is required.

7.2.7 Use tactical call sign for your location, while observing FCC's identifying rules.

7.2.8 Monitor your assigned frequency AT ALL TIMES. Notify NCS if you have to leave.

7.2.9 Use local time and the 24 hour clock when logging or transmitting information in the local area.

8. Equipment And Personal Checklists

8.1 Basic deployment equipment checklist

When responding to an emergency event, or even a training exercise, there is a minimum set of equipment and personal gear you should bring with you to get the job done.
Basic items include:

a. 2-Meter transceiver, preferably a mobile or base station unit. Hand held radios may not work from some locations.

b. 2-Meter magnetic mount antenna, or other portable emergency antenna and adequate coax. cable to place an antenna outside a building.
c. Ear-phone, headset or speaker/microphone. (Preferred to avoid disturbing other people at the shelter).
d. Note pad and pencils
e. Documents: FCC license, ARES ID card, FEMA or NIMS ICS certifications (if available). Currently, county background checks do not issue a certificate.
f. Extra batteries for your radio and any other accessories e.g. flashlight.
g. Appropriate clothing
h. Food and water. This may be provided at Brevard County Shelters.
i. Copies of FEMA Form ICS-213 and Communications Log form ICS-309, See Paras. 11.1 and 11.5.

The majority of these items should be kept in a "GO-KIT". Just pick it up on your way out of the door for deployment. You might also consider the items on the following list for inclusion in this "GO-KIT", designed to allow you to stay in the field for up to 72 hours.

8.2 Extended (72-hour) deployment equipment checklist
The following has been amended from early ARRL checklists to suit possible local conditions anywhere in the US, for locations, which might not have facilities. If the location is a Red Cross or county run Special Needs shelter some items could be deleted due to facilities available at the shelter.

Snacks, Throat lozenges (optional)
Prescriptions (if required)
First aid kit (Optional, may not be necessary at Brevard County shelters).
Log books
2 day change of clothes
3 day supply of water and food (food and drinks may be available at Red Cross shelters).
Flashlight
Alarm clock
Electrical and Duct tape
Additional radios,
packet gear
Headphones
RF Connectors and adaptors
Patch cords
Liquid refreshments (non-alcoholic)
Toilet articles
Message forms
Sleeping bag or bedroll
Foul weather gear
Batteries, rechargeable type (fully charged) and/or spare non-re-chargeable type.
Small tool kit
Soldering iron and solder
Small test meter (Volt/Ohm Meter).
Microphones (for mobile or base station type radio)
Power supplies, battery charger.
Antennas with mounts
VHF SWR bridge if not built into your radio
Extra connectorized coaxial cable

DC power cords with ARRL standardized Connectors for DC power (Anderson 30amp Powerpole) to match your radio equipment.

8.3 About your "Ready" kit

8.3.1 Power - Your radio 72-hour kit should contain several sources of power, with extra battery packs. An alkaline battery pack for your HT may be useful. For mobile VHF and UHF radios, larger batteries are needed. Gel-cell or deep-cycle marine batteries would be good sources of battery power, and you must keep them charged and ready to go. It is also wise to have alternate means available to charge your batteries during the emergency. You can charge smaller batteries from other larger batteries using a charge regulator. You can build a solar charging device. If you're lucky, you may have access to a power generator that can be used in place of city power. Have more battery capacity than you think you might need. Have several methods available to connect your radios to different power sources.

8.3.2 Gain antennas - You can expect to need some kind of gain antenna for an HT, as well as an additional gain antenna that can be used on either your mobile rig or HT. The extra antenna may be needed by someone else, or your first antenna might be damaged. For VHF and UHF, you can build a J-pole from a TV twin-lead, for an inexpensive and very compact antenna. Have several lengths of coax in your kit, totaling at least 50 feet and with barrel connectors to connect them together.

Do not assume that your assigned site will be equipped with a preinstalled antenna.

8.3.3 Personal - Include staples: water, enough food for three days, eating utensils, a drinking cup. Light is psychologically important during an emergency. Make sure that you have several light sources available. Various battery-powered lights are available. Flashlights using light emitting diodes are useful and provide long battery life. Propane, oil or gasoline-fueled lanterns are not recommended for typical

Florida disaster conditions and may constitute a serious fire risk in a hurricane or tropical storm scenario. At any given location, there may be no air conditioning so temperature and humidity may make heat generating lights untenable.

9. Basic Emergency Program Information (from ARRL literature)

9.1 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public interest when disaster strikes. Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in the ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve. Because ARES is an amateur radio service, only radio amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency-powered equipment is desirable, but is not a requirement for membership. The MREN is an ARES operation.

All ARES members should be qualified to the Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Certificate (ARECC) Level One or better (This may now be the EC-001 course). Training is given locally or can be obtained by distance learning from the ARRL via the internet. The FEMA ICS-100, certification is recommended and is available free on the internet. A simple background check through Brevard county Office of Emergency Management is becoming mandatory.

ARES Organization

There are three levels of ARES organization - section, district, and local. At the section level, the Section Emergency Coordinator is appointed by the Section Manager (who is

elected by the ARRL members in his/her section) and works under his supervision. In most sections, the SM delegates to the SEC the administration of the section emergency plan and the authority to appoint district and local ECs.
It is at the local level where most of the organization and operation is effected, because this is the level at which most emergencies occur and the level at which ARES leadership makes direct contact with the ARES member-volunteers and with officials of the agencies to be served. The local EC (or AEC) is therefore the key contact in the ARES. The EC is appointed by the SEC, usually on the recommendation of the District EC (DEC). Depending on how the SEC has set up the section for administrative purposes, the EC may have jurisdiction over a small community or a large city, an entire county or even a group of counties.
Whatever jurisdiction is assigned, the EC is in charge of all ARES activities in his area, not just one interest group, one agency, one club or one band.

In large sections, the SECs have the option of grouping their EC jurisdictions into "districts" and appointing a district EC to coordinate the activities of the local ECs. In some cases, the districts may conform to the boundaries of governmental planning or emergency-operations districts, while in others they are simply based on repeater coverage or geographical boundaries.
Special-interest groups are headed up by "assistant emergency coordinators" designated by the EC to supervise activities of groups operating in certain bands, especially those groups which play an important role at the local level, but they may be designated in any manner the EC deems appropriate. These assistants, with the EC as chairman, constitute the local ARES "planning committee" and they meet together to discuss problems and plan projects to keep the ARES group active and well-trained.
There are any number of different situations and circumstances that might confront an EC, and his ARES unit should be organized in anticipation of them. There is no specific point at which organization ceases and operation commences. Both phases must be concurrent because a living organization is a changing one, and the operations of a changing organization must change with the organization.

9.2 National Traffic System (NTS)
The National Traffic System is an ARRL messaging system, which has been in operation for many years, but with the advancements in communications technology and the advent of the Incident Command System is beginning to fall into disuse. This notwithstanding a knowledge of the ARRL NTS message system may be useful at times and information on its use can be found on the ARRL web site, www.ARRL.org.

9.3 Types of Emergency Nets
9.3.1 Tactical Net - The Tactical Net is the front line net employed during an incident, usually used by a single government agency to coordinate with Amateur Radio operations within their jurisdiction, There may be several tactical nets in a single incident depending on the volume of traffic and number of agencies involved. Communications include traffic handling, and resource recruiting.
9.3.2 Resource Net - For larger-scale incidents, a Resource Net is used to recruit operators and equipment in support of operations on the Tactical Nets. As an incident requires more operators or equipment, the Resource Net evolves as a check-in place for volunteers to register and receive assignments.
9.3.3 Command Net - As the size of an incident increases and more jurisdictions become involved in the incident, a Command Net may become necessary. This net allows the incident managers to communicate with each other to resolve inter- or intra-agency problems, particularly between cities, or within larger jurisdictional areas. It is conceivable

that this net could become cluttered with a high volume of traffic. It may also be necessary to create multiple command nets to promote efficiency.

9.3.4 Open and Closed Nets - A net may operate as an Open or "free form" net, or as a closed net where a net control station is used to control the flow of transmissions on the channel. Typically, when the amount of traffic is low or sporadic a net control isn't required, and an Open net is used. Stations merely listen before they transmit. When a net is declared a "closed" net, then all transmissions must be directed by the NCS.

9.4 Incident Command System (ICS)

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a management tool that has been adopted by professional emergency responders throughout the country. ICS provides a coordinated system of command, communications, organization, and accountability in managing emergency events. Due to the wide spread use of ICS, Amateur Radio operators should be familiar with the system, as well as how they interface with agencies employing ICS.

Integral to the ICS is the concept of *Unified Command*. There is only one boss, the Incident Commander, who is responsible for the overall operation. For any incident, there are a number of functions that must be performed ranging from planning and logistics to handling the press. The functional requirements of planning, logistics, operations, and finance are always present regardless of the size of the incident. They may be handled by a single individual for a small incident, or a "Command Staff" in a large incident. Another characteristic of ICS is "span of control." In simple terms, any manager should only directly manage a small number of people. ICS uses the number of five for organizational purposes. The number five isn't hard and fast, but provides a useful organizational guide line.

How does the Amateur Radio volunteer fit into the Incident Command System? We are expected to be communicators, and within the ICS, this would place us in the *Logistics Section* in the *Service B*ranch as part of the *Communications Unit*. The communications unit provides all communications services for the operation.

All ARES members should satisfactorily complete the FEMA IC-100 training, obtainable free of charge on line at http://emilms.fema.gov .

10. Basic Operating Principles

10.1 Principles of Repeater Operation

10.1.1 Use minimum power. Otherwise, especially in heavily populated areas, you may run the risk of keying more than one repeater, thus causing unnecessary QRM. Low power also conserves batteries.

10.1.2 Use simplex, whenever possible. Use a gain antenna at fixed locations for simplex operation.

10.1.3 Observe the "pause" procedure between exchanges. When it is your turn to transmit, after the transmitting station stands by, count to two or three before pressing your transmit switch.

10.1.4 Listen much, transmit little. Announce your presence on a repeater when you are certain of being able to assist in an emergency, and don't tie it up with idle chatter.

10.1.5 Monitor the repeater or designated frequency, when otherwise not busy.

10.1.6 Think before you talk. Anyone with an inexpensive public-service-band receiver can monitor. Stick to facts, control your emotions. Remember, during an emergency is the time when you are most apt to act and speak rashly.

10.1.7 Articulate, don't slur. Speak close to your mike, but talk across it, not into it. Keep your voice down. In an emergency situation one often gets excited and tends to shout. Talk slowly, calmly - this is the mark of an experienced communicator.

10.2 Principles of Disaster Communication

10.2.1 Keep the interference level down. In a disaster, crucial stations may be weak. All other stations should remain silent unless they are called upon. If you're not sure that you should transmit, don't.

10.2.2 Monitor established disaster frequencies. Many ARES localities and some geographical areas have established disaster frequencies where someone is always (or nearly always) monitoring for possible calls.

10.2.3 Avoid spreading rumors. During and after a disaster situation, especially on the phone bands, you may hear almost anything. Unfortunately, much misinformation is transmitted. Rumors are started by expansion, deletion, amplification or modification of words, exaggeration or interpretation. All addressed transmissions should be officially authenticated as to their source. These transmissions should be repeated word for word, if at all, only when specifically authorized.

10.2.4 Authenticate all messages. Every message, which purports to be of an official nature should be written and signed. Whenever possible, amateurs should avoid initiating disaster or emergency traffic themselves. We do the communicating; the agency officials we serve supply the content of the communications.

10.2.5 Strive for efficiency. Whatever happens in an emergency, you will find hysteria and some amateurs who are activated by the thought that they must be sleepless heroes. Instead of operating your own station full time at the expense of your health and efficiency, it is much better to serve a shift at one of the best-located and best-equipped stations, suitable for the work at hand, manned by relief shifts of the best-qualified operators. This reduces interference and secures well-operated stations.

10.2.6 Select the mode and band to suit the need. It is characteristic of all amateurs to believe that their favorite mode and band is superior to all others. However, the merits of a particular band or mode in a communications emergency should be evaluated impartially with a view to the appropriate use of bands and modes. There is, of course, no alternative to using what happens to be available, but there are ways to optimize available communications.

10.2.7 Use all communications channels intelligently. While the prime object of emergency communications is to save lives and property (anything else is incidental), Amateur Radio is a secondary communications means; normal channels are primary and should be used if available. Emergency channels other than amateur radio, which are available in the absence of amateur channels should be utilized without fear of favoritism in the interest of getting the message through.

10.2.8 Don't "broadcast". Some stations in an emergency situation have a tendency to emulate "broadcast" techniques. While it is true that the general public may be listening, our transmissions are not and should not be made for that purpose.

10.2.9 ARES leadership coordination. Within the disaster area itself, the ARES is primarily responsible for emergency communications support. The first priority of those ARES operators who live in or near the disaster area is to make their expertise available to their Emergency Coordinator (EC) where and when needed. For timely and effective response, this means that ARES operators should talk to their ECs before the time of need so that they will know how best to respond. Remember- no form of amateur communications is private! Anyone can copy our messages.

11. Documentation

11.1 Message Form ICS-213

A copy of this form can be found in the PCARS web page www.PCARS.org and can be downloaded and printed.

While form ICS-213 does not require a declared precedence, operators should be aware of the meaning of the four levels used both in written or spoken messaging. These are the same as those used by the ARRL in the NTS system.

Emergency - Any message having life and death urgency to any person or group of persons, which is transmitted by Amateur Radio in the absence of regular commercial facilities. This includes official messages of welfare agencies during emergencies requesting supplies, materials, or instructions vital to relief of stricken populace in emergency areas. During normal times, it will be very rare. When in doubt, do not use it.

Priority - Important messages having a specific time limit. Official messages not covered in the Emergency category. Press dispatches and other emergency-related traffic not of the utmost urgency. Notification of death or injury in a disaster are personal or official.

Welfare - A message that is either

a) An inquiry as to the health of an individual in the disaster area or
b) An advisory or reply from the disaster area that indicates all is well, should carry this precedence. These messages are handled after Emergency and Priority traffic, but before routine.

Routine - Most traffic in normal times would be in this category. In disaster situations, traffic considered Routine should be handled last, or not at all when circuits are busy with traffic considered as Emergency, Priority, or Welfare.

11.2 Using Form ICS-213

Now with numbers in the blocks. This form should be filled in using hand printed text rather than handwriting for clarity.

11.2.1 The TO and From blocks should bear the names of the official originating or requesting the message and the person to which the message is to be delivered. The Position blocks must be filled in with the appropriate official designations of these persons..

11.2.2 The Subject area should bear a simple description of the subject matter of the message e.g. Meals or Blanket Needs.

11.2.3 The Date/Time group is very important because it substitutes as serial number or identifier for the message for recall and tracking purposes.

11.2.4 The Message contains the details to be communicated to the addressee and must be in clear legible printed form. The contents should be reviewed before sending preferably with the originator. The text must never be edited by the operator, without the express permission of the originator. If necessary the message should be sent including the errors if the originator cannot be contacted and a service message sent by voice to the receiving operator notifying him of the possible error.

11.2.5 The signature of the originator should be appended or their name printed in lieu plus their official position.

11.2.6 The Operator block should contain your Tactical callsign or if none has been assigned your amateur radio callsign only!

11.2.7 The Reply area instructions are the same as the Message area in Para..

11.2.8 The To and From box contents now being reversed (mentally) by the operators. However a different person may originate the reply on behalf of the original recipient and their name will appear in the Reply Signature/Position block.

11.2.9 The Reply Date/Time group are for the date and time the message is received by the final receiving operator. See "relays" below.

11.2.10 The Reply Operator block instructions are as for the originating operator in Para. 11.2.6. except it is the identity of the final operator to receive the reply for delivery to the addressee.

11.2.11 In the event that the message is relayed by an intermediate station that station does not make any change or formal annotation on the message form although he/she may make notes in his/her station log and/or on the copy of the message he/she makes but these notes are not for transmission as part of that message.

11.3 Communications Log

The communications log form has been custom made for ARES purposes and closely follows those used by other emergency nets.
This form is for general use during an incident whether an emergency or a training exercise.
It will be used at the MREN Net Control Center and at each fixed site manned by ARES operators e.g. Brevard County Shelters.

11.4 Using the Communications log form or ICS 309

11.4.1 The consists of two sections. The Header and the log section.

11.4.2 In the Header – The Event section should indicate the name of the incident e.g. "Hurricane Esmeralda"

11.4.3 In the Header - The Date should be in the common form i.e. 9/2/2009.

11.4.4 In the Header – The Page number should be the previous page number plus one. The total number of pages should be left blank until the operation ends and then each log page appended with the total number of pages.

11.4.5 In the Header – The Operational Period should contain the Month/Day Year and time this log page started – to - the month/day year and time this log page ended. All times should be Local and in 24 hour clock time.

11.4.6 In the Header – The Station ID should be the Tactical Callsign of the location. If no Tactical callsign was assigned insert the operators amateur radio callsign.

11.4.7 Log Time must be local and 24 hr clock.

11.4.8 Enter the station that was contacted (TO) or the station that contacted you (FROM). Only one of the sections should be completed per contact. It shows if you contacted the other station or if they contacted you!

11.4.9 Subject / Message Summary: Enter brief summary of traffic handled.

Log sheets must be returned to the MREN EC within one week of cessation of operations for forwarding to the county EC. The last operator present when operations cease should carry out this task.

11.5 Source of form ICS-213 and Log sheets.

The availability of form ICS-213 from Govt. sources has not been determined. (response to inquires has been negative!).
In addition, the large scale printing, long term storage and distribution of documentation when an emergency is declared presents serious logistics problems for the SBEN member clubs.

Therefore the following practice should be followed,

11.5.1 On or before the declaration of an emergency activation involving the MREN, ARES, members should individually download copies of form ICS-213 and the Communications Log form from the PCARS web site - www.PCARS.org . Select ARES-Emergency from the menu on the left margin and select the appropriate form.
A quantity of 6 to 8 sheets of each form is recommended as a minimum. PCARS web page has ICS-213 formatted two to a page. At the assigned site your forms should be combined as part of that sites messages and Communications. Log. and not kept separately. Brevard ARES/RACES may have 3-part NCR ICS forms available.

11.6 Internet and E-mail

11.6.1 Information on ARES activities can be found on the Brevard County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Web Site, which is located at. http://bearsfl.us/

11.6.2 Emergency information can be found on the Florida Emergency Operation Center Web Site, http://www.floridadisaster.org/index.htm

11.6.3 An MREN E-mail mailing list is used to keep members informed and to alert them of any potential activation. ARES members who have e-mail capabilities, will be added to this mailing list when they join ARES.