

“The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)”

In any emergency, situations change constantly. Your ARES group’s performance will be determined by how quickly and effectively you respond to those changes. You do have several “constants” on which you can depend in an emergency, however. Your constants should be called your Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Your SOP should include:

1. Members of your ARES group, their calls, responsibilities, addresses, (at home and work), telephone numbers, equipment, availability, a relative (to contact in an emergency) and any specialized training or vocation which may be pertinent.
2. Frequencies and modes you plan to use (including back-up frequencies).
3. List of those authorized to call an alert including proper alerting procedures.
4. A detailed map (or maps) showing the staging positions (if any) for your group, offices or buildings of importance (Red Cross, Hospital, City Hall, Office Emergency Services etc.) and repeater sites including their coverage areas.
5. Training procedures listing types of training and the frequency of training, meaning how often.
6. Floor plans of buildings your group may need to enter (such as a hospital or county courthouse, Local Schools, nursing Homes etc.)
7. Mobilization procedures, possibly as a “check-off” sheet.
8. List of equipment and supplies the ARES member should have ready for an emergency.
9. Net and message handling procedures on ARES and NTS nets.
10. Samples of paperwork needed and examples of how to properly utilize it.
11. Names, addresses and phone numbers of key people you may need to contact in an emergency, such as: ambulance services, elected officials, fire departments, government administrators (health, social services, public works), hospitals, media (radio, TV and newspaper), pharmacies, police (local, county and state), schools, utilities.

In Summary: Your ARES group’s SOP should provide quick reference to your members when they are in an emergency situation. When they are in doubt, they should “read the SOP.” As with the emergency plan, the SOP should be flexible (as the demands on your ARES group change), understandable (in any emergency), and rational (to an operator who may be “drafted” into service during an emergency).