

Why A.R.E.S

As simple as this may sound, A.R.E.S. is the "Amateur Radio Emergency Service" every word of which is important.

First, there is the word Amateur. Contrary to what many think, it doesn't imply unlearned or untrained. The correct synonyms are actually unpaid or part-time. The meaning as it applies to Amateur radio is to simply say we are volunteer radio operators as apposed to commercial radio. This is why it is against FCC rules to use amateur radio for commercial purposes, or to accept money for our contributions. To be an amateur radio operator, the FCC requires that individuals pass examinations in technical and regulatory competence. Amateur operators are usually quite distinctive from citizens band (CB) operators who require no training or licensing. To the contrary, Amateurs come from various walks of life including police, fire and ambulance services, doctors, nurses, lawyers, radio and computer technicians, former and current military officers as well as other professionals, most of which already understand and are accustom to being professionally trained as a requirement to perform there duties.

The second operative word being radio, which simply defines the type of equipment we use as Emergency communications. As a group, we should be specialists in various forms of communications modes from computerized packet radio, Winlink 2000, long distance HF voice, Morse code, UHF/VHF voice, APRS.

The third word Emergency refers to why the FCC allows us as much spectrum as they do. A.R.E.S. is a trained group of amateur radio operators willing to assist emergency services and municipal agencies in an emergency or disaster. Communications is often cited as the weakest link in the command and control component of an emergency. Experience has shown that in emergencies, traditional systems become overloaded or are often disabled. Agencies who normally don't need radio communications will need it. Services that don't usually coordinate with each other will need to. People who seldom or never have used a radio are now on them for extended periods of time. Batteries that are used only to monitor for a few hours a day, when pressed into emergency service often fail. During the same emergency, telephone systems often become overloaded and fail. Cellular phones as a component of any emergency communications plan is a

mistake. The Cellular system is often the first to fail. ARES is designed to operate during such an emergency.

This is KE5NZZ with the ASTEN

The forth operative word is SERVICE. Amateur radio is a service as defined by the FCC. The Amateur radio emergency service has been utilized extensively in major disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, tornados, and floods in many parts of the world. Our service might include:

#1 Providing a common communications link between agencies or other communications services at the Command Post location or the EOC.

#2 Being able and available to provide any required communications around the disaster site itself.

#3 establishing staging areas for responding volunteers outside of the effected area.

#4 Providing backup facilities for first responders in the event of loss of radio/phone services.

#5 Providing distance relay of status to agencies should outside links be lost.

#6 Providing a standard e-mail services that is compatible with existing agencies equipment using software they are already familiar with such as outlook or outlook express.

So in a nutshell. The why A>R>E>S question is answered, simply by understanding the meaning of the group. Having a functional A.R.E.S. group, means having a team of trained communicators who are willing to volunteer there time and resources both before and during an emergency.

I wonder how many of our ARES groups can fulfill the above roll if called on tonight? I would like to hear your comments regarding the program and this question in particular.