

# Emergency Communications Participant Guide Version: 1.05

**Gregg County Emergency Communications (GCEC)  
Longview East Texas Amateur Radio Club (LETARC)**

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## **1 - Scope**

This document provides details for registration, training, operational, and participation requirements for those wishing to participate in emergency communications (Emcomm) activities in which GCEC and/or LETARC is involved.

## **2 - Terms Of Use**

This document is intended for use by individuals participating in emergency communications within the Gregg County Emergency Communications and the Longview East Texas Amateur Radio Club organizations.

## **3 - Reporting Defects**

Defects in this document should be reported to the document coordinator.

## **4 - Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ver</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>
06-01-2011	1.00	Initial version	Gary Lewis (WG5L)
06-16-2011	1.01	Populated with class information	Jim Quinn (AJ1MQ)
06-17-2011	1.02	Added additional explanations on requirements	Gary Lewis (WG5L)
06-21-2011	1.03	Added information on course certificate upload	Gary Lewis (WG5L)
10-05-2011	1.04	Moved apparel, badges, and ready kit information to this document from EmComm Plan document	Gary Lewis (WG5L)
10-11-2011	1.05	Added Summary table of training/capability requirements	Gary Lewis (WG5L)

## **5 - Participant Registration**

Those wishing to participate in either Skywarn or ARES programs are required to fill out the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form* on the LETARC web site and eventually fulfill the requirements as outlined in this document. The registration form is only visible to those who have gone through the web site registration process and set up an ID.

The registration form is located under the **Emergency Communications** menu item as a pull-down in the menu. The form collects personal contact information, as well as information about your operating capabilities and training. Information is not shared publicly and will only be used for the administration of the Emergency Communications programs within GCEC and LETARC. You can return to the form to update your information at any time. However, you must be logged into the site to do so.

As part of the registration data collection process, there is also a place to upload PDF copies of certificates of completion from FEMA courses. When you take a FEMA course, please be sure to save the PDF copy of the completion certificate provided to you, so you can upload it for GCEC/LETARC records.

## **6 - RACES, Background Checks, and Leadership Positions**

Normally, an ARES participant need not fill out a RACES application and undergo the associated background check. However, other served agencies, such as the Red Cross, CERT, or Salvation Army (to name a few) may require a background check. If this is necessary, as a participant, you will be informed as to the requirements. Because these requirements periodically change, they are beyond the scope of this document at the time of its publication.

If you are in an emergency communications leadership position, where you may need to interact with government officials under the RACES protocol, it is required that you submit a RACES application through the RACES District Officer and undergo the DPS background check.

An emergency communication leadership position is defined as a GCEC board member, an ARES Emergency Coordinator for Gregg County or Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AECs). Within ARES, all leadership positions above AEC require ARRL membership.

## 6.1 Summary of Participant and Leadership Requirements

Activity Area	Training	Operating
<b>Skywarn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Basic Spotter Training</li> <li>● Advanced Spotter Training</li> <li>● SpotterNetwork Online Class &amp; Exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must have a UHF/VHF mobile or handheld</li> <li>● Must have SpotterNetwork client for PC or phone and/or APRS capability to report location, so we can display your location on radar overlay</li> </ul>
<b>ARES - Participant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FEMA IS-100 (required)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-700 (required)</li> <li>● ARRL EC-001 (required)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-200 (recommended)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-800 (recommended)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must have a UHF/VHF mobile and/or handheld</li> <li>● Knowledgeable on message traffic handling</li> </ul> <p>The following capabilities are desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to perform WinLink operations (either through RMS Express or APRSLink)</li> <li>● Have access to HF communications to check-in to statewide ARES nets</li> </ul>
<b>ARES - Leadership (EC, DEC, ASEC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FEMA IS-100 (required)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-700 (required)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-200 (required)</li> <li>● FEMA IS-800 (required)</li> <li>● ARRL EC-001 (required)</li> <li>● ARRL EC-016 (required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must have a UHF/VHF mobile and/or handheld</li> <li>● Knowledgeable on message traffic handling</li> <li>● Ability to perform WinLink operations (either through RMS Express or APRSLink)</li> <li>● Have access to HF communications to check-in to statewide ARES nets</li> </ul>

## **7 - Participant Training Requirements**

### **7.1 - Skywarn**

Skywarn participants are required to attend the following classes at least every two years:

#### **7.1.1 - National Weather Service (NWS) Classes**

- Basic Skywarn Spotter Class
- Advanced Skywarn Spotter Class

Skywarn training schedules for our area:

<http://skywarn.org/skywarn-training/texas-training-schedules/>

#### **7.1.2 - SpotterNetwork Online Class and Exam**

- SpotterNetwork Level One Training Class
- Pass the SpotterNetwork Level One Training Class Exam

SpotterNetwork and SpotterNetwork Class Information

<http://www.spotternetwork.org/account/index.php>

You must first setup an account. To take the class and the exam, follow the link from your account page to the Level One Training Class.

For new participants who have never completed the above training, they are required to complete the NWS Basic Skywarn Course, SpotterNetwork Online Class, and pass the SpotterNetwork exam prior to their first storm season (usually in the first quarter of the year). The NWS Advanced course (unless taught simultaneously with the Basic Course) must be completed by the start of the participant's second storm season.

## 7.2 - ARES

ARES participants are required to complete the following courses within the indicated timetable:

### 7.2.1 - Required for All Participants

#### 7.2.1.1 - FEMA IS-100.b (within the first three months)

*Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS100)*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS100b/index.htm>

#### *Course Overview*

ICS 100, Introduction to the Incident Command System, introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and provides the foundation for higher level ICS training. This course describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System. It also explains the relationship between ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

#### *Cost*

- \$0

#### *Prerequisites*

- None

#### 7.2.1.2 - FEMA IS-700.a (within the first three months)

*National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS700aNEW/index.htm>

#### *Course Overview*

This course introduces and overviews the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides a consistent nationwide template to enable all government, private-sector, and nongovernmental organizations to work together during domestic incidents.

#### *Cost*

- \$0

#### *Prerequisites*

- None

### 7.2.1.3 - ARRL EC-001 (within the first six months)

#### *Introduction to Emergency Communications*

<http://www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog>

#### *Course Overview*

This course is designed to provide basic knowledge and tools for any emergency communications volunteer. The course has 6 sections with 29 lesson topics. It includes required student activities, a 35-question final assessment and is expected to take approximately 45 hours to complete over a 9-week period.

#### *Cost*

- \$50 for ARRL Members
- \$85 for Non-ARRL Members/Guests

***Note: In the near future, we will be offering this class locally by ARRL Field Instructors at a substantially reduced cost. The exam will also be administered locally by ARRL Field Examiners.***

#### *Prerequisites*

- IS-100.b Introduction to the Incident Command System
- IS 700.a, National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction

### 7.2.2 - Recommended, but not Required for Participants in Non-Leadership Positions

The following courses are not required, but are recommended:

#### 7.2.2.1 - FEMA IS-200.b

#### *ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS200b/index.htm>

#### *Course Overview*

ICS 200 is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.

#### *Cost*

- \$0

#### *Prerequisites*

- IS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System is required.
- Completion of IS 700.A, National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction is recommended.

#### 7.2.2.2 - FEMA IS-800.b

*National Response Framework, An Introduction*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS800B/index.htm>

##### *Course Overview*

The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework.

##### *Cost*

- \$0

##### *Prerequisites*

- None

#### 7.2.3 - Required for All Participants in Leadership Positions

The following course is required for those in emergency communications leadership positions:

##### 7.2.3.1 - FEMA IS-200.b (within the first nine months)

*ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS200b/index.htm>

##### *Course Overview*

ICS 200 is designed to enable personnel to operate efficiently during an incident or event within the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS-200 provides training on and resources for personnel who are likely to assume a supervisory position within the ICS.

##### *Cost*

- \$0

##### *Prerequisites*

- IS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System is required.
- Completion of IS 700.A, National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction is recommended.

### 7.2.3.2 - FEMA IS-800.b (within the first nine months)

*National Response Framework, An Introduction*

<http://emilms.fema.gov/IS800B/index.htm>

#### *Course Overview*

The course introduces participants to the concepts and principles of the National Response Framework.

#### *Cost*

- \$0

#### *Prerequisites*

- None

### 7.2.3.3 - ARRL EC-016 (within one year)

*Public Service and Emergency Communications Management for Radio Amateurs*

<http://www.arrl.org/online-course-catalog>

#### *Course Overview*

This course is designed to train licensed Amateur Radio operators who will be in leadership and managerial roles organizing other volunteers to support public service activities and communications emergencies. In this course you will learn how radio amateurs prepare and organize to support local community events, and, working in coordination with governmental and other emergency response organizations, deploy their services to provide communications when needed in an emergency.

#### *Cost*

- \$0 but must be an ARRL Member

#### *Prerequisites*

- ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 1/ Basic (EC-001)
- IS-200.b, ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- IS-800.b, National Response Framework, An Introduction

## 7.3 - Course Certificates and Uploading to LETARC Site

### 7.3.1 - NWS Courses

To print your class completion certificate(s) for the NWS Skywarn classes held by the Shreveport NWS Office, go to the following link:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/shv/spottercertificate>

Please upload PDF copies of your certificates using the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form* with the following naming convention:

For NWS Skywarn Basic Class use:

Skywarn-BasicSpotter-URCALLSIGNINCAPS.pdf

For NWS Skywarn Advanced Class use:

Skywarn-AdvancedSpotter-URCALLSIGNINCAPS.pdf

Where:           URCALLSIGNINCAPS is your Call Sign all in CAPS

### 7.3.2 - FEMA Courses

Within 24-48 hours after successfully passing the exam for an online FEMA course, you will receive an e-mail with a link to your course completion certificate. Please save these certificates in a safe place. Rename the files using the following format:

FEMA-IS-COURSECODE-URCALLSIGNINCAPS.pdf

Where:           COURSECODE is the FEMA course code (e.g. 100b, 700a, 200b, etc.)

URCALLSIGNINCAPS is your Call Sign all in CAPS

Please upload PDF copies of your certificates using the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form*.

### 7.3.2 - ARRL Courses

Upon successfully completing an ARRL course, you should receive an e-mail with your certificate. Please save these certificates in a safe place. Rename the files using the following format:

ARRL-EC-COURSECODE-URCALLSIGNINCAPS.pdf

Where:           COURSECODE is the ARRL course code (e.g. 001, 016)

URCALLSIGNINCAPS is your Call Sign all in CAPS

Please upload PDF copies of your certificates using the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form*.

## **8 - Participant Operational Capability Requirements**

### **8.1 - Skywarn**

Within Gregg County, we try to minimize mobile spotting as much as possible to ensure everyone's safety. Because the county is small, we usually have adequate coverage without mobile spotting. However, if you are a new spotter and are participating in mobile activities, you should ride with an experienced spotter for your first season.

All spotters, both at fixed locations and mobile are required to have the following operational capabilities:

- Must have a UHF/VHF mobile or handheld
- Must have SpotterNetwork client for PC or phone and/or APRS capability to report location, so we can display your location on radar overlay

### **8.2 - ARES**

ARES participants must have the following minimum operational capability:

- Must have a UHF/VHF mobile and/or handheld
- Knowledgeable on message traffic handling

The following capabilities are desirable:

- Ability to perform WinLink operations (either through RMS Express or APRSLink)
- Have access to HF communications to check-in to statewide ARES nets

If a participant is involved in a leadership position, they must have access to HF and WinLink capabilities, to be able to participate in State or Section nets.

## **9 - Ongoing Operational Participation Requirements**

### **9.1 - Skywarn**

In addition to the training and operational capability requirements, all Skywarn participants must be a part of at least four GCEC Skywarn nets in a given storm season to be considered active. All spotters checking into the GCEC Skywarn net will be required to be registered via the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form* on the LETARC web site and complete the required Skywarn training.

### **9.2 - ARES**

In addition to the training and operational capability requirements, all ARES participants must be a part of at least eight local ARES nets and participate in scheduled exercises/drills in a given calendar year to be considered active. All ARES participants must be registered via the *Emergency Communications Participant Registration Form* on the LETARC web site and be either working toward completion of required training or have completed the required training within the timeframe specified.

If a participant is in a leadership position, they must participate in a minimum of eight check-ins on State RACES nets. In addition, those in leadership positions are required to participate in State or Section ARES HF or WinLink nets, as required.

## 10 - Deployment Apparel, Badges, and Ready Kits

### 10.1 - Deployment Apparel

It is important that all GCEC/LETARC ARES personnel present a professional appearance. ARRL recommends all ARES personnel wear officially sanctioned apparel, so amateur radio resources are consistent and easily recognizable.



It is recommended that a participant order the deployment shirt pictured below, probably a size larger, so one could wear a navy-colored thermal long-sleeve shirt underneath during winter. The cap is optional. However, given that many in our group are or are becoming follicle-ly challenged, it would be wise to obtain a cap in case we are deployed outdoors.

Deployment Shirt	Deployment Cap (optional)
	<p>GCEC Ball Cap (not pictured)</p>
<p>Nike Golf Dri-FIT fabric technology. Flat knit collar, three-button placket and open hem sleeves. Pearlized buttons are selected to complement the shirt color. The contrast Swoosh design trademark is embroidered on the left sleeve. Made of 4.7-ounce, 100% polyester Dri-FIT fabric.</p> <p>Cost including imprinting: \$35 (vendor's cost)</p>	<p>Adjustable, one-size fits all ball cap.</p> <p>Cost: ~\$15 (vendor's cost)</p>
<p><b>Ordering Contact Information:</b> Vital Graphics Attn: Darrell Toland 440 N Eastman Rd Suite J Longview, TX 75601-6901 903-753-0619</p>	<p><b>Ordering Contact Information:</b> Vital Graphics Attn: Darrell Toland 440 N Eastman Rd Suite J Longview, TX 75601-6901 903-753-0619</p>

## 10.2 - Badges and IDs

### 10.2.1 - Name/Call Sign Badges

Name/Call Sign badges should be worn on the right-hand side of the vest. While most operators have a name/call sign badge of some type, it is recommended to standardize on a single badge type for ARES deployments. The recommended participant badge looks like the following:

Participant Badge	Leadership Badge (for AEC's, EC's, DEC's, ASEC's)
	
<p><b>Content Specifics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call Sign</li> <li>• First and Last Name</li> <li>• Gregg County, TX</li> </ul> <p>A magnetic bar attachment option is recommended.</p>	<p><b>Content Specifics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First and Last Name</li> <li>• Call Sign</li> <li>• Title</li> <li>• County, District, or Section Name</li> </ul> <p>A magnetic bar attachment option is recommended.</p>
<p><b>Ordering Information:</b>  <a href="http://www.thesignman.com/clubs/aresraces.html">http://www.thesignman.com/clubs/aresraces.html</a></p>	<p><b>Ordering Information:</b>  <a href="http://www.thesignman.com/badges/arrl.html">http://www.thesignman.com/badges/arrl.html</a>            You will be required to provide an appointment certificate or e-mail to the Sign Man for these badges.</p>

### 10.2.2 - ARES Photo ID and other ID Badges

When deployed, all ARES members should carry their GCEC ARES Photo ID badge on a lanyard, in addition to their drivers license or government-issued photo ID.

Example ARES Badge:



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**ARES® Member's Signature**

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ FSD224 (GCEC)

**Back**

Also, depending on where your normal assignment is, you may be required to have other served agency IDs and/or entrance cards/keys for building access.

All individuals who have RACES officer appointments should also carry their RACES cards, in case RACES protocol is invoked.

All individuals who have MARS DoD ID cards should also carry those cards, in case MARS protocol is invoked.

### 10.3 - Personal Deployment Ready Kit

An emergency ready kit really should be part of any family's emergency preparedness and one really should have these items ready for portable use by each family member. However, for an ARES participant, we never know what the nature of a deployment may entail. So, having a personal ready kit available for a deployment is essential, especially if a deployment is characterized as requiring self-sufficiency for a period of time (typically 72 hours). Why 72 hours? This is typically the average time it takes to set up an incident staging area, especially in larger incidents. Will you always need to carry all of this with you and have it on every deployment/call-up? No.

A typical personal ready kit can include (but not limited to) the following items:

First Aid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Band-Aids, small and large</li> <li>● Band-Aids, finger and knuckle</li> <li>● 2"x2", 3"x3" gauze pads</li> <li>● Butterfly closures</li> <li>● Triangular bandage</li> <li>● Emergency dental kit</li> <li>● Blister care kit</li> <li>● Heat, cold packs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil or other painkillers</li> <li>● Immodium &amp; Benadryl tablets</li> <li>● Rehydration powder</li> <li>● SAM Splint</li> <li>● Eye wash</li> <li>● Eyeglass repair kit</li> <li>● Latex gloves</li> <li>● Insect sting wipes</li> </ul>
Personal Items	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 day change of clothes</li> <li>● 3 day supply of water               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 gallon per day, minimum</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 3 day supply of food &amp; snacks</li> <li>● Prescription meds</li> <li>● Eyeglasses, contact lens supplies</li> <li>● Toothbrush &amp; supplies</li> <li>● Soap, waterless cleaner</li> <li>● Waterless shampoo</li> <li>● Handi-wipes (antibacterial)</li> <li>● Throat lozenges</li> <li>● Sunglasses</li> <li>● Hat</li> <li>● Ear plugs</li> <li>● Dust masks</li> <li>● Water purification tablets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foul weather gear</li> <li>● Shelter               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tent or other</li> <li>○ Sleeping bag</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Portable stove</li> <li>● Waterproof matches, lighter</li> <li>● Water containers</li> <li>● Mess kit &amp; cup</li> <li>● Alarm clock</li> <li>● Flashlight, lantern</li> <li>● Sewing kit, safety pins</li> <li>● Hard hat</li> <li>● Cash</li> <li>● Cell phone, calling cards</li> <li>● Camp chair, table</li> <li>● Multitool or pocket knife</li> </ul>

## 10.4 - Resource-Oriented Kits

The different portable resource types often require additional tools and supplies to support that resource. Some of the items that can be included:

Common	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Connectors for antennas, cables</li> <li>● Powerpole cables/connectors</li> <li>● Copy of amateur license</li> <li>● Radio operating instructions</li> <li>● Area maps with residential street detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notepads, pencils, pens</li> <li>● Log books</li> <li>● Message forms</li> <li>● Carbon paper</li> <li>● Repeater directory</li> </ul>
Tools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pliers</li> <li>● Wire cutters, large &amp; small</li> <li>● Wire strippers, large &amp; small</li> <li>● Vise grips</li> <li>● Screwdrivers, various sizes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Phillips &amp; flat</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Adjustable crescent wrenches</li> <li>● Ratchet &amp; socket set</li> <li>● Duct tape or gaffers tape</li> <li>● Safety glasses</li> <li>● 100ft rope</li> <li>● AC power bar</li> <li>● 100 ft of AC extension cords</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20 watt &amp; 60 watt soldering irons</li> <li>● Solder, sponge</li> <li>● Multimeter</li> <li>● AC tester</li> <li>● Electrical tape</li> <li>● Spare RF connectors</li> <li>● Spare RF adapters</li> <li>● Spare Anderson Powerpoles</li> <li>● Spare 12 gauge zip cord</li> <li>● Miscellaneous wire</li> <li>● Pipe clamps of various sizes</li> <li>● Serial cables, USB cables</li> <li>● Heat shrink tubing</li> </ul>