

Types of Emergency Nets

There are three types of nets which might be set up during an ARES event. These are the TACTICAL NET, RESOURCE NET, and the COMMAND NET. Which net, or whether all three evolve during an event, is strictly a function of the size of the event.

Tactical Net

The “Tactical Net” is the “front line” net during an incident. This type of net is typically used to manage amateur radio operations within the city’s boundaries. There may be several tactical nets for a single operation depending on the volume of traffic. Types of traffic which might exist on this net could be anything from traffic handling, to coordination of ARES, RACES/ACS efforts, to recruiting. When an event grows beyond the boundaries of a single city/agency to the point where mutual aid is necessary, it becomes necessary to create the next type of net, the “Resource Net”.

Resource Net

A “Resource Net” is primarily used to recruit resources (both operators and equipment) in support of mutual aid operations. The “Resource Net” evolves as a natural outgrowth of the size of the incident. The “Resource Net” is also used as a check-in point before an assigned responder leaves for his/her assignment. As the size of an operation increases and more ARES jurisdictions become involved in the incident, a “Command Net” may become necessary.

Command Net

The “Command Net” allows the ARES and RACES/ACS leadership to communicate with each other to resolve amateur radio operations-related problems. This is also the net which would be used to allow cities to talk to each other. It is conceivable that this net could become cluttered with a high volume of traffic; it may be necessary to create further tactical nets to allow this traffic to flow efficiently. As an added note, when other agencies such as Red Cross establish their own nets they are considered tactical nets. Each such tactical resource should have someone monitoring the main Command Net so that they can respond to Agency-to-Agency requests.

Being Part of an ARES Net

Taking part in an ARES net and learning how to handle traffic are perhaps the two major qualifications required of an ARES team member. Being a successful participant of a ARES net requires exercising some discipline, and observing a few basic rules of the road:

1. Report to the Net Control Station (NCS) promptly as soon as you arrive at your station.
2. Ask the NCS for permission before you use the frequency.
3. Only use the frequency for traffic, not for chit-chat.
4. Answer promptly when called by the NCS.
5. Use tactical call signs whenever possible.
6. Follow the net protocol established by the NCS.

Getting on and off the net is important, but traffic-handling techniques are important also. The first step in the process is getting all the information needed for the message:

1. **Get the exact title/address of the addressee from the sender. This is EXTREMELY important to guarantee the accurate prompt delivery of the message.**
2. Get an exact title of the sender. If a response is required, the exact name and title of the sender will become very important.
- 3) . Make the message as short and concise as possible when originating your own message traffic. If handed a message originated by someone else, do not modify it. Send the message exactly as it is written. It is not as important that you understand the message content, as it is that the addressee receive an unaltered message.
4. Number, log and time stamp the messages as you send them. This will allow you to reference the messages more easily later.