

Introduction

The National Communications System, a confederation of government agencies, and the American Radio Relay League, representing U.S. radio amateurs, have cooperated in a series of national level communications exercises. These have demonstrated the capability of radio amateurs to respond to simulated national emergencies when normal communications are disrupted. These tests confirm that volunteer Radio Amateurs are a valuable national resource whose capabilities should be utilized, further developed and exercised to improve our national security.

I. Purpose

This Agreement between the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) and the National Communications System (NCS) is to establish a broad framework of cooperation and a close working relationship with volunteer radio amateurs for national emergency communications functions. It is intended through joint coordination and exercise of the resources of both organizations, to enhance the nation-wide posture of telecommunications readiness for any conceivable national emergency.

II. Responsibilities

The ARRL is a non-commercial national association of radio amateurs, established for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation, for the relaying of messages by radio, for the advancement of the radio art and the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative matters, for the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct and for voluntary service in the public welfare. A primary responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service, as established by the Federal Communications Commission's Rules and Regulations (47 C.F.R. Part 97), is the rendition of public service communications for the general public, particularly in times of emergency when normal communications are not available. Using Amateur Radio operators in the amateur frequency bands, the ARRL has been serving the general public directly and government and relief agencies for more than 50 years. To that end, in 1935 the League organized the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps (now called the Amateur Radio Emergency Service --ARES). In 1949, the League created the National Traffic System (NTS). Together, ARES and NTS comprise the League's public service field organization of volunteer radio amateurs. As leaders and representatives of radio amateurs the ARRL has responsibilities in motivation, education, policy and leadership in promoting Amateur Radio functions in the public service, especially in times of emergency when the resources of radio amateurs may be the most survivable communications available to the nation.

The National Communication System (NCS) is a confederation of federal agencies and departments established by the Presidential Memorandum of August 21, 1963. The mission of the

NCS is to insure that the most critical telecommunications needs of the Federal Government can be met in any possible emergency, ranging from a normal situation to national emergencies and international crisis including nuclear attack, while at the same time, achieving the most effective and economical fulfillment of the day-to-day telecommunications requirements. The Manager, NCS, develops plans, standards and procedures for the management of Federally owned and leased telecommunications assets during disasters and emergencies declared under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (Public Law --93-288). The NCS administers a joint restoration priority system with the FCC to assure that available telecommunications resources are used to meet the most critical requirements under all conditions. The NCS is also given primary responsibility for implementing Presidential Directive 53, National Security Telecommunications Policy, under the direction and guidance of the National Security Council.

III. Recognition

The NCS recognizes that the ARRL is the principal organization serving more than 400,000 U.S. radio amateurs, and because of its organized emergency communications, training and resources, can be of valuable assistance in providing critical communications and restoration of government circuits during emergencies and disasters when normal lines of communication are disrupted.

The ARRL recognizes that NCS is responsible for coordinating restoration of Federal government communications carried over the commercial carrier networks. The ARRL recognizes that because more than 95 percent of the Federal government's communications are provided by commercial carriers there is a national requirement to assist in the transmission of critical messages and in the restoration of government communications.

Principles of Cooperation

So that communications facilities of the Amateur Radio Service may be coordinated and utilized to the fullest advantage during disasters and emergencies, and to the extent permitted or required by law and regulation, the American Radio Relay League and the National Communications System have agreed that each organization will:

2. Participate in cooperative pre-emergency planning, exercise and training programs at the Federal Region and National level.
3. Cooperate in time of disaster or emergency, to meet the needs of the government and of the agencies and organizations attempting to restore communications.
4. Make its facilities, resources and capabilities accessible to the other in accordance with established plans and procedures.

5. Work through its own lines of authority and respect the lines of authority of the other.
6. Distribute copies of this agreement through channels to its own field units, and to other organizations, both public and private which may have an active interest in emergency restoration of government telecommunications.

VII. Implementation

This memorandum shall take effect upon its signing by authorized representatives of the ARRL and the NCS. This memorandum may be amended by mutual agreement of both parties and will remain in effect until terminated. ARRL and NCS will periodically review this agreement and coordinate such revisions as may be necessary. Upon 90 days written notice, this memorandum may be terminated by either party.