

**WOOD COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Wood County RACES
(Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service)

Requirements and
Application
Packet

1. Backgrounds.

a. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is an organization of amateur radio operators who volunteer to provide radio communications for State and local governments in times of emergency. Created in 1952 primarily to serve in civil defense emergencies, RACES provides essential communications and warning links to supplement State and local government assets during emergencies.

b. RACES is a special part of the amateur operation sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). RACES provides emergency communications for civil preparedness purposes only. RACES is conducted by amateurs using their primary station licenses or by existing RACES stations. In the event that the President invokes the War Emergency powers, amateurs officially enrolled in the local civil preparedness group could become limited to certain frequencies, while all other amateur operations could be silenced.

c. Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is a voluntary organization of licensed radio amateurs who have registered their capabilities and equipment for providing emergency communications as a public service to the community. ARES provides communications in the event of natural or man-made disaster, when regular communications fail or are inadequate. Sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), ARES functions at the local level to meet local communications needs. ARES operates under the direction of the Emergency Coordinator (EC), whose function is to direct the activities of the ARES to maintain a state of readiness. This service is provided as non-commercial radio communications by or among amateur radio stations solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary or business interest.

2. Chain of Command.

a. Wood County Office of Emergency Management (WCOEM), ARES/RACES:

- County Commission
- Director, WCOEM
- Assistant Director, WCOEM
- RACES Radio Officer (RO)
- Assistant RACES Radio Officer (ARO)
- ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC)

2. RACES Eligibility.

Any United States citizen 18 years of age or older, who possesses a valid Amateur Radio Operators License issued by the Federal Communications Commission, technician class or higher, is eligible to become a registered RACES operator.

A. Recruitment and Retention.

- a. Each prospective applicant completes a RACES Operator Application and returns it to the RACES Radio Officer. With this application, the prospective member also attaches a copy of their valid amateur radio license and a list of communications capabilities. The application has been designed to meet local requirements.
- b. Membership with the ARES and at least Auxiliary Membership with Wood County Emergency Communications Inc. (WCEC) is required.
- c. The RACES Radio Officer recommends acceptance or non-acceptance to the Director of the WCOEM or his designated assistant. Once approval is granted, the Director prepares a letter designating the applicant as a registered RACES operator. The photograph identification cards issued to members of Wood County Emergency Communications Inc. shall be labeled accordingly and serve each RACES operator as Official Identification for use during emergencies or when called upon for assistance.
- d. The RACES Plan often refers to the WCEC Operations Plan as the guide for operations. For this reason, both plans should be reviewed annually in the event there may be a conflict of interest.

B. RACES operators are responsible for:

- (1) Being familiar with the RACES Plan, WCEC Operations Plan and ARES Plan.
- (2) Participating in the training sessions;
- (3) Briefing the RACES Radio Officer of any changes in equipment or amateur status that may affect operation in the RACES program;
- (4) Developing a strong background in emergency procedures, FCC Rules and Regulations, Net Control procedures, operation and function of the Digital Amateur Radio Emergency Network (DAREN), and other network procedures;
- (5) Doing your best to be available when emergency communications are requested by the WCOEM Director or authorized representative.

(6) Helping strengthen the organization by offering suggestions and positive feedback to correct deficiencies;

(7) Complying with volunteer standards established by the jurisdiction; and,

(8) Notifying the RACES Radio Officer, in writing, when terminating membership.

C. Membership participation, through Wood County Emergency Communications Inc., will be evaluated every year. If a member's participation is lacking, membership may be terminated; if adequate, membership continues for another year.

3. Message Format and Transmission Mode.

a. RACES message format will parallel that of the ARRL.

b. Each message element is defined to minimize confusion. In emergency communications, most messages are assigned immediate transmission precedence. The emergency communication individual must understand the order of transmission and the precedence governing its sequence. The following defines message precedence:

(1) IMMEDIATE precedence messages are processed ahead of all other precedence messages and sent or delivered in the order of receipt.

(2) PRIORITY precedence messages are processed in the order of receipt and processed after IMMEDIATE precedence messages and ahead of all ROUTINE precedence messages. PRIORITY precedence messages are sent or delivered in the order of receipt.

(3) ROUTINE precedence messages are processed in the order of receipt and after the IMMEDIATE and PRIORITY precedence messages.