

**Memorandum of Understanding  
between the  
County of Sonoma  
and the  
San Francisco Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to state the terms of agreement between the County of Sonoma, a political subdivision of the State of California ("County") and the San Francisco Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service ("ARES"), sponsored by American Radio Relay League ("ARRL"), with respect to local emergency communications coordination within the County of Sonoma. This Memorandum of Understanding shall serve as a framework within which the parties may develop and maintain a spirit of cooperation while performing their respective roles in support of local emergency communications.

**II. Recitals**

**A. Sonoma County / Operational Area Auxiliary Communications Service**

Sonoma County's Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) is a team of volunteer communication professionals dedicated to assisting local government agencies within Sonoma County with public safety and emergency communications in times of disaster and/or community need. ACS is operated under the supervision of the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services and when applicable, operations will be in accord with the provisions of the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) as provided for by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The County-wide ACS organization has nine local geographic Units and one central coordinating Unit. Each of these ten Units has a designated Unit Leader that reports to the ACS Radio Officer. Each local area ACS Unit provides ACS services to a local government jurisdiction while remaining within the chain of command of the Sonoma County / Operational Area ACS program. ACS follows the principles of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS).

County has formally selected ACS as the primary volunteer service that augments local government public safety communications for all local government jurisdictions and other disaster relief organizations within the County of Sonoma in the event of failure, overload or other problems that might jeopardize their usefulness. Further, all local government jurisdictions within Sonoma County have formally accepted ACS services as administered by the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services as their principal method of auxiliary emergency communications. ACS services are provided to the local municipal governments and other agencies, while the ACS program is managed and coordinated by the County. Operational control of local ACS units assigned to local jurisdictions is at the discretion of the local jurisdiction, following the ACS chain of command and ACS policies and procedures. Local unit policies and procedures that are developed must be consistent with ACS guidelines and be approved by the ACS Radio Officer.

**B. Amateur Radio Emergency Service**

Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is an emergency preparedness element of the Field Organization of the ARRL, a national amateur radio organization. The ARRL has formal national-level agreements with the American Red Cross (ARC), the National Weather Service (NWS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO-International), the National Communications System (NCS), the National Association of Radio and Telecommunications Engineers (NARTE), the Salvation Army, the Society of Broadcast Engineers (SBE), the Quarterly Century Wireless Association, Inc. (QCWA), and Radio Emergency Associated Communications Team (REACT).

The ARRL has fifteen geographical Divisions, with each Division having three to seven Sections. Each Section may be further divided into Districts. The local section of ARES is the San Francisco Section of the Pacific Division. The Districts within the San Francisco Section consist of seven counties, including Sonoma County. The San Francisco Section ARES organization is administered under an elected Section Manager. The Section Manager appoints a Section Emergency Coordinator, who (along with appointed local Emergency Coordinators and District Emergency Coordinators) directs ARES communications preparedness activities in each section.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a radio communication service certified by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), and conducted by volunteer licensed radio operators, for providing emergency radio communications to public service organizations. In Sonoma County, ARES' primary responsibility is providing communications and logistic / resource allocation traffic for non-governmental agencies. ARES may be deployed to augment emergency communications for governmental agencies within the County of Sonoma when requested by ACS.

ARES volunteers are radio amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes. Many ARES volunteers specialize in the transmission of health and welfare information for the families and friends of disaster victims. ARES follows standard Incident Command System (ICS) protocols in times of emergency.

### **III. Cooperation Agreement**


To coordinate the communications resources of ACS and ARES utilized during disasters and emergencies, and to the extent permitted or required under existing plans, procedures and regulations, the County, ACS participants and ARES have agreed to the following:

- A.** To ensure an efficient liaison between ACS and ARES, the points of contact will be as follows: For County, the ACS Radio Officer or designated Assistant Radio Officer. In the absence of the Radio Officer or designee, the point of contact will be the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services' Emergency Services Coordinator or designee. For ARES the point of contact will be the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC), or in the absence of a DEC, the ARES Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC). In the absence of the DEC and SEC, the point of contact will be San Francisco Section Manager or Assistant Section Manager.
- B.** ACS and ARES will generally encourage liaisons with each other and urge participants of both organizations to develop effective communications and cooperation through ongoing communications and information sharing. Regular, periodic reporting on activities, services, local agreements, plans and procedures and contact information will be provided in writing and kept current.
- C.** Each organization will work through its own lines of authority and respect the lines of authority of the other as outlined above.
- D.** ACS will encourage local interaction between the local ACS Unit Leaders and the local ARES Emergency Coordinators in an effort to establish cooperative relationships, and closer ties between the two organizations. Both parties recognize that when these relationships develop at the local level, effective service to the public is significantly enhanced. Neither organization will discourage its volunteers from participating in the other organization.
- E.** ACS and ARES will work to establish protocols and procedures that facilitate efficient field operations where both groups are involved in emergency communications response. Each organization retains the right to develop and maintain independent protocols and procedures that will accurately reflect the respective relationships agreed upon.

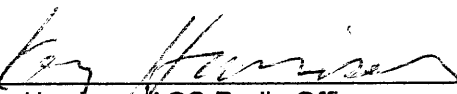
- F. Each organization will avoid duplicative or competitive activities in order to ensure effective delivery of emergency communications service. Local working relationships and existing local agreements between either of the two parties and their served agencies will be respected. Both parties recognize the principal roles of each group as outlined above.
- G. Other areas of mutual cooperation and future agreements may be developed and established as necessary.

**VI. Implementation**

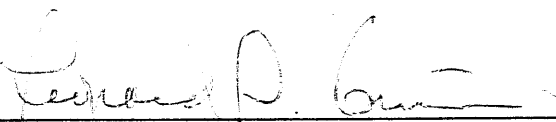
This Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect upon signature by authorized officials of the County, ACS and ARES. This memorandum may be amended by mutual agreement in writing of both parties, and will remain in effect until terminated. Either party may terminate this memorandum upon 30 days written notice. Nothing herein will create any joint venture, partnership or other business association, nor shall either party enter into any obligation or commitment on behalf of the other. This memorandum does not create rights in, nor is it intended to benefit, any third parties.

  
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 Sandy Covall-Alves, Emergency Services Coordinator  
 Sonoma County / Operational Area Emergency Services

14 March 03  
 Date

  
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 Ken Harrison, ACS Radio Officer  
 Sonoma County / Operational Area Emergency Services

14 March 03  
 Date

  
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 Leonard Gwinn, Section Manager  
 San Francisco Section American Radio Relay League

14 MARCH 2003  
 Date

  
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 Richard Freitas, Sonoma County District Emergency Coordinator  
 San Francisco Section American Radio Relay League

3-14-03  
 Date