

Marty KE4KEW and I had hoped that our first ARES eLetter would be a little less rushed, but that is the nature of emergency communications.

As many of you are no doubt aware, our neighbors in Buchanan County are again being struck by flooding. I know that we all wish them well, and stand ready to assist either remotely or in person if needed.

I have been in contact with some of our Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs), and also with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) to see if there may be a need for our assistance. On Tuesday they stated that the possibility did exist, but for the essential communications in support of air, medical, and search and rescue (SAR) the State Radio Cache team has that covered. I had been told that there may be a need for shelter and mass care communications under Emergency Support Function 6 (ESF-6) Mass Care, but they wouldn't know that until later on Wednesday or Thursday (today, as I'm writing this). As it turned out, without the knowledge of the SWIC or the VOAD partners, there had been contact made with a local amateur radio service organization to arrange for assistance with damage assessments. That is a good thing, as all disasters are local when it gets right down to it. I remain in contact with our VOAD partners, and they recognize that ARES is their go-to for emergency communications, both as a matter of formal agreements (Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)), but also because unlike other organizations, we are a national organization with strong local roots. We may yet get the call.

Now would be a good time to review the resource typing documents, have your folks get their personal go kits in order, and review their ARES Task Books, the ARES manuals, and also the Virginia Section ARES Mutual Assistance Team (ARES MAT) documents. If the call comes, the emergency management personnel (through the Incident Communications Unit Leader (COML)) will identify the resources needed based on standardized resource typing, and that information will be relayed down to the Emergency Coordinators (ECs) to find operators that can fulfill those requested roles. A checklist your operators can use to both determine what roles they can fulfill, as well as a packing list for communications gear can be found here: <https://emcommwiki.org/index.php?title=File:ResourceMatrix.pdf> All the resource typing documents are in the Standard Operating Procedure at this link: https://emcommwiki.org/index.php?title=VA_ARES%C2%AE_Mutual_Assistance_Team_Standard_Operating_Procedure (ARES MAT SOP) Don't worry too much about the other components of the SOP, as we haven't had a chance to train on it. Just the resource typing and the ordering form are all that's needed for now.

Remind everyone not to self deploy, as adding others to the area without being requested would get in the way of essential life-saving measures. But do take a moment to look gear over, and think about how to operate self-sustained for up to 72 hours. Make sure your operators have a copy of their ARES Task Book, license photo ID, and other documents in their kit as well. Also, even if they have taken ICS-100 and IS-2200, a quick review of the course material is a good idea.

If we do get the call, I know that we will answer, and will do our part to help our neighbors. Even if not called, the knowledge that we have an evolving force with ever increasing competence and readiness is reassuring to our partners and our neighbors. At the end of the day, it's all about taking care of the survivors of disasters.

73,

Jack R. Smith, VaPEM
KE4LWT
Virginia Section Manager
American Radio Relay League
jsmith@arrl.org
(4340 218-3393)