JEFFERSON COUNTY ARES NET

**Becoming a Net Control Station**

Amateur radio can play a critical role in emergencies. Among other services, volunteer ham operators conduct “nets” during times of threatening severe weather, active severe weather, or in the aftermath of damaging storms.

We are thankful for all ham operators who are willing to step up and serve in this capacity. This can be rewarding service and can be an occasion in which volunteers can save lives.

Ham radio organizations conduct regular nets to prepare for emergencies. These encourage regular radio contacts among radio operators, and allow us to practice some of the procedures that occur in severe weather nets. In order for all of this to work, we need Net Control Stations (NCS). Thank you for your interest and willingness to learn and serve.

The general requirements are:

1. Willingness to participate in regular weekly practice nets as an alternate net control station (ANCS) and later a net control station (NCS).

2. A amateur radio license. The Technician is sufficient, but we encourage all radio operators to pursue the General and Extra licenses.

3. A radio station capable of consistent reception of and solid, easily readable transmission into the 146.88 and the other major repeaters in Birmingham.

4. Appropriate training as a Stormspotter (more below.)

5. Clear and readable speaking voice.

6. Demonstrated ability to accurately record net activity.

7. Willingness to be available, once trained as a Net Control Station, in active weather nets as an ANCS or NCS.

We have a procedure to help new volunteers become good net control stations. Here are the steps.

1. VOLUNTEER AND SERVE AS AN ALTERNATE NET CONTROL STATION

1. Tune in to one of the weekly nets and, when the net control station asks for a volunteer to serve as an alternate, identify yourself by call sign, name, and location and indicate you will serve. If able, notify the net manager in advance, so he or she can be listening for you to volunteer during the net. Plan a time when you would be able to serve as an Alternate Net Control Station (ANCS) for at least 3 out of 4 consecutive weeks.
2. Even if someone else volunteers, go ahead and volunteer. Our practice on is to allow more than one alternate net control for training purposes.
3. During the net, keep a log, in any form you prefer, on which you record the call signs, names, and locations of all operators who check-in to the net. Also log in the net control station and yourself, as an alternate. Count those as check-ins.
4. At the end of the net, usually after the net has ended, make radio contact with the net control station (NCS), so you can compare your total number of check-ins recorded.
5. Email your log, in any text format or as a PDF, to the net manager.

2. OBTAIN A COPY OF THE NET PREAMBLE (sometimes called a “script”) FROM THE NET MANAGER AND ARRANGE A TIME TO CALL THE NET AS NCS.

After serving as alternate net control for three nets, with good service into the repeater, the Net Manager will give you a copy of the preamble and ask you to serve as a Net Control Station, ideally the following week, or as quickly as possible.

Once you serve your first time as Net Control, you will be added to the regular schedule to call the net as Net Control.

You will receive by email a schedule for the net control stations every two months.

3. ADDITIONAL TRAINING NEEDS

Net Control Stations should attend, either live or online, a Basic Storm Spotter program and be certified as having completed that program. This is not a major time commitment. Net Control Stations would be encouraged to retake Basic Stormspotter annually. It is not necessary to receive this training prior to serving as NCS, but it should be accomplished as soon as practical.

We encourage Advanced Storm Spotter training.

Also encouraged, especially for net control operators with a strong interest and who would like to eventually serve in a leadership capacity for emergency communications, is the ARRL EC-001 course, Introduction to Emergency Communications.

We also encourage membership and participation in ALERT, the Alabama Emergency Response Team.

4. CHAT SERVICES.

There are a number of online chat services that amateur radio operators, media organizations, and the National Weather Service use during severe weather situations. NCS operators should have an account on http://weather.im/live/ and/or NWS (National Weather Service) Chat. Your net manager can assist you.

5. SERVING AS ANCS or NCS DURING ACTIVE EMERGENCY NET

When severe weather threatens or arrives, your net manager may ask you to participate in an active weather net. Depending on the circumstances and your experience as NCS, you may be asked to take a shift during an active weather net. This should only happen when you and the Net Manager are both comfortable that you feel ready to serve in that capacity.

Thank you again for your interest and your willingness to volunteer.

RESOURCES

Jefferson County Ares Net

Tuesdays at 9:00 PM

146.88 Repeater, PL tone 88.5

NET MANAGER: David Hanna, KK4YPK email: kk4ypk2015@gmail.com

NET SECRETARY: Dale Wisely, N4HEY email: n4hey@outlook.com

Skywarn Training in Alabama: http://skywarn.org/skywarn-training/alabama-training-schedules/) and the NWS link to Skywarn training schedule: http://www.srh.noaa.gov/bmx/?n=skywarnschedule

ALERT: http://alert-alabama.org/

JEFFERSON COUNTY ARES: http://www.alabama-ares.org

CENTRAL ALABAMA HAM: General information for VHF/UHF repeaters, nets, events, clubs, etc.: www.centralalabamaham.com