



New Hampshire ARES[®] FAQ

www.nh-ares.org



What is ARES?

ARES is the *Amateur Radio Emergency Service*, a nationwide program founded in 1950 by ARRL[®], the national association for Amateur Radio. Its motto is “When all else fails, Amateur Radio works.”

ARES provides no-cost nationwide backup emergency communication services to private and public emergency and disaster relief agencies. (Individual Amateur Radio operators are prohibited by Federal law from receiving compensation for their services, hence the name “Amateur.”)

Who does NH-ARES serve?

In New Hampshire, we have cooperative agreements with the American Red Cross chapters, National Weather Service Skywarn program, New Hampshire Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM), the New Hampshire Hospital Association, and emergency management agencies, police, and fire departments in many local towns and cities. NH-ARES provides HSEM with essential backup communication links during all nuclear power plant emergency drills and first 72-hour coverage for other emergencies. Nationally, ARES has agreements with the National Weather Service, FEMA, Red Cross, and many other emergency relief agencies.

How many members does NH-ARES have?

It varies from year to year, and the actual response may vary daily, but in a large-scale emergency we can usually field between 50 and 150 trained operators statewide. We also have the ability to request additional teams from neighboring states and to quickly train spontaneous licensed volunteers.

How is NH-ARES organized?

At the state level a Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC) and a small staff handle statewide planning, operations, coordination, and training. The rest of the state is divided into twelve operational areas, each with its own ARES Emergency Coordinator (EC). Local members, under the EC’s leadership form the working backbone of NH-ARES.

Are NH-ARES members licensed and trained?

To be an NH-ARES member you must hold a valid FCC Amateur Radio license, which requires passing a comprehensive written examination. Most members have some level of local training, and an increasing number have completed required national-level training in emergency communications as well as various FEMA courses. Periodic drills and training events are held all around New Hampshire. In addition, many of our members come from a variety of professional and technical backgrounds, and their skills are often useful in unexpected ways.

What sorts of communications can NH-ARES provide?

Amateur or “ham” radio has been called the “Swiss Army knife” of emergency communications. Depending on the nature of the emergency and immediately available resources, we can provide local, statewide, and national tactical voice and digital text communications. If we know an agency’s specific needs in advance, our emergency operations plans and training can be tailored to provide more specific and responsive service. NH-ARES can also provide specially trained operators for agency-owned radio communication systems upon request, as we have for HSEM for many years.

**For more information, contact NH-ARES SEC Al Shuman at:
akshuman@comcast.net**

Amateur in name - Professional in performance