

ST. LUCIE COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

EFFECTIVE JUNE 1, 2024



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St. Lucie County, FL

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FOREWARD

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) consists of licensed amateur radio operators who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes. Every licensed amateur, regardless of membership in ARRL or in any other local or national organization, is eligible for membership in ARES. The only qualification, other than possession of an Amateur Radio license, is a sincere desire to serve. Because ARES is an amateur radio service, only duly licensed amateurs are eligible for membership. The possession of emergency powered equipment is desirable but is not a requirement for membership.

Part 97.1 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and regulations provide for an amateur radio service whose fundamental purpose is described in the following:

“Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.

This is an essential element of the "public interest, convenience or necessity" doctrine embodied in the Communications Act of 1934. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for amateur radio, makes emergency communications a principal objective for its Field Organization. The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) is its vehicle for accomplishing this task.

/s/ Paul L. Horner

Paul L. Horner, W4ISZ
Emergency Coordinator
Amateur Radio Emergency Service
St. Lucie County, Florida

1. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the St Lucie County ARES® (Amateur Radio Emergency Service), hereafter "SLC ARES," is to provide emergency communications for its served agencies in St. Lucie County (Florida) on amateur radio frequencies with FCC licensed operators who are well trained and efficient in emergency communications.

2. PURPOSE of PLAN

- A. This plan provides formal guidelines for SLC ARES. It describes an organization within which county, district, section, and statewide amateur radio units may function with maximum effectiveness and minimum confusion. It is intended to promote uniform procedures among local, district, section and state amateur radio units, their officials, and their operators.
- B. This plan provides the served agencies with an understanding of how SLC ARES will interface with them to provide a high level of support and assistance.
- C. This plan will provide guidelines for mutual assistance with other ARES groups, counties, or other served agencies when requested.

3. SERVED AGENCIES

- A. SLC ARES exists for the purpose of providing supplemental communications for governmental and private organizations involved in emergency and disaster response and mitigation in St. Lucie County.
- B. When an agency asks SLC ARES for communications assistance, it gets the full benefit of the entire ARES organization, including its nets, repeaters, mobiles and emergency power sources, as well as its member-operators' personally owned radio equipment.

C. SUPPORTED AGENCIES

St. Lucie County, Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management

St. Lucie County Health Department

Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute

St. Lucie Medical Center

St. Lucie County Board of Education

Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital

Cleveland Clinic Health Facility at St. Lucie West

4. ARES ORGANIZATION

- A. NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORGANIZATION is at ARRL Headquarters under the supervision of the ARRL Field Services Manager, who is responsible for advising all ARES

officials, maintaining contact with federal government and other national officials concerned with potential amateur emergency communications, and, in general, with carrying out ARRL's policies regarding emergency communications.

- B. SECTION LEVEL: The Southern Florida Section is led by the Section Manager (SM) who appoints a Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) and County Emergency Coordinators (EC).
 - C. COUNTY LEVEL: SLC ARES is led by the Emergency Coordinator (EC) who is appointed by the Section Manager. The EC may appoint Assistant Emergency Coordinators (AEC).
 - D. STATE OF FLORIDA: SLC ARES falls under the requirements of the Florida Division of Emergency Management and the State Emergency Response Team (FLSERT).
5. ST. LUCIE COUNTY ARES ORGANIZATION

A. EMERGENCY COORDINATOR: Paul Horner, W4ISZ

- i) Promotes and enhances the activities of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) for the benefit of the public as a voluntary, noncommercial communications service.
- ii) Establishes an emergency communications plan.
- iii) Establishes a viable working relationship with SLC DEM and other federal, state, city governmental and private agencies in the ARES jurisdictional area that might need the services of ARES in emergencies.
- iv) Establishes local communications networks that run on a regular basis and periodic testing of those networks by realistic drills.
- v) Establishes an emergency traffic plan. Establishment of an operational liaison with local and section nets.
- vi) Represents the SLC ARES before the SLC DEM.
- vii) Assists in the development of operating procedures unique to the SLC EOC.

B. ASSISTANT EMERGENCY COORDINATOR *** VACANT ***

- i) Assists the EC with the SLC ARES group through the planning, preparedness, and response phases of the ARES mission.
- ii) May perform the duties of Net Manager of the Emergency Nets and Training Nets. May assign net control stations (NCS) in conjunction with the EC. Compiles reports for the EC as may be requested or required.
- iii) Performs the duties of the SLC ARES EC when he is not available.

C. TRAINING OFFICER ***VACANT ***

- i. Conducts and coordinates Emergency Communications and FEMA training.

- ii. Maintains membership training records.

D. TECHNICAL OFFICER: Greg Bunting, KB4VVE

- i. Recommends equipment for use by SLC ARES members.
- ii. Supervises the maintenance of ARES communication equipment.

E. DATA COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: John Sweigart, KK4SHF

- i. Recommends and maintains data communications equipment related to Packet Radio, Winlink® Messaging, APRS and related equipment for use by SLC ARES members.

F. FIELD OPERATIONS OFFICER *** VACANT ***

- i. Designs and supervises deployment of ARES operations at designated locations for maximum safety and efficiency.

G. SKYWARN® COORDINATOR *** VACANT ***

- i. Coordinates SkyWarn® operations with National Weather Service personnel and/or other appropriate local authorities.
- ii. Coordinates training and educational programs of local SkyWarn® Spotter Volunteers as required or recommended by the National Weather Service.
- iii. Activates the Treasure Coast SkyWarn® Net as directed by the National Weather Service in the event of a weather emergency.
- iv. Activates the SkyWarn® Net in the event of a local weather emergency when SLC ARES is activated. The SLC ARES Emergency Coordinator or representative may request that the SkyWarn® Net be activated to gather and provide weather related information as may be requested by the SLC Department of Emergency Management.

6. MEMBERSHIP and TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- A. A valid Amateur Radio License issued by the Federal Communications Commission is required for membership in SLC ARES.
- B. SLC ARES leadership will conduct training and education on a regular basis in conjunction with regular meetings, special drills, and regular nets.
- C. SLC ARES imposes training requirements for continued membership. SLC ARES will conduct or coordinate appropriate training to fulfill this requirement.
 - i. Operators that will be deployed locally only, or operating from home stations: ARRL EC-001, FEMA ICS-100, ICS-700.
 - ii. Individual served agencies may have additional training requirements.
- D. SLC Department of Emergency Management issues St. Lucie County identification cards to SLC ARES members. This ID card is required for unescorted access to the EOC and all other County owned and/or served agency facilities to which an ARES volunteer may be assigned and must be carried at all times when on the property. A completed ARES application and County background check will be required prior to

the issuance of a St. Lucie County ID card.

7. ACTIVATION

- A. ARES members will self-activate in standby mode, and monitor the designated frequencies and nets, upon becoming aware of the potential need to activate from any reliable source. Reasons to assume standby mode include but are not limited to: a hurricane watch issued by the National Hurricane Center; other severe weather watches or warnings issued by the National Weather Service; notice of an emergency drill or similar exercise.
- B. When the SLC ARES EC receives any such request from the SLC DEM for any reason, SLC ARES will activate. SLC ARES leadership will notify members of activation status via amateur radio, telephone, and e-mail.
- C. When requested by the SFL Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), SLC ARES will activate.

8. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

- A. VHF/UHF nets will be conducted as directed nets under the control of a net control station (NCS).
 - i. St. Lucie County uses the following VHF repeaters as the primary repeaters for assigned locations as well as for mobile and portable stations: 147.240 MHz (W4SLC owned by St. Lucie County), 147.015 MHz (W4SLC owned by St. Lucie County), and 146.955 MHz (K4PSL owned by the Port St. Lucie Amateur Radio Association). K4PSL is operated during emergencies, if needed, pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between SLC and PSLARA. All use a tone of 107.2 Hz.
 - ii. The County's linked repeaters on 443.475 MHz and 444.600 MHz (tone of 107.2 Hz) are reserved for tactical and administrative use.
 - iii. In case of failure of the above referenced repeaters, or traffic overload, the repeater owned by the Fort Pierce Amateur Radio Club (W4AKH) on 147.345MHz (tone 107.2 Hz) will serve as a backup repeater. W4AKH (tone 107.2 Hz) on 444.800 MHz and K4PSL on 443.650 MHz may be utilized as backup repeaters for tactical and administrative use. Both repeaters utilize a tone of 107.2 Hz.
 - iv. Should all repeater operations fail, primary simplex operation on 147.420 MHz will be utilized.
 - v. St. Lucie County EOC station W4SLC will be manned as serve as the primary NCS. Other stations may assume NCS duties as requested or required by the EC.
 - vi. In the event that the American Red Cross business-band repeater becomes inoperable, the St. Lucie County Repeater Association repeater on 146.775 MHz (AF4CN) will be used for communication between ARC-staffed locations and the ARC offices. If this repeater is inoperable, this frequency will be used in simplex mode by the American Red Cross.
 - vii. St. Lucie County Winlink RMS Post Office (W4SLC-10) is located at the EOC tower building. VARA FM frequency is 144.990 MHz. PACKET Winlink frequency is 145.530 MHz.

- B. The EOC and/or Official Emergency Stations (OES) will monitor and operate on the SFL ARES net on 3.940 MHz or other frequencies and nets as may be designated during the incident, as well as the above VHF/UHF nets. SLC ARES will also monitor the Florida Statewide Amateur Radio Network (SARnet). SARnet will serve as an alternate communications link to the Florida State EOC. SLC ARES also maintains the capability to monitor and operate on the DMR network of repeaters which include Local, Regional and Statewide talk groups.
- C. Mobile units may be activated and deployed as needed.
- D. Tactical call signs may be used at the direction of the EC or NCS. Amateur operators only need to identify with their personal call sign at the end of a transmission when they do not expect to transmit again within ten minutes, and at the end of their shift assignment. (Ref. FCC part 97.119).
- E. Designated locations will be manned by assigned ARES members when directed.

9. HURRICANE SPECIAL PLANS

A. Pre-storm

- i. ARES members will monitor radio, television, email, and internet sites daily for tropical weather updates.
- ii. When requested by SLC DEM, EC, or AEC, the SLC ARES telephone tree, email system and Emergency Net will be activated. All members are to check into the net as soon as possible to receive updates and instructions. NCS will report to the EC or AEC.
- iii. When directed to open the EOC, emergency shelters, and agencies by the SLC DEM, ARES members will:
 - 1. Inventory their available emergency communications equipment and supplies.
 - 2. Monitor the SLC ARES Primary repeater (147.240 MHz).
 - 3. Test communication with the EOC as requested by the NCS.

B. During the Hurricane

- i. SLC ARES members will weather the storm at their residence.
- ii. Refrain from travel, stay indoors and keep safe.
- iii. Maintain constant communications with the EOC to the best of your ability.

C. After the Hurricane

- i. SLC members should survey their home and immediate surroundings for damage, transition to emergency power as may be necessary, take care of any immediate medical needs.
- ii. Standby on the Primary repeater frequency for information and/or instructions from the EC or NCS.
- iii. Once the emergency has passed, SLC ARES members are to check with the NCS and obtain permission to secure their station and be released.

- iv. All participants should be prepared to critique the incident. Comments received will be included in the After Action report prepared by the EC or AEC.

10. RECORD KEEPING

- A. All operators are to maintain copies of all written messages that they receive or send, including the person's name, position, and date/time that the message was originated or delivered. After the incident, these record copies are to be given to the EC or AEC.
- B. A log will be kept at each location of radio communications. This log should include as a minimum the operator(s) on duty and their dates/times in/out and local time only; all communications with other net stations; any significant events. After the incident, these logs are to be given to the EC or AEC. A completed Activity Log (ICS 214) is the preferred method to satisfy this requirement.

11. MESSAGES

- A. Tactical messages are defined as spoken instructions, consultation, or net check-in where no third-party communications occur.
- B. Third-party messages are defined as messages originated by someone other than the operator for relay to another person by radio. All third-party messages must be on a FEMA ICS-213 message form. All such messages must be retained by the operator.
- C. Under Federal regulations, the contents of any messages handled in any form by SLC ARES are not to be divulged to any unauthorized persons.

12. MEETINGS, NETS, TESTS and DRILLS

- A. SLC ARES meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00p.m. Meeting location will be either via ZOOM Workplace, at the EOC, or at other designated locations as circumstances may warrant.
- B. The SLC ARES net meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. on the W4SLC 147.240 MHz repeater. This repeater may be linked with the W4SLC 147.015 MHz South County repeater. SLC ARES will conduct an annual test of its capabilities in conjunction with the National Simulated Emergency Test (SET) and/or at other times as designated by the EC.
- C. Additional tests, drills and exercises may be conducted at the request of SLC DEM, the State of Florida, ARRL SFL Section, or other served agencies.

13. SHELTERS and FACILITIES

The following Locations have been identified by SLC DEM as locations to be potentially manned by SLC ARES. This list may be modified by SLC DEM as may be required.

- A. St. Lucie County Emergency Operations Center – Midway Road and/or Rock Road
- B. Havert L. Fenn Center (Special Needs Shelter) – Ft. Pierce
- C. Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute – Ft. Pierce
- D. St. Lucie Medical Center – Port St. Lucie
- E. Lake Forest Community – St. Lucie West
- F. Lake Charles – St. Lucie West
- G. Cleveland Clinic Hospital – Tradition

- H. Cleveland Clinic Emergency Facility – St. Lucie West
- I. SLC General Population Shelters

- i. First Tier:

- Lakewood Park Elementary School
 - Ft. Pierce Westwood High School
 - Ft. Pierce Central High School
 - Treasure Coast High School

- ii. Second Tier:

- Samuel Gaines Academy
 - Westgate K-8 School
 - Oak Hammock K-8 School

- iii. Third Tier:

- C.A. Moore Elementary School
 - Parkway Elementary School
 - Bayshore Elementary School
 - Morningside Elementary School
 - Floresta Elementary School

14. MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

- A. SLC ARES may be called upon to provide mutual assistance to other ARES groups, counties, agencies, or states in the event of a wide scale disaster.
- B. Requests for mutual assistance are only valid if received by the SLC ARES EC from the SFL ARES Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC).
- C. The SLC ARES EC will determine if such aid can be provided only after consultation with its served agencies, primarily the SLC EOC.
- D. If a SLC ARES member is deployed away from St. Lucie County pursuant to the request and approval of mutual aid as described above, the ARES member must be registered in the State of Florida database and have a tracking number assigned in order to receive coverage by the State of Florida's liability insurance and workman's compensation insurance programs and in order to receive any potential reimbursement of expenses incurred. This registration will be done by the EC through the Northern Florida ARRL Section Manager or representative.
- E. State of Florida (FLSERT) or DOD identification cards may also be required to enter a disaster area.
- F. No member of SLC ARES will undertake, on his own, to provide assistance and travel to another location without the expressed written authorization of the SLC ARES EC.

APPENDIX 1

SHELTER EQUIPMENT and PERSONAL GEAR CHECKLIST

The following materials are a recommendation of items you will need in a shelter or assigned facility during the emergency period:

1. County ID Card
2. Copy of your current FCC Amateur Radio License
3. VHF/UHF radio
4. Radio power supply (extension cord recommended)
5. Headphones (recommended)
6. Emergency Antenna
7. Adequate coax with spare if possible
8. Flashlight with extra batteries
9. Spare fuses
10. Coax patch cords
11. SWR meter
12. Writing gear (pens/pencils, writing pads, etc.)
13. Message and Log forms
14. Basic tool kit (soldering iron w/solder and a VOM recommended)
15. Adequate battery with charger
16. Battery operated AM/FM broadcast radio.

Personal gear recommended to bring along with you in addition to the radio equipment:

1. Cooler with water and food for 3 days
2. Clothing for 3 days
3. Prescription medication in original bottle or container
4. Aspirin, throat lozenges, etc.
5. Foul weather gear
6. Mess kit or similar
7. Personal first aid kit
8. Sleeping bag and pillow
9. Toilet articles
10. Mechanical or battery operated alarm clock
11. Cell phone/tablet charger
12. Extra prescription glasses/reading glasses

APPENDIX 2

EMERGENCY MONITORING FREQUENCIES

Broadcast AM/FM Radio

WPSL	1590 AM
WQCS	88.9 FM
WSTU	1450 AM
WZZR	92.7 FM

Television Channels

WPTV	CH. 5
WPEC	CH. 12
WPBF	CH. 25
WFLX	CH. 29
WTVX	CH. 34

NOAA Weather Radio

St. Lucie	162.425 MHz.
Palm Beach	162.475 MHz.
Belle Glade	162.400 MHz.
Melbourne	162.550 MHz.

Amateur Radio Frequencies – Monitored by the EOC

W4SLC (Primary Repeater)	147.240	+600K	tone 107.2
North County Admin.	444.600	+5.0M	
North County Secondary (W4AKH)	147.345	+600K	
North County Admin. Secondary	444.800	+5.0M	
South County Primary	147.015	+600K	
South County Admin.	443.475	+5.0M	
South County Secondary (K4PSL)	146.955	-600K	
S. County Admin. Secondary (K4PSL)	443.650	+5.0M	
Red Cross Secondary (AF4CN)	146.775	-600K	

Additional Amateur Radio Frequencies

Okeechobee	147.090	+600K	tone 100.0
Okeechobee	147.195	+600K	tone 100.0
Vero Beach	145.130	-600K	tone 107.2
SkyWarn	146.775	-600K	tone 107.2
Resource Net EOC/ARES	146.640	-600K	tone 107.2
Stuart EOC	145.150	-600K	tone 107.2
Stuart SARNET	444.150	+5.0M	tone 107.2

National Hurricane Net	14.325 MHz.
Maritime Mobile Net	14.300 MHz.
Florida State ARES	3.940 MHz.