

KNW-170
HARRIS COUNTY ARES INFORMATION
RESOURCES REVIEW

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Tonight's training is just a review of some ARES related information resources available to us and tips on how we might better stay in touch as a team and up to date on ARES activities. We sometimes receive questions on a topic indicating a member did not know where to look, what to do next, or they were out of the information loop for some reason. As communicators, we want to make sure we do everything we can to close the loop and keep each other informed.

When I started as a new ARES member, there was limited guidance on where to start.

It was hard to determine what to do after I signed up and how to get involved. This indicated to me it would be good to provide additional guidance and orientation to new recruits as well as reminders to current members on how to leverage some of the tools we have.

Where do you start? - Joining ARES of course.

If someone asks you how to join ARES its easiest to just remember to tell them the following:

- Go to harriscountyares.org and click "join ARES".
- Click the FSD-98 link at the top of the page and fill out the form.
- Once the new member registration is approved, they will receive a login to the STX ARES information Depot. [STX Depot Gateway \(arrlstxvps.org\)](http://STX Depot Gateway (arrlstxvps.org))

Task Book

In the South Texas information depot, you will find your personal Task book under the link **Courses and Training**. Your Task book is your guide to the desired basic skills and initial training suggested for each ARES member.

- Your first goal should be to fill out your Task book with dates of current or newly acquired skills and then identify any needed training.
- Ask one of your team AEC's for assistance if you have questions on a listed skill or need help finding potential sources for the recommended training.

All members should do the following:

- Regularly review and update your Task Book
- Keep your Information depot contact information up to date. This includes email, cell phone # and carrier. If your carrier changes you may not get ARES txt alerts and may get late notice of an activation or drill.
- If you do not have a photo in your profile, make sure you send an appropriate photo to your EC Sean Ramsey to update your profile. This is also required to obtain an ARES ID.
 - An ARES ID can be helpful if you're deployed or working at a served agency.

Harriscountyares.org

Harriscountyares.org is another great reference for you to find more ARES related information.

Here you will find:

- **NW Unit Leadership Team** and our contact information
 - We are available if you have questions or need assistance.
- **Frequencies we use**, net schedule and scripts for our regular nets
 - This frequency list is a great place to start for the minimum frequencies to program in your radio.
 - The net script is a good reference for you to begin learning more about being a net control.
- **Public service events** we are involved in and who to contact if interested in volunteering.
 - Volunteering is a great way to get to know other ARES team members and gain valuable operating experience.
- **District 14 and NW Unit comm plans** – You should review and be familiar with these unit comm plans.
 - The most important thing to remember from the comm plan is that during a potential incident in the absence of specific direction from your leadership, monitor 147.000 MHz (+) 103.5 the District 14 ARES® bulletin/information repeater. Here you will get updates and potential activation information.
- **Training** – Also at harriscountyares.org under the training link you will find the ARES training library with a wealth of information and great articles used during our weekly nets. You will also find links to external free Emcomm training with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the ARRL Emergency Communications training program.

Texas Division of Emergency Management (Preparingtexas.org)

You can take advantage of Texas Division of Emergency Management training by going to Preparingtexas.org. There you can sign up for free online classes such as the recommended FEMA IS-100,200, 700, and 800 courses which are all prerequisites for the more advanced AUXCOMM training that will be available to us in the future.

ARRL.org/emergency-communications-training

You can sign up for the ARRL Ecomm courses mentioned in your task book such as EC-101 and EC-016 by going to ARRL.org/emergency-communications-training and clicking learn more under the “Intro to Emcom”. section.

Traffic Handling – National Traffic System Training

Another training opportunity to mention is the weekly nets offering “hands-on” National Traffic System training. If you are new at traffic, experienced or in between this is a great opportunity to learn, practice, and exercise traffic handling skills.

The two Houston area NTS nets:

Monday, 630PM ,146.940 MHz,(167.9 Tone)

Thursday, 630 PM local 147.000 MHz,(103.5 Tone)

- Mondays are focused on traffic handling and formal training whereas the Thursday net will focus primarily on traffic handling. (radiogram)

Staying Up to Date

We sometimes hear from members that they were not aware of meetings or other events. A great way to be sure you stay up to date is to subscribe to the STX ARES groups in Groups.io, join the ARES Facebook group, and attend the District 14 monthly meeting.

GROUPS.IO

At Groups.io you will find ARES specific forums where group discussions occur on current and upcoming activities. This is a great way to get notifications of meetings, drills, volunteer needs and other ARES related items.

To best utilize this tool, go to Groups.io and do the following:

1. Create an account and join the STX ARES and District 14 Subgroups
2. Under subscriptions –sign up for individual emails. This will make sure you are notified with an email every time someone creates a post. You’ll then get timely emails on activations, meetings, training, and other activities.
3. You should also check out the files section in the groups for previous meetings slides, and other presentations.

Facebook

We also suggest you join the Harris county Texas ARES Facebook group for additional team interaction and updates. There is also some good information on winlink in the files section of this group.

District 14 monthly meetings – Attending our District 14 monthly meetings is another great way to get to know your leadership and other ARES members while staying up to date on group activities and technologies we deploy. These meetings are held monthly with all members welcome. Notifications usually go out via email, Facebook, and Groups.io.

Harris County Office of Emergency Management

One last suggestion to help you stay informed is to sign up for txt and email alerts from our primary served agency - Harris County Office of Emergency Management

- Sign up for these alerts by going to www.readyharris.org and clicking sign up for alerts at the top of the page.

In closing, this review obviously doesn’t cover everything but is a few items I found helpful for myself and useful when helping others get more out of ARES.

Hopefully this will help you help others and answer a few questions you might have.