

HARFORD COUNTY ARES/RACES PERSONNEL POLICY HANDBOOK



**Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES)
Amateur Radio Emergency Service (Harford County ARES)
2220 Ady Road, Forest Hill, MD. 21050**

I. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PACKET

Membership in Harford County ARES/RACES is open to any amateur radio operator who holds a Technician Class or higher license, and who lives, works, or attends school in Harford County. Persons who do not live, work, or study in the county may be admitted as members at the discretion of the Leadership Team.

Applicants must pass a background check through Harford County government procedures as applicable to county employees, and be approved by Emergency Services officials for membership, before any credentials may be issued.

TRAINING

The following courses are required to maintain eligibility for participation in Harford County Government RACES events:

- ICS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System**
- ICS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents**
- ICS-700 Introduction to the Incident Management System**
- ICS-800 Introduction to the Incident Response Framework**

You can start this online training program by visiting the FEMA Independent Study Course Site.

<https://training.fema.gov/is/docs/is%20brochure.pdf?ver20181218>

The first step in the process is to register and obtain a FEMA Student Identification Number. Then you can register for individual courses. Course registration is free of charge. When you complete each course, you will be issued a certificate of completion, which you can forward to ARES/RACES administrators by email.

Members are expected to complete the required training courses and to attend a sufficient percentage of scheduled meetings and activities to maintain eligibility. All members will be evaluated every two years to determine if training requirements are being met and satisfactory participation levels are being attained.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Email _____

Amateur Radio Call Sign _____ License Class _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

Home Station Equipment (Check All That Apply):

VHF/UHF HF Digital Voice (Fusion DMR D-Star) Digital Data
 Auxiliary Power

Mobile Equipment (Check All That Apply):

VHF/UHF HF Digital Voice (Fusion DMR D-Star)

Handheld Portable Equipment (Check All That Apply):

VHF/UHF Digital Voice (Fusion DMR D-Star)

Related CourseWork Completed (Course Title and Number):

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Deployment:

Are you available to deploy to emergencies in Harford County? _____ Yes _____ No

Please list hours of availability:

Mondays: _____

Tuesdays: _____

Wednesdays: _____

Thursdays: _____

Fridays: _____

Saturdays: _____

Sundays: _____

Application Agreement:

If approved for membership, I agree to support the mission of the organization by completing the training requirements and maintaining a sufficient level of participation in events. I also grant Harford County Government permission to conduct a background check in order to process this membership application. I certify that all information included in this application is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

II. PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. Membership: Prospective members must complete the following procedures before being granted full or probationary membership status.

1. Submit a completed and signed membership application. Membership applications may be turned in to any member of the leadership team, or may be mailed to:

**Phil Hebert, RACES Radio Officer
Harford County Department of Emergency Services
2220 Ady Road
Forest Hill, MD. 21050**

2. Submit an application for a background investigation administered by the Harford County Department of Human Resources. Prospective members must submit the background application within two weeks of the date of membership application. Applications for background investigations must be sealed in a separate envelope and returned to:

**Linda Ploener, Manager
Emergency Preparedness/Planning Branch
Harford County Department of Emergency Services
ATTN: RACES Background Check
2220 Ady Road
Forest Hill, MD. 21050**

3. After passing the background investigation, prospective members must be approved by the Leadership Team and/or DES Officials for membership.
4. Submit evidence of successful completion of FEMA Courses ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-700, and ICS-800.
5. New members who have not completed all of the required courses, must submit evidence that study of the required FEMA course-work is in progress, and must successfully complete all four courses within one year of application. Such members will be in probationary status pending completion.
6. Must maintain active participation in scheduled activities, public service events, and emergency activations for a minimum number of 16 hours per year. Activities that will contribute towards the participation requirement include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- a. Attendance at monthly meetings: 2 - 3 hours per meeting depending on length.
 - b. Checking in to the Monthly Harford ARES Net: ½ hour per net
 - c. Participating in the Maryland Commex in the RACES Room: 1.5 hours per net (Must be present in the RACES Room to participate in this net.)
 - d. Participation in group training sessions.
 - e. Participation in public service events (such as the SRRF), to include attendance at planning meetings, development of written plans, and event participation.
 - f. Participation in emergency activations.
 - g. Planning, preparing for, or participating in local, state, or federal exercises (SET, Peachbottom, CPOD, etc.)
 - h. Engineering-related activities include repeater work, antenna work, the hospital radio project, etc..
 - i. Assisting with Administrative Upkeep (to include assisting with taking inventory, file organization, RACES Room cleanup/organization, etc.)
 - j. Preparing for and/or representing the organization in community educational/outreach events.
 - k. Planning, preparing for, or participating in other group activities (to include field radio tests, Field Day activities, open house/recruitment events, etc.)
 - l. Assisting with the organization's web-based presence to include web page maintenance, cloud-based file storage, etc.
7. Members are eligible for deployment in all activities and events, and may vote on policy making decisions where appropriate.

B. ID Badge: Each member will be issued a photo ID badge after passing the background investigation and on approval of emergency management officials. The badge must be worn at all times in the DES building and at all activation locations. The badge must be returned to the Department of Emergency Services when a member leaves the organization.

C. Uniform Clothing: Members are encouraged but not required, to purchase the following items from the ARRL online store:

1. ARES Polo Shirt: Blue or Tan
2. ARES Deployment Cap
3. ARES Deployment Vest

The blue t-shirts that were purchased a few years ago are still acceptable.

The ARES clothing items help to give the group a uniform professional appearance while providing identification among the many agencies that we work with. Members are encouraged to wear the shirts to meetings, training, drills, deployments, and other ham events. The vest and

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cap are suited for deployments where more visibility is needed such as at an outdoor site or around traffic.

C. Denial of Membership: Prospective members may be denied membership by the leadership team or emergency management officials for any of the following:

1. Failure to submit completed and signed membership application.
2. Failure to submit application for background check.
3. Failure to pass background check.
4. Does not meet residency requirements (must live, work, or attend school in Harford County, or receive a special exemption from the leadership team.)

D. Dismissal from Membership: Members may be dismissed from the organization by the leadership team or emergency management officials for any of the following reasons:

1. Felony conviction, or any level conviction involving a crime that jeopardizes public safety.
2. Loss of FCC Amateur Radio License.
3. Misconduct: Any actions, gestures, language, or communications that:
 - a. Are inappropriate or disrespectful.
 - b. Undermines the integrity and mission of the organization.
 - c. Purposely sows discord among the membership.
 - d. Disrupts operations.
 - e. Willfully disregards or disobeys established policies, procedures, directions, etc.
 - f. Constitute harassment of any kind.
4. Consumption of and/or impairment by, alcohol or illegal substances while on DES property or at any group event.
5. Failure to complete required coursework.
6. Failure to maintain minimum participation level.

E. VISITING AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS

1. Visiting operators may participate in public service events such as the Susquehanna River Running Festival. Membership in Harford County ARES/RACES is not required.
2. Visiting operators who are assigned to work at a public service event, may attend briefings that are related to the event, as permitted by the leadership team.
3. Visiting operators may attend one meeting as a guest, for the purpose of joining the group.
4. Prospective members may not attend meetings on a regular basis until final approval of membership status has been granted by the Leadership Team and/or Emergency Management.
5. ARRL officials from the Maryland DC Section, including those EC's of neighboring jurisdictions, may attend meetings as guests, for the purpose of information sharing as appropriate for their position. They are not granted membership privileges in the local group unless regularly enrolled, meeting all membership requirements. They may not attend meetings on a regular basis, but only as needed for any scheduled event or purpose.
6. Visiting personnel will not be issued county ID badges, nor will they be permitted to deploy on RACES activations. When attending a meeting, they will not be permitted to vote or otherwise participate in the decision making of the organization. Visitors may also be restricted from attending a meeting when sensitive public safety matters are on the agenda.
7. Anyone who has been dismissed from or been denied membership due to criminal background or misconduct issues, will not be permitted to attend any meetings or events as a visitor, nor will they be eligible to reapply for membership.
8. Anyone who has resigned from the group under honorable conditions, is eligible to participate as a guest operator in public service events. They are also eligible to rejoin the group, but must go through the membership application process.

III. ADMINISTRATION

- A. The Harford County ARES/RACES group is a dual status organization. All members are enrolled in both RACES and ARES.
- B. The RACES side is administered by the designated County Radio Officer who is appointed by the Harford County Government Emergency Manager. The Radio Officer has full authority to implement policies and to supervise operators and activities in all phases of emergency operations involving Harford County Government. The Radio Officer may appoint deputies and other administrators as needed, to assist in carrying out the mission.
- C. The ARES side is administered by the designated Emergency Coordinator(EC), who is appointed by the Section Emergency Coordinator of the Maryland DC Section of the ARRL. The EC may appoint assistant EC's as needed. The EC follows ARRL policies in carrying out the activities and reports of the ARES group.
- D. Administrators in Harford County ARES/RACES may hold dual positions covering both the ARES and RACES sides, to facilitate a smooth transition in situations where the status may change during an incident.
- E. In cases where there may be conflicts of policy, scheduling, or activations, Harford County Government policies and activities will take priority over those of the ARRL.

IV. ARES/RACES POLICY REGARDING USE OF DES PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

1. Harford County Department of Emergency Service (DES) property and facilities will only be used for ARES/RACES activities "sponsored" by either DES or Harford County ARES/RACES and only for activities relevant to the Harford County ARES/RACES mission. Activities relevant to the Harford County ARES/RACES mission include the following.
 - a. Meetings
 - b. Training events
 - c. Drills/exercises
 - d. Deployments
 - e. Equipment upgrades, replacement, or maintenance

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- f. Administrative tasks such as conducting inventories, RACES Room file maintenance and file organization, etc.
 - g. Recruitment / public outreach events.
2. Procedures for Scheduling an Event Open to the Public or to Multiple Non-Member Hams:
- a. If a member of Harford County ARES/RACES wishes to hold an event on DES property that is open to the public or to multiple non-member amateur radio operators (hams), the topic should be submitted for discussion at the next scheduled ARES/RACES meeting (or for the next Harford ARES Net if meetings are not being held due, to a public health emergency or other contingency).
 - b. The Harford ARES/RACES group will discuss the matter and approve or reject the proposal either by consensus or by a formal vote.
 - c. Once the proposed event is approved, DES will be contacted by either the member organizer or a member of the Harford ARES/RACES leadership team to request their approval for holding the event. DES staff may approve, approve with specified conditions, or reject the proposed event.
 - d. If DES staff approves the event or approves the event with conditions, the member organizer, with the approval of Harford County ARES/RACES leadership, may proceed to organize the event contingent upon any conditions established by DES.
 - e. If DES staff approved the event but expressed reservations, the member organizer will contact Harford County ARES/RACES leadership for guidance on whether and how to proceed.
 - f. If DES staff rejected the event due only to the proposed date or time of the event, the member organizer and/or Harford County ARES/RACES leadership may propose an alternate date/time to address the concern. With the approval of Harford County ARES/RACES leadership, the member organizer may contact DES and request permission for the activity on the alternate date/time.
 - g. If DES staff rejected the event, no further steps will be taken to organize the rejected event on DES property.
 - h. The following are exclusions to this procedure (unless otherwise indicated by DES rules or guidelines).
 - i. One or two individuals invited to attend a meeting to provide specific training or discuss a particular topic relevant to the organization.
 - ii. Leaders of ARES/RACES groups in adjacent jurisdictions may occasionally attend meetings of Harford County ARES/RACES as liaisons to coordinate activities or provide updates on activities in these jurisdictions.
 - iii. Subject to DES rules and guidelines, and with the approval of DES staff and/or Harford County ARES/RACES leadership, one or two prospective members may attend a meeting on a one-time only basis to learn about the organization and decide if they wish to join.

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3. All Harford County ARES/RACES members and non-members participating in an event on DES property shall abide at all times by any permanent or temporary rules established by DES pertaining to the use of DES property and facilities. Persons violating or resisting DES rules may be dismissed from the event.

4. Recruitment /public outreach events open to the general public or to multiple hams who are not Harford ARES/RACES members should be limited to one or at most two events per calendar year, subject to the above conditions and procedures.

Recruitment/public outreach events open to the general public, such as Field Day, will be limited to one event per year.

NOTE: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the following restrictions are in place (as of June 2, 2021) until further notice.

1. Non-members may not attend ARES/RACES meetings.
2. Events open to non-members may only be held outside. Building access for non-members will be restricted to the use of the lobby restrooms only.
3. ARES/RACES members will be restricted to certain parts of the building.
4. ARES/RACES members must clean areas and equipment used prior to departure.