

GUIDELINES AND A “GENERIC” PLAN FOR ARES TEAMS DURING WIDESPREAD OR EXTENDED POWER OUTAGES AND TELEPHONE SYSTEM FAILURES

By D. W. Thorne, K6SOJ

BEFORE THE POWER OUTAGE

1. **MAINTAIN** your radios, accessories, lighting, and other gear in a “state of readiness”. Keep your batteries charged, your generator serviced, and enough fresh fuel (safely stored) to keep it running at least 24 hours. Always keep the fuel tank in your vehicle(s) at least half full (when the power is out, service stations cannot pump fuel).
2. **PARTICIPATE** in daily and weekly nets, drills, and training. Get to know your EC, AEC, and other members of your ARES team. Keep familiar with your local and regional emergency plan.
3. **CULTIVATE** good public relations on a daily basis. Let your friends, neighbors, and local community leaders know what amateur radio is and what it is capable (and not capable) of doing.

DURING A POWER OUTAGE OR TELEPHONE SYSTEM FAILURE

1. **CHECK ON** your family and neighbors. Especially any elderly, disabled, or infirm persons you know. If assistance is needed summon help as appropriate.
2. **ACTIVATE** your station by connecting to your auxiliary power source. Monitor designated local and section EMCOMM frequencies. Keep an accurate log of pertinent information and traffic.
3. **CONSERVE** power, and help keep the frequencies clear, by not transmitting unless you have traffic or useful information.
4. **AS SOON AS** a net has been activated, check in when your area is called. Advise the NCS of your availability for assignment(s).
5. **YOU MAY BE** asked to stay at home and serve as a relief NCS or a relay station. ARES stations (fixed or mobile) with both VHF and HF are of special value.
6. **IF YOU GO MOBILE**, travel self-contained. Have appropriate clothing, food and drink, a first aid kit and a tool kit with you. A good flashlight or two plus extra batteries is essential, as is a clipboard, notepad, pens and pencils and local maps. Carry an adequate supply of blank RADIOGRAMS.
7. **RESPOND** as directed by your NCS. Or, depending on your local group’s conventions, go to the nearest location where people congregate during an emergency. This may be a local fire station, community hall, school, church, general store, or even an intersection. When surveying an affected area, be alert for people who may have an immediate need for communications or other special needs. Obey all laws, stay out of the way of emergency vehicles, and periodically keep the NCS station informed of your location.
8. **IDENTIFY** yourself as an emergency communications unit. Wear your ARES cap, jacket, or other ID materials. On vehicles, magnetic ARES signs are nice. Or, you can make placards and place them on your dashboard or sun visor.
9. **INTRODUCE** yourself to local officials. Briefly tell them who you are, make them aware of how they can utilize your services, what you can do, where you will be located and that they may refer persons with emergency, priority, or health and welfare messages to you. Remain polite, but **DO NOT** initiate or accept **ROUTINE** traffic until the NCS gives the “OK”.
10. **THE NCS** (at the direction of the EC or acting EC) may ask you to move to other locations (such as a hospital, clinic, utility office or city hall).
11. **IF YOU MUST** leave your post or assignment notify the NCS. Allow enough time to find a replacement.
12. **KNOW** your own limitations. Do not try to be a “marathon operator”. When your relief arrives, give him / her a brief report, and go get some rest. You may be needed tomorrow!

Posted August 2003