



Johnson County Iowa ARES®/RACES



*At your service
for Emergency and Public Service
Communications*

What is Amateur Radio?

More than 700,000 US radio operators licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) after completion of written exams on radio theory, operating principles and FCC regulations.

A radio service authorized by the FCC with the following as one of its fundamental purposes:

- Provide a voluntary, non-commercial communication service in the community during times of emergency.

Capabilities include:

- VHF/UHF - Local Communications via repeaters or simplex modes
- DX - Long Range Communications operated on HF bands with the ability to communicate world-wide.
- CW - Communications via Morse Code
- Digital Modes - Communications computer to computer via radio, email over radio.
- Amateur Television, Amateur Satellites

Amateur Radio is *not* Citizen's Band (CB), Family Radio Service (FRS), General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) or Business Band radio, although Amateur Radio operators might use these other services as well.

What Is ARES/RACES?

Amateur Radio operators nationwide who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment and formed an organized pool of operators to provide reliable primary and secondary communications links for governmental agencies and/or non-profit organizations when needed.

Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) is sponsored by the ARRL, the national organization for Amateur Radio. ARES can be activated by any supported agency or non-profit organization in accordance with Memoranda of Understanding.

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) provides for Amateur Radio operation in support of government agencies during periods of declared emergencies only, as authorized by Emergency Management officials.

Johnson County ARES/RACES members are dual enrolled in both organizations to enable them to provide support in virtually any situation. ARES and RACES amateur radio operators have provided communications during earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, wild fires, and were used extensively in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Amateur radio has been used for more than a two decades as the primary communications link for the New York City Marathon. Amateur radio has a proud tradition of serving the public since 1917. ARES, as part of the ARRL, is an official affiliate program of Citizen Corps, an initiative within the Department of Homeland Security to enhance public preparedness and safety.

Johnson County ARES/RACES has been active in recent years supporting the communication needs of community organizations, such as the Red Cross, police, fire, and medical groups, including the major effort after the 1998 derecho, and monitoring flooding during the 1993 and 2008 events. Members of ARES/RACES have assisted with communications and event coordination during parades, foot, bike races and RAGBRAI.

Johnson County ARES/RACES members participating in the regional SKYWARN, support the National Weather Service. During severe weather conditions a network of trained weather spotters is activated, reporting directly to the National Weather Service office in Rock Island.

Johnson County ARES/RACES has a dedicated communications equipment installation at the Johnson County Joint Emergency Communications Center in Iowa City, with the ability to communicate throughout the county, state, or nation on amateur radio frequencies. ARES/RACES members man this station during emergency conditions, exercises, or special events. Additional equipment for ARES/RACES communications is installed in area hospitals.

How can amateur radio assist your agency or non-profit organization?

Do you, or agencies within your organization, need to divert routine communications away from operational or tactical radio channels during an emergency? Does your agency need an organized back-up communications link that can be called into action if your usual communications become overloaded or disrupted? Are you in need of reliable interagency communications during emergencies? If so, volunteer amateur radio operators can fill the gap.

Does your organization sponsor public-service events such as walkathons? Would reliable communications allow you to sponsor a safer, more coordinated event? If so, amateur radio fits the bill.

Are the services provided by amateur radio operators expensive?

Services are provided on a strictly volunteer basis at no charge to you. Federal Communications Commission rules **strictly prohibit compensation of any kind** for services rendered by amateur radio operators.

Where would amateur radio operators fit into your plans?

They could be your primary or secondary communications link. Amateur radio operators realize that their role is to provide communications, not to make your decisions. Your ARES Emergency Coordinator might be considered your volunteer communications consultant.

ARES/RACES can provide:

- ✓ **Trained Amateur Radio communicators**
- ✓ **Manpower with portable communications capability**
- ✓ **Mobile communications capability**
- ✓ **Coordination of Amateur Radio efforts at an incident**
- ✓ **Coordination between Amateur Radio operations in adjacent counties or statewide**
- ✓ **County-Wide communication via repeaters (can be linked to Des Moines)**
- ✓ **On-Site communications equipment with temporary power if needed**
- ✓ **Multiple frequency capability – many channels available to take the load off the limited public service frequencies**

How can I find out more about amateur radio and Johnson County ARES/RACES?

Contact the person below. He will gladly provide you with the following:

- How you can best include volunteer amateur radio operators in your plans.
- An explanation of how the Amateur Radio Emergency Service is organized and how these volunteers are trained.
- A demonstration of the capability and reliability of amateur radio operators and their equipment.

For more information, contact:

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Providing voluntary communications - when all else fails...