



Walton County ARES

Emergency Communication Plan

EC - John Blaisdell - W4CJB

[This page left intentionally blank]

Table of Contents

Purpose

Administration and Organization

Leadership and Organizational Structure

Chain of Command: County ARES Group

Chain of Command: Walton County Emergency Management

Operations

Activation

Nets

Net protocol

Frequency usage

ARES Operators

Conduct

Certification

Access Authority Badges

Appendix A: Glossary

Appendix B: Deployment teams

Appendix C: Shelters

Appendix D: Repeaters

Appendix E: Roster of Key Personnel

[This page left intentionally blank]

Purpose

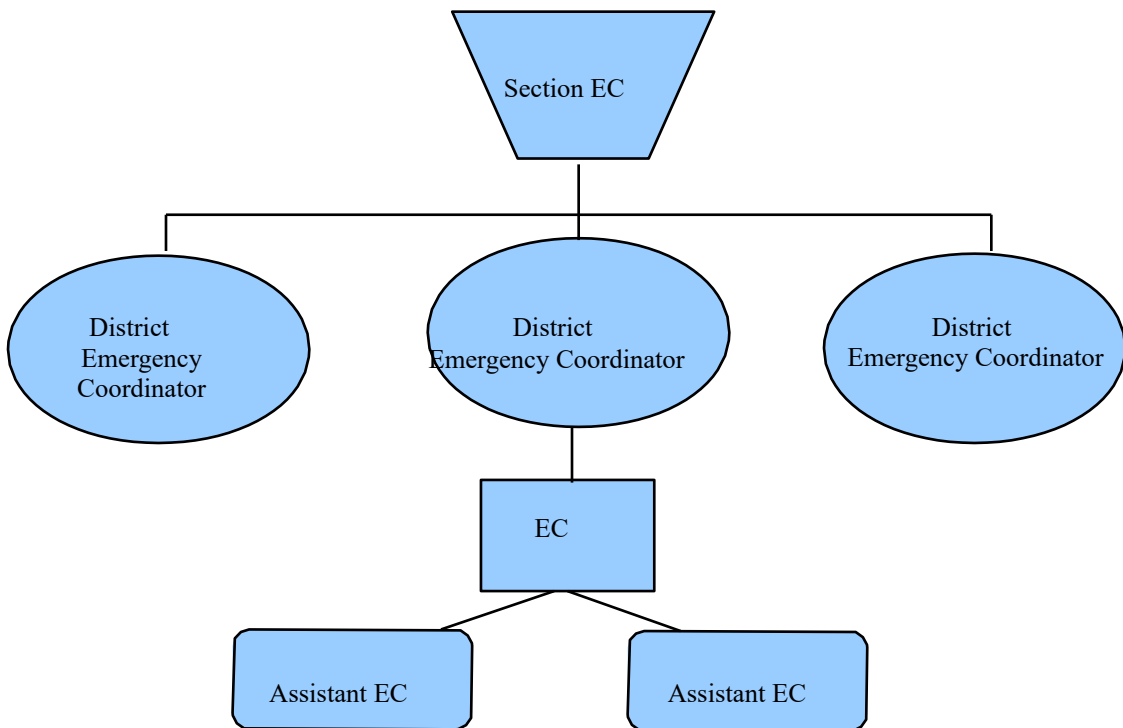
The purpose of this document is to establish a clear and effective operating methodology for the Amateur Radio Emergency Service in Walton County. Since situations tend to develop and change rapidly, this plan should not be considered a concrete set of rules, but guidelines to be adapted to best fit the situations encountered. Should any section of this document prevent you from providing constant and reliable communications, deviate from the plan to the extent necessary to effect communication.

The sections "Definitions", "Policies", "Emergency Coordinator", "Alerting Procedures" and "GATEway System" from the ARRL Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications Plan (NFLECP), 29 September 2010, are hereby included in this section as if they were written in full. For a complete, up-to-date reference on these sections, refer to the latest version of the NFLECP at the ARRL Northern Florida Section website: <http://www.arrl.org/sections/view/northern-florida>

Administration and Organization

Leadership and Organizational Structure

ARES is part of the American Radio Relay League, the ARRL, and as such, all ARES officials are field officials of the ARRL. This diagram illustrates the ARES chain of command:



Chain of Command: The County ARES Group

Emergency Coordinator

The Emergency Coordinator for a county ARES group is in charge of ARES operations in that county. ARES operators in his county report to him, and he reports in turn to the DEC. The EC is ultimately responsible for the planning, training and operations of the ARES group.

Assistant Emergency Coordinators

Assistant Emergency Coordinators are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the county EC. The Emergency Coordinator assigns them specific support roles within the organization.

Chain of Command:

Walton County Emergency Management

When ARES members operate in support of government agencies or government-managed emergency operations, the federally mandated National Incident Management System (NIMS) requires that each member have only one supervisor. This concept is known as *Unity of Command* and is required for organizations to be NIMS-compliant.

Therefore, when operating in support of government operations, the EC shall report directly to the Incident Commander, typically the Walton County Emergency Manager or his/her designate. Other Walton County ARES operators will continue to report to the EC.

Should the EC be unavailable, an AEC or other operator will be designated as the liaison between Walton EMA and Walton ARES operators.

Operations

Walton ARES operates in support of any emergency operation that requires timely, accurate and fail-safe communications. In Walton County, this generally means hurricanes. The majority of the information presented in this document will therefore focus around preparation, response, and relief for pre- and post-hurricane operations.

Activation

Walton ARES is activated by the ARRL directly or at the request of a served agency. Generally, ARES members will normally have advance notification of activations, but situations may not always allow for advance notification. Respond as soon as practically possible to activations, as ARES is activated for situations in which life and property depend on constant and reliable communications.

Served Agencies

*ARES operators are not first responders, and so almost always provide communications in support of another group – the American Red Cross, FEMA, or state, county, and city Emergency Management Agencies. These groups are called *Served Agencies*.*

The main served agency for Walton ARES is the Walton County Emergency Management (WCEM) and the main working relationship is currently with WCEM. Other agencies can request service, and depending upon human and equipment resources available, Walton ARES may assist these agencies upon request.

Status Levels

These status levels are passed down from the Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications Plan. Operators are encouraged to review the NFLECP for further information.

Monitoring – Condition Green (Level 3). ARES operators are encouraged to monitor for potential emergency situations, report as needed, and continue training and exercise.

Hot Standby – Condition Yellow (Level 2). ARES operators are notified that their services may be needed in less than 48 hours. Team leaders should prepare their teams; operators are requested to secure property and prepare for deployment.

Full Operation – Condition Orange (Level 1). ARES operators are in place and operating.

Activation Methods

The WCARES EC will activate ARES as a general rule. It is vital that ARES operators keep their contact information up to date. ARES operators should monitor email and Walton County local repeaters, mainly WF4X 147.285(+)(100hz), and the general FM calling frequency at 146.52 simplex.

Upon activation, ARES operators should contact the EC as soon as possible, by any means possible to receive operating instructions, pre-incident briefings, and any further instructions. Absent further instructions, ARES operators should report to the Walton County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located at the 75 S Davis Ln. DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435.

Nets

ARES Nets are the backbone of communication during emergencies. The Net

*Control Station (NCS) supervises and routes radio traffic during emergencies, allowing the smooth and orderly flow of information. Sometimes these are formal nets, where check-ins are taken, and formal traffic is passed between stations. More often, ARES Nets are simply directed nets, using tactical call signs to identify which operator is where. **In any case, an active ARES Net is an emergency net, and takes precedence over all other traffic.***

Local Nets (VHF/UHF)

Walton ARES nets will operate primarily utilizing UHF/VHF frequencies. UHF frequencies are encouraged whenever possible, since space and power requirements are more suitable for emergency operations. **When the EOC is staffed, the operators at the EOC shall function as Net Control.**

Once net control is established, a secondary Net Control located separately from the EOC shall be established.

HF Nets

HF nets are managed at the District and Section levels, and therefore should require little to no action from Walton County operators.

HOWEVER: All HF-capable stations are strongly encouraged to monitor calling frequencies and traffic nets, and to stand ready to offer assistance should traffic relay requests go unanswered. In the absence of a functioning net, HF operators are encouraged to relay priority and emergency traffic to the best of their ability. For additional information on HF Nets and their operation in ARES, refer to the Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications Plan.

Priority Traffic

In an emergency situation, health and welfare traffic is secondary to priority traffic, and health and welfare traffic should be diverted to a secondary net until the incident has terminated. Such health and welfare traffic should be recorded as opportunity allows and relayed after the incident has terminated, at the first possible opportunity.

Net Protocol

How to Check In:

Give your call sign, and location. If your location has been assigned a tactical call sign, use it.

When checking into an ARES net, be as exact with your location as possible, so there is no confusion. If you are relieving another operator, indicate this in your transmission. Example:

“This is KI4IIB, checking in. I am at the Walton County High School Shelter on Walton Road, in DeFuniak Springs. I am relieving W4XLB at this location.”

Indicating Traffic:

If you have traffic to pass, indicate the number of messages you have when you check in. Example:

“KI4IIB, Walton High School Shelter, one piece of traffic.”

Checking Out:

When you wish to secure your station, report to the net controller and they will normally grant permission unless your assistance is immediately vital. If you are going to step away from the radio report that you are doing so, and check back in when you return to your operating position.

Tactical Call Signs:

Operation positions generally change hands during an emergency situation of any length. To simplify things, ARES operators should use tactical call signs as they are assigned by Net Control. Consistency and speed of communication are the goals (at 3:30 in the morning, nobody will remember who's staffing a particular shelter). Operators still have to comply with FCC regulations regarding transmission of their own call signs (once every 10 minutes, and at the end of a transmission)

Frequency Usage

VHF:

- **Primary Frequency** is the WF4X 147.285(+)(100hz) DeFuniak Springs repeater.
- **Secondary Frequency** is the N4EMA-C D-Star DeFuniak Springs repeater.
- In case either of the above frequencies is not available, net control shall indicate the frequency to be used.

UHF:

ARES nets may use UHF frequencies whenever practical, given the more practical size, power and transmission qualities of UHF frequencies. Be aware that many stations have limited UHF capability, and so this statement is intended to be forward-looking to a time in which most ARES operators have UHF capability, and a capable infrastructure is deployed. Repeater frequencies may be found in Appendix D.

Operational Note: Many repeaters require sub-audible tones, which tend to interfere with digital operations. Ensure that the repeater you use has the tone turned off when using digital modes through a repeater.

D-STAR:

ARES nets may use D-STAR frequencies whenever practical. D-STAR has the capability to connect to regional and national nets using an Internet gateway, and is capable of providing GPS information to the EOC. Be aware that many stations do not have D-STAR capability, and so this statement is intended to be forward-looking to a time in which most ARES operators have D-STAR capability, and a capable infrastructure is deployed. Repeater frequencies may be found in Appendix D.

Operators

ARES operators serve their community in times of great need. They work long hours in conditions that are often stressful and unpleasant, with little sleep. Usually, their only reward is the knowledge of the good they have done for their community, and a few kind words. ARES operators are amateur radio operators of the highest caliber, professionalism, and dedication to their community.

Conduct

While courtesy is encouraged at all times for all amateur radio operators, it is absolutely vital during emergency operations. While the general public is not our intended audience, many non-hams listen through other means (scanners, etc). Our audience extends **far** beyond the confines of our radios. In that light:

- Professional conduct shall be maintained at all times.
- Confidential information, unless vital to operations, should not be passed over the air. If there is any doubt about the confidentiality of information, contact net control and inquire further.
- During emergency nets, stress builds quickly. If any personal conflicts arise which interfere with ARES operations, conflicting individuals shall attempt to resolve those conflicts. The EC or his/her designate shall have ultimate authority to resolve the conflict if the conflicting individuals cannot resolve the situation on their own.
- ***At NO time during operations will any station operators be under the influence of alcohol or any other mind-altering substances.***

Certification

NIMS stands for the National Incident Management System. It's a federally mandated training system that enables disparate agencies with little or no common background to operate on the same emergency scene in close conjunction with little notice or mutual training. It is designed to maintain interoperability before, during and after disasters.

ARES operators who wish to operate at the EOC, any shelters, or deploy as an extension of local, state, or federal government Emergency Management, shall be certified as required by the relevant agencies. These requirements are mandated from the Department of Community Affairs (the parent department of the Florida Emergency Management Agency), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Required certifications:

- Completion of online independent study NIMS courses, available at <http://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.asp>

- ① *ICS-100 Introduction To The Incident Command System*
 - ① *ICS-200 IS For Single Resources And Initial Action Incidents*
 - ① *ICS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS): An Introduction*
 - ① *ICS-800 A National Response Plan (NRP): An Introduction*
 - ① *ICS-802 Emergency Support Function (ESF-2) Communications*
- The above courses are required by federal regulation.

- ARRL Emergency Communications Classes
 - ① Introduction to Amateur Radio Emergency Communications EC-001

The above course is required by the ARRL for ARES appointment.

Regular training sessions are held to assist operators in attaining these goals. Lack of certifications should not discourage any volunteer from offering to help at any time. However, all operators are encouraged to pursue certification **well** before hurricane season approaches, as the turn-around time for certificate receipt may be in excess of 48 hours for an electronic notice, and up to 2 weeks for receipt of a paper notice.

Access Authority Badges

The Walton EOC, located at 75 S Davis Ln, DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

Walton County EOC badges will be issued to operators as needed. Operators are required to keep their issued badges secure when issued. Should a badge be lost or stolen, report the loss or theft immediately to the WCARES EC, since a stolen badge may allow access to secured areas by unauthorized persons.

In the event that access badges are unavailable, and/or ARES personnel are denied access to areas in which they are deployed, said ARES personnel shall request enforcing personnel to make contact with their team leader / supervisor at the EOC to grant access authority.

Example: An ARES member is requested to move to Navarre from Walton County, to assist in relief operations in Santa Rosa County, but encounters a roadblock.

ARES member acknowledges the situation, produces identification if requested, and politely requests that the enforcing officer or Guardsman make contact with his supervisor to confirm entry with both the Walton and Santa Rosa EOC. The ARES member shall also contact the Walton EOC to report his/her situation. The ARES member is -patient-, as these things take a few moments.

[This page left intentionally blank]

Appendix A: Glossary

AEC – Assistant Emergency Coordinator

ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service

ARC 4496 – Risk assessment guidelines used by county officials in evaluating shelters

ARRL – American Radio Relay League

DEC – District Emergency Coordinator

EC – Emergency Coordinator, usually in reference to the ARES field official.

EOC – Emergency Operations Center.

FCC – Federal Communications Commission

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

NCS – Net Control Station

NFAREC – North Florida Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

NFLECP – North Florida Section Emergency Communications Plan

NIMS – National Incident Management System

SEC – Section Emergency Coordinator

WCARES – Walton County ARES

WCEMA – Walton County Emergency Management Agency

Appendix B:

Deployment Teams

This guidance, extracted from the Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications Plan, outlines requirements for those amateurs in Walton County who wish to volunteer for deployment outside of Walton County in support of ARES. In cases where this document and the Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications plan conflict, the Northern Florida Section Emergency Communications plan takes precedence.

Volunteers in many areas are being more highly scrutinized these days. This ranges from general or criminal background checks through financial (credit scores, etc.) and personal character references. Many people (not just hams) who have nothing to hide look upon this as a form of invasion of privacy. In most cases however, the maximum degree of vetting for ARES® participation is a criminal background check.

To qualify for official deployment requires you to provide your Florida Driver's License ID number when registering in the Northern Florida Section Database. Joining the database does not trigger any form of background check. Those who are concerned should realize however, that background checks can be made by the State without permission and that there may be a background check made without an individual's knowledge prior to an actual deployment they agree to perform.

Deployment for emergencies directed by the Northern Florida Section will not be authorized unless the amateur radio operator has voluntarily submitted the necessary information to be officially listed in the Northern Florida Data Base. This is the only way the section can maintain a list of those willing and able to meet the needs of a deployment mission. Once the call for help comes in, it is too late to accomplish the pre-vetting necessary to determine who can commit to a deployment. The database allows us to get ahead of the storm so to speak. Determining the protection of volunteers who provide service to the state and its political

subdivisions is a complex tour involving several Florida Statutes. They can be found at the following website;

[http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?
App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0252/ch0252.htm](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=Ch0252/ch0252.htm)

The Florida State Statute GS 252.41 (2) (c) is the enabling legislation giving emergency managers the authority to do what is necessary. GS 768.1355 is the Florida Volunteer Protection Act and identifies conditions under which protection can be afforded to individual members of nonprofit organizations. GS 768.12, the Good Samaritan Act pertains mainly to medical personnel but has been held to protect people aiding in medical responses in some situations. Much depends upon the volunteer responding to a specific, documented, call for assistance from emergency management.

The amateur radio operator should be prepared to take full responsibility for personal injury or illness incurred in the performance of volunteer duties, and always act in a manner that is consistent with commonly accepted good practices for amateur radio operations and FCC rules and regulations, in order to justify his/her actions if they should ever need to seek a claim for compensation or request indemnity from liability.

Deployment Team Formation

Self-supporting mobile teams have been a staple of AREC operations for many years. Deployment teams can go quickly to distant locations to help in AREC operations. They can be first responders where no local amateurs are available. They can provide relief operators to let exhausted local operators to get some rest. Current guidance states that each Northern Florida DEC should maintain at least **one** such team ready to respond to a call within two hours or less of notification. All deployment teams shall obtain a Florida State tracking number before responding to an emergency communications request.

Suggested organization

The Northern Florida Section maintains a roster of pre-vetted volunteers for “jump team” duty. Volunteers are chosen in part for their ability to deploy upon notification with minimal delay and deploy with their "Ready Kits" already pre-checked and loaded.

Preparedness

The jump team should be self-supporting in transportation, fuel, food, water, emergency power, medications and sleeping accommodations in addition to their communications equipment. Generally, this would require one or more members of the jump team to have a roadworthy, serviceable recreational vehicle (RV) or travel trailer/tow vehicle combination with either built in or standalone generator.

The Ready Kit

Each member should prepare his own “Ready Kit” and keep it in their vehicle or at a specific place where it can be picked up without delay. Typically, the ready kit must include provisions *for at least three days of fully self-sufficient existence* with the understanding that deployment may extend beyond three days.

Deployment to Another District

Normally, no relief teams are sent to another District unless specifically requested by the DEC or Emergency Manager in the impacted area. Relief teams **must obtain a state tracking number before deploying to an impacted area**. Operators should not just “show up” and expect to go to work.

Upon arrival, the team shall follow the directions of the EC or Emergency Manager at the impacted area.

Scheduling Operator Relief

As soon as local ARES operators in the target area begin to report for duty posts, the DEC in the impacted area would notify the SEC that relief crews will be needed to staff various positions in about 24 hours, relieving worn-out local operators. The notice would specify the number of operators and any special equipment needed, e.g.; emergency power, portable repeaters, special antennas, ATV, AMTOR, WINLINK or APRS, or high-speed CW operators, for example. The SEC then attempts to locate suitable teams. He sends them to a staging point near the impacted area to await further instructions.

The SEC arranges for a second-wave replacement team if necessary, and attempts to keep fresh operators moving into the impact area about every 24 hours until they are no longer needed. The first deployment teams typically should be scheduled to arrive in the target area or staging area about 24 hours after local ARES units go on Activated Alert status.

In severe impact incident situations where personal trauma of the local ARES asset is considered at risk the SEC may assemble a Forward Command Assistance Team (FCAT) to accompany the initial the first wave of deployment teams. The purpose of this team is not to take over the role of the DEC or EC in the incident area but to relieve the impacted personnel so that they can take care of personal matters and get sufficient rest during times of extreme stress.

The local DEC and EC will continue to be full participants to the extent that they are able and that they decide given the circumstances, utilizing the FCAT as needed. One function of the FCAT will be to program stress reduction activities for all ARES volunteers in the impacted area and keep the SEC apprised of all matters affecting the welfare of team members.

The Reporting Point

At the reporting point the leader reports the teams arrival to the host EC. The host EC will advise the team how to reach specific duty sites, and on what frequency to check in. On that frequency, the impact-area EC will direct the team to its specific duty assignments.

Appendix C: Shelters

Shelters listed as ARC 4496 compliant (i.e., they were designed as shelters) are in bold, and are most likely to be open in a disaster.

Shelter Name	Address	Capacity	Special Needs	Showers?
Freeport High School	12615 US 331 Business Freeport, FL	2,630	80	Yes
Northwest Florida State College, Bldg 2	908 US Hwy 90W, DeFuniak Springs, FL	401	0	Yes
Paxton High School	21893 US Hwy 331N, Paxton, FL	485	0	Yes
Mossy Head Elementary School	13270 Hwy 90 W DeFuniak Springs, FL	1484	0	Yes
Walton High School	449 Walton Road DeFuniak Springs, FL	1588	0	Yes
South Walton High School (Host Shelter)	645 Greenway Trail Santa Rosa Beach, FL	1751	0	Yes

Appendix D – Simplex and Repeater Frequencies

This section is intended to provide a quick-reference section for local simplex and repeater frequencies. Keep in mind that in a disaster, many repeaters may be unavailable. Programming schedule for handheld radios, Okaloosa and Walton counties:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Offset</i>	<i>Sq</i>	<i>S-Freq</i>	<i>Call</i>	<i>Mem Seq</i>	<i>Mem Band</i>
All								
Simplex1	146.520	FM	0.0				000	A00
Simplex2	146.550	FM	0.0				001	A01
Simplex3	146.580	FM	0.0				002	A02
Simplex4	146.430	FM	0.0				003	A03
DS_Calling	146.460	DV	0.0				004	A04
District	444.950	FM	5.0	Tone	100	N4NID	005	A05
Walton								
Walt ARC DFS	147.285	FM	0.6	Tone	100	WF4X	006	B00
Walt EOC DFS	147.3750	FM	0.6	Tone	100	KJ4JAH	007	B01
Walt UHF DFS	443.750	FM	5.0	Tone	100	KJ4JAH	008	B02
Walt ARC Portland	145.2300	FM	-0.6	Tone	100	WF4X	009	B03
Port DV V	146.9625	DV	0.0			KJ4EZZ	010	B04
Port DV U	443.100	DV	0.0			KJ4EZZ	011	B05
Okaloosa								
NOARC	147.360	FM	-0.6	TSQ	100	W4AAZ	012	C00
PARC	146.790	FM	-0.6	TSQ	100	W4ZBB	013	C01
CR DV V	145.130	DV	-0.6			K4FWB	014	C02
CR DV U	444.600	DV	5.0			K4FWB	015	C03

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Repeater	Frequency / Offset	Tone	Emergency Power	Served Area
W4ZBB	146.790 (-)	100hz	No	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
W4AAZ	147.360(+)	100hz (can be disabled)	Yes	Crestview, FWB, Baker Eglin Range, Niceville
WF4X	147.285(+)	100hz	Yes	DeFuniak Springs, Freeport, N. Walton County-EchoLink
KJ4JAH	147.375(+)	100hz	Yes	Walton County EOC
KJ4JAH	443.750(+)	100hz	Yes	Walton County,
N4NID	444.950(+)	100.0	Yes	Crestview (West District)
W4ZBB	147.225(+)		Yes	South / Central Okaloosa County
K4PRA	146.760(-)	100.0 Hz	No	Pensacola
W4NN	147.120	100.0 Hz	Yes	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
W4NN	444.800(+)	100.0 Hz	Yes	FWB, Navarre, Destin, Eglin Range
K4FWB	145.13(-)	DV	Yes	Crestview, FWB, Baker
K4FWB	444.60(+)	DV	Yes	Crestview, FWB, Baker
K4FWB	1291(-20)	DV	Yes	Crestview, FWB, Baker
K4FWB	1251.3(RPS)	DD	Yes	Oka. EOC to Davidson Shelter (Red Cross HQ)

Appendix E: Roster Of Key Personnel

North Florida Section Manager: Kevin Bess

North Florida Section Emergency Coordinator: Karl Martin

West Panhandle DEC:

West Panhandle ADEC:

Walton County ARES EC: John Blaisdell 850-307-7458

Permission is hereby granted for unlimited whole or partial reproduction and distribution of this document in any format desired, so long as the content distributed remains unmodified.

ARES is a registered trademark of the American Radio Relay League, used by permission.

Information current as of August 27, 2014, except where noted.