

Pikes Peak Amateur Radio Emergency Services Introduction
July 05, 2015

WELCOME

Hello, and welcome to the *Pikes Peak* Amateur Radio Emergency Services (PPARES) community! By simply showing an interest in using your time and talents to help others, you have set yourself apart from the crowd. We hope that you find our organization warm and welcoming. All it takes to be a PPARES member is a desire to serve your community during times of emergency, be a licensed amateur (HAM) radio operator and have a willingness to train & educate yourself to be prepared when needed.

INTRODUCTION

ARES (formerly known as AREC), was founded in 1935 by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) and continues to be its emergency communications arm. Formally, ARES provides an answer to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate in Part 97 “*to enhance the value of the amateur services as a voluntary non commercial communications service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications*”. As such, your participation in ARES helps ensure the continued existence of amateur radio in the USA. Informally, PPARES provides opportunities to create and build relationships with like-minded people that can last a life time (find your 'tribe').

To accomplish our mission, each member has to be a licensed Ham operator, technically proficient on their equipment, been trained in emergency response procedures and practices, and maintain their proficiency in the field by participating in multiple public service events and served agency exercises each year. AND, we have fun doing it!

Our job #1 is communicating – to get the message through for our served agencies using the fastest and most accurate means available consistent with the urgency of the message. For our served agencies we provide reliable radio networks with message logging & tracking support, and professionals specially trained in emergency preparedness (NIMS) & the use of their equipment.

BACKGROUND

Take a little time to get to know us. We are Public Service minded, working to give back to our community and have fun at the same time. You do not need a lot of equipment. You are well equipped with whatever skills and equipment you have. What you do need is a willingness to donate some of your time and a desire to have fun working with similar like minded Hams. Take a few minutes and read the “Welcome” paragraph in the top center of our Website Home Page (<http://www.pparet.net>).

Our effectiveness comes from being a group of Hams with many different and diverse interests with varying skill levels who are trained to come together in an emergency situation to create voice and digital radio communication networks (“nets”). This is done using the FCC allocated Amateur Radio Spectrum, our own equipment & power sources, and our communications skills. We strive to be professional radio communicators. We are unique in what we do, and to do it effectively, we practice as teams at Public Service Events and weekly nets. We also train using our own Minimum Essential ARES Training (MEAT), the FEMA Incident Command System (ICS) Training, and ARRL Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Training. We work using our equipment to improve our proficiency while enjoying each others camaraderie.

This may seem a bit overwhelming at first, but you can eat the PPARES “elephant” one bite at a time; at a pace you are comfortable with, so it continues to be interesting & fun. Remember we are all volunteers. We have a broad range of skills and experiences from new Hams just learning, to old Hams

with many years of practice. It makes a marvelous mix and we work to enable everyone to grow. As you get to know our members and what they like to do, you may find some skills, training, and equipment you might want to add to your “kit” over time. It's a great way to make friends and expand your horizons.

GETTING STARTED

Talk to us on the Pikes Peak District Amateur Radio Emergency Service net. This net meets weekly on Tuesday evening 7pm local time on the 146.970 (-) (100 Hz) Pikes Peak FM Association repeater. All amateur radio operators interested in learning about PPARES are invited. In the event of QRM or temporary loss of the repeater, the alternate repeater frequency is 147.345 (+) (107.2Hz) run by the Cheyenne Mountain Repeater Group.

Visit and explore the PPARES website (<http://www.ppares.net>); it has three parts. The first is the main site itself; next is a *Membership Database*, and the third component is *Event Signup*. Each of these sections requires a separate username and password. When registering with each section, please use your call-sign as your user-name.

The *Membership Database* allows you to enter & update information about who you are, your training, equipment, interests, availability, etc. This allows the PPARES staff to match your capabilities with emergencies – critical information when responding to a served agency's needs on short notice. Once you have completely filled in your information, send an email to membership@ppares.net, including your callsign. This serves as your “application” to the Pikes Peak ARES group. Someone will get back to you with more information. Please use your ARRL email address (if you have one) when registering in the database.

The *Event Signup* site allows you to volunteer for scheduled events. Upcoming events are listed, along with the number of volunteers required. Simply click on an event, and fill in any requested information. You can also see which of your compatriots are signed up for various events. There are charity events, running events, cycling events, Pikes Peak Ascent and Marathon, Salvation Army holiday dinners, and, of course, the famous Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. You can only sign-up for events after having been approved as a member.

Once you have been approved as a PPARES member, your email address will be used to inform you about upcoming events, urgent notifications, and general PPARES information. You will be directed to visit the *reflector* (email list) site at: <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/ppares> to sign up. If you need help with the mailman software (or just want to learn more about how to adjust your delivery options), visit: <http://www.gnu.org/software/mailman/users.html>.

The reflector is for ARES information and requests only. No SPAM, “for sale”, personal correspondence, or inflammatory dialog will be tolerated. Questions or comments should be directed to the appropriate ARES staff member (staff email contact link on the website).

PPARES ACTIVATION IN RESPONSE TO REAL-WORLD EMERGENCIES

Pikes Peak ARES activates for real-world emergencies when called upon by our served agencies. We provide them with emergency communications using the FCC regulated Amateur Radio Spectrum, our own equipment, power, antennas, operating and technical skills, and our Incident Command System (ICS) training. We deploy to field locations in shifts so that many have the opportunity to support and so that no one individual is overburdened with the commitment. Our field locations may be Red Cross shelters, Salvation Army canteens, rural district fire stations, sheriff's department locations, and many

others.

In order to serve in Red Cross shelters, a background check (BI) is required (by the Red Cross). Several types of ID's can be used to satisfy this requirement. No information from the BI is recorded other than you have one that is current. No BI is required for deployment and participation at any non Red Cross shelter location.

THE AGENCIES SERVED IN REGION 2 DISTRICT 2 (R2D2) – EL PASO AND TELLER COUNTIES WHEN CALLED UPON

In El Paso County, PPARES serves the Colorado Springs Office of Emergency Management, the Fire Department, and Police Department (including the Emergency Operations Center). Also served are the Tri-Lakes Fire Department, Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, Memorial, Penrose / St Francis Hospitals, and the American Medical Respons. In addition, El Paso county (itself) is served along with the Air Force Academy, and Fort Carson.

In Teller County, PPARES serves the Office of Emergency Management, the Sheriff's Office & Emergency Operations Center (to include Search & Rescue), the Woodland Park Police, Cripple Creek/Victor Police/Fire/Medical, and the Teller County Fire Protection Districts.

THE TYPES OF SUPPORT PPARES PROVIDES TO SERVED AGENCIES

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| Inter-jurisdictional / agency communications | SKYWARN (severe weather observation/reporting) |
| Remote location communications | Logistics communication support |
| Mobile & portable operations | NWS Pueblo EOC forecast support |
| Packet data Communications | Portable EMWIN access |
| Out of district-long haul communications | Incident / Local Weather (Kestrel Instruments) |

WHAT THE SERVED AGENCIES EXPECT FROM PPARES

Our served agencies members are professionals, trained in the use of ICS procedures and protocols because they use NIMS. They expect our members, who deploy to support their agency to be previously trained in NIMS/ICS and accustomed to working on a team in an ICS environment. Second, they expect us to know our equipment and how to use it to find solutions that “move the message” and solve communications problems that are encountered whether in a fixed/rear or a forward/remote location. Lastly, they expect our members be self-supporting during the first 48 hours of the incident.

TRAINING

For a look at initial PPARES training, go-to the PPARES website (<http://www.ppare.net>), then navigate to the *Downloads* section, then to “Training – MEAT” in order to access the Minimum Essential ARES Training (MEAT). Download the archive file, and unZIP the file into its 182 .jpg compressed image files. Paging through the image slides will give you a good orientation for PPARES; some of the information is a little dated and still being worked on. We are working to make the file more user friendly. There will be official MEAT training sessions scheduled, and you'll be notified via email.

Mentioned in the MEAT slides are additional initial level courses of study involving the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the ARRL. The FEMA classes are IS 700.a, IS 100.b, IS 200.b and IS 800.b which are on-line, free, and go at our own pace; but should be completed within a year. The equivalent ARRL classes cost \$50, and you will be assigned a mentor for the duration of the class. The ARRL classes used to be several parts, but have been collapsed into EC-001, and EC-016 (EC-001 must be completed within 9 weeks of starting). Prerequisites to EC-001 are the FEMA IS

100.b and IS 700.a courses.

In addition to Emergency Preparedness training mentioned above, there is also National Weather Service SKYWARN Training. The National Weather Service (NWS) Office in Pueblo offers a one day class several times each in April-May in the Colorado Springs area to train PPARES members as Weather Spotters. They assign a special Weather Spotter Number to each person who successfully completes the training. As you will see below PPARES conducts a daily weather service net at 12:30 local time from 15 May until 31 August each year.

FIELD TRAINING

The Public Service Event “season” runs from March through December. There are usually two or three events/month. Members, depending on their experience and/or desire to work with more experienced members are usually placed along the various event courses to relay status and emergency information.

We ask ARES members to have a goal of participating in three events per year. The reason is that the events are what provide the team training for real-world emergencies. The radio procedures we use, the circumstances we work in, our ICS training, and experience with using our equipment are what’s necessary for participating in actual emergencies. In the post-9/11 world, there is increased sensitivity to training, experience and credentials in the use of volunteers in emergency situations.

The Emergency Coordinator, based on his meetings with the several served agencies, has learned that they desire to have PPARES members assigned to them who have current field radio team experience such as we gain from the public service events held during the year. The critical time during an emergency is the first 48 hours when PPARES can be asked to deploy upwards of three shifts to support an agency/agencies. A limited number of us are able to deploy on an hour or twos notice; however, most of us cannot because of jobs, family, etc. So number of us would deploy on the 2nd, 3rd, and follow-on shifts.

Obviously, ARES is a volunteer organization and no one is asked to contribute more than he or she can. Public service events provide training opportunities in relaxed, generally predictable environments. If you are relatively new to our world, you can be matched up with someone who is more knowledgeable so that you can grow your experience by participating.

We understand that not everyone is able to participate in field exercises, so there are a number of other ways to contribute to the organization and be ready for emergencies. PPARES has an important job for every ham radio volunteer. It is important to note, and PPARES recognizes, that not every member has the ability to support rigorous field exercises. We have a variety of jobs very necessary for the function of our organization that can help the organization. Some may require additional training/apprenticeship. Examples are PPARES Staff Positions (Membership, Training, Liaison to Hospitals or other agency, Resources, etc.), Net Control Stations, SKYWARN Weather Spotters, etc.

WEBSITES

Pikes Peak ARES website: <http://ppares.net/>

Colorado ARES website: <http://www.coloradoares.org/>

ARRL ARES website: <http://www.arrl.org/ares/>

ARRL Emergency communications training: <http://www.arrl.org/emergency-communications-training>

Pueblo Weather Service website: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pub/>

SKYWARN website: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/skywarn/>

FEMA Independent study NIMS course list: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp>

KEY DOCUMENTS

Helping you further sort through the PPARES website, under “Articles” there are several documents that provide useful information:

D-2 R-2 Ops Manual and Annexes (http://www.ppare.net/articles.php?cat_id=4)
EmComm Colorado 525 Repeater Policies (http://www.ppare.net/articles.php?cat_id=25)
Forms (http://www.ppare.net/articles.php?cat_id=6)

NETS

PPARES has three nets:

- 1) The Pikes Peak District ARES 2 meter FM Net on 146.97 MHz (-), 100 Hz tone, repeater each Tuesday evening at 7 PM (19:00 hours).
- 2) The Colorado ARES 2 meter SSB Net (upper sideband) on 144.220 each Monday Night at 7 PM.
- 3) The Pikes Peak ARES SKYWARN Mid-Day Weather Advisory FM Net held daily from May 15th through August 31st on the 146.970 (-), 100.0 Hz tone, repeater at 12:30 PM. We support the National Weather Service with trained Ham weather spotters – it is easy to get trained, either face-to-face or on-line – and receive a Spotter Identification Number to be identified by.

Backup for both FM Nets is the Cheyenne Mountain Repeater Group 147.345 MHz (+), 107.2 Hz tone, repeater.

For information on more nets, see : <http://www.coloradoares.org/nets.htm>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

History of ARES: <http://www.arkansas-aresraces.org/Training%20Scripts/history.pdf>
SKYWARN Weather Spotter Guide: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/brochures/SGJune6-11.pdf>
SKYWARN Training:
Registration: https://www.meted.ucar.edu/resources_faq.php
Module 1: http://www.meted.ucar.edu/spotter_training/spotter_role/
Module 2: http://www.meted.ucar.edu/spotter_training/convective/

We warmly welcome you to our team.

John Bloodgood, KD0SFY, Emergency Coordinator, Region 2 District 2, El Paso and Teller Counties