**Topic 8b: ARRL Memoranda of Understanding**

**Objectives**

Following completion of this Topic, you will be aware of the nature of the ARRL’s national-level agreements with major served agencies in government and the public sector.

**Student Preparation Required:**

* None required for this Learning Unit.

**ARRL Memoranda Of Understanding**

A major part of our emergency communication activity is conducted within the context of ARRL’s formal agreements with seven key agencies of the national emergency management community. These include, not in order of importance, the American Red Cross, the National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Homeland Security’s Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Association of Public- Safety Communications Officials-International, the National Communications System, and the Salvation Army.

These national-level agreements are called either a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU) or “Statement of Affiliation” (SOA), depending on the agency. For this discussion, we will refer these agreements as MOUs.

The Basics: An MOU provides a simplified framework for cooperation and coordination with agencies to which we as radio Amateurs may provide communication services. At the national level, this means periodic headquarters-to-headquarters contact for exchanging news, views, information, and points of contact in the field. For example, ARRL staff attends the annual Red Cross partnership meeting, along with representatives from other agencies and organizations (from the government and non-government, private and commercial sectors) that have MOUs with the congressionally chartered organization. The idea is to get to know one another on a face-to-face basis so that when an actual emergency occurs each knows whom to call and whom to count on.

At the local level, an MOU serves two purposes. First, it is a “door opener.” A new ARES group is more likely to be heard and taken seriously by a local NWS office when accompanied by the agreement document signed by the national head of the agency. The agency says, in effect, “We have examined this organization of radio amateurs and have found them to be trustworthy and able to render needed services for our field operations in times of emergency.” The agency head is telling its field offices, “work with them – they are good for us.”

Before a draft local MOU can be signed by a local ARES official, it must

be approved by the Section Manager and ARRL HQ

Second, the provisions of the MOU document spell out the capabilities and organization of the serving agency (ARES), the organization and needs of the served agency (them), and the methods of cooperation. These are broad guidelines that should lead to the establishment of a local MOU or similar document that sets forth the more detailed operational plans and policies to be subscribed to by both parties during drills, and actual events.

The most important step here is to ensure that both parties to the local agreement have a realistic assessment of the resources brought to the table by ARES, and the needs of the served agency. Fanciful expectations lead to breaches of trust and a breakdown of relations, with each party going away unhappy and demoralized. Rifts develop and once in place, become more or less permanent. Worst of all, the public – the clientele of both Amateur Radio and the agency – is not served. Having an MOU in place is a good way to see that there are no “surprises” and that expectation levels on either side are not beyond the scope of capabilities. In other words, we know what they expect – and they know what we can deliver.   Many sections or districts appoint a liaison representative to the local offices of the served agencies that we are about to discuss. This liaison forms a working relationship with the leadership on a local level of any of these agencies who may become involved with an ARES group.

**American Red Cross**

ARRL and the ARC have had cooperative agreements since 1940. Chartered by Congress in 1905, the American Red Cross provides relief to victims displaced by disaster, from the onset of disaster conditions through the recovery phase. By federal law, ARC is the lead agency for disaster relief in the United States. Their national headquarters is located in Washington, DC but most of the action occurs at the regional and local chapter levels. Local ARES Emergency Coordinators work closely with their counterparts in the chapter offices. Look at just about any summary of a disaster event, and you’ll find reports of Amateur Radio operators out on missions with ARC personnel and providing communications for shelter managers. For the purposes of the ARES program, the intent and cooperation detailed in the last MOU remain. Amateur Radio Operators should continue to operate in this spirit.

**National Weather Service**

Amateur Radio is almost synonymous with the SKYWARN™ program, since in many cases we are the “eyes and ears” of the National Weather Service during severe weather emergencies. Amateur Radio operators compose a large segment of SKYWARN volunteers, who report “ground truths” to local NWS offices in real time, supplementing their sophisticated weather monitoring equipment. ARRL has had an agreement with the National Weather Service enabling this support since 1986.

The agency consists of a national headquarters in Washington, DC, with regional offices throughout the country, and has undergone considerable reorganization in the last few years. The SKYWARN program is one of the finest examples of Amateur Radio operators providing public service.

**A** **Department of Homeland Security - Citizen Corps - FEMA**

In June 2003, ARRL became an official "affiliate program" of Citizen Corps, an initiative within the Department of Homeland Security to enhance public preparedness and safety. Citizen Corps programs are administered by DHS’s Corporation for National and Community Service.

The present Statement of Affiliation (SoA) makes ARRL an affiliate under all four Citizen Corps programs – Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, Community Emergency Response Teams, and Medical Reserve Corps. The League joins the National Safety Council, Points of Light Foundation, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Association, Save a Life Foundation and The Jaycees as Citizen Corps affiliate programs.

The SoA calls on DHS and ARRL to raise public awareness of Amateur Radio as a safety resource. DHS and ARRL will cooperate in providing training and accreditation for Amateur Radio emergency communications. They will work together to promote the formation of local Citizen Corps councils and assist them with education, training and volunteer service opportunities that support first responders, disaster relief organizations and community safety efforts.

ARRL has worked very closely with FEMA beginning in 1984 when an MOU was inked that helped ARRL volunteers coordinate their services with emergency management at all levels of government.

**APCO International**

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International is

composed of communications professionals in emergency medical, law enforcement, fire, SAR, and other public safety fields. The APCO Bulletin is an excellent periodical devoted to a broad range of communication issues. (The June 1996 issue featured Amateur Radio.) Headquartered in South Daytona, Florida, the organization has numerous chapter offices across the country. ARRL volunteers should interface with the chapter offices. APCO International promotes standardization, education, and information exchange. Amateur Radio is often represented at the organization’s annual convention.

The ARRL/APCO MOU calls for pre-planning between local ARRL officials and APCO chapter officers to provide for supplemental communications services by Amateur Radio operators during emergencies. A new MOU was signed in 1996. National-level coordination occurs between standing committees of both organizations.

**National Communications System**

The NCS is a unique organization. It is a confederation of 24 organizations across the Federal Government with the mission of ensuring a reliable national security and emergency preparedness communications system. The President designates member organizations that have communication assets of value to emergency response or that have important related policy, regulatory, or enforcement responsibilities. These assets compose the bulk of the Federal Government’s non-military telecommunications resources.

Veteran radio amateurs may recall the NCS “Night Tango” exercises of the ’80s, designed to evaluate the capabilities of volunteer communications systems to support NCS goals. NCS recognizes the resources that trained radio amateurs bring to the table, especially through the decentralized field organization (ARES and NTS) of the ARRL.

**The Salvation Army**

Last, but certainly far from least, is The Salvation Army (TSA), which for decades has provided services to victims of disasters. Its national headquarters is in Alexandria, Virginia. TSA is organized in four territories across the US, each having its own headquarters and corporate structure. Each territorial office has between nine and eleven administrative centers reporting to it

The Salvation Army is particularly active in the recovery stage of disasters, and its communications needs are often filled by Amateur Radio volunteers in addition to its own Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN) volunteers. ARRL staff meets with Salvation Army representatives each year at the annual NVOAD meeting in Washington. NVOAD is the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, of which ARRL is a member-organization. The ARRL and the Salvation Army revised their MOU in 1996.

**Getting Your Local MOUs Approved**

Before a draft local MOU can be signed by a local ARES official, it must be approved by the Section Manager and ARRL HQ. This is to prevent agreements that could be detrimental to, or cause legal difficulties for ARRL, which is the parent organization of the ARES program.

**Rules and Regulations of the ARRL Field Organization**

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3. In each section there will be an elected Section Manager (SM) who will have authority over the section's Field Organization, and, in cooperation with the Division Director, will foster and encourage ARRL activities and programs within that section. No Section Manager shall have the authority to commit, obligate or bind the League in any dealings with individuals, entities or governmental units or agencies unless the agreement has been reviewed by the Membership & Volunteer Programs Manager and approved by the ARRL President or the President's designee.

Sample MOUs are available from ARRL HQ that can be used as templates for writing your own MOU. (An example is included here as [**LMOU.doc**](http://www.arrl.org/files/file/EC-016-Course/LMOU.doc)) If you have any questions about what to say in your MOU, please contact ARRL HQ by phone, letter, fax, or email.

Once agreed upon and approved, a signed copy should be retained by the served agency, ARRL HQ and the SM. But you are not done yet! Set a date for review and revision. Events, situations and needs constantly change. If you have not met with your served agencies to review and revise any MoUs in a while, an old document may be worse than no document.   Always be sure to set a periodic review date.

**References**

For MOUs listed for each of the agencies above, please consult the following link:

* **www.arrl.org/served-agencies-and-partners**

DHS SAFECOM has a web site which provides a "Local to Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Template as one of eight guidance documents featured in the Formal Agreement and Standard Operating Procedure Template Suite and Reference Library. The Template Suite and Reference Library provide members of the emergency response community with guidance to construct their own  agreements and standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to communications inter-operability.

* **www.dhs.gov/safecom**

ARRL Rules & Regulations:

* **www.arrl.org/arrl-rules-regulations**

**Review**

MOUs and similar documents have been signed between ARRL and a number of organizations that deal in emergency response. These MOUs establish a set of guidelines for cooperation and support. In addition, they act as letters of introduction for Section or local ARES organizations that wish to establish relationships with local or state branches of these organizations and agencies. National MOUs establish a basis from which local MOUs can be drafted. All MOUs must be approved by the Section Manager and ARRL staff before signing.

**Student Activities**

1. In what ways is an MOU similar to a written contract?
2. In what ways do MOUs and contracts differ?
3. Suppose you were assigned to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between your emcomm group and a local agency.

A.           List the things you would need to know before you could develop such a document.

B.           List some of the items you would include in the MOU.

C.           List some of the items you would exclude from the MOU.

**Topic 8 Section B Knowledge Review**

In order to demonstrate mastery of the information presented in the topic, you will be asked a series of un-graded questions. There are approximately 5 questions on the following pages in multiple-choice or true/false format. Feedback will be offered to you based on the answer you provide. In some cases, you may be directed back to the area of the topic where a review might benefit you in order to find the correct answer.

Question 1

Which of the following best defines an MOU?

1. A contractual agreement between agencies.
2. An insurance policy covering national emergencies.
3. A framework for cooperation and coordination between organizations.
4. The means by which Congress charters certain non-governmental organizations.

Question 2

Which of the following groups of organizations have current, signed MOUs with ARRL?

1. The U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
2. The National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Guard.
3. The American Red Cross, International Red Cross and The Salvation Army.
4. The Department of Homeland Security, National Communications System and The Salvation Army.

Question 3

Which of the following does an MOU not provide at the local level?

1. It is a “door opener.”
2. It spells out capabilities, needs and methods of operation.
3. It forms the foundation for operational plans and policies.
4. It provides a written guarantee of service.

Question 4

With which of the following Department of Homeland Security Citizen Corps programs is ARRL affiliated?

1. Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, Community Emergency Response Teams and Medical Reserve Corps.
2. The National Safety Council, Medical Reserve Corps, the Points of Light Foundation and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.
3. Volunteers in Police Service, Community Emergency Response Teams, and the National Volunteer Fire Council.
4. Neighborhood Watch, National Fire Protection Association, Jaycees and APCO International.

Question 5

Regarding the National Communications System, which of the following is true?

1. It is a confederation of organizations across the Federal Government.
2. Its membership includes communication professionals in the fields of emergency medical, law enforcement, fire and SAR.
3. It sponsors the Night Tango event annually.
4. It operates a separate emergency radio network called SATERN.

**Correct Answers**

1 c

2 d

3 d

4 a

5 a