

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR HAMS**

**ARES® (Amateur Radio Emergency Service):** Consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes. Southwestern Alabama ARES: [swalares.info](http://swalares.info)

### **ARESMAT (Amateur Radio Emergency Service Mutual Assistance Team)**

A completely self sufficient group of hams that carry all of their radios, antennas, generators, towers, tents, sleeping bags, fuel, food, and water for at least 4 days. Must be able to respond rapidly. When assembled and trained, they will be credentialed to be recognized anywhere in Alabama and surrounding states. Contact the ARRL-AL Section Emergency Coordinator [sec@arrl-al.org](mailto:sec@arrl-al.org) . <http://www.arrl-al.org>

**ARRL – AL Section:** Local Points-of-Contact are needed (operators whom the AL Section Emergency Coordinator can contact during emergencies). [sec@arrl-al.org](mailto:sec@arrl-al.org) [www.arrl-al.org](http://www.arrl-al.org)

**ARRL Legislative Action Program:** wants League members who are willing to get directly involved in promoting and protecting Amateur Radio through coordinated, legitimate political action at the "grassroots level." Members of Congress often base their votes upon their understanding of what their constituents – the voters who put them in office – want. Radio amateurs can be a valuable resource to members of Congress, who may have only a limited knowledge of Amateur Radio. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

<http://www.arrl.org/legislative-faqs> on the ARRL Legislative Action Program is available for ARRL members and others interested in this ARRL grassroots effort. Contact your ARRL Division Director <http://www.arrl.org/divisions/> for additional information or to volunteer.

**ARRL Volunteer Counsel/Volunteer Consulting Engineer Program:** Under these ARRL programs, lawyers and engineers who are also licensed amateurs have agreed to assist other amateurs with ham-related legal and engineering problems, such as antenna restrictions and tower construction. They will provide a free initial consultation. VC's and VCE's must be full ARRL members. VC's must be admitted to the bar in the state for which they are listed. VCE's must be Registered Professional (structural, civil, mechanical) Engineers. If you would like more information or to join one of these groups, or just get a copy of the complete list for your area, go to <http://www.arrl.org/volunteer-counsel-program> ; <http://www.arrl.org/volunteer-consulting-engineer-program> or contact ARRL headquarters.

**Alabama State Defense Force:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Alabama State Defense Force (ASDF) covers Mobile, Baldwin, & 9 surrounding counties. The ASDF is an all-volunteer state military unit, created to assist the AL National Guard and take over their state-side duties when the Guard is mobilized out of the area. The ASDF operates only within the state of Alabama. They assist the EMA during times of emergency, as well as providing community services (traffic and crowd control) for large events such as veteran and patriotic ceremonies. They also help provide disaster operations training. Membership is open to any US citizen, 17 years of age or older, and not a member of any US military component, and willing to commit to training to meet ASDF missions. Prior military service is not a requirement. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade meets on the second Monday at a local armory. They would appreciate help from individuals and groups with communications experience.

3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade <http://sdf.alabama.gov/3rd/> ASDF Home: <http://sdf.alabama.gov/>

**American Red Cross:** Alabama Gulf Coast Chapter <http://www.redcrossalcoast.org>, (251) 544-6100 ; 35 N. Sage Ave., Mobile, AL 36607

**Civil Air Patrol:** The Civil Air Patrol performs three main functions – emergency services, aerospace education, and cadet training. Communications volunteers are needed both on the ground and in the air.

Alabama Wing – <http://www.alwg.cap.gov/> National HQ – <http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/>

**Disaster Communications:** In addition to ARRL, MARC, and the agencies listed here, religious / faith-based organizations, community groups, and business and governmental entities may

offer opportunities to serve through their local or national offices. Self-deployment to disaster sites is not advisable due to curfews, limited gasoline, no local contact, etc. An appropriate ID issued by a recognized agency may be needed to enter stricken areas. Volunteers will need equipment, personal items and provisions, vaccinations, and may work in harsh or uncomfortable conditions. Some agencies require volunteers to have specific training, and may require a background check. Online courses or training through local organizations is available through the ARRL, FEMA, American Red Cross, etc. A point-of-contact in the local area is needed to direct volunteers to where they are needed. Interested operators should work with MARC, ARRL, or other recognized disaster assistance agencies.

**Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS):** A United States Department of Defense sponsored program, established as a separately managed and operated program by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program consists of licensed amateur radio operators who are interested in military communications on a local, national, and international basis as an adjunct to normal communications. At present, the primary mission of MARS is to provide communications support for federal agencies responding to emergency situations. This is done by supporting state and local government efforts to save lives, protect public health, property, and to ensure individual safety.

US Army MARS – [www.netcom.army.mil/mars](http://www.netcom.army.mil/mars)

US Navy / Marine Corps MARS – [www.navymars.org](http://www.navymars.org)

US Air Force MARS – <http://afmars.tripod.com/mars1.htm>

#### **Mobile County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)**

Volunteer amateur radio operators man the well-equipped ham radio station at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during times of natural or man-made disaster. However, space is very limited, and families are not allowed. Volunteers are also needed to provide communications for shelters (to which they may bring their families), as well as in their own area and throughout the community in the aftermath (while remaining in their homes during the event). For more information, talk to a club officer or contact the MCEMA at (251) 460-8000 (answered 24/7) or [www.mcema.net](http://www.mcema.net), 348 N. McGregor Ave.; Mobile, AL 36608.

#### **Mobile County Sheriff's Flotilla Water Search and Rescue**

The Sheriff's Flotilla is a marine search and rescue organization composed of volunteers. They assist the Sheriff's Department, as well as the Marine Police, other law enforcement agencies, and the Coast Guard. As well as boats, the organization uses jet skies, hovercraft, and an airboat for rescues in shallow water. A response unit with radios, a generator, and diving suits and equipment serves as a command unit, and a converted school bus is used as a base unit. Volunteers visit schools with their water safety program, and the "I got caught wearing my life jacket" t-shirts for kids have attracted attention from similar organizations in other areas.

Funding comes mainly from donations, along with member dues and limited allotments from the county. Most members furnish their own equipment. Volunteers are liable to be called anytime day or night. All ages are welcome, and those who cannot go out on the boats can stay on land and provide radio communications, freeing others to assist in the actual search and rescue.

New members go through a 6 month trial period called the cadet program, when they are paired with an experienced volunteer for on-the-job training. Applicants for search and rescue must complete first aid and CPR, a training program on boat operation, radio communication training, and a 50 yd. swim with or without life jacket. For more information, contact the Mobile County Sheriff's Office at 574-8633.

#### **National Disaster Medical System – The Southwest Alabama Disaster Medical Assistance Team**

A DMAT is a team of volunteer healthcare professionals and support staff capable of deploying in 8 to 12 hours and delivering medical care in austere conditions, self-sustaining for 72 hours. These volunteers travel to affected areas to assist after natural and man-made disasters, as well as providing medical support for large gatherings such as air shows, triathlons, presidential

inaugurations, the Olympics, and local events such as the visit of the tall ships. Non-medical personnel with radio experience are needed for communications. All radio equipment and transportation is provided, as well as training and insurance coverage, and DMAT leaders are glad to meet with your employer. Volunteers must purchase their own uniforms and travel and personal gear, and the same resumes and applications are required as for a government job. A variety of technical and physical skills as well as comprehensive training are needed. International deployment is possible, as this is a Level 1 team. All positions are over-staffed to allow for unavailability. There is also a need for volunteers who cannot travel. For information, visit the website at [www.al3dmat.com](http://www.al3dmat.com) (an application is available on-line). Monetary donations or in-kind contributions of needed items such as office supplies are always welcome.

**Salvation Army:** SALVATION ARMY TEAM EMERGENCY RADIO NETWORK (SATURN)  
[www.saturn.org](http://www.saturn.org)

**Scouts:** BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA – Scouting provides several applications for ham radio, including the radio merit badge. Volunteers are needed to introduce amateur radio to scouts, mentor those who are interested, teach radio theory classes, and assist with Jamboree On The Air (JOTA). JOTA takes place on the third weekend of October every year; it is not a contest, but an opportunity for Scouts and Guides around the world to communicate with each other and experience Amateur Radio. Contact the local Scout Councils for more information (look in the phone book under “Boy Scouts of America” or “Girl Scouts of America.”) For more information about scouting and ham radio or JOTA, go to <http://www.arrl.org/amateur-radio-and-scouting> .

**Skywarn:** During severe weather conditions volunteers man radios at the local National Weather Service office to assist with communications during Skywarn net and weather spotter activation. Weather spotters provide information on local weather conditions. For more information contact Gary McDuffie (KC4MIX), (251) 661-8806 [kc4mix@bellsouth.net](mailto:kc4mix@bellsouth.net)  
<http://www.skywarn.org/>

**US Coast Guard Auxiliary:** The US Coast Guard Auxiliary is looking for Amateur Radio operators or prospective amateur licensees. When normal means of communication are out of service, the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary rely on the Auxiliary Net (AuxNet), a backup radio network, to maintain communication with both the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard. In areas where there is no regular Coast Guard presence, the Auxiliary may rely solely on its AuxNet for communication. In areas with a large USCG presence, the AuxNet operates in both a support and backup capacity. The US Coast Guard Auxiliary is open to all US citizens over the age of 17. A security background check, paid for by the US Coast Guard, is required before an applicant is accepted. Visit the US Coast Guard Auxiliary Web site [nws.cgaux.org](http://nws.cgaux.org)

**US Ranger Corps, Alabama Brigade:** The USRC will provide volunteers to assist their local communities in everything from helping in a disaster and National emergency, to assisting local authorities in locating missing persons and provide prompt assistance to any local community request made to the local USRC commander. The USRC is a total volunteer organization run by volunteers using their personal resources. Amateur Radio operators are needed to help provide communications. [usrangercorps.us](http://usrangercorps.us)

**Volunteer Examiners (VE's):** For information on becoming an ARRL examiner, go to <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/> or contact Weston Fryatt, AK4BK, [wryatt@gmail.com](mailto:wryatt@gmail.com) , 281-4873. For information on becoming a CAVEC examiner, contact Larry Galey, KC4JPD, 625-0235, [lgaley1@bellsouth.net](mailto:lgaley1@bellsouth.net) , or David Robinson, WA4AVC, [wa4avc4873@att.net](mailto:wa4avc4873@att.net)

*Educational Resources:* The ARRL has information and resources available for those wishing to introduce Amateur Radio to people of all ages, training for disaster communications, tools to help those interested in upgrading their license class, and scholarship opportunities available to hams. <http://www.arrl.org/courses-training>

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