

SECTION 24: MANAGING PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEERS

This section provides guidelines to help you manage personnel and volunteers.

Once you complete this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the personnel that may become involved in ARES operations
- Describe the mustering process
- Match capabilities to requirements
- Manage spontaneous volunteers.

AVAILABLE PERSONNEL

During exercises and planned operations, you are likely going to be working with an ARES group made up entirely of operators who have had some experience or have participated in at least some ARES training. However, during real disaster operations, you may also be compelled to deal with operators who are not ARES trained.

The following groups may either volunteer to participate, or actually self-deploy:

- Amateur radio club members, as a group
- Untrained, individual amateurs
- Amateurs with ARES training obtained in other regions, who are not currently registered with ARES locally
- ARES operators arriving from other areas under a mutual assistance request
- ARES operators who self-deploy from other regions
- Non-ARES trained amateurs who self-deploy from other regions
- Unlicensed amateurs in training who may already have equipment and familiarity
- Unlicensed radio owners who wish to self-deploy

Any 'walk on' volunteers that either represent themselves as amateurs or ARES operators potentially become a management problem that you will have to address. In some cases, such as radio club members or ARES operators arriving under a mutual assistance request, these will present valuable opportunities to increase your network capability and capacity. In other cases, such as unlicensed radio enthusiasts and even licensed amateurs with no ARES training, they will present a possible hazard to your operations. In any case, you cannot ignore these groups.

MUSTER

The process of mustering, or activating, your personnel will change depending on the type and severity of the emergency. Typically, the following methods are used:

- telephone callout
- on-air callout
- gathering at a single marshalling point
- gathering at multiple marshalling points
- direct-from-home dispatch (operators sent from their home locations directly to posts, without ever going to a marshalling area).

MATCHING CAPABILITIES TO REQUIREMENTS

Factors to consider

Training

Check the ARES membership database to see the training provided to each member. When possible, assign personnel based on training and experience. (For example, an operator who has been oriented on the PLEOC site is a better choice for PLEOC deployment than one who has not.)

Also consider other training the person may have had (for example, ground search and rescue, first aid, community aid, coast guard auxiliary, ATV use, etc.).

Fitness

Unfortunately, many amateur radio operators and some ARES personnel face fitness challenges that may limit how and when you should deploy them during actual emergencies. Consider not only known disabilities but also overall health when assigning personnel to posts. Also consider the schedule and likelihood of relief when making assignments. (Some posts may not expect relief for 24 hours or more, putting great stress on any operators assigned there.)

Language

If the disaster area includes regions or served agencies in which French is a common working language, does the person have enough fluency in French.

Mobility

Does the person have a vehicle that is capable and suitable for transport to and from the site or duty?

Is the person mobile enough to meet the onsite requirements? (For example, a person with a physical disability may not be suitable for duties shadowing a fire chief, or attached to a search and rescue team.)

Risk

Assess the risk associated with a posting and consider it in relation to the person's expressed preferences and the person's vulnerability. (For example, in a radiological environment, it is preferable to use operators who are no longer of childbearing age.)

MANAGING SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

You must be careful when dealing with the participation of spontaneous or unsuitable volunteers (for example, unlicensed radio enthusiasts). If these volunteers are perceived to be radio amateurs by served agencies, they become a management problem you must deal with even if it seems at first to have nothing to do with ARES.

Strategies you may wish to use:

- Assigning volunteers to assist with already staffed posts
- Asking volunteers to perform non-radio related duties elsewhere
- Asking volunteers to perform non-radio related communications duties (for example, handling telephone traffic).