ROWLETT CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY	
TITLE: Rowlett Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)/Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES®) SOP	
APPROVAL SIGNATURE: NAME: Mark Riaboy TITLE: ARES/RACES Director	DATE: September 27, 2024 POLICY NO.: 23-143 (supersedes 19-137 & 21-141) PROGRAM: ARES®/RACES® SECTION: Operations PAGES: 7

INTRODUCTION

The Rowlett Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®) program is a field organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL®). It is composed of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed amateur radio operators who are trained in emergency communicators, volunteering their personal time, skill and equipment, to serve in the public interest. The Rowlett ARES® group is focused on providing service to Rowlett, Texas and the surrounding area.

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES®) is an emergency radio service authorized by the FCC rules and regulations governing amateur radio in the United States. RACES stations are only activated by a state, county, or local emergency management authority to operate on their behalf.

All references to ARES/RACES below shall refer to the combined activities of Rowlett Citizen Corps Council (RCCC) FCC licensed amateur radio operators.

MISSION

The Rowlett ARES/RACES mission is to assist the City of Rowlett, Texas by providing communications during events of all kinds including severe weather, disasters, crises, and emergency as well as encouraging amateur radio education throughout our community.

AUTHORITY

Rowlett ARES/RACES is an affiliated program of the RCCC. All bylaws, policies, and procedures of RCCC apply and are enforceable to all Rowlett ARES/RACES members to the fullest extent possible.

This policy supersedes the 18-138 Rowlett Emergency Plan where conflicts in policy language exist.

POLICY

1. BASIC MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

1.1. Meet RCCC membership requirements

1.2. Live or work in the City of Rowlett. The ARES/RACES Director may waive this requirement

1.3. FCC Amateur Radio Operator license.

1.4. Valid driver's license and reliable transportation.

1.5. A dual band (2m/70cm) amateur radio appropriate for ARES/RACES operation.

1.6. Sign an RCCC waiver and non-Disclosure agreement as a condition of membership.

1.7. Demonstrate a willingness to prepare for and participate in emergency communications events.

1.8. Demonstrate a willingness to learn skills, knowledge, and equipment to operate effectively as an ARES/RACES member.

2. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1. A membership committee shall be comprised of not less than three (3) ARES/RACES members including the ARES/RACES Director.

2.2. All applicants must complete an application form or other documents as required by the Membership Committee.

2.3. All applications will be reviewed within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the completed packet by the Membership Committee.

2.4. The Membership Committee shall schedule and conduct a panel interview with the applicant to determine their suitability for the program. Determinations of the Membership Committee are final and not subject to appeal.

2.5. A criminal background check shall be completed on all applicants. Findings should be in line with RCCC policy.

2.6. Findings of the Membership Committee shall be approved by the ARES/RACES Director, and then reported to the applicant.

2.7. In the event an applicant is not accepted into membership, the applicant may not reapply for-a period of two years from the interview date.

2.8. New members shall serve a minimum six (6) month probationary period.

3. MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

3.1. Rowlett ARES/RACES members are expected to:

3.1.1. Report for duty as requested within 20 minutes of an activation call.

3.1.2. Adhere to all FCC rules and regulations.

3.1.3. Conduct themselves in a matter befitting public safety communications.

3.1.4. Demonstrate excellent operating procedures at all times.

3.1.5. Maintain radio equipment in good working order and know basic functions of their equipment.

3.1.6. Maintain an acceptable level of readiness, including go kits, battery packs, etc.

3.1.7. Comply with instructions of authorities, incident command, and program leadership.

3.1.8. Wear appropriate program clothing, ID cards, etc. and present a professional appearance whenever on duty.

3.1.9. Prioritize responses for Rowlett activations. As a best practice, members are strongly discouraged from membership in more than one ARES® or RACES® organization so as to avoid conflicts during activations.

3.2. Attend meetings, trainings and drills as required

3.3. During the 6-month probationary period, new members must successfully complete the FEMA IS-100 Introduction to the Incident Command System, IS-200 Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, and IS-700 An Introduction to the National Incident Management System Independent Study Courses and submit proof of such completion to the Rowlett ARES/RACES Director. All courses are available online at no charge.

3.4. Meet annual renewal requirements as determined by the ARES/RACES leadership. This includes but not be limited to:

3.4.1. Participation in a minimum of four monthly training nets or Skywarn® activations per year.

3.4.2. With prior approval of the Rowlett ARES/RACES Director, members may substitute up to two volunteer radio affiliated activities for these requirements.

3.4.3. NWS Skywarn® Basic Training at least once every 2 years.

4. MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

4.1. ARES/RACES Membership is a one-year term and may be renewed annually.

4.2. The ARES/RACES leadership shall determine annual renewal and training requirements and post such at the beginning of each calendar year.

4.3. The ARES/RACES Director shall determine if criteria for annual renewal has been met for each member and make notifications in December for the same calendar year.

5. MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

5.1. Membership in Rowlett ARES/RACES may be terminated for any of the following:

5.1.1. At the member's request.

5.1.2. Failure to achieve criteria for annual renewal.

5.1.3. Violation of RCCC policy, rules, or provisions

5.1.4. Conduct that is contrary to the ARES/RACES mission, harmful to the RCCC or any Affiliated Program, or illegal in any form.

5.1.5. Failure to finish probationary requirements or meet expectations.

5.1.6. Other reasons as determined by RCCC or ARES/RACES leadership.

6. ADMINISTRATION

The Rowlett ARES/RACES program shall be administered by a Director appointed by the RCCC Board of Directors. The ARES/RACES Director serves on the Board and receives approval on policy and procedural initiatives from the Board. The ARES/RACES Director may appoint a Leadership Team as needed to facilitate the operations of the program.

The ARES/RACES Director serves at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed by a simple majority vote of the RCCC Board of Directors. ARES/RACES Leadership Team members appointed by the Director serve at the pleasure of the Director and may be removed at will to suit changing program needs.

7. SKYWARN® PROGRAM

7.1. Qualifications for Skywarn® spotters

7.1.1. NWS Basic Skywarn® class at least once every 2 years, but encouraged to take it yearly..

7.1.2. NWS Advanced Skywarn® class optional but encouraged.

7.1.3. It is recommended that storm spotters have at a minimum:

7.1.3.1. Technician or higher-class FCC Amateur Radio license

7.1.3.2. A dual band (2m/70cm) amateur radio with a minimum of 25 watts of power.

7.1.4. During a Skywarn activation, alternative methods of communication may be accomplished by any of the following:

7.1.4.1. Rowlett CERT radio frequencies

7.1.4.2. The Slack communications program designed by Slack Technologies, LLC

7.1.5. The ARES/RACES director may authorize RCCC members that do not have an FCC amateur radio license as Skywarn® spotters on a case-by-case basis. Communication by non-licensed amateur radio operators may be accomplished using any of the alternative methods listed in section 7.1.4 above.

7.2. Authority

7.2.1. Authority for this policy resides jointly with the RCCC Board of Directors through Program Leadership, and the Rowlett Office of Emergency Management.

7.2.2. For purposes of command and control, the ARES/RACES Director shall have chief responsibility for coordination of all notifications, deployment orders, or radio operations concerning Skywarn® operations.

7.3. Activation Authority

7.3.1. The Skywarn® Response Team may be deployed at the request of one of the following:

7.3.1.1. Direct Emergency Operations Center (EOC) request (Office of Emergency Management, Fire Chief, City Official)

7.3.1.2. ARES/RACES or CERT® Director, or their designee

7.3.1.3. RCCC President

7.4. Alert Levels

7.4.1. The following alert levels shall be used for notifying Skywarn® responders of potential activation:

7.4.1.1. **PREALERT** - Notice of potential spotter activation within the next 24 - 48 hours based on NWS forecast of severe weather.

7.4.1.2. **YELLOW ALERT** - Notice of potential spotter activation within the next 120 minutes. The **YELLOW ALERT** is issued based on the following criteria:

7.4.1.2.1. Severe Warning in any adjacent County with potential track for Rowlett.

7.4.1.2.2. Enhanced level or greater of NWS Storm Prediction Center (SPC) Severe Thunderstorm Risk Category during the threat period.

7.4.1.3. **RED ALERT**- Notice of immediate deployment of spotters. The **RED ALERT** is issued based on the following criteria:

7.4.1.3.1. Severe Warning in Dallas County with potential track towards Rowlett.

7.4.2. The EOC may request any of the above levels of notification/activation at any time regardless of the above criteria.

7.4.3. Alert notification messages shall include as much pertinent information as possible, including timing of activation, direction of storm, and type and severity of warning when known. **RED ALERT** must include area of focus for spotter locations.

7.5. Responsibility

7.5.1. The ARES/RACES Director shall:

7.5.1.1. Maintain an active role of Skywarn® team members sufficient to provide adequate coverage for severe storm spotter activation.

7.5.1.2. Set appropriate spotter locations around the fringes of Rowlett city limits that allow for visualization of approaching severe weather conditions.

7.5.1.3. Maintain appropriate systems of notification, communications and alerting that allow for effective and efficient Skywarn® operations.

7.5.2. Skywarn® team members shall:

7.5.2.1. Maintain Skywarn® certification and training as required.

7.5.2.2. Maintain necessary equipment and supplies in good order to respond in a prompt and efficient manner. Deployment "GO" Gear is outlined in the Dallas RACES Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual.

7.5.2.3. When notification of an alert is received, all actions should be taken to enable a state of readiness consistent with the level of alert.

7.6. Deployment

7.6.1. When a **RED ALERT** notification is issued, Skywarn® team members must be deployed, at their assigned location and ready to report visual conditions as soon as practical given conditions, but no later than 20 minutes from request.

7.6.2. All Skywarn® team members will have coordinated spotting locations as set by the ARES/RACES Director. **RED ALERT** notification will contain area of focus information relating to appropriate spotter locations.

7.6.3. Radio Net – A net will be initiated upon **RED ALERT**. All Skywarn® team members who are ARES/RACES units will check in with Net Control and remain checked in at their designated spotting location until released by Net Control.

7.6.4. Net Control should maintain contact with the EOC Liaison at all times during the deployment.

7.6.5. An ARES/RACES representative is required to be present in the EOC whenever the EOC is fully activated, or whenever requested.

7.6.6. Skywarn® team members are encouraged to adopt alternate or backup methods of communications and tracking, such as Slack, Deploy Pro, APRS or other approved systems.

7.7. Reporting

7.7.1. Pictures should be taken of any damage that is encountered as well as reportable hail or any other reportable item. Pictures should be sent via Slack if possible, otherwise other forms of picture transmission are acceptable such as text, DeployPro, email, etc. Pictures of hail should include a size reference, preferably a ruler.

7.7.2. Reportable Weather Conditions are outlined in the most current version of the Dallas RACES Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual.

7.8. Demobilization

7.8.1. If the EOC was activated, Skywarn® operations will be suspended at request of EOC.

7.8.2. If the EOC was not activated, Skywarn® operations will be suspended at the discretion of the activating officer.

7.8.3. Once Skywarn® operations are suspended, the net will remain open until all personnel have reported in back at home or an alternate location.

7.9. Additional References

7.9.1. Rowlett ARES/RACES Emergency Plan

7.9.2. Dallas RACES Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual

###