

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE AND THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE, INC.**

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to state the terms of a mutual agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between the National Weather Service (NWS) and the American Radio Relay League, Inc. (ARRL), that will serve as a framework within which volunteers of the ARRL may coordinate their services, facilities, and equipment with NWS in support of nationwide, state, and local early weather warning and emergency communications functions. It is intended, through joint coordination and exercise of the resources of ARRL, NWS, and Federal, State and local governments, to enhance the nationwide posture of early weather warning and readiness for any conceivable weather emergency.

## **II. RECOGNITION**

The National Weather Service recognizes that the ARRL is the principal organization representing the interests of more than 400,000 U.S. radio-amateurs and because of its Field Organization of trained and experienced communications experts, can be of valuable assistance in early severe weather warning and tornado spotting.

The American Radio Relay League recognizes the National Weather Service with its statutory responsibility for providing civil meteorological services for the people of the United States. These services consist of:

1. Issuing warnings and forecasts of weather and flood conditions affecting the nation's safety, welfare and economy; and,
2. Observing and reporting the weather of the U.S. and its possessions.

To perform these functions and many related, specialized weather services, NWS operates a vast network of stations of many types within the U.S.; it cooperates in the exchange of data in real time with other nations, including obtaining of weather reports from ships at sea.

## **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE**

The American Radio Relay League is a noncommercial membership organization of radio amateurs, organized for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation, for the establishment of networks to provide communications in the event of disasters or other emergencies, for the advancement of the radio art and of the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative matters, and the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct. A primary responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service, as established by the Federal Communications Commission, is the rendering of public service communications for the general public, particularly in times of emergency. Using Amateur Radio operators in the amateur frequency bands, the ARRL has been serving the public, both directly and through government and relief agencies, for more than fifty years. To that end, the League created the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and the National Traffic System (NTS). The League's Field Organization consists of sixty-seven administrative sections managed by elected Section Managers. A Section is a League-created political boundary roughly equivalent to states (or portions thereof). The Section Manager appoints expert assistants to administer the various emergency communications and public service programs in the section. Each section has a vast cadre of volunteer appointees to perform the work of Amateur Radio at the local level, under the supervision of the Section Manager and his/her assistants.

## **IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**

The National Weather Service consists of a National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and six regional offices in the United States: Eastern, Southern, Central, Western, Alaska, and Pacific. An NWS Public Information Office is located at Weather Service Headquarters. Fifty-two Weather Service Forecast Offices and 209 Weather Service Offices provide warnings and forecasts to the Nation.

SKYWARN is the spotter program sponsored by the NWS. Radio amateurs have assisted as communicators and spotters since its inception. In areas where tornadoes and other severe weather have been known to threaten, NWS recruits volunteers, trains them in proper weather spotting procedures and accepts the volunteers' reports during watches and episodes of severe weather. By utilizing the SKYWARN volunteers, the NWS has "eyes and ears" throughout the affected area in conjunction with NWS sophisticated weather monitoring equipment.

## **V. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION**

- A. The American Radio Relay League agrees to encourage its volunteer Field Organization appointees, especially the Amateur Radio Emergency Service, to contact and cooperate with Regional Weather Service Headquarters for the purpose of establishing organized SKYWARN networks with radio amateurs serving as communicators and spotters.
- B. ARRL further agrees to encourage its Section management teams to provide specialized communications and observation support on an as-needed basis for NWS offices in other weather emergencies such as hurricanes, snow and heavy rain storms, and other severe weather situations.
- C. The National Weather Service agrees to work with ARRL Section Amateur Radio Emergency Service volunteers to establish SKYWARN networks, and/or other specialized weather emergency alert and relief systems. the principle point of contact between the ARRL Section and local NWS offices is the Meteorological Services Division of the appropriate NWS Regional Office. The addresses of the Regional offices are listed below. The national contact for ARRL is the Public Service Branch, ARRL Headquarters, Newington, CT 06111.