



## Cherokee County R.A.C.E.S. MOU

This Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) is an addendum to the current ARES MOU to establish an agreement of volunteer service between the Cherokee County Office of Homeland Security/Emergency Management (OHS/EM) and the Cherokee County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, Cherokee County RACES group.

RACES is administered by local, county and state emergency management agencies, and supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the United States government. It is a part of the Amateur Radio Service that provides radio communications for civil-preparedness purposes *only*, during periods of local, regional or national civil emergencies. These emergencies are not limited to war-related activities, but can include natural disasters such as fires, floods and earthquakes.

As defined in the ARRL publication, *The FCC Rules and Regulations for the Amateur Radio Service*, along with the rest of the amateur regulations, RACES is a radio communication service, conducted by volunteer licensed amateurs, designed to provide emergency communications to local or state civil-preparedness agencies. Every amateur should study closely and become familiar with these rules; civil preparedness, now a major function, may become our only on-the-air function if we are plunged into war. It is important to note that a RACES operation is authorized by emergency management officials only, and this operation is strictly limited to official civil-preparedness activity in the event of an emergency-communications situation.

Emergency service is one of the basics of the Amateur Radio Service and there is sometimes some confusion about ARES, the ARRL arm of emergency services and RACES, the government arm of amateur emergency services.

ARES is activated before, during and after an emergency. Generally, ARES handles all emergency messages, including those between government emergency management officials. RACES, on the other hand, almost never starts before an emergency and is active only during the emergency and during the immediate aftermath if government emergency management offices need communications support. RACES is normally shut down shortly after the emergency has cleared.

### **Operating Procedures**

The Cherokee County ARES Emergency Coordinator will also serve as the RACES Radio Officer for Cherokee County RACES and report to the Director of Cherokee County OHS/EM and/or EOC designee.

Amateurs operating in a local RACES organization must be officially enrolled in the local civil-preparedness agency having jurisdiction. RACES operation is conducted by amateurs using their own primary station licenses and by existing RACES stations.

The FCC no longer issues new RACES (WC prefix) station call signs. Operator privileges in RACES are dependent upon, and identical to, those for the class of license held in the Amateur Radio Service. All of the authorized frequencies and emissions allocated to the Amateur Radio Service are also available to RACES on a shared basis.

While operating in a RACES capacity, RACES stations and amateurs registered in the local RACES organization may not communicate with amateurs not operating in a RACES capacity. Such restrictions do not apply when such stations are operating in a non-RACES--such as ARES--amateur capacity. Only civil-preparedness communications can be transmitted.

Test and drills are permitted only for a maximum of one hour per week. All test and drill messages must be clearly so identified. With the approval of the chief officer for emergency planning and applicable state, Commonwealth,

district or territory, however, such tests and drills may be conducted for a period not to exceed 72 hours no more than twice in any calendar year.

*Dual ARES/RACES membership is **strongly recommended, but not required.*** In order to serve effectively as a volunteer member of RACES, access to otherwise restricted areas, such as the EOC, may be associated with RACES participation and assignments. To the extent that similar requirements exist for other members of RACES with access to restricted areas, a limited background check for RACES applicants may be performed if door access is required and determined by Cherokee EOC Staff & ARES EC/RACES Radio Officer.

Those desiring to become RACES members will be required to complete a Cherokee County ARES/RACES registration form to officially enroll as a RACES member and submit the completed form to the Cherokee County ARES Emergency Coordinator/RACES Radio Officer. All ARRL ARES and RACES rules, including FCC Part 97 rules apply to each member. A copy will be filed at the EOC and with the EC/RACES Radio Officer. All rules and regulations of the original ARES MOU are applicable to this addendum.

This MOU is effective:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

J. Robby Westbrook, CEM  
Director  
Cherokee Sheriff's Office of Homeland Security - Emergency Management

\_\_\_\_\_

Jim Millsap  
Cherokee County ARES AEC  
RACES Radio Officer