How to be the NET CONTROL STATION for Placer County ARES

These instructions should help ARES members be successful Net Control Station operators during our regularly scheduled Sunday night net. Remember that our net is actually training and practice for ARES volunteers for a real emergency or disaster radio net. No worries if things don't go well.

ARRL wants every ARES member to practice being a net control operator at least twice each year. If during an emergency, you tune into a repeater, or frequency, to check in, and you find no net in progress, then you should assume the Net Control Station duties until you are relieved.

You should be able to locate the most current copy of our Net Control script and roll call on the Groups.IO web site. Click on Files (left column) and then the Net Control folder. Here is a list of tasks that will make you more comfortable being the Net Control operator.

1. Make sure you have an accurate time piece, clock or watch. All our members are sitting by their radios expecting the net to begin at 7:30 sharp. Cell phones are not too accurate but will work. I need to reset my clock every other month to keep it accurate. My watch keeps much better time. I do use my cell phone alarm clock as a reminder that the net is about to begin.

2. You may want to have printed copies of the current Net Control script and the Roll Call files. Read the script to yourself before the net begins. Having printed copies allows you to run the net without having to use your computer.

   The Role Call lists our ARES members in call suffix order. It's much easier to just locate a call in the list and check it, rather than having to write everyone's call, name and location. There is also space for writing visitor calls, names and locations. In a real disaster, having the roster with who has checked-in will be a great help. You can also record member specific notes (like availability) on the roster.

3. Be sure to monitor the frequency prior to talking. Perform a "radio check" on the W6EK repeater to assure you and your radios are ready for the net. This also confirms the repeater is working. If the repeater is offline, switch to the backup repeater (K6IOK 145.13, minus offset, tone 114.8). Follow our "No repeater" procedure! We encourage check-ins on W6EK 2M using 145.43 and also on 223.86 MHz.

4. As the Net Control Station you need to connect W6EK to the 220 radio. Your 2M radio can control the repeater using DTMF. If you are using EchoLink or Allstarlink or do not have DTMF on your radio, ask if anyone connected to the repeater can connect it to 220 for you.

   Be sure to monitor the frequency prior to transmitting. About 6 minutes prior to the start of the net (1924 local), announce "your CALL sign" connecting W6EK 2 meter to 220, please stand-by. Then, hold your push-to-talk button while you press *3 56039. If successful, you should hear an automated connection message "*Node 56039 connected to 51018*". The *3 indicates a request to connect the node.

5. Read the ARES announcement as shown on the Net Control script. You should continue to monitor the repeater until the net begins. You may hear other automated connection messages, but these will stop in about one minute.

6. Begin the net on time, normally at 7:30 local. RELAX… Read the Net Control script. Break at the end of each paragraph by un-keying your mic and listening for traffic prior to going on.

7. Check-off each member as they check-in. At the end of each group, be sure to <mark>acknowledge everyone that you heard by repeating each complete call sign</mark>. Listen for anyone you did not acknowledge to repeat their check-in.

8. If we have anyone on EchoLink or AllStar, be sure to allow extra time between transmissions… and listen carefully. You may need to remind them to delay at least 2 seconds after keying before they talk, so we don't miss the first part of their message.

9. Close the net by continuing to read the Net Control script. Continue to monitor the repeater for a few minutes after the close. To disconnect W6EK from 220, announce "your CALL sign" disconnecting W6EK 2 meter from 220, please stand-by. Then, hold your push-to-talk button while you press *1 56039. If successful, you should hear an automated disconnection message like "*Node 56039 disconnected*". The *1 indicates a request to disconnect the node.

10. After the net is closed… take a breath. Thank you for your service. Your last task is to count the number of member check-in's and visitors (like 14 + 5) and go to http://www.sacvalleyares.org/ and **Log in** (upper right). Click Enter a Net Log Report. Fill in the form and click Add Net Time. Log out and you're done. Contact Brad, KM6RIW, if you have any trouble logging in.

If you cannot be available on your scheduled day

1. Try to trade with someone else near your date
2. If it is impossible for you to find someone to trade with, then contact Brad (EC) with your dilemma