

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Air Force Communications Agency
Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)

MARS National Emergency Communications (ECOM) Plan 2006-1

14 May 2006

Reference(s): USAF MARS Operating Instruction (MOI)
AFI 33-106, Managing High Frequency Radios, Land Mobile Radios,
Cellular Telephones, and the Military Affiliate Radio System
FEMA Federal Emergency Response Plan
DOD Directive(s) 4950.1

TASKED ORGANIZATION(S): US Air Force MARS

1. SITUATION: A disaster condition may result from a catastrophic earthquake, significant natural disaster, weapons of mass destruction attack or other incident that produces extensive damage and results in large volumes of requests from all levels of government authority for services required to save lives and alleviate human suffering. Authorities require accurate and timely information on which to base their decisions and focus their response actions. Widespread damage to commercial telecommunications facilities is likely. At a time when the need for real-time electronically processed information is greatest, the capability to produce it may be seriously restricted or nonexistent. All surviving telecommunications assets of the various levels of government, augmented by extra-regional assets, will be needed immediately to assure a proper response to the needs of victims of the event.

a. General:

(1) This ECOM plan serves as a general guide for USAF MARS stations conducting emergency operations during emergency, disaster, contingency and exercise operations and serves as a basic plan and template from which local plans should be developed. This plan, used in conjunction with regional and local plans, provides guidance for use in the event that a situation exists or is projected which threatens life and/or property and/or causes a state, federal, or military official to declare an emergency or disaster for a specific geographic area. This plan also applies to contingency operations.

(2) The primary response to emergency or disaster events is accomplished by local and/or state emergency management officials, augmented by communications support from MARS as needed. MARS members are not to enter into the management of the emergency except for actions required to employ MARS and to maintain the safety of MARS personnel.

2. MISSION: USAF MARS mission is to provide radio communications that:

a. Augment Department of Defense (DoD) emergency and disaster preparedness and response operations by providing primary or back-up communications links between DoD organizations and to federal response agencies.

b. Enhance Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA) during emergency and disaster response and recovery operations by providing state and local authorities with communications links to DoD and federal response agencies.

c. Provide Essential Elements of Information (EEI) reports to the National Emergency Coordinator (NEC) for relay to various DoD and DHS agencies. EEI Reports provide critical information regarding emergency and or disaster situations which could adversely impact life, limb or otherwise impede the Public Safety. EEI Reports provide insight into availability and limitations of local infrastructure. This information may also be forwarded to appropriate local, county and state emergency management and emergency response agencies by local MARS stations, if included as part of the local and state communications support plan.

3. SUPPORTED ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES:

Department of Defense
U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)
National Communications System (NCS)/Shared HF Resources (SHARES).
Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
National Guard
Local and State Emergency Management Agencies
Other organizations and agencies as directed

4. PLANNING: Disaster and emergency response begins at the local levels. MARS ECOM planning must begin within each state. State level planning and organization provides state emergency planners with known resources which, when tasked, can provide primary or secondary communications links to Military and federal response agencies and organizations.

a. All three MARS services must plan for a coordinated joint MARS response and be prepared to serve as a single supplier of emergency communications. Locally, the three services should develop a joint response plan and combine resources to maximize resources (manpower, equipment, networks and frequencies) and capabilities. Emergency planners should see MARS as one organization. Army, Navy-Marine Corps and USAF must work as partners.

b. Joint planning should include support to National Guard and active duty military installations each state. State MARS Directors (SMDs) and State Emergency Coordinators (SECs) must be proactive in the involvement and coordination of MARS support within the state.

c. Planning should begin with the National Guard Headquarters in each state. This should be accomplished with the Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) J6 function (Command, Control, Communications, and Computer (C4) Systems Directorate). JFHQ typically provides

Operational Control (OPCON) of National Guard resources in each state, in support of the state's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) or Emergency Management Agency (EMA) requirements. MARS must be an integral part of the overall emergency and disaster communications architecture in order to be considered part of the state response plans.

d. Planning should include liaison with Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), and the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Typically, these organizations are already in place and providing the critical "on-scene" communications links to and from the local, county and state Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). Coordinated efforts will help define the role of each of the communications services and enable each to focus on its primary role within the state's communications architecture. Liaison with ARES and RACES will generally provide direct communications links into the local, county and state Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) in the affected area.

5. ASSUMPTIONS:

a. Upon activation of the SHARES "SCN" (Shares Coordination Net) and or FEMA "NECN (National Emergency Coordination Net), USAF MARS will immediately activate TRANSCON Voice Nets and ECOM Nets in the area(s) affected by the emergency/disaster that has resulted in the SHARES and FEMA activations. TRANSCON will provide support to SHARES, FEMA and MARS regional and state ECOM Nets in the affected region(s) as required.

(1) If an actual emergency or disaster occurs and MARS has not yet received official notification of the FEMA or SHARES net activations, FEMA Liaison and SHARES stations should monitor FEMA and SHARES frequencies and be prepared to provide liaison support.

b. Upon activation of ARMY MARS ECOM Nets, USAF MARS will also activate ECOM Nets in the affected areas and TRANSCON Net(s) and prepare to support the emergency or disaster response. NOTE: HQ ARMY MARS serves as the primary liaison with DoD for DSCA (Defense Support to Civilian Authorities) support.

c. Upon activation of USAF MARS regional ECOM Nets, TRANSCON Voice will activate its nets or extend its operations to provide liaison between regions and federal agencies and serve as a gateway for ECOM related traffic between MARS regions and other government agencies (FEMA, SHARES, etc.) responding to and supporting an actual event or exercise.

d. Upon activation of MARS ECOM nets during "actual" ECOM operations, MINIMIZE will be imposed on TRANSCON digital networks. Only mission essential and ECOM related traffic will be passed on the networks until MINIMIZE is lifted by the National ECOM Manager or National Digital Manager.

e. MARS ECOM ALERTS/BROADCASTS serve as immediate guidance for supporting ECOM operations. ECOM broadcasts may also provide interim changes in this plan or the MARS Operating Instruction (MOI) as it pertains to ECOM operations. Alerts/broadcasts will be

distributed throughout USAF MARS by all available modes of communications including Digital, Voice and EMAIL. Alerts and broadcasts will be broadcast on all voice nets.

f. MARS stations outside affected emergency/disaster areas (including exercise areas) are asked to monitor regional and TRANSCON frequencies and be available to assist relaying traffic and with deliver of traffic whenever possible.

g. MARS Joint Service Operations are directed at all levels of MARS operations. MARS will, when possible, serve as one entity and support ECOM operations as needed. Effective use of each other's available resources will be coordinated at the lowest levels of management when possible.

6. COMMAND AND CONTROL:

a. State, Regional and National MARS officials operate under the authority assigned by the Chief, USAF MARS and in accordance with (IAW) the USAF MARS Operating Instruction (MOI) and this plan. These officials may task appropriate CONUS, regional and or state ECOM support within their jurisdictions as needed, based upon reliable knowledge that an emergency or disaster situation (or exercise) is imminent or has already occurred, and when MARS ECOM operations will enhance contingency operations or emergency/disaster response and recovery efforts.

b. The State MARS Director (SMD) is the only state official authorized to commit USAF MARS affiliate resources within their jurisdiction. These responsibilities may be designated to the SEC.

(1) The State MARS Director (SMD) will appoint a State Emergency Coordinator (SEC) who will serve as the OPR (Office of Primary Responsibility) for all State Level ECOM issues and operations, under the direction and guidance of the SMD and REC.

(2) More than one SEC may be appointed. Each SEC will have responsibility for a specific geographic region. All SECs will work together to provide ECOM support statewide.

c. The Region MARS Director (RMD) has overall responsibility for coordination of USAF MARS support by affiliate members within the jurisdiction. The RMD or REC may assign Affiliate Stations to serve as liaison to FEMA and or other agencies as required to coordinate MARS ECOM support and handle traffic during exercises, emergencies, disasters and contingency operations.

(1) The Region Emergency Coordinator (REC) will serve as the OPR (Office of Primary Responsibility) for all ECOM issues in the region, under the direction and guidance of the RMD and National ECOM Manager (NEC), and will coordinate ECOM support as needed with in the jurisdiction.

d. The National Emergency Coordinator/Manager (NEC) is the focal point and OPR (Office of Primary Responsibility) for all USAF MARS ECOM activities including planning,

exercises, contingency operations and actual emergencies/disaster support. National level guidance is provided as needed to national, regional and state level MARS operations.

(1) The NEC serves as the USAF liaison for Joint MARS operations at the national level, coordinates USAF MARS support of joint MARS operations and provides direction and guidance for national, regional and state joint ECOM operations as needed.

e. The National Guard JFHQ in each state typically provides primary Operational Control (OPCON) of National Guard military resources in each state, in conjunction with the State Office of Emergency Management or Emergency Management Agency. Joint MARS coordination efforts should include the JFHQ Command, Control, Communications, and Computer (C4) Systems Directorate (J6).

7. TASKED EQUIPMENT AND NETWORKS: The equipment and networks employed during ECOM operations are determined by the situation and mission requirements.

a. Equipment may be both government owned and privately owned and maintained by individual MARS members except for military stations.

b. Equipment and networks are made available at no charge, in support of the DoD, the public interest and safety.

c. Fixed station High Frequency Single Sideband (HF/SSB) radio systems provide beyond line of site non-secure voice and digital communications to support ECOM operations.

d. Limited mobile, transportable and portable HF/SSB systems may be available for deployment within each region. Tasking is on a voluntary basis depending upon the available resources.

e. Limited VHF/FM voice and digital resources are available to support local ECOM operations. Each state's VHF/FM capabilities and infrastructure varies. Tasking is on a voluntary basis. Shared use of all 3 services resources is strongly encouraged.

f. TRANSCON (Transcontinental) voice and digital networks provide CONUS wide communications links and provide a gateway between regional jurisdictions. TRANSCON networks also serve as the primary gateways for federal response agencies to enter ECOM traffic into the MARS networks.

g. USAF MARS Phone Patch Nets are available to any and all stations operating from within a disaster area, and requiring Phone Patch capabilities to conduct OFFICIAL ECOM business.

(1) Phone Patches are made by placing "COLLECT" calls to the party being called, by the Phone Patch Operators. This must be briefed and understood by those placing calls from the disaster area. (Frequencies are listed in Attachment 9).

(2) The following briefing will be given when initiating Phone Patches:

(SIR/MA'AM) THIS IS A NON-SECURE RADIO CIRCUIT. PLEASE SAY THE WORD "OVER" EACH TIME YOU FINISH TALKING. USE LAST NAMES ONLY. THE USE OF FULL NAMES, RANK AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED. OBSCENE OR PROFANE LANGUAGE IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. DO NOT DISCUSS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION OVER THE AIR. ADVISE PERSONNEL IN THE AREA THAT YOU ARE DOING A NON-SECURE PHONE PATCH AND BACKGROUND NOISES WILL BE TRANSMITTED OVER THE RADIO. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS (SIR/MA'AM)?

8. EXECUTION:

a. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

(1) General: The purpose of USAF MARS ECOM operations is to provide primary, secondary or alternate communications links with which to expedite the flow of emergency and routine message traffic into and out of a disaster area. USAF MARS stations, in a state and/or region where an emergency situation is imminent or occurring, will activate all available communications resources to conduct ECOM operations, including radio (voice and digital modes), wire-less and wire based communication assets, and assets belonging to other MARS Services IAW ECOM plans. MARS emergency operations can simultaneously support several agencies and several phases of the MARS mission. MARS emergency operations will continue until terminated at the request of user agencies or determined to be no longer required by MARS officials.

(2) The primary purpose is to provide communications support to, local, state and federal emergency/disaster response by providing communications links between local, state, federal response agencies and DoD resources.

(3) The secondary purpose is to provide communications links to send infrastructure status reports from a disaster area to the NEC for relay to various DoD and DHS agencies using the Essential Elements of Information (EEI) reporting program.

(4) The third purpose is to provide communications links to provide morale, health and welfare (H&W) communications support into and out of a disaster areas.

(5) During disaster support addresses may not meet the specific MARS message formatting requirements for addresses and phone numbers. MARS station handling this type of traffic will make every effort to deliver H&W traffic and deliver it to its destination.

b. ALERTING: It is essential that SMDs and RECs maintain accurate Alert Rosters in order to alert MARS members of ECOM Alerts. Alert Rosters must contain contact information which enables MARS leadership to contact the MARS members as needed. Alert Rosters **WILL NOT BE POSTED ON PUBLIC WEB SITES**. This information should not be released

outside MARS Channels and should be treated as FOUO/Privacy Act information. Alert Rosters may be distributed within the MARS membership for official MARS use only. Distribution should be directed and approved by the SMD and for the purpose of alerting and warning MARS members of ECOM operations (exercise and actual). Alert Rosters should contain as a minimum the following information:

- Member's Callsign
- Member's First and Last name
- Station Location by town/city and state (Do not list the mailing address)
- Contact number(s)

NOTE: Post the following banner on the Alert Roster: "PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION - The information accessed through this system is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY and must be protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and AFI 33-332."

(1) Upon notification of a potential or current emergency/disaster event within a jurisdiction, state and regional leadership will immediately notify:

a. Affiliate members in the affected area and surrounding region(s) by the most expedient method possible depending upon the nature of the pending or current event.

b. Army and Navy-Marine Corps MARS Points of Contact within the affected state/area.

c. National ECOM Manager by sending an EMERGENCY/CONTINGENCY PLAN ACTIVATION message by EMAIL. (See attachment 1 format)

d. In the event that neither the SMD nor SEC is available, affiliate members will notify the other affiliates in their jurisdiction, brief them on the situation and instruct them to monitor the appropriate Net frequencies and wait for further instructions.

e. Affiliates will notify the REC and obtain assistance and guidance if needed. When contact is made with the SMD or SEC, they will assume command and control of the situation and provide appropriate guidance and take appropriate action.

(2) **ECOM ALERT (CONDITION) CODES:** The ECOM CONDITION CODES serve the same function as the Warning Order and Operations Order. These are considered authorization to implement the ECOM actions directed by each condition level. Alert Codes may begin at the level most appropriate for the current situation.

a. Any member may initiate an ECOM ALERT Condition in the absence of the SEC, SMD, or Region officials; however, attempts to contact these designated authorities shall be made prior to and after a member initiates the Alert Condition. The member initiating the Alert Condition is also responsible for ensuring that the telephone Alerting system and ECOM Nets are activated.

b. When broadcasting Alert Conditions, ensure that the geographical areas that are or may be affected are identified.

c. Unless an emergency or disaster situation is local and requires no outside support, ECOM Alerts are applicable to the entire region in order to ensure that sufficient extra-regional capabilities are available to handle traffic. Actions taken by stations outside the emergency or disaster (affected) area may vary depending upon the support required.

(3) When ALERT CONDITIONS are no longer required, Broadcast ECOM CONDITION 5 to notify Stations to resume normal operations.

ECOM CONDITION 5

Normal Day to Day Communications Operations.

ECOM CONDITION 4

Conditions exist that may develop into potential emergency/disaster situations over the next few days. NOTE: This is primarily used for potentially severe weather ALERTS issued by the National Weather Service and should be used any time severe weather is predicted.

Take the following action(s):

- Stay Alert to News and Weather reports for potential problems.
- Be prepared to change ECOM Conditions to higher Readiness levels
- Check-in to regular State, Area, and Region Nets for current information.

ECOM CONDITION 3

An emergency or disaster situation is expected to develop within 48 hours.

Take the following action(s):

- Monitor regular and/or Primary ECOM Net Frequencies.
- Check into Nets to obtain the latest information.
- Monitor designated Joint Service frequencies and systems, for Local or State Wide situations.
- For Region Wide situations, Monitor the Primary REGION ECOM Frequencies
- Activate the Alerting System. Ensure that all members are aware of the potential emergency/disaster situation.
- Encourage all to check-in to regularly scheduled Nets for the latest updates on the potential situation.
- Take preliminary precautions: Test emergency power, locate essential equipment and supplies, review ECOM Plan, etc.
- Continue normal MARS operations and REMAIN ALERT.
- Continue preparing for ECOM operations.

ECOM CONDITION 2

An emergency or disaster situation is anticipated within 24 hours.

Take the following action(s):

- Take all actions required to activate all ECOM operations on short notice (In addition to actions taken in ECOM Condition 3).
- Maintain close contact with State and Region Officials for guidance and up to date information. STAY ALERT!
- Monitor regular and/or ECOM nets for updated information
- Take appropriate actions to protect family and property
- Ensure that food and water supplies and other personal items are readily available.
- Establish Regularly Scheduled Broadcasts of updated information regarding the potential emergency/disaster situation

ECOM CONDITION 1

An emergency or disaster is imminent.

Take the following action(s):

- Suspend all normal operations
- Activate All ECOM Networks (NETS) and ECOM Plan(s)
- Take final actions to protect family and property.
- Check-in to ECOM Nets and monitor (Guard) closely
- For Local and Statewide situations, check-into appropriate Joint Service NETS and be prepared to help as needed.

ECOM CONDITION 0 (ZERO)

An Emergency or Disaster situation exists.

Take the following action(s):

- Same actions as ECOM Condition 1
- Ensure that all available ECOM Nets and systems are in full operation
- Provide ECOM assistance to Local and State and Federal Emergency management Agencies as needed.

9. TASK(S): Establish and maintain the following communications capabilities as required by the situation:

a. ECOM Net Operations:

(1) The Net Control Station (NCS) will activate ECOM Nets and assign an Alternate NCS (ANCS) to assist with activities. Nets will be a directed and strict Net procedure will be followed during ECOM operations.

(2) In the absence of an “officially designated or assigned” NCS, any affiliate member may activate an ECOM Net.

a. An “official” NCS may assume control of the net when available. All information and net rosters will be transferred to each new NCS. Any USAF MARS station may serve as NCS or ANCS and provide what ever assistance is needed.

(3) The NCS will obtain the current ECOM ALERT Condition from available state or region officials. If none of the officials are available, use the guidance in this plan and issue an ECOM ALERT CONDITION. Ensure that this is passed on to each NCS and ANCS when Net Control stations change.

(4) The NCS and Alternate NCS will maintain a log of all activities.

(5) Regional and national MARS officials, designated liaison stations (SHARES, FEMA and TRANSCON) and TRANSCON Digital stations will identify themselves during Check-in.

(6) The NCS will obtain the current communications capabilities from stations checking in from the emergency or disaster area. These capabilities should include modes of operation (HF, VHF, digital, telephone, cellular phone, fax, etc.), emergency power availability, portability or mobility of each station.

(7) Liaison station(s) will be assigned to other agency nets (FEMA, SHARES, TRANSCON, etc.) as required. NOTE: Joint Service Liaison Stations will not be required if a pro-active Joint Service MARS program exists and Joint Service stations are on the net frequency.

(8) Radiotelephone/phone patch and Digital modes may be used on any ECOM voice net with approval of the NCS, if applicable to the current emergency situation and when in the best interest of expediting the flow of ECOM message traffic.

b. State ECOM Operations

(1) States affected by an emergency or disaster will immediately alert all State MARS members and activate State ECOM Nets on assigned frequencies IAW local ECOM Plan.

(2) Ensure that Army and Navy - Marine Corps MARS leadership has also been notified of the situation and implement Joint operations. Joint Service operations should be activated immediately and Joint resources should be used to support the emergency, disaster or contingency.

(3) Regional HF Frequencies may be used when state and Joint service frequencies are not available or insufficient to support HF operations. Select a frequency that will provide the best propagation coverage to all direct supporting stations (stations within the affected area). Frequency availability problems should be forwarded to the NEC immediately for action.

(4) VHF Voice and Digital operations may be conducted as required and IAW local MARS ECOM Plans.

(5) Establish a gateway into TRANSCON Digital networks for out of region message traffic and EEI reports.

(6) SMD or SECs will notify the Regional MARS Director (RMD) or Emergency Coordinator (REC) and request Regional support for State operations if needed.

(7) State level Nets operating non-regional nets will provide liaison to the Regional Nets which will serve as a gateway (link) outside of the affected area.

(8) Establish Liaison to ARES, RACES and CAP if applicable. ARES and RACES should be able to provide a link to and from the EOC(s) engaged in the operation.

(9) EEI Reporting is critical to provide DoD and DHS with the status of existing infrastructures in a disaster area. EEI reporting should be accomplished by all MARS Stations in a disaster stricken area. Ever possible effort will be made to draft and send an EEI Report to the NEC.

a. USAF MARS stations aware of any emergency or disaster situation(s), or operating in a disaster area where conditions exist which could adversely impact life, limb or otherwise impede the public safety, regardless of how minor it may appear, will immediately prepare and send EEI reports to the NEC to ensure that DoD and DHS agencies have the most current information available, in order to make an assessment on what emergency action, if any, should or needs to be taken; and how best to proceed given the information obtained from EEI reports.

(10) Net Control Stations will maintain accurate logs of all activities on the net.

(11) Net Control Stations will monitor the availability of all liaison stations and TRANSCON Digital stations to ensure that a gateway to other nets and digital modes exists.

c. Regional ECOM Operations

(1) The Primary emphasis on Region-wide Operations will be for the purpose of supporting local, state, or area operations in effected areas.

(2) At the direction of the Chief, National ECOM Manager, Regional MARS Director, designated representative (REC, RVNM) or any other region official, a HF Radio voice Command and Control (C2) Net will be established on the primary or alternate Regional Nets for the purposes of:

a. Coordinating emergency/disaster communications support for State MARS ECOM operations.

b. Providing local and State MARS ECOM Operations with “GATEWAYS” (Links) into agencies such as FEMA, SHARES and other federal and military agencies supporting emergency, disaster and contingency operations.

c. Frequencies will be determined by the geographical area involved, type of support, time of day and propagation conditions.

(3) Establish liaison to TRANSCON Voice Net(s) to ensure that incoming and out going traffic has an outlet beyond the region and into FEMA, SHARES and other federal agencies networks. (See Attachment 9 for frequencies and designators)

(4) Establish liaison with SHARES Coordination Net (SCN) if SHARES is activated. Registered SHARES should provide the liaison and gateway between SHARES and MARS Regional/TRANSCON nets. SHARES frequencies are published in the National Communications System Handbook 3-3-1 normally published in SHARES Readiness Notice.

(5) Regions where an emergency or disaster has occurred or is imminent, should establish liaison with the FEMA NECN (National Emergency Coordination Net) as directed. Only stations in the affected disaster area and surrounding region(s) should check into the FEMA NECN. All other liaison stations should “monitor” and be prepared to assist with message relays and traffic handling as needed. Liaison stations provide the MARS gateway to FEMA networks.

a. The MARS Regional NCS will identify FEMA NECN liaison stations when calling the net. Liaison to FEMA NECN should be maintained throughout the duration of the ECOM operation.

b. Liaison stations should utilize the FEMA frequency that best supports propagation from your area to FEMA. FEMA NCS locations and assigned frequencies are identified in their activation messages. (See attachment 9 for FEMA frequencies and assigned MARS designators).

(6) Identify TRANSCON Digital stations on the Nets and ensure that traffic is routed from voice nets to digital networks whenever possible to expedite ECOM traffic and EEI Report handling and minimize congestion on voice nets.

(7) Establish liaison to Joint Service Coordination Nets as required. Frequency designators are typically provided in alert messages if available. TRANSCON may also be used for this purpose during large scale ECOM missions.

d. CONUS ECOM Operations

(1) TRANSCON Voice Nets will be activated and maintained to provide a gateway for incoming and out going ECOM traffic from the Disaster area.

a. Stations outside the disaster area should check into TRANSCON voice Nets and be available to help handle traffic.

b. Identify TRANSCON Digital stations on the Nets and ensure that traffic is routed from voice nets to digital networks whenever possible to expedite ECOM traffic and EEI Report handling and minimize congestion on voice nets.

(2) TRANSCON DIGITAL networks will be utilized whenever possible to expedite the flow of traffic.

a. SYSOPS will monitor their networks and ensure that traffic is flowing in a timely manner.

(3) MANNED Digital nets play a critical role in ECOM and are encouraged, especially when dedicated point to point links to and from the disaster area will enhance message handling.

e. Joint Service Operations

(1) State, area (multi-state), and regional Joint Service ECOM Operations are authorized and strongly encouraged. Prior planning, coordination and training enables members of all three MARS services to interoperate with one another on each others networks efficiently, effectively and accomplish the ECOM mission. Coordinated joint operations are essential to successful ECOM support to MARS customers.

a. Good working relationships with Army and Navy-Marine Corps MARS will allow for smoother transition into ECOM operations when needed. Joint use of HF/SSB Voice and Digital (Multi-mode) Nets consolidates resources and frees up limited frequencies for Region or Area wide operations.

b. Joint use of local resources such as VHF Digital and VHF Voice systems is also encouraged and provides more effective coordination of efforts and processing of local information.

(2) Any MARS station from any service or federal agency station will be recognized and allowed access to USAF MARS Nets during ECOM Operations. USAF MARS stations will provide assistance and guidance to stations from other services and agencies when they check in to USAF Nets.

f. Essential Elements of Information (EEI) Reporting:

(1) Essential Elements of Information (EEI) reports are critical status reports provided to various DoD and DHS agencies, which provide insight into availability and limitations of local infrastructure during and immediately following an emergency or disaster event. These situations are reported because there is a potential that the event has or could adversely impact life, limb or otherwise impede the Public Safety. EEI Reporting is an ongoing mission supported by MARS.

(2) This information may also be forwarded to appropriate local, county and state emergency management and emergency response agencies if included as part of the local and state agency's communications support plan. HQ Army MARS and the USAF NEC also provide the information to a variety of DoD operations centers.

(3) EEI Reports should be submitted to the NEC using email as soon as possible once the information is received regarding an emergency or disaster event. The information provided in EEI reports may be critical to the assessment of the infrastructure and the potential need for federal response. At a time when the need for "Real Time" electronically processed information is greatest, the capability to produce it may be seriously restricted or non-existent. EEI'S will be needed immediately, to help ensure that a proper response is available.

a. Every MARS member must be proficient in generating EEI Reports

b. EEI reports must be sent as soon as possible during or immediately after an emergency or disaster occurs.

c. All actual EEI reports (non-exercise) should be sent directly to:

(1) AFN1EC by EMAIL to the addresses listed on attachment 5.

(2) AFN1EC will forward actual EEIs to various DoD and DHS EOCs and JOCs (Joint Operations Centers).

d. Reports must be submitted using the format in attachment 3. **DO NOT SEND EEI REPORTS AS EMAIL ATTACHMENTS.** Paste them into your email software in the text box and in the format identified in attachment 3.

(4) All MARS Members are asked to send EEI Reports if you are: aware of any disaster or emergency situation which could adversely impact life, limb or otherwise impede the public safety, regardless of how minor it may appear.

a. Reports should include bridges or roads washed out, widespread power lines down, wind or tornado damage, heavy rains, flooding, heavy snow, forest fires, etc. Include large scale accidents with HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) or Chemical spills

b. Local fires and traffic accidents that don't affect more than a small portion of the local population probably don't need to be reported. Fires engulfing city blocks or neighborhoods and major accidents on highways blocking traffic should be.

c. EEI reports require common sense.

- **DO NOT REPORT SEVERE WEATHER WATCHES OR WARNINGS.** This information is already available to federal agencies. However, if during the severe weather, conditions adversely impact life, limb or otherwise impede the public safety, report them.

d. Follow-up EEI reports may be sent using the same EEI formats to AFN1EC's email addresses with updated information. These are not normally required, but for large scale emergencies or disasters that will require lengthy response and recovery operations they may be needed to update the various DoD and DHS agencies, especially when information from normal channels is limited.

10. LOGISTICS:

a. USAF MARS affiliates will normally operate from their home stations unless situations require deploying to specific operating locations. Most USAF MARS stations are not deployable.

b. USAF MARS affiliates should be equipped and prepared to deploy from their normal operating locations and establish communications links and systems required to support organizations and agencies involved in emergency/disaster operations.

c. USAF MARS affiliate stations should be capable of operating on emergency power. Commercial power sources should be used whenever possible in order to conserve batteries and other emergency power sources.

d. USAF MARS affiliates should be capable of integrating their equipment, systems, and operating procedures with other DoD and Emergency Management and Military agencies. This can only be accomplished by participation in Joint Service Exercises

e. USAF MARS Military Auxiliary Stations and Base Support Teams (BST's) will operate IAW the USAF MARS Operating Instruction, Air Force Instructions, and applicable installation Disaster Preparedness and USAF MARS ECOM Plans.

11. RECORDS: (Logs & Reports)

a. Accurate and complete logs will be maintained by each Net Control Station (NCS) in order to account for USAF MARS participation in any operation, as well as serve as a key source of information for review and analysis of USAF MARS effectiveness. Logs should include number of messages transmitted/originated & received and any pertinent information.

b. Situation Reports (SITREPs) will be submitted daily for each 24 hour (0001Z - 2359Z) period throughout the entire length of the ECOM operation (actual or exercise). SITREPs from the previous 24 hour period (0001Z - 2359Z) will be submitted to the NEC daily no later than (NLT) 1600Z daily via EMAIL. (See attachment 7 for format and information required)

(1) SITREPs will be submitted by each NCS to the Regional Voice Net Manager (RVNM) or designated representative. These should be submitted by each NCS immediately following the ECOM net session.

(2) SITREPs will be submitted to the RVNM or designated representative, for consolidation into a daily report covering the 24 hour (0001Z - 2359Z) period, throughout the entire length of the ECOM operation (actual or exercise).

(3) The RVNM or designated representative will send the consolidated SITREPS to the NEC via EMAIL by 1600Z daily during ECOM operations (including exercises). Info the SEC and REC IAW local ECOM plans. (See attachment 7 SITREP format)

(4) SITREPs are required for TRANSCON Voice and Phone Patch Nets only when engaged in ECOM operations support. are also requested to submit SITREPs. Net managers or designated representatives should submit SITREPS IAW paragraph 12b using the format in attachment 7.

c. After Actions Reports (AARs) are mandatory for all ECOM exercises and actual operations. AARs provide a significant tool for managers, at all levels, to use to evaluate MARS operations. After-action reports not only identify potential limitations, but they also provide valuable information on specific portions of an operation that worked well and those that didn't work so well and require improvements. (See attachment 2)

(1) Regional and State Emergency Coordinators (RECs and SECs) will collect and consolidate statistics and the information needed to complete AARs for each of their jurisdictions. Emergency coordinators are responsible for submission of AARS to the NEC following each MARS exercise (MARS EXERCISE) or actual ECOM operation. The NEC should receive AARs from each state and each region involved in the ECOM operations and MARS EXERCISE.

(2) AARs should be submitted within 5 working days of termination of the ECOM operation or MARS EXERCISE and sent to the NEC via EMAIL. Send an INFO copy to the RMD and SMD.

(3) Reports should be submitted in message format IAW attachment 2.

12. SAFETY:

a. All possible precautions will be taken to prevent accidents or injuries to all MARS affiliates and other persons.

b. Antenna systems and equipment will be installed in such a manner as to minimize physical, electrical, and RF radiation safety hazards.

c. Safety is the Number One Priority for all MARS Members.

13. SECURITY:

a. OPSEC: During ECOM operations all communications should be on a need-to-know basis. The items listed below are considered Critical Information (CI) and should be treated as FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO):

- (1) Units/agencies participating in the mission
- (2) Dates and times of the mission
- (3) Systems tasked
- (4) Call signs and frequencies associated with users
- (5) Security weaknesses
- (6) Physical security at deployed sites
- (7) Any VIP itineraries
- (8) Capabilities of Communications Equipment
- (9) Operations schedules
- (10) After Actions Reports and lessons learned
- (11) Operations Plans

14. DISTRIBUTION:

a. The NEC will distribute this plan to MARS leadership and to HQ USAF MARS via EMAIL distribution.

b. RMDs and SMDs will ensure this is distributed to all MARS stations within their respective jurisdictions.

c. This FOUO plan in its entirety will not be placed on public websites. **Frequency designators and frequency lists will be removed before posting on public websites.** Contact the NEC for copies to be posted on websites.

//Signed//

HARRY L. MARSTERS II, CMSgt, USAF
National Emergency Coordinator (AFN1EC)

Attachments:

- 1 - ECOM Plan Activation Message
- 2 - After Actions Report Format
- 3 - Essential Elements of Information Format
- 4 - Essential Elements of Information Event Identifiers
- 5 - Essential Elements of Information Routing (EMAIL and DIGITAL Addresses)
- 6 - Sample Essential Elements of Information Message
- 7 - SITREP
- 8 - Sample SITREP
- 9 - Abbreviations and Acronyms
Record of Changes

(Attachment 1)

ECOM PLAN ACTIVATION MESSAGE

PRECEDENCE: IMMEDIATE

FROM: (YOUR CALLSIGN & STATE)

TO: AFN1EC ME

INFO: REC

RMD

BT

(ACTUAL EVENT or MARS EXERCISE)

SUBJECT: ECOM PLAN ACTIVATION MESSAGE

1. SITUATION: *(Nature of the emergency)*

2. REQUESTER: *(Name and Title of requester of USAF MARS support)*

3. LOCATION: *(Affected location or area)*

4. APPRAISAL: *(Severity of the emergency. Estimate of communications needs and circuits to be established)*

5. COMMUNICATIONS: *(Identify the level of communications support required/anticipated. Identify the Nets tasked to support this ECOM operation activated include: TRANSCON, Regional, State, Joint, TRANSCON Digital, Regional and State Digital Networks etc.).*

6. REMARKS: *(Pertinent information not mentioned above. Include a narrative overview of the ECOM operation)*

(ACTUAL EVENT or MARS EXERCISE)

BT

NNNN

(Attachment 2)

AFTER ACTIONS REPORT

PRECEDENCE: ROUTINE

FM SEC or REC (*Name/Call sign/State*)

TO AFN1EC ME

INFO (*IAW Local/Regional Plans*)

BT

(ACTUAL EVENT or MARS EXERCISE)

SUBJ AFTER ACTIONS REPORT

1. NATURE OF THE EVENT REQUIRING SUPPORT:

A. PARTICIPATING STATIONS: (*List Call signs*)

B. NET CONTROL STATION (S): (*List NCS Call signs*)

C. LOCATION(S): (*Event Location*)

D. DEPLOYED MARS STATION(S): (*List Call signs and deployed locations*)

E. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION: (*Narrative*)

F. HOW WERE YOU NOTIFIED OF THE EMERGENCY:

G. WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING OPERATIONS:

H. PROPAGATION CONDITIONS: (*List Time/Date/Frequency/Conditions*)

I. NUMBER OF MESSAGES PROCESSED:

J. NUMBER OF MESSAGES ORIGINATED:

K. NUMBER OF EEI MESSAGES PROCESSED:

2. PROBLEMS OR ISSUES ENCOUNTERED/OBSERVED: (*List problems or issues*)

A. PROVIDE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEMS/ISSUES: (*Include positive and negative*)

B. RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS:

3. MEDIA RECOGNITION: (*list media sources, attach copies or provide links/URLs*)

(ACTUAL EVENT or MARS EXERCISE)

BT

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(Attachment 3)

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of INFORMATION (EEI)

PRECEDENCE: PRIORITY (*Actual Reports*)/ROUTINE (*MARS EXERCISE & Training*)

FM (Members Name/Call sign/State)

TO AFN1EC ME

INFO AFN1EC (*EMAIL*)

(*INFO copies IAW local and regional ECOM Plans*)

BT

SUBJ: (*ACTUAL EVENT/EEI or MARS EXERCISE*)

1. REF: (*APPLICABLE EVENT IDENTIFIER/STATE/DATE OF EVENT*)

A. AREA IMPACTED BY INCIDENT: (*Date and time of the incident, specify town, city, county or state-wide area*)

B. STATUS OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL FACILITIES: (*Operational, Damaged, destroyed, or Field Facilities needed, Not Applicable*)

C. STATUS OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES: (*Indicate which Roads are affected and status - open, restricted, closed, damaged, destroyed, Not Applicable. Which Bridges are open restricted, damaged, destroyed. What is local airport and status - open, restricted, destroyed, unknown. What is the local railroad and status - operating, restricted, destroyed, unknown. The objective is to provide enough information to disaster relief officials to aid in deciding how to get assistance into the affected area.*)

D. EXACT LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DAMAGE: (*General description of damage or impact of incident or Not Applicable, on major structures such as government buildings, schools, residences, commercial property, public facilities, fire stations, etc. Identify location of shelters if applicable.*)

E. STATUS OF AREA UTILITIES: (*Gas, water, commercial power, sanitation systems - operational, damaged, destroyed, needed, Not Applicable*)

F. STATUS OF COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATION FACILITIES: (*Telephone, Radio, TV, Cellular Phone - Operational, Damaged, Unavailable, Not Applicable.*)

G. SOURCE OF INFORMATION: (*Indicate Source of information if different from Date Time Group of the message. Include MARS Call sign, name of official and agency, radio/TV station Call sign or network as applicable.*)

H. REMARKS: (*Include Comments about expected changes in status of any of the above items such as Power Companies expect power to be out for more than how many hours. If applicable, include expected time of next report.*)

ACTUAL EVENT/EEI or MARS EXERCISE: (*Same as subject line*)

BT

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(Attachment 4)

EVENT IDENTIFIERS

EVENT:	IDENTIFIER:
AIR CRASH	FALLEN STAR
AIRBORNE POISONED GAS	POISONED AIR
BIOLOGICAL EVENT	BAD BUG
BOMBING INCIDENT	LOUD BANG
BRIDGE DAMAGE/LOSS (MAJOR)	LOST SUPPORT
CHEMICAL SPILL	POISONED GROUND
CIVIL UNREST/RIOT	BAD MAGIC
COMMUNICATIONS LINK DOWN (MAJOR)	LOST COMM
DAMAGING HAIL	FALLING ICE
EARTH QUAKE	ROLLING THUNDER
FLOOD	TALL WATER
FOREST/GROUND FIRE	SCORCHED EARTH
GAS LEAK/EXPLOSION (MAJOR)	HOT AIR
HEAVY WIND (OTHER THAN HURRICANE OR TORNADO)	MIGHTY WINDS
HURRICANE	HOWLING WIND
ICY ROADS	BLACK ICE
INTERSTATE BLOCKED/DAMAGED (MAJOR)	BLOCKED LANE
NUCLEAR	NUCLEAR GRAYSTONE
OIL SPILL (WATER)	DARK WATER
POWER OUTAGE (MAJOR)	DARK DAY
SEARCH/RESCUE	SECURE HAVEN
SEISMIC SEA WAVE	TSUNAMI
SHIP WRECK/INCIDENT	DEEP SEA
TERRORIST THREAT	HIDDEN SHADOW
TORNADO	VIOLENT TWISTER
TRAIN WRECK/DERAILMENT	BROKEN TRACKS
VOLCANO	BRAZEN BRIMSTONE
WATER DAM BROKE/DAMAGED (MAJOR)	FAST WATER
WINTER SNOW STORM	WHITE BLANKET
COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT ROLE(S):	IDENTIFIERS:
NATIONAL COMM SYSTEMS (NCS) SUPPORT	TOP COVER
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF (JCS) SUPPORT	JOINT LIONS
NATIONAL DISASTER MEDICAL SYSTEM (NDMS) SUPPORT	MED LINK
SHARES SUPPORT	COMMON FORTUNE
NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVES SUPPORT	CIVIL COVER
FEMA SUPPORT	FED LINK

(Attachment 5)

EEI MESSAGE ROUTING

EMAIL ADDRESSES (For All ACTUAL EEI Reports):

NEC

AFN1EC@AOL.COM and HARRY.MARSTERS@MEBNGR.ANG.AF.MIL

TRANSCON DIGITAL ADDRESSES (for Exercise Messages only) :

NEC:

AFN1EC@AFA1PZ.ME

INFO ADDRESSEES SHOULD ONLY BE USED DURING EMAIL TRANSMISSIONS.

MORE THAN ONE ADDRESSEE LISTED ON DIGITAL MESSAGES REQUIRES SEPARATE MESSAGES TO EACH ADDRESSEE.

(Attachment 6)

SAMPLE EEI MESSAGE

DE AFA1PZ NR 0101

P 261730Z JAN 05

FM HARRY MARSTERS/AFA1PZ ME

TO AFN1EC ME (EMAIL: harry.marsters@mebngr.af.mil & AFN1EC@aol.com)

INFO (IAW LOCAL ECOM PLANS)

BT

ACTUAL EVENT/EEI

1. REF: TALL WATER

A. 26 JAN 05 1600Z GREATER PORTLAND AREA

B. NOT AFFECTED

C. FLOODING ON MANY SECONDARY ROADS. ALL ROADS PASSABLE AT THIS TIME

D. NOT AFFECTED

E. NOT AFFECTED

F. NOT AFFECTED

G. SAME AS ABOVE

H. RAIN EXPECTED FOR SEVERAL HOURS. ROADS EXPECTED TO GET WORSE. POTENTIAL FOR CLOSING OF MANY SECONDARY ROADS POSSIBLE LATER TODAY.

ACTUAL EVENT

BT

NNNN

(Attachment 7)

SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

NET SITREP Format:

PRECEDENCE: PRIORITY

FM (NAME)/(CALLSIGN) (STATE)

TO AFN1EC ME

SMD

RMD

REC

RVNM

BT

ACTUAL EVENT (*Include Event ID and State*) or MARS EXERCISE

SUBJECT: SITREP

1. NET OPENING/CLOSING TIME:

2. NET DESIGNATOR:

3. TOTAL STATIONS:

4. NUMBER OF EEI REPORTS:

5. TOTAL MESSAGES HANDLED:

6. REMARKS: (*Provide a brief overview of the MARS mission and communications being provided*)

ACTUAL EVENT (*Include Event ID and State*) or MARS EXERCISE

BT

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(Attachment 8)

SITREP SAMPLE

DE AFA2JQ NR 023
R 031200Z APR 97
FM HENSLEY/AFA2JQ SC
TO AFF2SC
 AFF2C
 AFF2E
 AFF2N

BT
MARS EXERCISE TALLWATER SC

1. 031101Z – 031700Z APR 97

2. 2S1

3. 23

4. 18

5. 25

6. FLOODING DUE TO HEAVY RAINS CREATING MAJOR ROAD CLOSURES AND LIMITING TRANSPORTATION. MARS IS PROVIDING EEI REPORTS AND LINKS TO AND FROM THE STATE EOC VIA ARES LIAISON. COMBINATION OF VHF PACKET, HF VOICE, RTTY, COMMERCIAL FAX AND EMAIL USED TO SEND ALL MESSAGE TRAFFIC TO REQUIRED DESTINATIONS.

MARS EXERCISE TALLWATER SC

BT

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(Attachment 9)**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AAR	After Actions Report
AFI	Air Force Instruction
ANCS	Alternate Network Control Station
ANEC	Assistant National Emergency Coordinator
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Service
C4	Command, Control, Communications, and Computer Systems
CAP	Civil Air Patrol
CI	Critical Information
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
Digital	Data Communications
DoD	Department of Defense
DSCA	Defense Support to Civilian Authorities
DTG	Date Time Group
ECOM	Emergency Communications
EEI	Essential Elements of Information
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FM	Frequency Modulation
FOUO	For Official Use Only
H&W	Health and Welfare
HF	High Frequency
HQ	Headquarters
IAW	In Accordance With
J6	Joint Command, Control, Communications, and Computer Systems Directorate
JFHQ	Joint Forces HQ
JOC	Joint Operations Center
MARS	Military Affiliate Radio System
MARSEX	MARS Exercise
MOI	MARS Operating Instruction
MSG	Message
NCS	National Communications System
NCS	Network Control Station
NEC	National Emergency Coordinator
NECN	National Emergency Coordination Net
Net	Network
NLT	Not Later Than
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
OPCON	Operational Control
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OPSEC	Operational Security

RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services
REC	Regional Emergency Coordinator
RMD	Regional MARS Director
RVNM	Regional Voice Net Manager
SCN	SHARES Coordination Net
SEC	State Emergency Coordinator
SHARES	Shared HF Resources
SITREPS	Situation Reports
SMD	State MARS Director
SSB	Single Sideband
TRANSCON	Trans Continental
USAF	US Air Force
USNORTHCOM	US Northern Command
VHF	Very High Frequency
Z	ZULU (Greenwich Mean Time)

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