

**Memorandum of Understanding
between the
Ocean-Monmouth Amateur Radio Club
and
Monmouth County ARES-RACES-Skywarn**

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to state the terms of a mutual agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the Ocean-Monmouth Amateur Radio Club (OMARC) and Monmouth County ARES-RACES-Skywarn (MCARS). This document will serve as a framework within which MCARS members will have access to OMARC owned and operated N2MO/R 145.110Mhz. repeater station in support of the Monmouth County Emergency Communications function.

Background

ARES

As established under Federal Communications Commission's Rules and Regulations (47 C.F.R. Part 97), a primary responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service is the rendering of public service communications for the general public, particularly in times of emergency when normal communications are not available. Using the Amateur Radio Service frequencies, Amateur Radio operators have been serving the general public, both directly and through governmental and relief agencies, for more than 50 years. To this end, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for radio amateurs, organized the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES).

RACES

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is an emergency service function defined under Part 97 of the FCC rules. RACES is a special service of the Amateur Radio Service that provides radio communications to local, county, or state civil preparedness agencies during periods of local, regional, or national civil emergencies. All of the authorized frequencies and emissions allocated to the Amateur Radio Service are also available to RACES on a shared basis. In the event that the President of the United States invokes his War Emergency Powers, RACES operators, using specially authorized amateur radio frequencies, may be the only Amateur Radio Operators permitted on the air.

Skywarn

Skywarn is a volunteer program sponsored by the National Weather Service (NWS). Each NWS office appoints a Skywarn Liaison from within its personnel. This Liaison is responsible for organizing the Skywarn program in their office's forecast area. Volunteers are trained by NWS meteorologists to spot severe weather and are given a list of criteria in which the NWS would like "spotters" to call with reports. The purpose of this program is to give forecasters information on "ground truth" so they can make a better interpretation of weather radar and remote sensor data. Also, severe weather watches and warnings may be issued based on Spotter observations. The Amateur Radio Service is utilized by many Skywarn Spotters to relay reports to a central Net Control Station (NCS) who then makes a single phone call to the NWS forecast office with all of the collected spotter reports.

Organization of MCARS

MCARS is a combination of the ARES, RACES, and Skywarn programs in Monmouth County. Leadership officials are more or less common among the three groups, effectively combining the three programs into one. MCARS members hold membership in ARES and RACES, and most are also trained Skywarn spotters. This enables MCARS to respond to any communications emergency with the same group of amateur radio operators, insuring Continuity of Operations (CONOPS) as the situation changes.

Organization of OMARC

OMARC, founded in 1977, exists as an association of persons commonly interested in the Amateur Radio Service. OMARC is both an ARRL Affiliated club and an ARRL Special Services Club. It is the purpose of OMARC as stated in its constitution and bylaws, to further the exchange of information and co-operation between club members, to promote radio knowledge, fraternalism and individual operating proficiency, and to conduct club programs and activities for the advancement of the general interest and welfare of Amateur Radio in the community, and for the advancement of the "OMARC" repeater station for the benefit of all.

OMARC will provide its repeater station for emergency communications organizations on an as needed basis. OMARC operates a repeater system on the 2-meter amateur radio band with excellent coverage of both Monmouth and Ocean Counties. This repeater system currently operates under the FCC callsign of N2MO/R on a coordinated frequency pair of 145.110 MHz (repeater transmit) / 144.510 MHz (repeater receive) with a PL tone of 127.3 Hz.

Recognition

OMARC recognizes that MCARS is an organization of approximately 70 Monmouth County-resident amateur radio operators that, in turn, is recognized by the County of Monmouth as the official RACES organization; by the Jersey Coast Chapter of the American Red Cross and Salvation Army as the official ARES organization; and by the Mt. Holly office of the National Weather Service as the official Skywarn organization for Monmouth County.

MCARS recognizes OMARC as the exclusive owner and operator of the N2MO/R repeater station. OMARC shall provide all repeater station maintenance, and ensures accessibility of the system by the Amateur Radio community.

Method of Cooperation

For the communications resources of OMARC and MCARS to be coordinated and used to the fullest advantage during disasters and emergencies, and to the extent permitted or required by law and regulation, OMARC and MCARS have agreed to the following:

1. The Points of Contact (POC) between OMARC and MCARS are listed in Appendix 1. All POC's should be updated by addendum, as necessary and verified on an annual basis by both MCARS and OMARC at the renewal of this agreement.
2. OMARC agrees to allow MCARS to assume operational control of the OMARC repeater station during times requiring disaster communications as described above. Operational control is defined as using the repeater station to communicate by running an informal (without Net Control Station) or directed (with Net Control Station) net.
3. OMARC agrees to provide a list of its trained Control Operators in Appendix 2 herein.
4. When contacted by an MCARS POC, the OMARC POC will make a reasonable attempt to have a control operator on frequency during an MCARS activation.
5. An OMARC Control Operator as requested by MCARS will monitor the technical aspects of repeater operation, making any necessary adjustments or changes to the operation of the radio station as can be achieved remotely such as:
 - a. Reducing power output to conserve backup battery capacity.
 - b. Turning the repeater off if it is in any danger of failure that would preclude further operation later, while notifying the MCARS NCS with as much notice as possible so the net may be moved to another frequency.

- c. Turning the repeater off if it is malfunctioning or in the presence of malicious interference which precludes proper operations with the same notification as in b. above.
 - d. Making any changes necessary to allow the repeater to operate in accordance with any/all FCC regulations and good radio practice.
6. MCARS agrees to the following stipulations while using the OMARC repeater station:
- a. During MCARS activation, all reasonable efforts will be made to make contact with an OMARC POC in the order listed in Appendix 1 to notify him/her of the impending, imminent, or on-going use of the repeater. However, emergency use of the repeater to save life and/or property will always come first, regardless of the status of notification (in such an instance, notification will occur as soon as is reasonable). Notification attempts may be made over the air, via telephone, via email, or in person and should continue until all methods are exhausted or contact is made.
 - b. For an MCARS training exercise, MCARS agrees to contact an OMARC POC in the order listed in Appendix 1 to request the use of the OMARC repeater at least 5 days prior to the training exercise, and such permission will be granted assuming there are no other scheduled events for the repeater during the drill's expected duration. During a training exercise, MCARS agrees to make all reasonable efforts to allow OMARC members to utilize the repeater simultaneously with the exercise. During a drill, this will take the form of allowing OMARC members to make calls on the repeater simultaneously with drill radio traffic. Both MCARS and OMARC members agree to keep transmissions short in concert with good on-air Amateur Radio practice so both groups may communicate efficiently.
7. OMARC and MCARS agree to maintain liaison so that there may be the closest possible cooperation in emergency communications planning and coordination, facility and equipment maintenance, and repeater equipment and site usage both during emergencies and on a normal, daily basis. *(An example of this would be for OMARC to notify MCARS that a new backup battery system has been placed in service at the repeater site. Another example would be that MCARS could notify OMARC of rolling power outages to make sure the repeater is sufficiently prepared.)*
8. The callsign used for the repeater system shall be at OMARC's discretion at all times. OMARC agrees to maintain their repeater system coordination with the current recognized repeater coordination group for the area.

9. During activation, MCARS will conduct the net using best practice standards and procedures, and will yield occasionally to directed calls among OMARC members and guests, at the discretion of the MCARS Net Control Station (NCS), which will not be unreasonably withheld.
10. Following each incident requiring an activation of the repeater system, MCARS will provide OMARC, by email (at an address provided in the contact list), with an after incident report which will include, but not be limited to, a brief description of the incident, times of activation and closure of the incident, callsigns and locations of those involved in the net (if available), and an MCARS incident number, if any.
11. OMARC will reasonably maintain the OMARC repeater station. Additionally,
 - a. OMARC cannot be held liable for failure of the repeater system, whether or not the failure is caused by emergencies described above.
 - b. MCARS agrees that OMARC cannot be required to effect repairs to restore communications on short notice during an activation or event.
 - c. MCARS agrees that it will not expect any OMARC member to be put in physical danger to effect repairs to the repeater station.
 - d. OMARC agrees to maintain the repeater station within the constraints of members availability to effect repairs; and within OMARC's Bylaws, Section 7, "Expenditures" as applicable to the repeater station, where it states that "In an Emergency, to maintain the integrity of the repeater, the Board will spend the necessary monies to get the machine back into good health as soon as possible without taking a vote".
12. OMARC and MCARS agree to make this agreement available to their membership so all Amateur Radio Operators in each organization understand the MOU between the two groups. This availability can take the form of publication on the Internet, or any other method deemed appropriate by each organization.

The intent of this MOU is not to serve as a legally binding document. Rather, it should serve as a set of guidelines for good Amateur Radio practice and sufficiently serve the needs of both groups to determine how to conduct themselves prior to, during, and after a communications emergency or regional disaster where the OMARC repeater station has been utilized.

This MOU shall take effect upon signature by the OMARC repeater trustee, and/or appointed official, and the MCARS DEC/Radio Officer at the time of signature and shall remain in effect for one year from the date of signature. This agreement may be terminated by either organization with 30 days prior written notice to the other organization.

Marlo Montanaro- KA2IRQ
MCARS DEC/Radio Officer

Date

Ron Olender- WA2HZT
OMARC President

Date

Steve Hajducek- N2CKH
OMARC Secretary

Date

Appendix 1- Points of Contact

MCARS POC's

Primary POC: Marlo Montanaro- KA2IRQ- MCARS DEC/Radio Officer

ka2irq@comcast.net

ka2irq@yahoo.com

ka2irq@arrl.net

ka2irq@qsl.net

mmontanaro@imcingular.com (email to pager)

Alternate POC: Rich Krohn- N2SMV- MCARS Deputy Radio Officer

n2smv@monmouth.com

OMARC POC's

PRIMARY POC: Steve Hajducek, N2CKH, OMARC Technical Committee Member

n2ckh@optonline.net

shajducek@optonline.net

ALTERNATE POC: Bill Hollander, III, KC2CNB, OMARC Technical Committee
Chairman

kc2cnb@juno.com

ALTERNATE POC: Doug Buchan, W2UG, OMARC Trustee N2MO/R, OMARC
Emergency Communications Director

dbuchan@optonline.net

OMARC Repeater Station Control Operators

Steve, N2CKH

Bill, KC2CNB

Doug, W2UG

Ron, WA2HZT

Jim, K2DE

James, AB2QJ

Art, KC2CRI

Rich, KB2OPQ

Rob, N2QDQ

Larry, KB2RIS

Cy, VE3IFS/W2
Ken, KB2KBD
Mike, N2GEG
Bob, WD2U