

**The ARES E-letter October 18, 2017**

## **Florida Statewide Policy on ARES and Other Volunteer Communicators Issued**

During last month's hurricane emergencies, the ARRL was asked to share the following from the Communications Branch Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management:

"The State of Florida appreciates the service of ARES. State of Florida SEOC and its staff will never request individuals or provide individuals any information on an incident. All requests for individuals in the ARES program in the State of Florida will follow the North Florida ARES Plan and direction of their Section Manager Stephen Szabo (WB4OMM). Absolutely no direct communications to the SEOC or its staff is to be made by individuals to request to be deployed or provide services at anytime."

"Any amateur wishing to volunteer to assist needs to go through the ARRL Northern Florida Manager Steve Szabo's established processes, as that is the system Florida Emergency Management is utilizing to coordinate Amateur Radio activities. Under no circumstances should individual Amateurs contact Florida Emergency Management.

"We also remind ARRL/ARES volunteers who may be assisting in support of the ongoing relief and recovery efforts that the only persons who should be speaking on behalf of the ARRL or its field organization are the ARRL Section Manager or their Public Information Coordinator/ Public Information Officer. Unfortunately we have had reports of false information being apparently shared via Amateur Radio channels. This type of misinformation can negatively affect the hard work being done by various Emergency Management agencies involved, as well as the various agencies also providing assistance, and can be harmful to the efforts of the Amateur community trying to assist in the response and relief efforts. ARRL SMs, PICs, and PIOs only provide information publicly where it has been vetted by state officials, and only as directed. Unauthorized false reports can seriously and negatively impact the work of relief and recovery officials as well as damage the good relationships that Amateurs have in those relief and recovery communities. Let the trained PICs/PIOs do their jobs!

"Thanks to the hundreds of Amateurs who are providing communications assistance as this story continues to unfold. With everyone working in concert and through appropriate channels, your work is helping make a difference." -- *Dan Henderson, N1ND*  
*Assistant Secretary, the American Radio Relay League, Inc.*  
*Regulatory Information Manager*