

FOREWORD

The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc., and the American Radio Relay League, Inc. (ARRL) share the common bond of communications in the public interest. APCO International is made up of Emergency Medical, Law Enforcement, Fire and other Public Safety Communications personnel whose primary responsibility is the management, design, maintenance and operation of communications facilities in the public domain.

The ARRL is a non-commercial association of radio amateurs bonded together for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation, for the relaying of messages by radio, for the advancement of the radio art and of the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative matters and for the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct.

While the members of APCO International are charged with responsibility of communications in the public interest as professional members of the public safety community, a primary responsibility of the Amateur Radio Service, as established by Part 97 of the Federal Communications Commission's regulations, is the rendering of public service communication for the general public, particularly in times of emergency, when normal communications are not available.

APCO International has, since its inception, taken the lead in establishing International standards for public safety communications. Through International Headquarters and Affiliates, APCO International strives for professionalism and continuity of communications through education, standardization and the exchange of information.

Organizing and coordinating Amateur Radio operators in the amateur frequency bands, the ARRL has been serving the general public directly and government and relief agencies for more than 75 years. To that end, in 1935 the league organized the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps (now called the Amateur Radio Emergency Service--ARES). In 1949 the League created the National Traffic System (NTS). Together, ARES and NTS comprise the League's public service Field Organization of volunteer radio amateurs. As leaders and representatives of radio amateurs, the ARRL has responsibilities in motivation, education, policy and leadership in promoting Amateur Radio functions in the public service, especially in times of emergency when the resources of radio amateurs may be most survivable communications available.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to state the terms of a mutual agreement between the ARRL and APCO International that will serve as a broad framework within which volunteer personnel of the ARRL may coordinate their facilities and equipment with APCO International members and their agencies for disaster communications

II. Definition of Disaster

A disaster is either a natural or man-made occurrence that causes human suffering or human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance and which rapidly depletes the resources of the responding agencies involved.

It will be understood and agreed that members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service will neither seek nor accept any duties other than that of Amateur Radio communications.

III. Method of Cooperation

In order that the emergency communications facilities of the ARES and NTS may be coordinated and utilized to the fullest advantage during disasters, APCO International and ARRL agree to the following:

A. Through its national headquarters in Newington, Connecticut, the ARRL will establish regular liaison with the APCO International headquarters in South Daytona, Florida, through a standing committee of each organization. This liaison will provide the closest possible cooperation and direct operational assistance by the ARRL in emergency communications planning, and in the coordination of amateur radio communications facilities for disaster operations.

B. APCO International welcomes the cooperation and assistance of the American Radio Relay League, through its headquarters and its field organizations, to extend Amateur Radio emergency communications planning into the jurisdictions of APCO International chapters. APCO International chapters will be urged to further the cooperative effort by requesting that local ARRL ARES, and NTS personnel serve as disaster volunteers for emergency communications, with such personnel reporting to the ARES Emergency Coordinator of jurisdiction. ARRL ARES, and NTS volunteers, will be encouraged to take part in pre-disaster training and planning and to work with APCO International chapters to provide amateur radio communications equipment and volunteers, and to meet the needs of their disaster communications plans.

C. When a disaster occurs requiring the use of amateur radio communications facilities, APCO International, through an individual chapter and with the understanding of the agency (agencies) to be served, may recommend the assistance of the ARRL ARES, and NTS nearest the scene of the disaster. This assistance may include, but is not limited to the following:

2. The establishment and maintenance of fixed, mobile, and portable station emergency communication facilities for local radio coverage and point-to-point contact between public safety officials and locations, as required.

3. Maintenance of the continuity of communications for the duration of the emergency period or until normal communications channels are substantially restored.

D. ARRL agrees to supply APCO International with lists of emergency coordinators on an annual basis. APCO International agrees to supply ARRL with pertinent information and points of contact from the various chapters on an annual basis.

E. Detailed operating plans for the utilization of the communications facilities of the Amateur Radio service should be developed with APCO International chapters in cooperation with local ARRL ARES, and NTS personnel.

F. APCO International will recommend to its chapters that membership on disaster preparedness and relief committees include representation from the ARRL through its local ARES and NTS organizations.

G. APCO International will recommend to its membership that standing committees be appointed within the chapters as a means of maintaining liaison with local ARRL officials. APCO International will recommend to its chapters that local ARRL officials be admitted to appropriate APCO International training classes.

H. Each organization will distribute copies of this MOU through its field structure, and make copies available to other Organizations, both public and private, which may have an active interest in disaster operations.

This agreement is in force as of the date indicated below, and shall remain in effect unless terminated by written notification from either party to the other.

Signed unto this day, the twenty-fourth of October in the year 1996.