**Topic 8e: National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster**

**Objectives**

After reading this topic you will appreciate the role of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), and the role that Amateur Radio plays in supporting the missions and functions of the NVOAD member organizations.

**Student Preparation Required:**

* **IS-288 The Role of Voluntary Organizations in Emergency Management**

**Course Overview:**

This independent study course provides a basic understanding of the history, roles, and services

of disaster relief voluntary agencies in providing disaster assistance. It is appropriate for both the

general public and those involved in emergency management operations.

[**https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-288.a**](https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-288.a)

**Information**

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is a partnership among a number of organizations that are active during a disaster response. The organization was founded on the principle of disaster planning and cooperation among member non-government disaster response organizations in the US.

After Hurricane Camille in 1969, organizations that had been involved in providing resources and services to victims and communities affected by disaster shared their mutual concern about the frequent duplication or gaps in services. Beginning in 1970, representatives from these voluntary organizations began to meet together on a regular basis. The purpose of those early meetings was for participants to share their respective activities, concerns and frustrations in order to minimize duplication of effort and manage disaster activities more efficiently.

Today, NVOAD has 49 national member organizations (including the ARRL), and it continues to grow. There are fifty state and territorial VOADs and a growing number of local VOADs. State and local VOAD members include local ARES, REACT and other disaster communication groups.

**Functions Of NVOAD**

NVOAD coordinates planning efforts by many voluntary organizations responding to disaster – it does not provide direct services for the public. Member organizations increase their effectiveness by reducing duplication of services by working together before disasters strike. Once a disaster occurs, NVOAD or an affiliated state VOAD encourages members (including ARRL section officials, and other voluntary agencies) to convene on-site. This cooperative effort has proven to be the most effective way for a wide variety of volunteers and organizations to work together in a crisis.

NVOAD serves member organizations through:

* Communication - disseminating information by electronic means, its newsletter, a directory, research and demonstration, case studies, and critique.
* Cooperation - creating a climate for cooperation at all levels (including  grass roots) and sharing information.
* Coordination - coordinating policy among member organizations and serving as a liaison, advocate, and national voice.
* Education - providing training and increasing awareness and preparedness in each organization.
* Leadership Development - giving volunteer leaders training and support so as to build effective state VOAD organizations.
* Mitigation - supporting the efforts of federal, state, and local agencies and governments and supporting appropriate legislation.
* Convening Mechanisms - putting on seminars, meetings, board meetings, regional conferences, training programs, and local conferences.
* Outreach - encouraging the formation of, and giving guidance to, state and regional voluntary organizations active in disaster relief.

**NVOAD Organization**

A nine-member board of directors meets at least four times each year to provide guidance for the achievement of NVOAD goals. NVOAD is not itself a service delivery organization. Instead, it upholds the privilege of its members to independently provide relief and recovery services, while expecting them to do so cooperatively.

NVOAD is committed to the idea that the best time to train, prepare, and become acquainted with each other is prior to the actual disaster response. Organizations and agencies that wish to become NVOAD members go through an application process and need to demonstrate their capability to work within the parameters agreed to by the members of NVOAD.

Many NVOAD members are faith-based organizations that, in many cases, have a longstanding history of providing services to victims of disaster and their communities. Most are large organizations with paid key staff and professional services that can be relied upon by communities in the post-disaster and recovery phases. Time and again, victims will see these organizations roll into a disaster area and provide services including shelter, food, medical assistance, and the management of donations from the outside world.

**Amateur Radio And NVOAD**

Amateur Radio has long provided disaster communication support for these organizations. Most amateurs are aware of our support for the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, but are unaware of the same services provided to other NVOAD organizations. In many areas where state or local VOAD groups have a local presence or meetings, Amateur Radio emergency communication teams select a liaison person and coordinate efforts for training, drills and advance preparation. This relationship is encouraged, but check with your SEC to be sure there is not duplication of efforts.

During actual disasters, when NVOAD convenes on-site planning and coordination meetings, ARRL HQ provides NVOAD members with local and state ARES contacts to muster communication support for their activities. In cases where Amateur Radio groups are members of state and local VOAD groups, these contacts have already been made, and plans may be in place.

In many states, ARRL section officials participate in annual state VOAD conferences.

ARES leadership officials should review the current listing of NVOAD members at **www.nvoad.org**, determine the status of VOAD groups and activity at their state and local level, and then contact these organizations for advance disaster planning. ARES leaders will find that in many regions these organizations can provide significant disaster relief services, and that a viable opportunity may exist for radio amateurs to support them in their humanitarian missions.

**References**

* National member-organizations of NVOAD are growing. **Click here** to view all members.
* For more information on NVOAD and its agencies, consult: **www.nvoad.org****/**
* For questions regarding NVOAD, contact: **info@nvoad.org**

**Review**

In this Topic, you have received a basic introduction to NVOAD, its member organizations and functions, and the general communications support role of Amateur Radio.

**Student Activities**

1. Define the following terms and provide an example of each:

* VOAD
* NVOAD

1. List the major items of information you would need to have on hand before your local organization joined a VOAD.

**Topic 8 Section E Knowledge Review**

In order to demonstrate mastery of the information presented in the topic, you will be asked a series of un-graded questions. There are approximately 5 questions on the following pages in multiple-choice or true/false format. Feedback will be offered to you based on the answer you provide. In some cases, you may be directed back to the area of the topic where a review might benefit you in order to find the correct answer.

Question 1

Which of the following best describes NVOAD?

1. A contractual relationship between the Federal Government and voluntary organizations.
2. An organization based upon MOUs between the Federal Government and voluntary organizations.
3. An organization which encompasses CERT, ARES, REACT and RACES.
4. A partnership among organizations that respond during disasters.

Question 2

Concerning NVOAD, which of the following statements is true?”

1. NVOAD includes CERT, RACES, ARES and REACT.
2. NVOAD consists only of small, volunteer organizations.
3. NVOAD coordinates planning efforts by many voluntary organizations.
4. NVOAD provides direct services for the public.

Question 3

Which of the following is not a function of NVOAD?

1. Communications and Cooperation among participating organizations.
2. Leadership Development and Training for representatives of participating organizations.
3. Command and Control of disaster relief efforts.
4. Coordination of policies and legislative efforts among participating organizations.

Question 4

Which of the following statements is false?

1. In addition to the national organization (NVOAD), there are state and local organizations (VOADs) as well.
2. NVOAD member organizations only work together during a disaster.
3. NVOAD has a nine member board of directors which meets four times per year.
4. NVOAD has historical roots extending back to Hurricane Camille in 1969.

Question 5

Which of the following describes the most important goal and benefit of NVOAD?

1. The board of directors gets to meet periodically.
2. Member organizations learn about one another.
3. Member organizations increase their effectiveness by reducing the duplication of services.
4. Member organizations obtain leadership training.

**Correct Answers**

1 d

2 c

3 c

4 b

5 c