



Ontario Section  
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Office of the Section Manager

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(via e-mail)

25 July, 2011

**OPEN LETTER TO ONTARIO ARES  
DISTRICT AND EMERGENCY COORDINATORS**

A number of changes have, and are about to take place in the Ontario Section that I would like to inform you of. You are aware that at the ARES Ontario meeting held at Toronto on 23 October, 2010 a steering group composed of DEC's and other volunteers, chaired by the SEC, was authorized for the purpose of developing a proposal to incorporate ARES Ontario. The intent was to bring the proposal before a second ARES Ontario meeting to be held this past spring. As it turned out, a small number of ARES personnel, in association with the Canadian Forces and several NGOs, incorporated an entity named the Emergency Communications Ontario Association (ECO). This was done without prior consultation with me or even some members of the steering group, which was never convened. ECO then went on to apply for affiliation with RAC in order to gain access to the RAC insurance. This of course raised a number of questions by the RAC executive and the insurance company with respect to ECO's role and support of RAC policies and programs – a fundamental condition of affiliation.

Over the past several months a detailed series of talks took place between ECO officials and the President, First Vice President (insurance and policy administration) and Vice President Field Services. While ECO was advised that RAC fully supports all associations and groups that provide emergency communications services, the insurmountable issue was ECO's premise that it could assume part of the established RAC ARES organization within Ontario while also utilizing an organizational model that bypassed the elected Section Manager and the subordinate section structure. This would put RAC in the untenable position of having an external organization, functioning outside the Ontario Section management structure, using RAC titles and trademarks and possibly even representing itself as ARES Ontario.

Most difficult of all was the premise that the President of the ECO and the Ontario SEC were one and the same person – a clear conflict of interest situation. Without the required unqualified statement of support for RAC's policies and programs, and adherence to the Ontario Section management structure as specified in the RAC Administration Manual, I was left with no alternative and yesterday sadly I withdrew Mr Bob Gammon VA3RX's appointment as SEC. Given the events which are about to take place (see below) I will retain SEC's function in the near term.

During the negotiations with the ECO it became apparent that the SEC had made a number of appointments that were not published on the official RAC website. This is not only contravenes established ARES policy but removes those appointees and their teams from the legal and liability protections that the policies are designed to provide. Put simply, we cannot receive the benefits provided by our national association if the leaders are not registered participants adhering to the policies designed to demonstrate that our activities are carried out within approved guidelines and authorized leadership. As mentioned above, RAC will support all external organizations providing emergency communication services but it can not have its appointed leadership accountable to more than one organization. I therefore must request that those EC's and DEC's indicate to me via return e-mail whether or not you wish to continue as am ARES Ontario appointee so that the ARES Ontario files can be corrected.

To assist you with your decision I would like you to consider the following initiatives either completed, now underway, or about to take place:

- √ In December 2010 the Section Managers banded together, under the chair of Vice President Field Services, to form the VPFS Council. The Council is the vehicle for the Section Managers to coordinate activities and programs across the country and to provide recommendations for policy change to the RAC executive..
- √ At the beginning of this year a Council secretariat was established. Some of it's members are the VPFS appointed officials such as the national Emergency, Traffic System and Training Coordinators as well as the NARED Manager. Others are new positions such as the IT and Webmaster Advisors. In the near future custodians for the various RAC documents will be recruited. The recent ARES Mission and Vision Statements developed by the secretariat and approved by the SMs is but one indicator of the positive change that this group is accomplishing.
- √ Operating under the aegis of the Council of the Federation federal, provincial and territorial "Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management" (SOREM) have developed a national communications interoperability strategy. A number of working groups are functioning under the Communications Interoperability Technical Investigation Group developing the operational practices and procedures. VPFS has joined CITIG as the official RAC representative. Special Advisor Ian Snow VA3QT participated in a CITIG Forum held in April at London, and plans are underway to have an Ottawa based representative participate in the annual CITIG meeting to take place at Ottawa in August.
- √ Lines of communication have been opened with Public Safety Canada and Industry Canada managers responsible for public safety spectrum policy. Michael Kelly, VE3FFK, has accepted an appointment as VPFS' on-the-ground liaison to these policy development.
- √ The RAC Board and Executive during strategic visioning sessions held Aug/Oct 2010 recognized that, with 60% of Canadian Amateurs resident in the province, Ontario hams are under represented with respect to the number of Directors. The Field Organization renewal taking place under the Council has determined that the section structure in Canada needs review given the geographic size of current sections and expanse over more than one province. The President has authorized an Ontario commission, to include the two Ontario Directors, to make recommendations for change in our province taking into consideration factors such as the distribution of Ontario Amateurs, demographics, political boundaries and other relevant factors. This commission is to make its report by end-November with the objective of putting the final proposal before the 2012 AGM for ratification.
- √ The SM's have begun the process of implanting Section Councils modelled on the national one. This council, which in turn is the formative step towards implementing a complete Field Organization within Ontario. It will be the decision making body for the Ontario Section. It will of course transform with time as we adapt to the recommendations that come forward from the Ontario review commission.

The negotiations with ECOA have consumed considerable energy and focus on the part of the RAC executive and myself, at the expense of developing the Ontario Field organization and the new ARES training system. It is now time to refocus our energies. I look forward to your email indicating your continued service in the Ontario ARE Service, and you can anticipate shortly the opportunity to contribute to the definition of our future once the commission is formally announced.

73,  
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Section Manager

Cc Vice President Field Services  
Director, Ontario North and East Region  
Director, Ontario South Region