



US AIR FORCE MARS

Providing the Reins of Command in Emergencies



What is Air Force MARS?

- The Military Auxiliary Radio System is a Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored program.
- It is established as a separate managed and operated program by the Army and Air Force.
- The program consists of licensed amateur radio operators who are interested in military communications.

MARS Mission

- Provide the Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored emergency communications on a local, national, and international basis as an adjunct to normal communications.
- Provide auxiliary communications for military, civil, and/or disaster officials during periods of emergency.
- Assist in effecting normal communications under emergency conditions.
- Create an interest, and furnish a means of training members in military communications procedures.
- Provide a potential reserve of radio communications personnel trained in military communication.
- Handle morale and quasi-official record communications for Armed Forces and authorized U.S Government civilian personnel stationed throughout the world.
- Conduct an appropriate Amateur Radio program as part of the annual celebration of Armed Forces Day.

Eligibility to Join USAF MARS

The Applicant must -

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a United States citizen or resident alien.
- Have a valid Technician, General, Advanced, or Extra Amateur radio license issued by the Federal Communication Commission.
- Operational capability on at least 2 Region 5 MARS HF SSB frequencies.
- Have radio equipment with a frequency stability of +/-20Hz.
- Operational digital capability, using either hardware (TNC) or software (sound card modes).
- Modes used in AF MARS are: OLIVIA, MT63, and M110A
- Use of Pactor is optional at this time.

Membership and Participation Requirements

- You will be given a Primary Assignment.
- Participation in your primary assignment is required
- A minimum of 12 hours per calendar quarter is required.
- Typical primary assignment will be 12 hours on air (HF) time per calendar quarter.
- As a new member you will be assigned a trainee call sign AFT5xx.
- You will be assigned to the two Training nets as your primary net assignments.
- You will be required to complete your training in 180 days.
- Training will consist of proper net procedures, proper use of call signs, formatting plain dress and encrypted traffic, how to pass, and receive traffic.
- You will be required to format and pass one plain dress message and one encrypted message in order to complete your training requirements.

Frequencies Required for Region 5 MARS Membership

- MARS members stations meet periodically in scheduled networks on military frequencies outside of the amateur bands.
- There are various types of networks and each accomplishes a specific goal. For example, Region Administrative and State networks take care of much of the day-to-day management of the program; traffic networks which exist solely to pass third party traffic; and of course, emergency networks which are established to provide communications needs during periods of emergency.
- There are also technical nets and training nets.
- MARS nets operate indifferent modes. Although high frequency (HF) single sideband (SSB) is predominant, HF digital modes such as PACTOR, ALE, and sound card modes such as MT63, Olivia, and M110A as well as newer developing modes are in use. Operational capability on at least one digital mode is required of all new members.
- Operational Capability on at least two of the three ✓ SSB Frequencies listed below is required for all Region 5 MARS members.
 - 33xx.0 kHz USB ✓
 - 40xx.0 kHz USB ✓
 - 51xx.0 kHz USB
 - 73xx.0 kHz USB ✓

Other areas for potential participation and assignment

- Phone Patch Network MARS RADIO <http://www.marsradioglobal.us/>
- Mission Support Network (MSN) <https://afmars-msn.org/>
- Transglobal CW Telegraphy Network (TCN)
- Transglobal Automatic Link Establishment (ALE) Network

Before you apply for membership

- Contact the State MARS Director in your state via email first.
- Ask him/her any questions that you may have regarding the MARS program.
- Email contact information is available via the Region 5 Web Site:
<https://www.afmars-nc-mil.us/index.php/mars-leadership/regional-info>
- Under 'REGION INFO' then select 'AFMARS REGION V' then scroll down to the State that you reside in.

How to Join US Air Force MAR in Region 5

(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin)

- Initiate for following steps:
- Access the web page: <https://www.afmars-nc-mil.us/index.php/for-prospective-members>
- Select JOIN MARS and then select 'APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP NOW'
- And select the State that you reside in.
- Follow the instructions and your application will be automatically forwarded to the proper offices.

Benefits of MARS Membership

- Add to the enjoyment of your amateur radio hobby through the expanded horizon of MARS.
- Increase your communication skills and capabilities.
- Operate on specially assigned military frequencies in voice, as well as various newer digital modes.
- Join a group of dedicated fellow radio amateurs participating in meaningful public service.
- Affiliate with the service branch of your choice (US Air Force or US Army) and become part of the professional military communication family.
- Gain a feeling of being associated with a military mission and contributing to the welfare and preparedness of the nation.
- Participate in regulated, disciplined radio nets with structured lines of organization and very specific operating rules.

For information on Army MARS visit:

<http://www.usarmymars.org/home/history-of-mars>