Ham Radio...

...Getting the message through for your family and community

ARRL The national association for AMATEUR RADIO
Amateur Radio, often called “ham radio,” has consistently been the most reliable means of communications in emergencies when other systems failed or were overloaded.

**Simply Put—Ham Radio Works!**
Most of the time, things work fine. But despite the development of very complex systems—or maybe because they ARE so complex—ham radio has been called into action again and again to provide communications when it really matters.

**Why Ham Radio Works So Well.**
Telephones, cell phones, Internet, trunk lines, satellite phone—to get a message out they all have to go through many vulnerable choke points and need electric power. Even if the system is functioning, these systems can be overwhelmed by the number of cries for help and families seeking information.

**Ham Radio is Different.**
While hams MAY use the Internet or a repeater system, they do not HAVE to do so! Hams can “go direct” and talk straight through to each other because each station is fully independent. Hams can operate just fine without other infrastructure. By selecting the right frequencies, hams can talk across town or around the world.

In an emergency, when your family’s lives may be at risk, which communications system would YOU want to have?

Ham radio operators provided emergency communications during these recent events:

- Earthquake in Hawaii—2006
- Flooding in Northeastern States—2006
- Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma and Rita—2005
- Wildfires in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico—2005
- Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne—2004
- Tsunami in Asia—2004
- Earthquake in Central California—2003
- Hurricane Isabel—2003
- Northeast Blackout—2003
- Shuttle Columbia Recovery Effort—2003
- Wildfires in Colorado—2002
- Flooding in Kentucky—2002
- World Trade Center, Pentagon and Western Pennsylvania Terrorist Attacks—2001
- Tropical Storm Allison—2001
- Fires in Los Alamos, New Mexico—2000
- Hurricane Floyd—1999
- Flooding in Texas—1998
- Hurricane Georges—1998
- “500-Year Flood” in N.D. and Minn.—1997
- Western U.S. Floods—1997
- Hurricane Fran—1996
- TWA Plane Crash—1996
- Oklahoma City Bombing—1995
Hurricanes, Ice, Snow, Tornadoes, Storms and SKYWARN

The National Hurricane Center in Florida relies on its ham radio station, WX4NHC, to receive reports from hams in affected areas (www.wx4nhc.org).

Ham radio operators by the hundreds volunteered for service to the devastated areas of the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina and her sisters Rita and Wilma pounded a five state area and destroyed other communications systems. For their life-saving work, the hams received commendations from the President and Congress as well as international praise. It truly proved the saying, "When all else fails, ham radio works!"

Within minutes of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, ham operators communicated from emergency operations centers as other systems failed. The ham operations continued for weeks as the airlines handled emergency and other important traffic. They also handled emergency traffic for government agencies as well as for displaced families.

Hams use all sorts of radios and antennas on a wide variety of frequencies to communicate with other hams across town or around the world. They can have radios for personal enjoyment, for keeping in touch with friends and family, for public service communications and for experiment with radio technology.

Boaters, RVers and outdoor enthusiasts also use ham radio as an excellent way to maintain communications from wherever they are.

FEMA advises that in a crisis you should plan to be totally on your own for at least 3 days — How will YOU communicate?

The National Weather Service uses hams operators for its "SKYWARN" program to get ground level reports of events that are missed by Doppler radar.
You Can Have This Capability for Yourself and Your Family—

Getting Your Own Ham Radio License

Unlike some other types of radio services, you need an FCC license to communicate with a ham radio. There are three levels of Amateur Radio licenses, and getting your first one is not too hard. Many people pass their FCC exam in a week or two, and there are lots of people and groups who will help you.

You can get help from a local club at www.arrl.org/findaclub. There is even an online, self-teaching course at www.arrl.org/cce/courses.html#ec010.

Where do I start?

Go to: www.emergency-radio.org

Simply stated, ham radio provides the broadest and most powerful wireless communications capability available to any private citizen anywhere in the world.

What is the ARRL?

Founded in 1914, the American Radio Relay League is the 150,000-member national association for Amateur Radio in the USA. Other countries have their own national associations.

ARRL is the primary source of information about ham radio in the USA. It provides books, magazines, an educational program designed especially for individuals and clubs, special events, all sorts ofakit, special events, all sorts of kits, publications, educational materials, and other information for its members.

Amateur or “ham” radio has been around for a century. It’s grown into a worldwide community of licensed operators using the airwaves, appearing on television, by satellites, by radio and by computer, and range from students to grandparents. Ham radio attracts those who have never held another radio, as well as some people who are also into the Ham radio. Local, however, are just normal folks like you and me, even though we may travel through the universe, voice to voice, country to country, continent to continent, using any type of transmitter or receiver that we can find.

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