



System Failures & Power Outages

Telephones, cell phones, Internet, trunk lines, and satellite phones are vulnerable to infrastructure failure and electric power outages. Even when these systems are functioning, they can be overloaded by excess use during emergencies.



Communication Systems Experts

Ham operators are able to independently communicate using their technology skills, ingenuity and a variety of portable and mobile systems. With a wide range of frequencies and modes, communication is possible across town, or around the state and country ... depending on the situation.



Self-contained radios, batteries and generators are key elements in the ARES Ham's emergency preparedness response plan.



Amateur (Ham) Radio has consistently been a reliable means of communications when other systems have failed ...



Washington County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)

ARES Involvement Is Easy!

Learn how agencies in Washington County can benefit from ARES and Amateur Radio...

1. Talk with the Washington County ARES Emergency Coordinator about needs
2. Draft and agree to MOU
3. Create emergency response plans
4. Develop training and drill events to prepare agencies and volunteers for emergencies

Contact:

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Special Thanks to the St. Paul Park Fire Department with related photos courtesy of John Harvard & Mike Love of Clarens House Photography.

www.clarens.house.com

Washington County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)

Amateur Radio Communications Emergency & Public Service

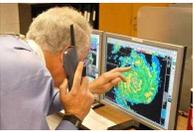




Service to Community & World



Amateur Radio Operators have a history for providing communications at emergencies, community service events and non-profit organization activities. Ham's resourcefulness has proven valuable when normal communication systems are overloaded, damaged or disrupted. They use personal radio equipment and their skills to provide communications as needed.



When disaster areas are crippled by loss of power and communications, Hams have set up and staffed command centers using portable two-way radio system networks. These networks are organized to provide communications locally for governmental and emergency officials, as well as non-commercial communication for the private citizens affected. A coordinated communications network offers a systematic flow of traffic as situations dictate – usually from a centralized Net Control Operator at a Command Center or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to multiple support/tactical stations throughout the network. In addition to handling operational and tactical communications traffic, health and safety information is often relayed.



Although most agencies have their own radio equipment, during a disaster the communications systems for agencies such as police departments, fire departments, emergency services and others become very busy – often overloaded. For a large-scale disaster, even cell phone systems may become unusable.

Emergency operation is initiated at the local level and the ARES Emergency Coordinator is responsible for setting up support services with county officials. Even if a situation transcends the local level and becomes state-wide, regional or national concern, the immediate situation and plan are the primary concern of local ARES staff.



Within minutes of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, New York City Ham Operators were active at emergency operations centers since most of the commercial communications systems failed.



Hundreds of Hams assisted after Hurricane Katrina and other storms hit the Gulf Coast. Hams originated the first communications coming out of Indonesia following the Tsunami.

Each year in hundreds of locations throughout the world, Hams assist in the aftermath of tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, ice storms, wild fires, earthquakes, tidal waves and other emergencies.



Mission, Training & Preparation

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) consists of FCC licensed Amateur Radio Operators (Hams) who have been trained in emergency communications and have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.

While not intended to be a primary means of communications, ARES provides support operations as well as a reliable backup system when all normal means of communications fail. Providing point-to-point contact, regardless of damaged or overloaded infrastructure, is a common ARES mission.



Most members have been trained in FEMA/ Emergency Management, National Incident Management System, ARRL emergency communications, radiation, shelter operations and other specialized areas. They are storm spotters for the National Weather Service and assist in reporting severe weather and tornadoes through the Skywarn Network.

Members are required to participate in regular training exercises as well as lend communications assistance during community events, including: Walk-A-Thons, concerts, festivals, fairs, parades, sporting and special events.



Served Agencies & Organizations



Communication services are provided free of charge as a community service to federal, state and local governments, as well as non-profit organizations. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements are established with local and national served agencies like the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other relief organizations that are active during emergencies.