When All Else Fails - Ham Radio Works!

Modern society takes our electric supply and communications tools for granted. They are reliable and efficient. But what if you lose power and find that the phone lines and internet services are out? When that happens the cell phone services, even if working, may become overloaded and useless.

In Maine, these problems are usually associated with blizzards and ice storms. In these situations, how would you get an important message to someone?

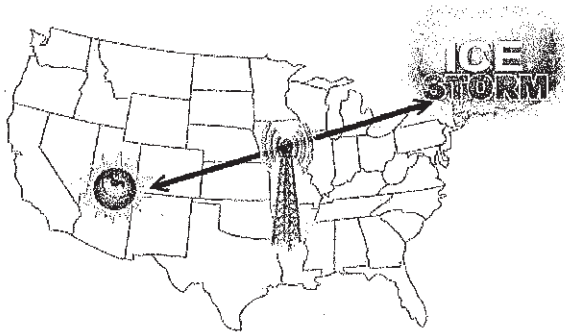
In times of emergency, the Amateur Radio Service can provide the means for individuals to communicate when the normal methods are either unavailable, inadequate or are overloaded.

Amateur radio operators, also known as ***hams***, have been providing this type of service for 100 years and it is available to everyone, free of charge.

Hams have provided emergency communication services in many minor to moderate emergencies such as our periodic ice storms along with major events such as Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy.

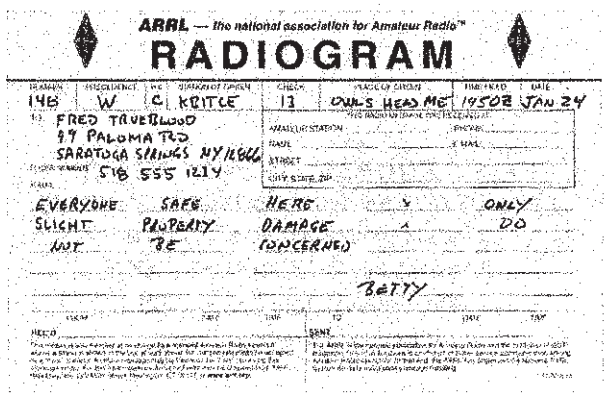
Amateur radio operators have several ways of using time-tested methods for delivering messages.

Hams can get a message to someone nearby or far away.



This may be done using radio relays or by using a combination of radio and the internet (if the internet is available at the recipient's location).

Your message could be of an emergency nature or it could be a "*we're okay*" message to a family member or friend. The message can be sent to someone elsewhere in the state or across the country.


ARRL — the national association for Amateur Radio™

RADIOGRAM

148 W C KRITCE 13 OWLS HEAD ME 1950Z JAN 24

FRED TRUEBLOOD
19 PALOMA TRD
SARATOGA SPRINGS NY 12866
518 555 1214

EVERYONE SAFE HERE X ONLY
SLIGHT PROPERTY DAMAGE X DO
NOT BE CONCERNED

BETTY

How to Send a Message

You don't need to be concerned with how the message will be sent but you do need to provide the ham radio operator with a sufficient amount of information. Details include:

The Addressee: The individual's name, full address, phone number and (optional) email address.

Importance of the Message: The ham will help you categorize the importance or priority of the message.

The Message Text: This should be limited to 25 words with no contractions.

Signature: Your name, address and phone number.

Handling: Indicate if you want a reply or confirmation of receipt.

The radio operator may ask some other questions to ensure that the best route for the message will be used.

Please note that messages sent by ham radio can not contain confidential information (Think of what you would put on a postcard) or be business related.

Getting Your Message to a Ham

Walk or drive if conditions permit.

Some hams monitor FRS/GMRS Channel 1 or Marine VHF . Check with your local ham operator to know if these options are available.

If activated, check with your local shelter.

Knox County Ham Emergency Frequencies to Monitor

If you have a scanner, program it for the following Knox County VHF ham radio frequencies:

147.060 MHz
145.490 MHz
147.540 MHz

If you have a short wave radio, you can monitor the Maine Amateur Radio Emergency Service frequency 3940 kHz lower side band (LSB). This frequency is always active daily at 5:00 PM and communications will be more constant during emergencies.

The best time to monitor the VHF frequencies during an emergency is at the top of each hour.

Related Information

What is Amateur Radio?
http://www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio
Amateur Radio Public Service
http://arrl.org/public-service

Ham radio is fun and rewarding. Becoming licensed is easier than ever and entry-level equipment has never been more affordable. For more information on becoming a ham, contact: knoxhams@belljar.net

Get to Know your Closest Participating Ham

Knox County has a growing group of hams who are participating in this program. Please contact the Knox County EMA at 207-594-5155 for information on your closest qualified operator and write that information here:

More detail is available on the web at: http://ballyhac.com

For more information about this program or, if you are a ham and are interested in participating, please contact: knoxhams@ballyhac.com

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Knox County Emergency Management Agency
http:knoxcountymaine.gov/ema
Knox County ARES/RACES-CERT
PenBay Amateur Radio Club
http://www.penbayarc.org

Knox County Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Project

How would you communicate with friends, family or important services if your normal communications tools were not available?