

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about the Amateur Radio Emergency Service

What do Amateur Radio operators do during and after disasters?

Amateur Radio operators set up and operate organized communication networks locally for governmental and emergency officials, as well as non-commercial communication for private citizens affected by the disaster. Amateur Radio operators are most likely to be active after disasters that damage regular lines of communications due to power outages and destruction of telephone lines.

How do Amateur Radio operators help local officials?

Many radio amateurs are active as communications volunteers with local public safety organizations. In addition, in some disasters, radio frequencies are not coordinated among relief officials and Amateur Radio operators step in to coordinate communication when radio towers and other elements in the communications infrastructure are damaged.

What are the major Amateur Radio emergency organizations?

Amateur Radio operators have informal and formal groups to coordinate communication during emergencies. At the local level, hams may participate in local emergency organizations, or organize local "traffic nets" using VHF (very high frequencies) and UHF (ultra high frequencies). At the state level, hams are often involved with state emergency management operations. In addition, hams operate at the national level through the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), which is coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES), which is coordinated through the American Radio Relay League and its field volunteers. In addition, in areas that are prone to tornadoes and hurricanes many hams are involved in Skywarn, operating under the National Weather Service.

Is Amateur Radio recognized as a resource by national relief organizations?

Many national organizations have formal agreements with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and other Amateur Radio groups including:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- National Communications System
- American Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- National Weather Service
- Association of Public Safety Communications Officials