



Amateur Radio Club

After a major earthquake or other disaster, communicating with your loved ones and local emergency services becomes a great concern to everyone. More than likely the telephone landlines and cell towers will be non-functional for at least a few days, so we might start looking to Amateur Radio operators to help fill the void. Here are a few examples of disasters where they have played a important communications role:

9/11: "Hams" helped coordinate emergency services and pass along vital information when some local communications proved unreliable.

Hurricane Katrina: The largest disaster response by U.S. amateur radio operators was during Hurricane Katrina, More than a thousand ham operators from all over the U.S. converged on the Gulf Coast in an effort to provide emergency communications assistance. Subsequent Congressional hearings highlighted the Amateur Radio response as one of the few examples of what went right in the disaster relief effort.

Hurricane Frances: On September 2, 2004, ham radio was used to update weather forecasters with information live from the Bahamas.

On December 26, 2004, an earthquake and resulting tsunami across the Indian Ocean wiped out all communications with the Andaman Islands except for a single Amateur station that provided a means to coordinate relief efforts.

2008 Sichuan China Earthquake: Amateur Radio operators in the People's Republic of China provided emergency communications after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake and U.S. hams did similar work following Hurricane Ike.

Boston Marathon officials relied on ham operators when the cell phone systems were instantly overloaded.

Whether it's a big station, or small and portable, hams enjoy the security of knowing they can get a message through in almost any situation without depending on a fragile infrastructure that can fail or be overloaded. With the support of the Four Seasons at Beaumont EPP and HOA Board, we feel confident that at least a basic level of communications can be provided to the community. Soon we hope to have a centralized communications facility operational and ready for "the big one".

Our website is W6FSB.com, our meetings are on the last Friday of the month at 10AM -- in the Lodge Ballroom. See you there!

Pete Hersey, KJ6NRR, Vice President