



Neighborhood HamWatch

Neighborhood HamWatch is a voluntary service program for all amateur radio operators who want to provide a helpful service to their neighbors during times of extended power outage.

When the power goes out for long periods of time, such as after a major storm, and everybody's batteries wear out and they run out of fuel for their generator, people are virtually left in the dark without any way to receive radio or television, or talk to friends or relatives outside the affected area. It gets lonely and feelings of isolation develop because you can't talk to anyone including Emergency Managers in local governments to find out what is being planned or done to help you. "Communication Isolation" can be worsened by downed trees and power lines which make it very difficult for emergency services to reach your neighborhood. This is a time period that often lasts several days, maybe even weeks. It is a time when Amateur Radio Operators, often called, "Hams" can help.

There are three things "Hams" can do.

1. Neighborhood Hams can **get on their radios and talk to each other** across the city and county and share information about what's going on in their neighborhoods. This conversation provides effective therapy to fight against the psychological depression that often accompanies communication isolation. Just talking to each other, and sharing information with their neighbors helps keep people in touch with what's going on and how the community is coping with the emergency. It beats speculating and fights rumors.
2. Hams in your neighborhood can also **contact local government Emergency Operations Centers** that are equipped with Amateur Radio Stations and operators and describe conditions and special needs in the neighborhood to local emergency managers. This information helps officials plan and coordinate a response to current needs and organize the recovery effort with first hand information about community conditions. Emergency Managers can also relay information through Hams to neighborhoods providing vital information about the recovery effort and reassurance that action is being taken to help the citizenry. This aids the overall recovery effort.
3. **Specially equipped Hams can also relay short messages over the Internet**, from their neighbors to distant relatives or friends, helping people reassure others that they are OK, survived the storm, and are in the recovery stage. There are two ways they can accomplish this special service, one through an amateur radio nation-wide message relay system called the Amateur Radio National Traffic System, and another more direct and efficient way, by using their Ham Radio to link their computer to the Internet, totally independent of Internet providers who are likely to also be without power. Ham radios connect to the Internet independent of wires, satellites and typical provider services.

For more information contact your local neighborhood amateur radio operator, or send an Email or call: Andy Gausz, KG4QCD@arrl.net, 321-229-7547.