

Providing Emcomm Services Directly to the Public – Key Points

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Working with the public usually means lower, more flexible time commitment and no uniforms, exams or credentialing. In a disaster, you will already be in your community – no travel to some distant EOC. Helping neighbors also builds public support for Amateur Radio.

Conduct outreach at preparedness fairs and other community events. Consider sending radiograms for visitors (if you are plugged into NTS) to demonstrate how we can handle welfare inquiries when normal communications are down.

Focus on CERT groups, Neighborhood Watch, community associations and even HOAs. Help them develop or improve their readiness plans, including communications.

Teach them how to use FRG / GMRS radios, including basic protocols, battery choices and alternate power sources and UHF radio coverage. Encourage them to map their neighborhoods for radio “hot spots” and “dead zones”. Lead occasional radio drills, either separately or in conjunction with other drills or meetings so they can practice the basic skills you taught them and get over their mic fright. Help them develop basic communication plans. Start a weekly or monthly FRS / GMRS neighborhood net so community members get used to using their radios for local communication

Make yourself more valuable by sharpening your message-handling skills (participating in your local NTS net is a great way to do this), having back-up power for your own station, taking local training in CERT, CPR, etc., preparing your own household for disasters (you can't help others unless you have taken care of your family's needs first) and becoming familiar with local ARES / RACES groups, who they serve and how to contact them.

By participating in and leading neighborhood preparedness efforts, you help improve the image of Amateur radio among neighbors and community leaders. You may also surface potential new Amateur licensees. If you do, then mentor them and add another operator to your neighborhood's communication resources.