

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

In an age where multiple forms of communications are standard, how would you communicate if they are suddenly removed? Most people rely heavily on their cell phones, iPads and other portable personal communications. But in a major emergency, such as a fire or earthquake, those forms of communications can be disrupted. Radios are the best way to remain informed in the event of an emergency and also to provide some communications.

### **Portable AM/FM Radio**

You should have a portable radio so you can keep informed on local occurrences. These radios can be battery, solar or hand-cranked in the event of a power outage. Remember to keep a supply of batteries with them so you can have at least one change of batteries.

Check to make sure the radio has reception at your residence or shelter-in-place location.

Use the radio sparingly in the event the emergency is of long duration. Most updates on local events will be given on the hour or half-hour by your local radio stations.

### **FRS/GMRS Radios**

The Family Radio Service/General Mobile Radio Service radios offer small two-way short-range radios for personal use. These radios, which are normally called handi-talkies, are available from many retailers and operate on AAA batteries or rechargeable battery packs. Most of the FRS/GMRS radios offer multiple frequencies and are very useful for communications between vehicles when you are told to evacuate and are using multiple vehicles. These are line-of-sight radios, so their capabilities can be masked by hills and tall structures.

If you use one of the first 14 frequencies on these radios you are not required to be licensed by the FCC.

### **Amateur (HAM) Radios**

Amateur, or Ham, radios are a longer distance two-way communications system that can be installed in a building, vehicle or hand-held. These radios are a higher power than the FRS/GMRS radios and have more frequency bands. They can be used for two-way communications and to monitor emergency services frequencies. Many locations throughout the United States also have volunteer emergency radio nets that operate on these frequencies.

Amateur radios are licensed by the FCC and the use of one when you are unlicensed can result in prosecution, major fines and confiscation of your equipment.

You can contact a local amateur radio club for more information on amateur radios.

### **Other Forms of Emergency Communications**

There are some other forms of communications that could be available in emergency situations. These include things such as satellite phones and satellite computer connections. The satellite computer connection will only be functional with a backup power source and if the satellite dish is not out of alignment.