



ERC Update January 2009

By Scott Grimmett

Emergency Communication Information

- ◆ Current information regarding emergency communication is found on the Provident Living website.
- ◆ There is no longer a section in the *Church Welfare Resources* manual about emergency communication.

Provident Living - Guidelines for Emergency Communication

- ◆ During an emergency, normal means of communication may become inoperable.

Provident Living - Priesthood Leaders Should Consider

- ◆ How to contact missionaries and members following a disaster.
- ◆ How to communicate the status of missionaries, members, buildings, and other necessary information to area leaders.
- ◆ Available communication personnel and equipment.

Provident Living - Communication Specialists

- Priesthood leaders may call communication specialists as needed. Individuals interested in communications often own radio equipment and possess valuable experience.

Provident Living - Additional Resources

- ◆ *Satellite Telephones* - Storehouses in the United States and Canada have satellite telephones. In other Church areas, satellite telephones are available in administration offices for emergency use.
- ◆ *Amateur Radio* – Some storehouses in the United States and Canada have amateur radio equipment and conduct regular network exercises. For information, contact your priesthood leader or regional welfare specialist.

Is there a need for emergency communication in my ward or stake?

- When an emergency occurs, leaders need the ability to immediately communicate with members, missionaries, and civil and Church authorities to provide status reports or to request assistance. A reliable emergency communication system should be in place if regular telephone or cell phone service fails.

If we typically do not have natural disasters in our area, why should we include emergency communication in our ward and stake emergency plans?

- In addition to a natural disaster, an emergency may occur anywhere and without warning. Examples include hazardous material spills, fires, power failure, and terrorist attacks. Consider which emergencies are possible in your location and identify specific ways to communicate in these types of emergencies.

What is the job description of a ward or stake emergency communication specialist?

- ◆ Leaders may choose to call a ward or stake emergency communication specialist from their community to assist with planning and implementing communication plans. Emergency communication specialists provide training and ensure the readiness of communication equipment. Emergency communication specialists may be invited to participate in ward and stake communication discussions as directed by leaders.

Will my mobile telephone work in an emergency?

- The mobile telephone is an effective tool for communication under normal circumstances. However, in a disaster, mobile telephone systems often fail due to overload, damage, and loss of power. Mobile telephone providers will restore service following a disaster, but it may take several hours, days, or weeks.

Should wards and stakes purchase or accept a donated satellite telephone or amateur radio equipment for use in an emergency?

- No. The ward and stake budget allowance does not include expenses for the purchase of equipment, repair, maintenance fees, or service contracts associated with satellite telephones and radio equipment. Leaders are encouraged to identify individuals who may already have their own equipment to assist with specific ward and stake communication needs.

What information should be reported to leaders following an emergency?

- Leaders should be prepared to report the nature of the disaster, the welfare of members and missionaries, the condition of meetinghouses, and any requests for assistance.



Emergency Communication Specialist

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

1. Determine what mode(s) of communication will work most effectively among the Church leaders (stake and ward) within the stake, with local civil authorities, and the nearest bishops' storehouse.

Spokane Region Modes of Communication

- ◆ Storehouse to Stake communication mode: Amateur Radio
- ◆ Stake to Ward communication mode: Recommend Amateur Radio
- ◆ Within a Ward communication mode: Work with the ward welfare committee and other communication specialists to determine the best method for your ward.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

2. Establish a relationship of trust and confidence with Church leaders. Plan and exercise a method for establishing contact between the leader and the communications specialist under disaster conditions (no phone or cell phone service).

Spokane Region Contact with Church Leaders

- ◆ I am concerned that we are not prepared when it comes to providing emergency communication for our church leaders.
- ◆ We need to move forward with plans to make sure every unit leader can be contacted in an emergency.
- ◆ Stake emergency communication specialists should take the lead.

Spokane Region Contact with Church Leaders

- ◆ Develop, test, and document the method of communication to Stake Presidents and Bishops.
- ◆ Examples:
 - One Bishop has a list of all amateur in a ward he keeps with him.
 - One Bishop and an amateur radio operator near his house plan to meet at a designated location.
- ◆ Test or review the method periodically.

Spokane Region Net Report Modification

- ◆ In order to track our progress, I am going to change regional net report.
- ◆ Instead of asking for a count of the ward ERC's, I want a count of the person that is assigned to make contact with the unit leader.
- ◆ This may or may not be the ward ERC.
- ◆ There may be more than one/unit.
- ◆ This number should not be reported unless the contact method is understood by all involved and documented.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

3. Become familiar with Church policy on local unit purchase of communication equipment, staging mock disasters, use of Church meetinghouses, etc.

Church Policy Clarification

- ◆ Purchase of equipment: Not encouraged, however; the stake president has the final decision.
- ◆ Mock Disasters: No
- ◆ Meetinghouses: The Stake President can authorize the use of a building for a shelter after discussing it with the Area Authority. Chapels should not be the first choice as a shelter.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

4. Become familiar with the anticipated flow of information and requests among Church and civil authorities in response to a disaster.

Spokane Region Information Flow

- ◆ Establish a relationship with local ARES/RACES organization.
- ◆ Establish a relationship with your local department of emergency management.
- ◆ Establish a relationship with local organizations/agencies that are involved with emergency planning.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

5. Under the direction of the stake president (or bishop) develop an emergency communications plan for inclusion in the stake (or ward) emergency plan.

Spokane Region Emergency Communication Plans

- ◆ Develop an emergency communication plan for your unit.
 - Some units leaders may want you to develop the plan.
 - Other unit leaders may want to have you work with the welfare committee to develop the plan.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

6. Develop a means of operating the communications network without commercial electrical power and under adverse conditions.

Spokane Region Backup Power

- ◆ Each amateur radio operator should work towards being prepared to operate without commercial power.
- ◆ Periodically run your net and ask all those who check into your net to do so on backup power.
- ◆ There will be a presentation today on backup power.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

7. Develop a cadre of communication specialists that can be depended on in a disaster. Consideration should be given to the care of the operator's family in an emergency so that the operator is free to serve with limited family concerns.

Spokane Region Communication Personal

- ◆ Enlist the help of the other radio operators in your unit.
- ◆ Make sure they are aware of your communication plans and how they can help.
- ◆ Each amateur radio operator should learn as much as they can about emergency communication and be prepared to help if called upon by unit leaders.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

8. Put together an emergency kit of communications equipment, tools and items needed to live self-sustained for at least 3 days.

Spokane Region Go Kit

- ◆ This is new instruction.
- ◆ Recent disasters have shown that it has been necessary for the communications personal to be able operate away from their homes.
- ◆ Future training meetings will focus on Go-kits.
- ◆ Work towards developing your personal Go-kit.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

9. Prepare to respond to the needs of neighboring Church units should they be overwhelmed by a disaster. Prepare to assist your community with its emergency communication needs.

Spokane Region Communication Assistance

- ◆ When a significant disaster occurs, those in the affected area are often struggling to deal with consequence of the disaster and are unable to help with communication.
- ◆ Others communicators outside the effected area may be need to assist with communications.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

10. Develop regular communications exercises to verify the function of equipment and the proficiency of operators. Avoid simulated or mock disasters per Church policy.

Spokane Region Communication Exercises

- ◆ The weekly nets are a good method of testing your equipment and network.
- ◆ Make sure you periodically check-in using your back-up power source.
- ◆ Stake ECS's should periodically run your net without repeaters using test back-up communications methods.
- ◆ You should also plan other exercises where operate from locations other than their homes.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

11. Familiarize Church leaders with the organization and function of the communications network so that they are comfortable with its operation in a disaster.

Spokane Region Communication Network

- ◆ Once your unit plan is complete, schedule a time to present it to unit committees so they are understand the communication plan.

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

12. Continue to seek knowledge of emergency management and emergency communications best practices to become more proficient in your calling.

Spokane Region Learning Resources

- ◆ Amateur Radio Emergency Communication Course I, II, III
- ◆ ARES/RACES training meetings.
- ◆ Local amateur club training meetings.
- ◆ Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

Spokane Region FEMA Resources

- ◆ IS-700a: National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction
- ◆ IS-100a: Introduction to Incident Command System
- ◆ IS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- ◆ IS-800b: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- ◆ IS-802: Emergency Support Functions Communications
- ◆ IS-288: The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management

Emergency Communication Specialist Key Activities

13. Constantly seek guidance from the Lord and your local Church leader. Catch the vision of your calling. Learn the expectations of Church leaders so that you may better meet their needs.



Regional Status

Last Communication Test with Radio

- ◆ Stakes represented: 10 of 12
- ◆ Stake ERC Specialists: 8 of 10
- ◆ Wards/Branches represented: 44 of 105
- ◆ Ward/Branch ERC Specialists: 29
- ◆ Member check-ins: 105 of 244
- ◆ Visitor check-ins: 7
- ◆ Total check-ins: 112

Spokane Region Status

- ◆ We have a plan for contact between the storehouse and the stakes.
- ◆ 284 licensed LDS amateur radio operators in our region.
- ◆ All but one stake has a stake specialist called.
- ◆ All but one stake has a weekly net.
- ◆ The regional welfare committee receives regular updates on the status of our progress.

Spokane Region Plans

- ◆ Regional ERC Net tests
 - Test without commercial power.
 - Periodic tests without the repeater.
- ◆ Relocation of station at the storehouse.
- ◆ Improve alternate methods of contact with Lewiston and Moscow.
- ◆ Future training on Go-Kits and HF.