

A CITIZENS GUIDE TO RECEIVING LOCAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD EMERGENCY INFORMATION



SUGGESTIONS FROM RADIO AMATEURS SERVING THE WESTERN COMMUNITIES

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WHEN THERE'S NO ELECTRICITY, TELEPHONE OR CELLPHONE SERVICE...

HOW DO YOU LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, WELLINGTON OR THE WESTERN COMMUNITIES?
HERE ARE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD MAKE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SAFER AND MORE SECURE.

BUT FIRST A TRUE STORY: THE PLACE WELLINGTON... THE TIME JUST AFTER HURRICANE FRANCES

WELLINGTON AND THE COUNTY WERE A REAL MESS. ALL TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS BROADCAST INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESIDENTS TO "BOIL WATER". THOUSANDS, IF NOT TENS OF THOUSANDS, OF WELLINGTON RESIDENTS FEARFULLY FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND FAMILIES FROM ILLNESS.

FOR DAYS WELLINGTON OFFICIALS TRIED TO INFORM COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGERS THAT WELLINGTON'S WATER WAS INDEED SAFE AS IS. THE WATER SYSTEM NEVER LOST PRESSURE NOR BECAME CONTAMINATED. BUT

REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS WERE OUT OF SERVICE OR OVERLOADED. EVEN THE COUNTY'S COSTLY PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO SYSTEM WAS DOWN.

OUR UTILITY DIRECTOR WAS ABLE TO GET HIS MESSAGE THROUGH BECAUSE OF WELLINGTON'S OWN EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC). ITS RADIO OPERATORS WERE ABLE TO LINK WITH THE FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL DISPATCH CENTER AND THE FHP RELAYED THE MESSAGE TO THE COUNTY EOC. SHORTLY AFTERWARD, THE BROADCAST STATIONS INFORMED RESIDENTS THAT WELLINGTON'S WATER WAS SAFE!

TO THEIR CREDIT, WELLINGTON'S LEADERS REALIZED THEY NEEDED TO REACH CITIZENS DIRECTLY... BY THE NEXT HURRICANE SEASON, WELLINGTON HAD ITS OWN PUBLIC EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM.

WELLINGTON'S PUBLIC EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM: 1680 ON THE AM DIAL

FEW CITIES OFFER THEIR RESIDENTS THIS SERVICE. IT MAY BE THE SINGLE MOST VALUABLE, RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL INFORMATION FOR WELLINGTON RESIDENTS. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES COULD BE ADDRESSED SUCH AS FLOODING, ROAD CLOSURES, CURFEW HOURS, DRINKING WATER SAFETY, AND FOOD, WATER AND ICE DISTRIBUTION.

THE AM DIAL IS THE ONE USUALLY MARKED WITH THE NUMBERS RANGING FROM 54 TO 170. ON DIGITAL RADIOS, THE DISPLAY WILL SHOW 540 TO 1700. SO WELLINGTON'S BROADCASTS ON 1680 ARE TOWARDS THE TOP OF THE RANGE. THE VILLAGE'S TRANSMITTER IS LIMITED TO VERY LOW POWER,

10 WATTS, BY ITS FCC LICENSE. DURING NON-EMERGENCY TIMES, YOU WILL HEAR WEATHER REPORTS BEING BROADCAST. THE CLARITY OF ITS SIGNAL DEPENDS ON HOW FAR YOU LIVE FROM THE TRANSMITTER, YOUR RECEIVER'S QUALITY AND THE TIME OF DAY. IT'S CLEAREST DURING THE DAY.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY RECEIVING IT, TRY ROTATING THE RADIO OR TAKE THE RADIO TO ANOTHER ROOM. EVEN GARAGED, MOST CAR RADIOS WILL PICK IT UP CLEARLY. SOMETIMES, FLORESCENT LIGHTS OR LIGHT DIMMER CONTROLS INTERFERE WITH AM BROADCAST TRANSMISSIONS... TURN OFF THE LIGHTS ONE BY ONE TO TEST WHETHER THEY ARE PROBLEM.

TUNE IN TO THE WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB'S EMERGENCY NETWORK: 147.285 MHZ

THE WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB HAS AN ORGANIZED EMERGENCY NET THAT USES ITS OWN, PRIVATE VHF REPEATER SYSTEM. DURING AN EMERGENCY, THIS REPEATER SYSTEM IS AVAILABLE TO THE VILLAGE AND ITS MEMBERS VOLUNTEER AT THE WELLINGTON EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER.

DURING EACH PAST ACTIVATION OF THE EOC FOR HURRICANES AND OTHER EMERGENCIES, AMATEUR RADIO STATIONS OPERATING ON EMERGENCY POWER,

TRANSMITTED REPORTS OF LOCAL CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN COMMUNITIES. THESE REPORTS WERE PASSED ON TO THE AUTHORITIES.

YOU TOO CAN RECEIVE THESE TRANSMISSIONS ON A RECEIVER CALLED A "SCANNER". INEXPENSIVE SCANNERS ARE SOLD AT MANY STORES INCLUDING RADIO SHACK. THEY CAN BE OPERATED FROM A BATTERY JUST AS ANY OTHER RADIO. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 385-2986.

TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS VIA THE FAMILY RADIO SERVICE: "FRS RADIOS"

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS WHEN YOU NEED ASSISTANCE, SUPPLIES, INFORMATION OR SIMPLY COMFORTING.

PEOPLE OFTEN POOH-POOH FRS RADIOS AS TOYS BECAUSE THEY ARE SO INEXPENSIVE AND NO LICENSE IS NEEDED TO USE THEM. BUT THEY ARE INVALUABLE FOR SHORT RANGE COMMUNICATIONS. SOME MANUFACTURERS

MAKE RANGE CLAIMS OF SEVERAL MILES, BUT SEVERAL BLOCKS IS REALISTIC.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS MAKING SURE YOUR NEIGHBORS KNOW WHAT CHANNEL SHOULD BE USED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. BRING THE SUBJECT UP AT A POA/HOA MEETING OR SIMPLY POST A SIGN IN YOUR WINDOW: "USE FRS CHANNEL X". CALL 385-2986 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.