

Disaster Relief Communication

The role of amateur radio operators and clubs

HF Radio Charitable Trust

Peter Mott - Founding Trustee

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- He has 10 years volunteer experience assisting recreational vessels conducting ocean passages, including multiple solo circumnavigators totalling dozens of vessels each year.
- Peter holds New Zealand Boat Master and Coastal Skipper Certifications, and has sea time on both coastal and ocean passages conducted on his own vessels.



Disaster Relief Communication

The role of amateur radio operators

1. Serve your community.
2. Prepare for natural disasters.
3. Participate in regular exercises.
4. Provide communication when all else fails.



Disaster Relief Communication

The role of amateur radio clubs

1. Promote service above self.
2. Help members prepare for natural disasters.
3. Deliver amateur radio operator certification courses and examinations.
4. Promote the amateur radio service to local communities.



The Role of Amateur Radio Operators

Serve your community

1. Your community starts with your household and extends to your neighbours and other people residing in your immediate area.
2. It includes local businesses, schools, churches, and community organisations.
3. Government agencies including emergency services and civil defence have their own communication networks that should be resilient in a disaster.
4. Such organisations are not your focus in disaster relief communication, but of course if any request your assistance, then you should do what you can to help.

The Role of Amateur Radio Operators

Preparation for natural disasters

1. Understand that amateur radio operators need initiative and to function independently.

Don't wait to be asked, told, or given permission. Such strategies are disempowering.

Just do it. If you need help, ask.

2. Design and build an amateur HF station that can operate off grid for extended periods.

A solar powered QRP field station with NVIS antenna for 80/40 metres is the gold standard.

3. Carry a high quality PRS / UHF portable radio for communicating with your household, neighbours, and community.

The Role of Amateur Radio Operators

Participate in regular exercises

1. Exercises prove your equipment is fit for purpose and enable you to hone your operating skills.
2. The Alpine Fault Net is conducted on the first Sunday of every month at 0930 local time on 7115 KHz and at 2030 local time on 3605 KHz.

All certified amateur radio operators located within New Zealand and operating off-grid at the time of calling are encouraged to participate.

3. Reach out to your local community, extending an invitation to see your station in action checking into the Alpine Fault Net.

The Role of Amateur Radio Operators

Provide communication when all else fails

1. When disaster strikes in your region, first attend to your welfare and those nearby BEFORE activating your amateur radio station.
2. If disaster strikes in another region, activate your station as soon as possible. You may be the only operator with access to Internet and business as usual communication.
3. Always self-activate. Do not wait to be called or asked to participate.
4. If you are located within the disaster region, switch on your PRS/UHF radio and listen for local traffic in your community.
5. Make your station available to everyone, not just government agencies. You decide which traffic you carry, and the transmission priority.

The Role of Amateur Radio Clubs

Promote service above self

1. Develop and maintain a culture of service within your club.
2. Actively encourage members to share their knowledge, and time with each other and their community.
3. Discourage “what’s in it for me?” There is greater satisfaction in seeing others succeed on the back of help given freely.
4. At meetings, roster a person to greet people at the door, introducing visitors and new members to a senior member.

The Role of Amateur Radio Clubs

Help members prepare for natural disasters

1. Introduce newly certified operators to disaster relief communications as soon as possible. Impress on them the need to prepare to assist their local community in the event of a natural disaster.
2. Promote the use of field QRP HF radios with NVIS antenna for disaster relief communication. Low power allows longer run times, and portability permits getting operational close to where the community gathers.
3. Conduct technical workshops focused on QRP field stations, including radio selection, building NVIS antennas, solar power systems, and other items required for an effective disaster relief communications field station.

The Role of Amateur Radio Clubs

Deliver amateur radio operator certification courses and examinations

1. Promote the availability of certification courses offered by your club. Hamcram and similar programmes are best promoted by word of mouth.
2. Recruit new amateur radio operators at Alpine Fault Net field stations established in locations where people are likely to see you operating.
3. Follow up after new operators are certified to establish what assistance they need to establish their station optimised for disaster relief communication.

The Role of Amateur Radio Clubs

Promote the amateur radio service to your community

1. Reach out to service clubs, schools, and community organisations to talk about amateur radio, your club, and how members are prepared to assist the local community in the event of a natural disaster.
2. Look for opportunities to establish a presence at community events like farmers markets, A&P shows, and emergency services days. Focus on disaster relief communication services available from your members.
3. Consider appointing a disaster relief communications officer to provide a single point of contact between the community and your club.

Disaster Relief Communications

Resources

1. Visit our web site at <https://hfradio.nz/alpine-fault-net/>

2. Join our announcement email list;

<https://groups.io/g/hfradio-nz>

3. Participate in our technical discussion group;

<https://groups.io/g/alpine-fault-net>

4. Participate in the monthly Alpine Fault Net conducted on the first Sunday of every month at 09:30 local time on 7115 KHz and 20:30 local time on 3605 KHz.

Thank you for your time!

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Peter Mott [ZL3PWM] - February 2025, v1.1