When All Else Fails, Amateur Radio Works!

When the cell towers are down, or overloaded, when the land lines are down or the power is out, amateur radio operators can communicate with other operators anywhere in the world.

From Part 97.1 of the FCC regulations: Basis and purpose – "The rules and regulations in this part are designed to provide an amateur radio service having a fundamental purpose as expressed in the following principles:" [in part]

"(a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications."

During and after disasters, amateur radio operators set up and operate organized communication networks locally for governmental and emergency officials, as well as non-commercial communication for private citizens affected by a disaster.

Amateur radio operators are most likely to be active after disasters that damage regular lines of communications, due to power outages and destruction of telephone, cellular and other infrastructure-dependent systems.

PGARES volunteers have provided emergency and non-emergency communications for events including a Presidential Inauguration, hurricane and tornado disaster relief, running and cycling races, parades and other community activities.

All U.S. amateur radio operators are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Prince George's County, Maryland Amateur Radio Emergency Service®

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES) is an organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). Members of PGARES are volunteers who provide communications support for served agencies during emergencies, as well as non-emergency public service events.

ARES is not affiliated with any local club or group and is under the direction of the ARRL appointed Emergency Coordinator (EC).

PGARES is supported by Prince George's County Emergency Radio Association (PGCERA), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Maryland.

PGCERA maintains the K3ERA repeater in District Heights, MD on 145.230 - pl 110.9, that covers Prince George's County, MD and the District of Columbia. The repeater is open to all users.

Meetings, On-the-Air Nets and Training Opportunities

PGARES hosts membership meetings on the third Monday each month, at 7:00 PM local time, and may be in-person, all virtual or hybrid.

PGARES conducts on-the-air training opportunities on a regular basis. All amateurs are welcome. You do not have to be a member of ARES to participate in the following nets:

Weekly – Directed Training Net – Voice - Every Tuesday - 7:30 PM local time - 145.230 - pl 110.9 – The net control station is W3PGC.

Monthly - MDC Winlink Check-in – Second Tuesday of each month

Monthly – HF Hospital Net (HFHN) – Voice - Wednesday after the third Monday - 7:00 PM local time - 3820 kHz – Lower Side Band (LSB) - The net control station is K3ERA.

Quarterly - PGARES conducts drills throughout the year, utilizing a variety of scenarios, locations and modes, to practice back-up communications, both in and out of the state. PGARES also supports multiple facilities in Prince George's County, including:

Adventist HealthCare Fort Washington Medical Center - Fort Washington, MD

Luminis Health Doctor's Community Medical Center - Lanham, MD

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center - Clinton, MD

Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management – Hyattsville, MD

University of MD (UM) Bowie Health Center - Bowie, MD

University of MD (UM) Capital Region Medical Center - Largo, MD

University of MD (UM) Laurel Medical Center - Laurel, MD

Did you know that you can send an e-mail over radio? ARES® operators nationwide can use a System called WinLink Express for e-mail over radio frequencies, without an internet connection. Standard e-mail can still get through to intended recipients using HF, VHF and UHF nodes linked to Internet Gateways to reach the rest of the world.

Additional Information

PGARES Website: http://www.pgares.org

PGARES Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pgaresraces

PGARES Google Group: https://groups.google.com/g/pgares

PGARES Emergency Coordinator: ec@pgares.org

PGARES Assistant Emergency Coordinator – Administration: aec-admin@pgares.org

PGCERA Website: http://pgcera.org/

ARES Website: https://www.arrl.org/ares

ARRL Website: http://www.arrl.org