

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



Join a local faith-based net

Throughout the US, many counties and cities have established *emergency service nets*, to give you the opportunity to check in, get trained, and get involved with the local emergency service. They're excellent sources of emergency preparedness information, especially when it comes to communication. However, most of these groups do not have the bandwidth to serve every neighborhood and every household individually, in the event of a disaster.

It just so happens that the predominant religious organizations of many locations in the US have divided their geographic locations into local regions they can serve in meaningful ways. This results in neighborhood and other community areas whose boundaries are conveniently drawn for suitable emergency communication. As a result, many of these areas hold weekly local nets, known as ***faith-based nets***. Regardless of the title, religion is rarely discussed on their nets, because their purpose is preparedness, not religious.

In many California cities, for example, Catholic dioceses have subdivided their communities into parishes, each of which might hold its own ham radio net and drill schedule. In Illinois, religious leaders have organized ham radio nets to serve their neighborhoods by synagogues. In Utah, many LDS stakes have subdivided their neighborhoods into wards, and hold appropriate nets to serve their emergency communication needs as well.



Whether you're a member of the local predom-

inant religious organization, or not affiliated with any religious group at all, it's in your best interest to join a local faith-based net that's hosted by one of them in your area. This involvement will serve your family by giving you a neighborhood-level emergency communica-



tion network, while allowing others in your area to get to know you and your family and build trust. This can be important, because during a disaster, people tend to turn first to those they know, for basic help and information. And if those people live in the same neighborhood, then all the better.

If your area does not have a faith-based net, or other neighborhood net, you are fully authorized to start one, even if you aren't a member of the local predominant faith, or do not, for some reason, have their blessing to start one. Instead of working at odds with them, however, do your best to work with them. If you do start an area net, and at some future time they would like to take it over, feel free to let them do so, if that's conducive to your plans. Your common goal should be to train area and neighborhood citizens on how to quickly set up an effective net, being ready to communicate needs and information between civic leaders and each other.