

September is Emergency Preparedness Month by KD5BJ

September has been designated Emergency Preparedness Month since 2004. The roots of National Preparedness Month can be traced back to the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognized the critical need for increased emergency preparedness and joined forces with various partners to establish this annual campaign in 2004.

Emergency Preparedness Month culminates on September 30. It is no coincidence that the ARRL encourages exercises within the Simulated Emergency Test framework on the first weekend in October or, when not feasible, throughout the month of October.

It is a good reminder that natural and man-made disasters can strike at any time. It's important to have a planned response when you're at home, at work, on vacation or on the road.

According to [Injuryfacts.ncs.org](https://www.injuryfacts.ncs.org), in 2023, 75,104 weather events resulted in 877 deaths and 3,857 injuries, resulting in an increase in weather-related deaths up 20% from 2019 and weather-related injuries up 120%. Heat, wildfires, and tornadoes were responsible for the most deaths during 2023. The largest number of reported injuries resulted from heat, tornadoes, and winter weather. The deadliest weather events in the United States over the past five years include winter weather in 2021, drought and heat wave in 2023, and drought and heat wave in 2021.

The National Safety Council offers safety tips specific on preparing for earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes, and how to minimize fire risks. Federal agencies, like [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also are valuable resources for emergency preparedness.

These agencies remind the population, when facing a natural or man-made emergency, to try to stay informed through radio, TV or the Internet. In some cases, however, cable, electric and cell phone service will be disabled, making communication nearly impossible. And this is where we come in. In our own preparedness, we must be the communication liaison between County authorities and First responders, and between these agencies and the residents of Lee County. A daunting task for a handful of volunteers, a few of which live close, but outside the boundaries of Lee County.

How do we do that? By fostering relationship with other County ARES and RACES radio operators. So far Lee County ARES has a personal relationship, and MOU, with Williamson County. Other counties we in relationship with, without an MOU, are Fayette County ARES for technical support, Highland Lakes ARES (a three-county alliance: Burnet, Hayes and Blanco counties), Travis County, and now Grimes and Robertson Counties.

Robertson County EC, Lorna --, asked me if we would like to participate with them in the 2025 Winter Field Day, at the Red Cross headquarter in Bryan. She specifically mentioned our

EmComm trailer to be shown and demonstrated. They are even willing to pay for our gas. We have established relationship with the ARES District 7 and 5 Emergency Coordinators.

We have failed so far to establish a close relationship with our ARES brother and sisters in Milam County, although Andy KC5DJT attends their meetings as a liaison. Hopefully, we will change that, soon, maybe by doing exercises, meetings, or other activities.

Last, but not least, we have relationship with state-wide RACES members and the State Operation Center, the ARES South-Texas section through weekly HF nets, and the National Traffic System and the 7290 Net.

Our director KC5DJT is a regular with the maritime mobile net and the Central Gulf Coast Hurricane net, besides serving to test equipment at the Dell Children's Hospital North through ARCHES/CATRAC, which stands for Amateur Radio Communications Hospital Emergency Service within the Capital Area Trauma Regional Advisory Council.

Last but not least, five of your Lee County ARES members have relationship with Bastrop Office of Emergency Management where we serve and are trained as auxiliary responders in case of emergency or disaster.

By our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), in case regular means of communications become inadequate, we will be at a radio starting at least an informal net. The EC, or a director, or both should physically drive to the County Judge and the Sheriff's Office with radios to communicate to the others possible unmet needs. ARES, RACES, and Traffic Net's frequencies should be monitored as well. Depending on the local needs, we will develop a plan to help. Members, please read and get familiarized again with our EmComm Plan and our SOPs.

Members are always encouraged, like they currently do, to advise the group on days that they will be away from Lee County so that the rest of us may remain at disposition should a bad day knock unexpectedly at our door. It will be unannounced, we can be sure of that. And this is why I am inviting ham radio operators within Lee County or close by, maybe even you listening to this net now, who possess a spirit of helping neighbors and authorities with humility, and a willingness to engage in the rules of the game, to please come and meet us and get to know us and how we operate. We will welcome you, as you may be essential piece of the puzzle to keep our family, friends, and neighbors safe in case of emergency or disaster.

There is more to Emergency preparedness Month than this. Unless other training stations will tackle it, and all are encouraged during this month to do so, I will come back with "the rest of the story" on Sept. 30.

This was training for tonight, this is KD5BJ back to net.