

CB Radios

Presented by Jason Korb, KI5ABB

Recently, Lee County ARES has been considering methods of communicating with our community during emergencies. One of those options is CB radio. While CB radio may not be as cool as HAM radio, it is technically HF radio as the CB channels fall into the 11-meter band.

CB radio, or “citizen band”, rose in popularity in the 70’s thanks to movies like “Convoy” and “Smokey and the Bandit,” and tv shows like “The Dukes of Hazzard.” Truck drivers used CB radios to locate service stations with better supplies of fuel, to notify other drivers of speed traps, and to organize convoys.

Although its popularity has faded during recent years, largely due to the development of mobile phones, the internet, and the Family Radio Service (FRS), it remains a highly popular option for truckers, radio hobbyists, and survivalists.

Citizen’ Band radio (CB radio) is primarily intended for short-range communication, usually distances of 5 – 25 miles and can be operated by anyone since it does not require a license. CB radios can provide essential communication between families and Emergency Responders as Channel 9 is reserved for emergencies and is scanned by police to get emergency communications regarding accidents, medical issues, and other mostly travel related emergencies.

Today we rely heavily on the internet and mobile phones, but when disaster strikes and those systems fail, we need options to fall back on. While we train to operate our amateur radios, others will be using the options available to them such as CBs and FRS radios.

It is a good idea to monitor those frequencies during troubled times, to hear calls for help and to collect important information about conditions around us. Particularly CB channels 9 (27.065 MHz) and 19 (27.185 MHz). A scanner is also a useful tool for this.

CB Radios are limited to 4 watts transmit power, so relays become essential during an emergency. However, a net can be organized on a CB channel to organize other civilians in emergencies to assist in operations or to distribute news bulletins or other public information. This has been proven effective by the Senator Wash Emergency Response Team which utilizes CB radios in a remote area of Southeastern California on the Arizona border.

While it may have fallen out of favor, CB radio should not be overlooked in our emergency preparedness plans.

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Here is a complete list of the CB Channels with their corresponding Frequency:

CB Channel	Frequency	Frequency Use
Channel 1	26.965 MHz	
Channel 2	26.975 MHz	
Channel 3	26.985 MHz	Unofficial Prepper CB Network (AM)
Channel 4	27.005 MHz	Used by many 4X4 clubs
Channel 5	27.015 MHz	
Channel 6	27.025 MHz	You'll hear many operators using illegal high-power amplifiers
Channel 7	27.035 MHz	
Channel 8	27.055 MHz	
Channel 9	27.065 MHz	Channel 9 is the universal C.B. emergency channel
Channel 10	27.075 MHz	
Channel 11	27.085 MHz	
Channel 12	27.105 MHz	
Channel 13	27.115 MHz	Often used in some areas for marine use & recreational vehicles.
Channel 14	27.125 MHz	Frequency for many walkie-talkies. FCMA (Federal Motor Coach Assoc) heard here
Channel 15	27.135 MHz	
Channel 16	27.155 MHz	Used by many 4X4 clubs
Channel 17	27.165 MHz	Used by truckers on the east-west roads in California
Channel 18	27.175 MHz	
Channel 19	27.185 MHz	Unofficial Trucker channel (but probably where you will find most of them hanging out)
Channel 20	27.205 MHz	
Channel 21	27.215 MHz	Used by truckers for North-South routes in some areas of the country
Channel 22	27.225 MHz	
Channel 23	27.255 MHz	
Channel 24	27.235 MHz	
Channel 25	27.245 MHz	
Channel 26	27.265 MHz	
Channel 27	27.275 MHz	
Channel 28	27.285 MHz	
Channel 29	27.295 MHz	
Channel 30	27.305 MHz	30 and up are often used for SSB operation
Channel 31	27.315 MHz	
Channel 32	27.325 MHz	
Channel 33	27.335 MHz	
Channel 34	27.345 MHz	
Channel 35	27.355 MHz	
Channel 36	27.365 MHz	
Channel 37	27.375 MHz	Unofficial Prepper 37 (USB)
Channel 38	27.385 MHz	Unofficial SSB calling channel, LSB mode
Channel 39	27.395 MHz	
Channel 40	27.405 MHz	