Emergency Communications according to CISA by KD5BJ

CISA, or the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (America's Cybersecurity Agency) posted about a year ago a very informative video on emergency communications. They asked State Wide Interoperability Coordinators (SWIC) around the Country how different SWICs define emergency communications. This video has been watched by more than 25,000 people. Although what is said here, we mostly know already and take for granted because we are part of it, many even here in Lee County are not familiar with what emergency communications do.

So this training is to remind us of the vital role we cover, and for those who listen or visit our website to learn why we do the sacrifices we do for the community as told not by us, but by CISA. Here we go:

CISA and SWIC describe emergency communications as the ability of First Responders, 911 dispatchers and everyone involved in emergency response and coordination to communicate sharing voice and data to coordinate their response in an emergency, disaster or cyberattack in real time.

It is the ability to reach out dispatchers, hospitals, emergency management centers, and to the public with notifications, alerts, and warnings.

Our own, recently retired, Karla Jurrens of the SWIC Texas, added to the list nontraditional emergency responders that are critical to emergency communications such as transportation and amateur radio operators, grouping us in, to use her own words, while showing an amateur radio operator in action, "folks in public works, those who are all equally important during a time of disaster to be able to communicate with each other."

Another definition was given by the SWIC coordinator in Connecticut, Scott Wright, who said that emergency communication encompasses anything to do with different agencies and people talking to each other by radio or telephone, or computer or smoke signals or anything that allows agencies and people to talk to each other.

Emergency communications main goal is to save lives and protect property, it is an entire ecosystem that goes from citizens to government, from agency to agency, and back to the citizens. Emergency communications is actually about the public, public asking for help, and responders and other fellow citizens, such as us, providing it. Anything happening in the realm of the emergency communication is to benefit the public, including welfare nets, road closures, alternate routes, closer pharmacies, urgent care centers and hospitals open in the area, etc..

The video also highlighted how crucial and well invested are tax dollars, private donations, and grants spent for emergency communication, including for ARES, for the protection of local citizens. In order to be beneficial and make a difference, ARES, like government agencies, needs to buy expensive technologies.

Every dollar donated to us goes to repeaters, radios, antennas, coax and heliax (cables that can cost $12/foot and higher) handheld radios to handout, and other very expensive technology that in a very tragic and bad day keep loved ones and First Responders safe.

I am so glad and proud to belong to and lead our Lee Co. ARES team. Besides having equipped in year past an EmComm trailer and our Lee Co EOC with backup radio communications, we just bought 16 interop radios for the goal to help first responders and fellow citizens; we are in the process to install a third repeater in Lee Co.; and are considering GRMS radios and repeaters. 2026 will be an exciting year.

Lee Co. ARES members, thank each and all of you for your hard work in 2025, paving the road for the future,

The video will be posted on the website with this training. This is KD5BJ back to net and short time.

CISA https://youtu.be/-vSLf8GXOW8?si=X4D71ZQaGLf719bp