

HAM RADIO FOR EMERGENCIES: QUICK START GUIDE



WHY HAM RADIO?

When cell towers, internet, and StarLink go down, ham radio still works.

- No infrastructure required
- Communicate locally or worldwide
- Operates on battery or solar power
- Proven during disasters



WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH IT?

- Talk to others in your area (or across the globe)
- Send email without internet (Winlink)
- Share positions/maps (APRS)
- Relay emergency messages



BASIC EMERGENCY SETUP

A simple “go kit” includes:

- Handheld radio
- Extra battery or power bank
- Antenna
- Notebook & pen
- Printed frequency list



POWER OPTIONS

- Rechargeable batteries (LiFePO4 recommended for external batteries)
- Car battery or adapter
- Solar panel for extended outages



HOW TO GET LICENSED

1. Study (free online resources available)
 2. Take a multiple-choice test
 3. Get your callsign and get on the air
- No Morse code required
 - Most people pass with a few weeks of study



GET INVOLVED

- Join a local radio club
- Participate in weekly practice nets
- Volunteer for emergency communications groups



COST TO START

- Budget handheld: \$30–\$100
- Mid-range radio: \$100–\$300
- Antenna upgrades: optional but helpful



ALTERNATIVES

Option	License	Range	Use Case
FRS	None	Short	Family, simple use
GMRS	Easy	Medium	Neighborhood comms
Ham	Yes	Long	Emergency & advanced



LIMITATIONS

- No encryption (communications are public)
- Requires some training
- Range depends on antenna & terrain



LEARN MORE

Community Preparedness Fair website:

- www.neighbors-prepared.org



Licensing and study tools

- www.arrl.org/getting-licensed



- www.hamstudy.org
(free study website. Offline app available for \$3.99)



- <https://hambook.org/tech2022/> (free online study guide)



When everything else fails, this still works.