

# **Preparing for Deployment**

## **Chapter Six**

### **By**

### **Glen Sage, W4GHS**

**It is vital that any organization make appropriate preparations prior to any emergency communications deployment. Some groups have committed themselves to an early response and are planning to support first responders with backup and in some cases primary communications support. These type teams may be know by such names as Rapid Response Teams (RRT) Emergency Response Teams (ERT) Rapid Emergency Deployment teams (RED) and Quick Response Teams (QRT). These are different names for much the same functions. Those that have been enlisted into this type service need to have the best preparations for being self-sufficient. Those that are deployed for long term projects that would arrive later have more room for errors in planning. The most knowledgeable communicators may diminish their value by responding without proper preparations. Special emergency communications training is important for those planning to be part of any communications team.**

**There are many common factors in every response to disaster and there are some that are unique that you or members of your team may have never encountered before. To have a list of what you need to do prior to leaving home is a good starting point but your need to be flexible in considering unique circumstances that will be a part of each deployment.**

**If you live on the east coast of Virginia and have dealt with hurricanes and ice storms and you have been ask to respond to a blizzard in SW Virginia on mountains that are over a mile high (5720 ft above sea-level) with actual temperatures of less than -20 Fahrenheit and wind speeds of over 60 mph during winter storms, your “go kit” may be different. Your radio equipment may be much the same but the content of your “go kit” with clothing and other personal items may be much different. Setting up of effective antennas can be a real challenge in this environment. This brings us to the needs of prepackaged “go-kits” or “jump kits”. These kits need to be two separate packages. One is for the task, which is your radio gear. The second is your personal gear such as food, clothing, water, medication and other personal items.**

**Having communications trailers gives you a real head start on deployment. Your equipment and emergency food and water supply may be pre-packed. Some items may need to be rotated from time to time. These would include meals ready to eat, water supply, halizon pills etc. The communications equipment in the trailer should**

be checked against a checklist periodically and tests should be run on the electronic equipment to ensure that it is in good working order. Each team member should be familiar with the setup and operations of all equipment in the communications trailer. Team members should try to learn to do simple repairs such as fuse replacement, making up a piece of coaxial cable and using simple test gear such as a multi-meter (VOM meter) or antenna analyzer.

Having a communications trailer doesn't eliminate the need for taking personal radio equipment in the event that you may need to be assigned to a location away from the trailer. You would also have spare equipment in the event of a failure to equipment in the trailer. It is important that common connectors are used on your personal gear and that in the communications trailer. The standard for emergency communications is the "Anderson Power Pole connectors". These can be purchased, as 20 amp or 30 amp types and they will interchange with connections of the other power rating. Be sure to have a manual for each piece of radio equipment. You can find and print these from the manufactures website and stick a copy in you "go kit". A list of suggested "go kit" items are listed below.

- 1) Two-meter rig with a minimum of 25 watts of output power, 50 watts is even better. Specialized communications equipment for packet, Winlink or other digital means.
- 2) A 10 Amp min. 12-volt power supply, 20 or 25 amps would be a better choice, high capacity deep cycle marine battery, solar panel, generator
- 3) 50 to 100 feet of RG-8X or RG8U Coax, This can be made up in shorter sections and put together with barrel connectors if needed.
- 4) A high gain antenna, such as a "Brute" or at the minimum, a Ringo Ranger. (The "Brute" is an antenna that I designed and is very rugged with excellent gain. A "J" Pole made from copper tubing is also an excellent choice. (Better than the Ringo Ranger).
- 5) Two-meter or dual band HT with at least 2 watts out, 5 watts would be better, purchase an adapter to allow a PL-259 adapter to connect your HT to a full size antenna.
- 6) Speaker mike for your HT and an Earphone would also be helpful.
- 7) Headphones with a 1/8" to 1/4" connector to allow you to use the headphones with most two-meter rigs.
- 8) A copy of your operator's manual for both your HT and full

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size two-meter rig.

- 9) A tripod and short mast that would allow you to set up a portable antenna at a “shelter” or other temporary operating location. You should have one mast cut to allow a set-up with an eight-foot ceiling.
- 10) Current copy of your FCC Operating License, SouthBEARS ID, SATERN ID, ARES/RACES PhotoID Card
- 11) Forms such as; Radiogram, Red Cross Intake Form, Numbered Message form FSD- 3, Emergency Phone Number Form, SouthBEARS Log Form. SouthBEARS Message Form 213
- 12) Pencils, Pens and writing paper.
- 13) Small Flash Light and a backup larger flashlight. (One that will mount on your head is excellent choice. Alkaline batteries for your flashlight and to go in a spare battery pack for your HT.
- 14) Battery case for alkaline batteries for your H.T.
- 15) High Capacity, well charged battery pack for your HT
- 16) Sealed Gel or other battery with at least 7 AH rating.
- 17) Chargers for you HT and spare batteries.
- 18) At least 25 feet of cord or rope.  
Spare cord, fuses and connectors, #33 electrical tape, pocket Knife, watch, screwdriver and pliers
- 19) First Aid kit with 5 days of your own medication requirements.  
County maps, State Maps (spare eyeglasses)
- 20) A box or bag large enough to carry the above listed items.
- 21) A full tank of gasoline in the vehicle that you plan to use.
- 22) Your cell phone if you own one.
- 23) Spare clothing, and sleeping bag if it is a major event or it appears that it may become one.
- 24) Snack food (high energy)
- 25) One gallon of water per day.
- 25) Shaving kit with personal items.

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