



**American
Red Cross**

The American Red Cross relies on the support and assistance from the ARRL (American Radio Relay League) to provide communications during times of disaster relief operation. Hams are critical at the onset of a disaster, providing local guidance on how to get around an

area, assisting with disaster assessment, setting up and maintaining radio links for communications of all kinds and providing human resources to communicate the information necessary to operate at multiple service delivery sites where traditional communication services are disrupted.

An example that highlights the benefits of our partnership with the ARRL occurred immediately after Hurricane Katrina. We found ourselves with over 200 shelters spread across several states and no consistent means of communicating emergency and support needs. A call to the National ARRL office started a chain of events that were invaluable to this large catastrophic operation that was unfolding. ARRL took the lead in finding volunteer ham radio operators from across the country to assist with the communication needs at these shelters. The ARRL Section Manager from Alabama reported to our Montgomery headquarters and stayed for several weeks helping to coordinate all of the ham radio volunteers as they would report to this central location, receive orientation and then report to their field assignments. As communications needs changed, these volunteers would relocate frequently and as necessary support the fragile communications infrastructure and continue to provide emergency communications. The extent of resources needed in the post-Katrina efforts shows the incredible service and flexibility of Amateur Radio Operators to be an invaluable partner in disaster response.

You can learn more about the American Red Cross at: <http://www.redcross.org/>

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