

6 Sept 2015 Emergency Preparedness Report Campbell River Amateur Radio Society

The functions of CRARS as an emergency asset have been clarified. These are:

1. The maintenance of the VHF repeater infrastructure and the Larwood station.
2. The provision of training courses, training manuals, advice and assistance
3. Assistance and participation in exercises organized for emergency preparedness.

Work is well underway on a sound card kits project to add digital communications to the society's capabilities. Progress is being made on both the equipment and training.

In 2015 CRARS had a successful Field Day and ran a joint Local Communications Contest with hams from Quadra (and one from Powell River). Both these events spoke to the interests of the members and enhanced our emergency preparedness. They will be repeated in 2016.

The Basic training manual is available as a free download from the CRARS website ve7crc.org It is presently being revised and expanded.

The SRD Emergency Communications Handbook will be revised this winter with greater emphasis on operating the radio stations and on guidelines for working with ESS.

In the absence of a standing communications team it will detail procedures for use in emergency. It will no longer give contact details for non-hams which are maintained elsewhere.

CRARS is not primarily an emergency response organization and, while members stand willing to assist emergency response agencies with emergency communications, preparation and planning for emergencies must be led by volunteer agencies with that specific mandate.

A local success story is Quadra Island where there are about 100 ESS volunteers and since ham radio was identified as a useful tool the emergency program has qualified 14 volunteers as hams. Their comm. team now numbers 20 and interest is maintained by a weekly VHF net and participation in regular Quadra Emergency Program exercises with the ESS.

They use the CRARS repeaters and CRARS members will assist with advice when requested.

An emergency group on Cortes Island is presently studying to gain their ham licenses.

In 2012 and 2014 CRARS ran Basic courses which were both filled to capacity and had each a 60% pass rate. Both courses gained CRARS some new members but in the 2014 course the majority of students were from fire departments in Comox Regional District.

A concern is the lack of a pool of emergency volunteers in Campbell River who can be trained as ham operators.

ESS in Campbell River has a problem attracting and retaining members and has very low numbers so is not a likely source at present.

Citizens On Patrol shares police concerns with security and appears reluctant to establish ties with other organizations.

CRSAR is fully occupied with the demands of SAR which takes priority over long term emergency preparedness.

There continues to be a demand for basic courses and if CRARS can put on a course every second year there should be a constant trickle of new members.