

# Ham Radio's "Emergency" Myths

**Myth:** "In an emergency, a ham may transmit on any frequency."

**Fact:** FCC Regulations only permit hams to transmit on ham frequencies, NO MATTER WHAT.

"The licensee of any station (**except amateur**, standard broadcast, FM broadcast, noncommercial educational FM broadcast, or television broadcast) may, during a period of emergency in which normal communication facilities are disrupted as a result of hurricane, flood, earthquake, or similar disaster, utilize such station for emergency communication service in communicating in a manner other than that specified in the instrument of authorization:"

§2.405 opening paragraph

"No provision of these rules prevents the use by an **amateur station** of any means of radiocommunication **at its disposal** to provide essential communication needs in connection with the immediate safety of human life and immediate protection of property when normal communication systems are not available."

§97.403

"Amateur station. A station in an amateur radio service consisting of the apparatus necessary for carrying on radiocommunications."

§97.3 paragraph (a)(5)

The means "at the disposal" of a ham operator include only **amateur radios**.

**Myth:** "Hams may prepare for emergencies by programming public safety frequencies into their radios."

"Except for frequencies used in accordance with §90.417, **no person** shall program into a transmitter frequencies for which the licensee using the transmitter is not authorized."

§90.427 subdivision (b)

(Where a rule within a part applies only to licensees under that part, the rule will refer directly to licensees. Where a rule says "no person" it applies to **everyone**.)

**Myth:** "Volunteer first responders who are licensed hams may use their ham gear on agency frequencies if their agency cannot afford to issue professional radio gear."

"Except as specified in paragraphs (b) and (l) of this section, each transmitter utilized for operation under this part and each transmitter marketed as set forth in §2.803 of this chapter must be of a type which has been certified for use under this part."

§90.203 subdivision (a)

Subdivisions (e) through (h) prohibit certification of radios that can be user-programmed in the field without modification or a computer, which would eliminate most ham equipment.