



Massachusetts Amateur Radio Emergency Communications  
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**Amateur Radio had significant participation in the Annual Hurricane Drill**  
*Drill was conducted with City and Town EM Directors*

Hudson, MA – Amateur Radio emergency communicators participated Monday night in this year's annual Region II Hurricane drill with regional city and town Emergency Management Directors (EMD). The exercise dubbed "Hurricane Madison", involved players from all over the state. The focus area was MEMA's Region II, with 52 communities participating.

"Local public safety officials indicated that the drill was well organized and proved to be a valuable training tool for their staffs", stated Bob Mims, the Region II Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) Radio Officer. He added that "the operators in the local communities are to be commended for their professional behavior and communication skills". Using pre-formatted message blanks, local RACES Radio Officers and their EMD counterparts performed simulated damage assessments to their communities using a published exercise scenario and meaningful local criteria. The other MEMA sections also fielded players, as well as the State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) MEMA Headquarters at the in Framingham, MA. "This exercise is an excellent opportunity for amateur radio emergency communicators throughout the Commonwealth to hone their skills", stated Tom Kinahan, the State RACES Radio Officer. Kinahan heads a team of operators at the SEOC working together with state emergency communication professionals, as part of the state's ESF2 effort.

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Amateur Radio operators also assist non-governmental organizations (NGO), such as the American Red Cross that respond in the recovery phase of an operation. “We specialize in providing additional support to RACES operators as well as to numerous NGO’s in the region”, stated Rob Macedo, the Director of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) for the eastern portion of the Commonwealth. “This is addition to weather related damage reports given to the National Weather Service (NWS) by our SKYWARN operators, many of whom are dual hatted ARES personnel”, Macedo added. The National Hurricane Center, Miami, FL, also participated for the first time, using the “Echolink” system, an exclusive internet based system for amateur radio.

Amateur Radio (also known popularly as “Ham Radio”) fields highly skilled and motivated volunteers to government and NGO organizations during emergencies and training evolutions. Hams are totally self sufficient and provide all the gear they will need at their own expense. Many are full time employees or professionals from every walk of life.

