

# Communications – Introduction

While executing your assignment, you will need to effectively communicate your progress and findings to Command. Most mission communication occurs via commercial VHF radio.

Radios improve our efficiency and enhance our safety. EPCSAR and most mountain rescue teams utilize very high frequency (VHF) frequency modulation (FM) radios. We operate on specific, licensed frequencies and individual operator licenses are not required when using these frequencies for official duties. Our primary channel is reserved for our use, all other channels (MRA channels) are shared with various other rescue teams. EPCSAR and other teams also utilize 800 Digital Trunked Radio Systems.

Citizen Band (CB) radio is still used extensively by off-road vehicle groups. Family Radio Service (FRS) and General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) radios are commonly used for recreation. EPCSAR and a number of members own this type of equipment, which can be utilized to communicate with these individuals when required. For example, SAR canine teams typically use low powered FRS radios for intra-team communications.

Amateur (or “Ham”) radio is less common in the wilderness, but is used by a number of SAR teams and is highly adaptive. Each individual operator of the equipment must hold a current license issued by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). Amateur radio is sometimes used by our team to communicate with other organizations (particularly the El Paso County Sheriff’s Special Communications Unit and events supported by EPCSAR) and a few radio “dead-spots” in our area of operation. Expect amateur radio to be actively used during any disaster situation.