

WGHP

Red Cross Using "Hams" to Communicate in Haiti

By Brandon Jones

FOX8 News

January 24, 2010

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

Ham radio operators aren't using the most sophisticated technology, but people in Haiti have been relying on members of the amateur radio society to relay information to and from the earthquake ravaged nation.

Eric Bowen, a Red Cross Emergency Coordinator, can communicate with people around the world from the basement of the Winston-Salem Red Cross.

"There are about 800,000 ham radio operators around the country that communicate on a daily basis for experimentation or for emergency communication purposes." Bowen said.

Ham radio operators have been working in Winston-Salem since the 1930s. Their main focus is to provide communication after a disaster when regular forms of communication won't work.

Bowen says you can communicate with anyone if you have a radio, a way to power the radio and an antenna to transmit your signal. He says a priest used this method to talk from Haiti after the earthquake.

"There was a priest in Haiti that managed to hook up his radio to a car battery and made contact with a station in Florida." Bowen said.

Bowen says recent messages from Haiti have been encouraging. He's been volunteering as a ham radio operator for 17 years, and says the service is critical during times of crisis.

If you'd like to volunteer or learn more, visit <http://www.w4nc.com/>.

Copyright © 2010, [WGHP-TV](#)