



Kaiser Permanente Amateur Radio Network

KP Internal Overview

Kaiser Permanente (KP) has an internal network of volunteer Amateur Radio Operators that was established in the late 1980's. The network is referred to as the Kaiser Permanente Amateur Radio Network (KPARN). KPARN is a component of the Southern California Regional Emergency Preparedness Program. It currently supports fifteen KP medical centers and several regional facilities including the Southern California Regional Command Center (RCC). These facilities stretch from the U.S. - Mexico Border to Bakersfield covering an area larger than the State of Indiana over six counties.

The purpose of KPARN is to support the Regional and Medical Center Emergency Operations and to provide support and emergency communications, particularly during times of catastrophic emergencies when normal communication systems are damaged, disrupted or overloaded. KPARN stations are located at each Medical Center as well as key regional facilities and the Regional Command Center. KPARN provides a communication link between all KP Medical Centers in Southern California. KPARN also provides amateur radio links to local government and health department emergency management.

KPARN radio operators participate with other hospitals, California State agencies, county health departments and local governments in simulated emergency exercises and/or drills for emergency preparedness. These exercises test KPARN equipment: its methods and technical and operational aspects of providing necessary regional healthcare emergency communication. KPARN radio operators participate in monthly internal communications tests to validate that numerous KP amateur radio and other wireless emergency communications systems are operational and performing properly.

KPARN volunteer radio operators receive mandatory emergency preparedness, general healthcare and hospital specific orientation prior to being assigned to support a specific KP Medical Center. Additional periodic technical and healthcare related training is provided to maintain the KPARN radio operator communications competency.

KPARN volunteers may be current employees, retired employees, or community members. The Southern California Region in partnership with the National Healthcare Continuity Management program provides support to the Regional KPARN Coordinator, whose responsibilities include:

1. Providing overall program planning, coordination, evaluation and management
2. Prepare annual budget for regional and medical centers review and approval by appropriate emergency preparedness committees and administrators.
3. Coordinating system technical design, implementation and installation of the KPARN hospital stations and infrastructure equipment across the region;
4. Promoting the program while recruiting, selecting, orientating, training, developing, supporting and managing KPARN volunteers;
5. Acting as the liaison between the Regional and Local Emergency Preparedness Committees and the KPARN volunteers.

More information about KPARN can be found at www.kparn.org or by contacting the KPARN Coordinator.