Tonight we haven’t slept because many earthquakes keep moving the bed. A few numbers for you: 67 communities are involved with a total of 15,000 refugees into the tents today. 70 hams are providing service with about 2,000 other volunteers in 12 different associations. At Misericordie we are working the organization and logistics for 5 camps (about 4,000 people) with 550 volunteers and 106 off-road vehicles and ambulances.

From report of Marco Barberi, IK5BHN, after Italian earthquake

When the earthquake struck in China’s Sichuan Province, the window of Liu Hu’s office suddenly shattered. The quake kept rumbling and only stopped several breathless minutes later. Liu emerged and immediately got on a portable ham radio. Other Amateur Radio operators of the network around Sichuan Province quickly began to send quake information and damage reports. More than 200 radio hams answered his call.

From report of Liu Hu of the Sichuan Amateur Radio Emergency Service Command Center, China

Established in Paris in 1925, the International Amateur Radio Union is the watchdog and representative for the world Amateur Radio community. Three regional IARU organizations correspond to the three radio regions of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The Amateur Radio Service is one of the radio services internationally recognized by the ITU. It benefits from a share of the precious spectrum, and from specific privileges, which make it the most flexible and versatile of all telecommunication services. It has earned its status due to its roles in education, development, and research, but above all due to its role as a public service.

Amateur Radio operators are unpaid volunteers who use their own equipment to provide communications in areas that are under-served by commercial services. They can provide communications in areas where commercial services cannot be provided and serve as a battery during natural disasters. They can establish voice and digital communications systems in the event of disasters.

To learn more about Amateur Radio in your country and its emergency capabilities, go to:
www.IARU.org/Emergency
www.Emergency-Radio.org

Amateur Radio’s digital communication capabilities have evolved rapidly within the last decade. Modern applications provide the ability to send e-mail to and from the Internet from very remote locations. Amateur Radio’s keyboard-to-keyboard digital communications work in very weak signal conditions. Real time resource mapping and Amateur Radio’s digital voice and data communications offer “last mile” solutions for providing Internet access to served agencies within disaster areas.

For more information, please contact the IARU International Secretariat, POB 310905, Newington, CT 06131-0905, USA, or the IARU International Coordinator for Emergency Communications, Hans Zimmermann, HB9AQS, hb9aqs@arrl.net

Amateur Radio’s digital communication capabilities have evolved rapidly within the last decade. Modern applications provide the ability to send e-mail to and from the Internet from very remote locations. Amateur Radio’s keyboard-to-keyboard digital communications work in very weak signal conditions. Real time resource mapping and Amateur Radio’s digital voice and data communications offer “last mile” solutions for providing Internet access to served agencies within disaster areas.

For more information, please contact the IARU International Secretariat, POB 310905, Newington, CT 06131-0905, USA, or the IARU International Coordinator for Emergency Communications, Hans Zimmermann, HB9AQS, hb9aqs@arrl.net
You have built a wonderful system for telecommunications. It provides voice and digital communications for your citizens. But think of a day like the day of the storm or quake or the day when a military attack is in progress. How will you communicate?

Now what will you do?

The Amateur Radio Service, also known as “ham radio,” was designed from the outset to provide emergency communications when other systems failed or were overloaded. Simply stated: Amateur Radio Works!

Most of the time, normal communications systems work fine. But despite the development of very complex systems—or maybe because they are so complex—people can be left without the information they need. In an emergency, when your family's lives may be at risk, you want communications systems to be available no matter what.

Hams are resourceful. They can use the radio, telephone, computer, or even a common 77-watt transistor radio to communicate. In fact, the radio is the fastest way to turn a crisis into a disaster. To get through, hams must often use simple radios or even walkie-talkies to get through the most difficult communications. Many hams have “go bags” that contain what they need to stay in touch in a crisis:

- Batteries
- Radios
- antenna
- Simple communications equipment
- A call book of people they can call
- A list of other ham radio operators
- A list of frequencies
- A list of emergency numbers
- A list of people who can work with them in a crisis

With the right equipment, a ham radio can provide the most effective communications available in a crisis. With their radios, they provide a voice and a link to people who need help but whom official agencies cannot reach. In a crisis, the difference between life and death is often a few minutes of effective communications.