

Reference Materials

We all utilize a variety of reference documents in our amateur radio activities and emergency communications is no exception. There is just too much information to accurately remember. The current trend is to go "paperless" and keep documents electronically, either stored on your hard drive, thumb drive, cell phone, etc or accessed online from various websites or the cloud. While this concept certainly has merit, it is not without some limitations.

In the event of a communications emergency, will you have internet access to retrieve online reference materials? Will you have power (commercial, emergency or battery) to operate your PC, laptop or cell phone to access documents stored there? Hopefully yes, but don't underestimate the importance of a few hard copies of the documents you will likely need most.

On the other side of the coin, the ability to share/deliver documents maintained electronically is huge. The ability to share documents electronically via the internet, MESH, LAN's, Bluetooth and a variety of proprietary systems is nearly instantaneous and can involve one person or one hundred persons. Try doing that with a copy machine.

Bottom line - Maintaining documents in a variety of formats is always a good idea. Know how to share documents via the systems available to us before the emergency arises.