

## Being Ready To Go

I love the transition seasons: Spring and Fall. The outdoor temperatures are more moderate compared to the seasons that follow. So it is a good time to take a good look at your amateur radio equipment, especially your outdoor antennas—and be ready to go when called upon.

In my case, it was an absolute necessity. The winter storm Hernandez wiped out my wire antenna for HF with a thick coat of ice, and made my dual band VHF/UHF chimney mount antenna look like the Leaning Tower of Pisa!

In the process of repairing my antennas, I gave thought on how to prevent weather-impacting problems in the first place. In the case of my wire antenna, my only thought was to roll up the wire ahead of the storm. For the dual band, I will strengthen the attachment by adding additional straps around the chimney and prune back the branches that were laden with snow and ice that swiped the antenna.

It seems we are always fixing, replacing, upgrading, and generally tinkering with our gear. Am I right? I suppose that's part of the learning process, and frankly the fun, of amateur radio.

But in the back of our minds, it is about always being prepared to use our equipment in the case of an emergency—being ready to go.

It's one thing to be ready to go with respect to equipment, but another thing to be physically capable to handle the activities that might be required of us. Examples might be: to operate the radio room at the EOC during a winter storm, or operating at a welcoming center or emergency shelter.

It's always understood and expected to secure yourself and your family first before heading into an emergency assignment with your amateur radio skills. Given that, who among us can take a 12 hour shift in the middle of a snow storm?

The children's song "Head and Shoulders Knees and Toes" comes to mind as I think of my own physical limitations. But rather than bemoan ourselves, we need to think about growing our capabilities as an Amateur Radio Club. There's nothing more disheartening than declining an opportunity when the EOC Chief calls upon us.

So let's think about how we can meet the challenges that are likely to fall upon us with increasing frequency in the future. I think part of this is growing the club and ARES with younger members—followed by training so that we can "work together to get things done" as Jim KC3BTV likes to say.