



# RADIO-ACTIVE!

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## The Benefits of HAM Radio in Marine Coastal Voyages

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When transiting along the coast or through inland waterways, having a HAM radio on board your vessel can offer significant benefits. Most sailing and motoring vessels are required to have a marine VHF radio on board, and while the VHF is invaluable, it lacks certain flexibility that HAM radio provides. In early September, I sailed from Monterey to Santa Cruz Island, located off the coast of Santa Barbara. Prior to this voyage, I installed a Kenwood TM-V71A dual-band HAM radio and a Diamond X50A antenna on my vessel.

Alongside this, I carried an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon via satellite), a PLB (Personal Location Beacon via satellite), AIS (Automatic Identification System via VHF that reports my GPS position to other vessels), and an InReach (which allows for text messaging and position tracking via satellite).

Whenever I operate my vessel, it's required that the marine VHF radio remains on, monitoring channel 16. In emergencies, this is undeniably the most critical piece of equipment on the boat. The U.S. Coast Guard has multiple stations along the coast and monitors channel 16 24/7. However, if I need to communicate with another vessel, we must be within radio range, and general conversation channels on marine VHF are limited.

The InReach satellite messenger is incredibly useful. It allows me to send a 260-character text message to any cellular phone, email, or other InReach device. However, its limitation lies in the slow message transmission—typically a 10-minute wait for replies. This delay makes continuous conversation challenging, and it can distract you from the surroundings while using your phone.

Of course, I also had my cellular phone with me. While close to towns along the coast, I could typically get a strong signal. But along certain stretches of the California coast—such as when sailing from Monterey to the Channel Islands—cell service is spotty. For example, the signal is usually lost at Point Sur, regained near San Simeon, and again near Morro Bay. After rounding Point Conception, signal loss persists throughout the rest of the trip, including in the Channel Islands. These stretches can last up to 12 hours without cellular signal. If anchored in the Channel Islands, you might not regain coverage for the entire duration of your stay (hiking to a peak may provide some signal, but it's not guaranteed).

This is where HAM radio, coupled with coastal repeaters, comes in handy. For this trip, I wanted to communicate with friends in the Santa Cruz County area while sailing along the Big Sur coast and near Morro Bay. The Salinas Valley Repeater Group, particularly the 444.975 W6SLO repeater—Continued on page 4



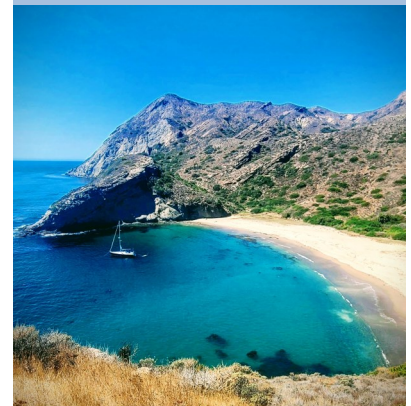
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### Coming Nearby!

#### Ham License Testing

Our friends of the San Benito Ham Radio Club will be offering Ham License Testing at the Emergency Operation Center, 5200 Soquel Avenue on Saturday, November 2nd. Time to be announced. This is a great time to upgrade your license.



## Get Set, Be Ready ... for Emergency Deployment



As we transition from the threat of wildfire to the threat of stormy winter with power outages, now is a great time to check and refresh what's in your go-kit. Or create an initial go-kit. A suggested list is on our web site: <https://xczcomm.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PSPS-Go-Kit.pdf>

September is National Preparedness month. Preparedness is important for all communities (including the communication community) and its key priority is to reduce the impact of a disaster or emergency. After a disaster or emergency strikes, you will not have time to gather supplies. A go-kit allows one to have emergency supplies already collected and ready for use. You may need more than one kit such as a personal and a radio kit. It is suggested to have at least a personal kit available in the three places you are commonly at—home, work and car. Radio kits vary based on function and need for the field assignments.

*Bring your go-kit/s to next month's membership meeting, October 16, and set up in the fading evening light at the parking lot outside the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), 5200 Soquel Avenue. Show off your preparedness and get good ideas from other members.*

*Wish you had more gear? Check out and set up one of the radio go-kits we have ready at the EOC to lend to members in an emergency.*

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### Equipment available to loan

Santa Cruz Communications Support have made **FOUR** kits available for loaning to allow ham operators participate in a deployment or to trial a different setup. Two kits are for a vehicle deployment and includes mobile dual-band radio, mag mount antenna, battery and kneeboard. The other two kits are for stationary outdoor deployments and includes the vehicle kit with additional supplies of a tripod antenna, lighting, and pop-up. Contact either John, N6QX, Roberta, AJ6KN, Stephen, KM6NEP or Gary, K6PDL for arranging for check out.

Legend:	Documentation
X = Required (must have in kit at all times)	<b>Identification:</b>
R = Recommended (likely useful on many assignments)	X CA Driver's license or CA-issued ID card
O = Optional (useful on some assignments)	X Amateur Radio license
	X Communications DSW Card
	<b>Maps:</b>
X 2m/70cm dual-band radio	X Paper or offline maps covering all Santa Cruz Co.
• HT recommended (min. 5W on 12V/2.5W on batt)	X Compass or GPS
• Mobile 25W optional (if vehicle will not be far away)	<b>Forms and Documentation:</b>
• Programmed with County frequencies	X Modified Mercalli (Mike-Mike) scale
X Charged batteries for 8-12 hours operation (min 3000 mAh for an HT or 20Ah for a mobile)	X ICS 205 – Communications Plan for Event
X 2m/70cm dual-band mobile antenna (mag mount, window mount or existing mobile antenna) or antenna such as a roll up J-pole with mast etc.	X ICS 213 – Message (min. 10)
R Cigarette lighter adapter or car battery adapter	X ICS 214 – Unit Activity Log (min. 5)
R Cell phone	X Emergency Report Questionnaire (min. 20)
X Radio user manual or cheat sheet	<b>Logging / Note taking:</b>
X Earbud or headphones minimum; headset, earbud/mic, or speaker/mic/earbud, or similar recommended	X Clipboard (covered type recommended)
X Coax adapter: connect HT or mobile to coax	X Notepads (standard or waterproof)
O Min. 25 feet of 50 Ohm coaxial cable	X At least 2 pens / pencils
O FRS/GMRS Radio	O Highlighters / felt-tip pens
O MURS Radio	<b>Contact Lists:</b>
<b>Tools:</b>	X Santa Cruz County Frequency List
X Colored tape or chalk to mark social distance	<b>Personal Gear</b>
	<b>Vehicle:</b>
	X Reliable operating condition
	X Fueled - full tank

Partial Go-kit List

## Report your volunteer hours!

The reported volunteer hours for August was 555 hours. Please remember to enter your hours on the form on <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>

Reporting the time you spend on ARES and ham radio activities reminds county public safety managers that we're around and ready to serve in time of need. Also, when you report your hours, your call sign is entered in a drawing. When you win, you get to select a valuable prize!

## Save the Dates: ARES Events

### 2024 SCC ARES Events

Date	Event	Approx. or confirmed date?	Description
September 22, 2024	Santa Cruz Triathlon	Approximate	Santa Cruz Triathlon is a non-profit that donates proceeds to various athletic programs in the county. ARES provides monitoring of participants positions and safety for the organizers.
October 25th, 2024	Halloween Trunk or Treat	Approximate	Trunk of Treat is organized by the Santa Cruz Sheriffs. ARES provides monitoring of participants along with closed road staffing and shuttle parking location.



PACIFICON<sup>SM</sup> is the premier amateur radio event in the Western United States. This conference will occur October 18—20 at the San Ramon Marriott hosted by the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club. This is a forum-driven event with a variety of topics of interest to just about every ham! There are exhibits and vendors for exploring and purchasing equipment and supplies. Also a swap meet!

## Resources

- Website: <https://xczcomm.com/>
- Reporting volunteer hours: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/hours-reporting/>
- Upcoming events: <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/calendar-of-events/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARES-of-Santa-Cruz-County-Ca-296232310799866>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431308973875528>
- PIO Articles: <https://arrlsantaclaravalley.org/news/> or <https://xczcomm.com/index.php/news/>
- XCZ Comm You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChZH8TU5gh4SqHTPXSwolPA>
- Submitting deployment documents: send in PDF form to [EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov](mailto:EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov)
- Submitting personal information such as DSW application, personal data update, education certificates: email [K6PDL@ARRL.net](mailto:K6PDL@ARRL.net), and [EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov](mailto:EOC.ARES@santacruzca.gov)

## Org. Positions

- DEC  
John / N6QX, jfgerhardt@gmail.com
- Assistant DEC  
Gary / K6PDL, K6PDL@arrl.net
- Assistant DEC and Deputy EC  
Karen / KM6SV, KM6SV@slvares.org
- Operations and Events  
Dan / N6RJX, N6RJX@slvares.org
- Webmaster  
Ed / N6EMA
- Administration  
Vacant
- Safety Officer  
Stephen/ KM6NEP,  
KM6NEP@slvares.org
- Public Information officer  
Allison/KM6RMN,  
KM6RMN@slvares.org
- Net Manager  
Roberta / AJ6KN,  
AJ6KN@slvares.org
- AEC-Education Coordinator  
Bill / AJ6CQ, wtyler@gmail.com
- AEC-Logistics  
{temp vacant}
- AEC- Meeting Trainer  
Jim / N6EWP, N6EWP@arrl.net
- AEC-MRC Liaison  
John/KN6DCA,  
drjohnrx54@gmail.com
- AEC-New Member Liaison  
Bob, KO6XX (bob@)
- AEC-Packet Radio /Digital  
Sebastian / KK6FBF, Sebastian@steinhauer.info  
Ryan / K16UAP, K16UAP@gmail.com
- AEC-Photographer  
Lisa / KN6IAB, KN6IAB@slvares.org
- AEC-Scribe  
JoMarie / KM6URE,  
KM6URE@slvares.org

If you see a vacant position of interest to volunteer for, please reach out to John Gerhardt, N6QX, jfgerhardt@gmail.com

## The Benefits of HAM Radio—continued



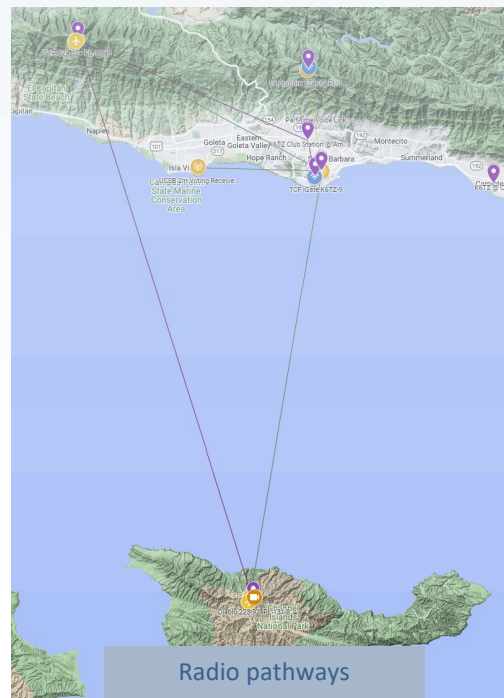
in Clark Valley – Los Osos, proved to be a game-changer. The W6SLO repeater provided crystal-clear communication in areas without any cellular signal. Since the repeaters are linked, I was able to easily stay in touch with friends back home.

During this voyage, I was also scheduled to meet my brother at an anchorage somewhere in the Channel Islands. Due to changing weather conditions, we couldn't finalize a meeting spot in advance. Luckily, the Santa Barbara Amateur Radio Club (SBARC) operates a linked repeater system, with repeaters on the mainland (Allstar-capable) and on the highest peak of Santa Cruz Island (W6XC). Through these linked repeaters, I was able to coordinate with my brother, who was in Oxnard, while I was about 20 miles off San Miguel Island, the farthest of the Channel Islands.

Another advantage of the Kenwood mobile radio was its cross-band repeating capability. I set channel A for my handheld transceiver (HT) and channel B to transmit at 50 watts on W6XC. This allowed me to take the HT with me while exploring in the dinghy or going ashore, all while staying in touch with my vessel. Knowing that I could use a nearby repeater at any time to request weather updates or relay a message home was incredibly reassuring. On several occasions, members of SCARC linked their Allstar nodes to the Santa Barbara system and communicated with me directly. I was thoroughly impressed with the addition of a HAM radio to my vessel and wouldn't go on another voyage without it.



Antenna on vessel



Radio pathways