



## Developing an Emergency Radio Network



**NPHRN's log periodic antenna and tower**

In an emergency, effective communication is essential to ensure that federal, state, and local health officials can work together to protect the public's health. Unfortunately, traditional means of communication may not function during an emergency. All of these traditional systems can be destroyed or overwhelmed by natural

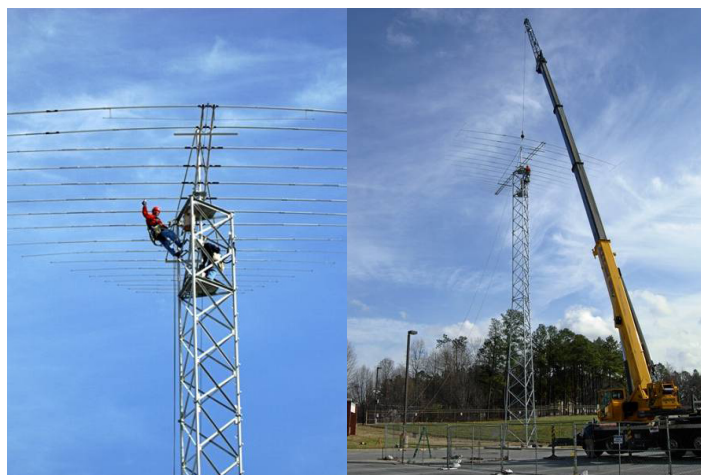
and man-made events. This was seen during Hurricane Katrina, when the storm and subsequent flood waters knocked out power, phone lines, and other essential communication tools.

CDC developed the National Public Health Radio Network (NPHRN) for transmission of information directly to CDC and other state and local health departments when other means of communication are not available. The NPHRN enhances CDC's all hazards preparedness and response by providing non-infrastructure dependent, redundant communications capacity for CDC and our state, and local public health partners. The NPHRN is CDC's only communication channel that does not rely on the nation's infrastructure-dependent networks (such as telephone, cellular, Internet, or satellite technology) as the backbone for both voice and data communication. The NPHRN was used to transmit emergency health, medical, hospital and pharmacy information after the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. Information reported and relayed through NPHRN

helped to recover two men -- one recovering from recent back surgery and the other with serious medical issues -- from being trapped in a trailer after Hurricane Katrina struck. NPHRN also provided assistance in the following ways during the hurricane:

- communication with hospitals that identified the number of unoccupied beds by specialty area for persons in need of medical care;
- contact with Red Cross for information on accessibility of relief shelters
- location of 400 hotel employees unaccounted for by their employer, and subsequent communication about available relief assistance.

The NPHRN provides CDC and its partners with an independent communications platform that can relay critical health information during emergency situations. Because of CDC funding, state and local health departments now have a much greater ability to communicate critical information during such events.



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For more information about CDC at Work, please contact us at (202) 245-0600 or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/washington/>.