



**Come out for the BARS Meeting  
Thursday September 20<sup>th</sup>**

Thursday is our meeting date at the at ARISE Assembly of God at 401 Pauls Drive in Brandon. Things get underway at 7:30 p.m. when Scott bangs the gavel to start things off. The planned program on preparedness dovetails nicely with this month's article.

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**Knowing Your Environment  
Key to Emergency Preparedness**

The average person thinks of emergency communications as monitoring the TV or local radio station for news about an impending or on-going disaster. Some hams see emergency communications monitoring as having access to the local RACES repeater or handling ARES traffic. Those are key functions in emergency situations especially in those incidents when the usual means of communication fail (remember: when all else fails ...).

However, you as a trained communicator can take your knowledge to the next level and monitor those activities outside the ham bands which just may give you insight into a disaster situation as it develops before it is picked up by local agencies starting their emergency procedures. A lot of us have transceivers with wide band receive capability. In some areas that allows reception of police and fire communication as well as other communication services on VHF and UHF. That is not the case with us since the county system here is trunked. The important thing to remember is that there is a lot of useful radio information activity that takes place on single channel analog transmissions or duplex analog transmissions using repeaters in the commercial bands.

Let's go through some steps to become aware of what things might be right in our back yard that we may have overlooked.

Step One: Take a look at your surroundings. We are out driving and walking in our neighborhoods all the time, but how much do we really see? Start looking at your local area when you are out. Next time you go out on a local shopping run let your spouse drive. Instead of just watching the scenery and traffic go by take a look at your local surroundings. Look for things like railroad tracks. Are these main lines or do they go to specific areas like farms, orchards, phosphate deposits, or fuel terminals? What about other storage areas or businesses in your area? Are there places, which could have hazardous chemicals or similar items? What about communication centers or terminals in your area? Are there other areas with large concentrations of people such as shopping areas, business centers, shipping and distribution centers, or vehicle operations?

Step Two: Document what you find out. Fire up the computer and pull a map of your area If you want to keep it small, just look at the area one or one and a half miles from your QTH. That's simplex range for you to start listening to area communications. Start making notes of what is around you.

Step Three: Do some basic searching. Dig out the July issue of the *ANTENNA* and start listening on the FRS and GMRS frequencies. What kind of stuff are you hearing on those frequencies? A lot of small businesses and other organizations use these radios. Are you near the water? Some of the key Marine VHF Frequencies used in this area are listed in **Figure 1**. Important frequencies are highlighted.

Ch	Ship	Coast	Usage Description
3	156.150	160.750	See Note A
4		160.800	
6	156.300	--	Safety
7	156.350	160.950	
9	156.450	--	Commercial/noncommercial
10	156.500	--	Commercial
11	156.550	--	Commercial
12	156.600	--	Port operations
13	156.650	--	Bridge to bridge communications (low power)
14	156.700	--	Port operations
15	156.750	--	EPIRBS
16	156.800	--	Distress/calling
18	156.900	161.500	(a) Commercial
19	156.950	161.550	(a) Commercial
20	157.000	161.600	Port operations
21	157.050	156.050	
22	157.100	161.700	(a) Coast Guard liaison
23	157.150	161.750	Coast Guard
24	157.200	161.800	Public correspondence
25	157.250	161.850	Public correspondence
26	157.300	161.900	Public Correspondence
27	157.350	161.950	Public correspondence
28	157.400	162.000	Public correspondence
66	156.325	160.925	
70	156.525	--	Digital GMDSS

**Figure 1: VHF Channels in use in Tampa**

71	156.575	--	Noncommercial
72	156.625	--	Noncommercial
73	156.675	--	Port operations
74	156.725	--	Port operations
77	156.875	--	Port operations
78	156.925	161.525	(a) Noncommercial
79	156.975	161.575	(a) Commercial
80	157.025	161.625	Commercial
81	157.075	161.725	
82	157.125	161.725	(b) U.S. Government
83	157.175	156.175	(a) Coast Guard Auxiliary
84	157.225	161.825	Public correspondence
85	157.275	161.875	Public correspondence
86	157.325	161.925	Public correspondence
87	157.375	161.975	Public correspondence
88	157.425	162.025	Commercial

(A) Ship and coast station may use ship transmit frequency  
**(B) Ship and coast station may use coast transmit frequency**

**Figure 1 (continued)**

Channel 13 is for ships to communicate with one another in high traffic areas. These transmissions are limited to a power of 1-watt and are only for navigational purposes. Channel 22 (157.100) is for announcing hazards to navigation and other safety items of interest to those on the waterways. The USCG makes transmissions on this frequency twice a day.

If you are near an area with a lot of rail traffic, **Figure 2** lays out some of the commonly used railroad frequencies and **Figure 3** gives a few specific frequencies for this area (Brandon, Valrico).

Scan frequencies from 160.215 to 161.565					
Other frequencies to check					
452.325	452.375	452.425	452.475	452.700	452.775
452.825	452.875	452.900	457.900	469.950	
End of train transponders 452.9375, 457.9375					

**Figure 2: General Railroad Frequency Ranges**

Engaging in some searching might prove helpful. There have been some changes in railroad communications, and there have been some recent additions to the list of local frequencies, too. The frequencies in Figure 3 are listed in numerical order, so it will be easier to see if something you come across is already in the list.

The end of train module is just a transponder that transmits data. This is what has replaced the caboose on trains in the old days. The transponder fulfills the requirement for an end marker (it's not a train without an end marker) and the transponder serves to also alert a following train that it is getting close to a train ahead.

160.230	Road Dispatcher
160.2750	Yard
160.2900	Dispatcher
160.3200	Dispatcher
160.590	Road Ch 3 very active
161.1000	Road/Dispatcher Ch1
161.2200	
161.3700	Dispatcher Automated Axle Reporting System
161.400	
161.5200	
161.5500	
161.6500	
452.925	Locomotive speed control
452.9375	End of train module
452.950	
457.925	
457.9375	End of Train Module
457.950	End of Train Module
<b>Figure 3: Active Railroad Frequencies Brandon/Valrico</b>	

This gives you a starting point to start thinking about activities in your area that could tip you off to an emerging disaster situation. There are other frequency ranges for business and transportation services. We can cover more of these in future issues.

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That's it for this month. Have fun with radio!

**Keep in Mind Our Weekly Nets and Bulletins**

**Monday 8 p.m. The Two Meter Net 147.765 - 147.165 MHz Hosted by Doris Haskell WB9VDT**

**Tuesday 7 p.m. 6-meter Roundtable 50.200 MHz USB followed at 8 p.m. with the 10 Meter Roundtable 28.365 MHz USB**

**Send us your articles AND PICTURES! We do much more in the digital format!**

**Remember to check out the BARS website:**

**[brandonhamradio.org](http://brandonhamradio.org)**