

Monitoring Emergency Communications . . . the concentric circle theory

By Jock Elliott, KB2GOM

I once asked a recognized scanning expert “What frequencies should I monitor in an emergency?”

To which he said, “What emergency?”

He had me there: indeed, what emergency?

If we don’t know what emergency, how can we know what frequencies to monitor?

Question: Are there other strategies we might employ?

There is at least one that I can think of: concentric circles.

The inner circle

- Monitor local broadcasting; have a high quality AM/FM radio that will run for an extended period off batteries; have spare batteries.
- Know which local stations have backup power.
- Have a weather radio with alert capabilities, preferably with SAME capability
- Program your scanner with local fire and first responder frequencies.

The intermediate circle

- Know which regional broadcast stations have backup power; local stations might be knocked out; you might have to depend on stations further out.
- Have CDERN and interoperability frequencies programmed into your scanner for a wider emergency; you can find New York State interoperability channels on the database and through Sentinel software
 - o New York State, your county, click on statewide frequencies and interoperability under that

The outer circle

- Federal Disaster –on the RR database, click on nationwide, federal, federal disaster
- Federal disaster on Sentinel software – New York, your county, nationwide, federal disaster
- It might be helpful to have shortwave radio to listen to shortwave broadcaster, and Single Sideband to monitor ham frequencies.