

Amateur Radio 21st Century Style

By William Artelt, WB9YVM

Amateur Radio, or Ham Radio for short, might seem like an old-fashioned technology in the age of cell phones and the Internet. But it's actually seen a resurgence in the 21st century, offering unique benefits and skills:

- **Communication Beyond the Grid:** Unlike cell phones and the Internet which can be reliant on infrastructure, ham radio allows communication even when the power is out or traditional networks are down. This makes it valuable for emergencies, disaster relief efforts, and remote communication.
- **Global Reach:** With the right equipment and conditions, you can connect with hams around the world, fostering international friendships and cultural exchange.
- **Technology and Experimentation:** Ham radio allows you to learn about electronics, radio waves, and even build your own equipment. It's a great way to explore the technical side of communication.
- **Community:** The ham radio community is welcoming and supportive. Local clubs offer camaraderie, learning opportunities, and a chance to connect with people who share your interest.

If you live in Fremont, California and want to delve deeper into ham radio, here are some resources: The South Bay Amateur Radio Association [SBARA](#). This Fremont-based club is a fantastic starting point. They hold meetings, license prep courses, and provide a space to connect with local hams.

American Radio Relay League (ARRL): The [ARRL](#) is the national organization for amateur radio in the US. Their website offers a variety of information on getting started, licensing requirements, and the latest developments in the hobby.

- **Online Resources:** Websites like [RepeaterBook](#) allow you to find repeaters (stations that extend communication range) in your area. You can listen in (with the proper equipment) to get a feel for ham radio conversations. Additionally, YouTube has a wealth of channels dedicated to ham radio, offering instruction and tutorials, equipment reviews, and unique insights into the hobby.

By exploring these resources and reaching out to the SBARA amateur radio club, you can learn more about ham radio in the 21st century and see if it's the right pursuit for you!

National Operating Event in 2024

Amateur Radio Field Day, held annually in June, is a big event for ham radio enthusiasts in North America. It's like a combined camping trip, radio contest, and public outreach event, all rolled into one. Here's a breakdown:

National Amateur Radio Event

Amateur radio operators gather and set up temporary stations, often at parks or public spaces, and set up temporary radio stations.

- **Contact Other Stations:** The goal is to make contact with as many other amateur radio stations as possible over a 24-hour period. This is a friendly competition with points awarded for each contact and points awarded for installation type be it Solar, Battery, Generator or Commercial Power.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Field Day also serves as a giant emergency preparedness exercise. Participants practice setting up communications quickly and efficiently, simulating situations where traditional infrastructure might be damaged.
- **Public Outreach:** Many clubs use Field Day as an opportunity to showcase ham radio to the public. They answer questions, demonstrate equipment, and even let interested people try their hand at making a contact.
- **When:** Field Day always takes place on the fourth full weekend of June. In 2024, that's June 22nd and 23rd. Clubs and individuals set up stations all across North America, In Fremont, [SBARA](#) (South Bay Amateur Radio Association) will operate at Lake Elizabeth located at Paseo Padre Parkway and Sailway Drive. All are welcome!
- **ARRL Website:** The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) website has information on Field Day, including a club search tool to find participating clubs at their [Field Day Locator](#). Even if you're not a licensed ham radio operator yet, Field Day can be a great way to learn more about the hobby and see it in action.

SBARA invites you to come and join us!

