

# DISASTERCOM

DERA Newsletter

51 Years of Service

July 2013



## Mission Refocus -- New Membership Structure

In response to a suggestion from our member Georg Grosse-Hohl, the DERA Board and program advisory committee conducted a thorough review of DERA's mission focus, categories of membership and related dues structure.

*The good news is that **membership dues rates will go down**, while categories of membership will be simplified.*

### Mission

DERA's mission is not changing so much as being restated to more clearly represent our core competencies and the areas where we work most effectively:

- **Preparedness**
- **Communications**
- **Logistics**

In the coming months, we will be refocusing our resources and efforts toward these three areas throughout the entire Preparedness-Response-Recovery-Mitigation continuum, locally, regionally, nationally and globally. What does that mean specifically?

- **Preparedness** has always been a central part of DERA's mission. The Board looked at past activities that were highly successful...such as our series of "Planning for a Safer Tomorrow" community preparedness programs and the training & exercise services we provided to governmental agencies, businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). DERA will manage our future activities through a new DERA Preparedness Institute, which sponsor a wide range of education, training, exercise, academic research and field support activities, including the publication of an annual peer-reviewed journal, as well as organized visits to communities that have dealt with major disasters. The long-term aim is that the DERA Preparedness Institute will

provide members with accredited volunteer opportunities around the world.

- **Disaster Communications** was the original mission of DERA and our future efforts will greatly expand on the resources and capabilities of our amateur radio members to encompass all forms of emergency communications. The range of communications activities will include:
  - Auxiliary Communications, including Amateur Radio, satellite systems, mesh WiFi, and emergency power generation for personal communication devices
  - Public information services
  - Auxiliary public alert and warning
  - Lessons-Learned publications
  - Technical support
  - Radio propagation & reliability analysis
  - System development and deployment
- **Logistics** support continues to be a critical need during every major response. Through our membership network, DERA will continue to link those with resources to those in need and those with the ability to move the resources. Initially, we will use the DERA Online EOC and conference bridge to provide these services.

### Membership

Categories of membership and dues rates for 2013 are:

Individual Membership, \$20  
Sponsor, \$35  
Executive Sponsor, \$75  
Nonprofit Organization, \$35  
Governmental Agency, \$35  
Small Business, \$50  
Lifetime Individual Membership, \$450

DisasterCom is the newsletter of DERA International. News items and articles are always welcome.

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Editor: (Vacant)

Associate Editor: Eric Ritter

Membership in this Nonprofit Association is open to all who share our commitment to effective disaster preparedness and response.

**Join online at: [www.disasters.org/dera/register.htm](http://www.disasters.org/dera/register.htm) or see the membership link at our home page, [www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)**

The Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Association, International

P.O. Box 797, Longmont, CO 80502 (USA)

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## **DERA International**

P.O. Box 797  
Longmont, CO 80502

DERA is a Nonprofit, U.S. IRS 501(c)(3) Disaster Service and Professional Association Established in 1962  
Incorporated in the State of Wisconsin.  
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DERA QR-Code. Please copy & share.

## **Partnerships & Affiliations Include**

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American Radio Relay League  
www.arrl.org

**CNA**  
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**EM Forum and EIIP**  
www.emforum.org

**EMLRC**  
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**FAIRS**  
Foundation for Amateur International  
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www.fairs.org

**Florida VOAD**  
www.flvoad.org

**International Assn of Emergency Managers  
IAEM**  
www.iaem.com

**NIAR**  
National Institute of Amateur Radio (India)  
www.niar.org



## **New Member Roster**

**Welcome to DERA!**

**Bruce S. Binder, MPH, CEM**  
Rochester, Washington

**Brandon J. Pugh**  
Moorestown, New Jersey

**Norman Williamson**  
Dickinson, Texas

**Jason Horning, KDØTEN**  
Bismarck, North Dakota

**Steven Strange**  
Bailey, North Carolina

**Tam Hoang**  
Bankstown, NSW, Australia

**Ahmed Alsubhi**  
Springfield Gardens, New York

### **Members:**

Please send us news and photos.

Everyone is interested in what you are doing.



## **Letter from the Chair**

When we talk about disasters, they are all personal. No matter where they happen they happen to some individuals. Everyone reacts to and handles the situation differently. Not all disasters are those seen on TV or covered by the media or declared by the highest levels of government. Often, they can start as a small family matter and have a long lasting impact.

Over the past year I have been dealing with disasters on a daily basis; the remnants of Hurricane [later Tropical Storm] Irene in multiple states, wild land fires, and currently SuperStorm Sandy.

Every location has suffered the impacts in a different way. Some homes and businesses are gone forever and were on property where they cannot be rebuilt. Others might be reconstructed but at what cost? Many had insurance, but not sufficient to cover the losses that were sustained. Others took the position that they did not need insurance because 'it will never happen to me'.

Five things you can do to reduce the impact of any disaster:

1] Check your insurance coverage. Work with your agent and understand what is covered and what is not covered. This will allow you to adjust your policy to meet your needs and reduce the possibility of uninsured losses and surprises.

2] Know your surroundings. If you are near water, how can you defend against a rise in water level? If you live in an area susceptible to earthquakes or tornadoes, are you prepared for what may happen? Do you have defensible space around your buildings to reduce the possibility of fire spreading?

3] Have a plan. Let your family know the plan. Have a meeting spot away from home. Do you have a contact out of the area or out of state that everyone checks in with?

4] Be prepared. Have supplies including food, clothing water and medicines. Have flashlights and cell phones or other communication devices.

5] When the authorities say it is time to leave, leave. They have spent many hours gathering data before they made the determination to evacuate.

Be prepared, know your surrounding and stay safe.

Best Wishes,

Howard Pierpont  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Email: [howard.pierpont@disasters.org](mailto:howard.pierpont@disasters.org)



## Changes in fire patterns across the globe; Western US will likely see increase in fires

By Georg Grosse-Hohl

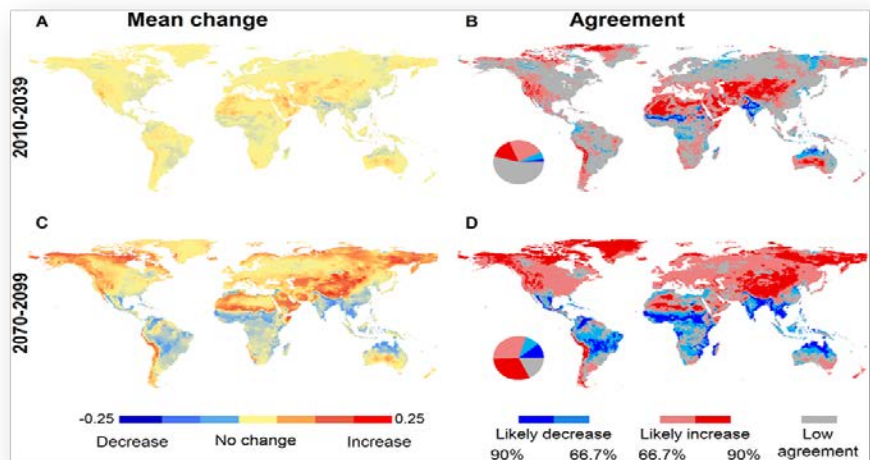
Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, in collaboration with an international team of scientists analyzed future fire patterns around the world. Their findings were published on June 12, 2012 in *Ecosphere*, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal of the Ecological Society of America.

The report examines 16 different climate change models to generate one of the most comprehensive projections to date of how climate change might affect global fire patterns. The researchers concentrated on two time periods: one in the near term (2010-2039) and one long-term (2070-2099). The study found that the models used show the greatest disagreements in the time period of 2010-2039. In that period there is uncertainty for more than 50% of the planet about whether fire activity will increase or decrease. Despite this uncertainty, some regions show high agreement among the climate change models for both, the near and the long-term. Among those regions are also the Western United States (currently suffering from disastrous wildfires), Italy and Spain (see picture below). For these regions, the report predicts more frequent fires in the future.

In addition, there are some regions for which the comparison of the 16 models concluded uncertainty in the short-term, but high agreement for the long-term development. These regions that will experience an increase in frequency of fires in the later part of this century include the United States and Europe (see picture above).

The study finds that most far-term models agree that increasing fire probabilities (62%) will occur at mid- to high-latitudes (the Northern hemisphere) while the models further agree on decreasing probabilities (20%) of fire in the tropics (around the equator).

In light of this year's fire season, the report serves as a warning not only to governments and politicians to stop budget cuts of fire departments and other emergency providers, but also as a reminder to all of us to always be prepared and getting used to be faced with severe fires on a regular base.



The full report is available at: <http://www.esajournals.org/doi/abs/10.1890/ES11-00345.1>

**Source:** Moritz, M. A., M.-A. Parisien, E. Batllori, M. A. Krawchuk, J. Van Dorn, D. J. Ganz, and K. Hayhoe. 2012. Climate change and disruptions to global fire activity. *Ecosphere* 3(6):49, p.13. "Copyright by the Ecological Society of America," <http://dx.doi.org/10.1890/ES11-00345.1>

Georg Grosse-Hohl is a Fellow of the Institute of Civil Protection & Emergency Management (FICPEM) and is a DERA Lifetime member.

Georg may be contacted at [georggrosse@me.com](mailto:georggrosse@me.com)



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# Catastrophic Disasters: Why should I Prepare?

By Lee Champagne, CEM®



I am concerned.

I live in the Pacific Northwest, in Edmonds, WA, a small community located on the Puget Sound waterfront just north of Seattle. We have been very fortunate in this part of the county to not have faced any major disasters of consequence for a very long time. As a result, the area has remained relative safe, and people are relatively complacent of preparing for a catastrophic disaster is not on the forefront of anyone's mind. People think "Why prepare? It won't happen here. Even if it does happen here, it won't affect me. If it does affect me, it can't be *that* bad. If it is, I probably can't do anything about it, so why prepare?" Really?

Past experience has shown that eventually "*bad stuff happens*" everywhere, even where you and I live. We can't stop it, but as individuals and as a community we must not be complacent. We can take action now to mitigate the effects. With proper planning and preparation we stand a much better chance of surviving and recovering.



**A head in the sand approach is not a good strategy when it comes to disaster preparedness.**

For Puget Sound residents there is a particular reason to take heed. Japan's catastrophic disaster in March of 2011 with a 9.0 devastating earthquake and tsunami is a wakeup call. What happened there is now expected to happen here with similar devastating consequences.

Japan's catastrophe occurred in a subduction zone – the interface boundary where an oceanic tectonic plate "sub-ducts" beneath a continental plate. Over time (150 – 500 years, more or less) significant force builds up along this boundary until there is a sudden slip, release of energy and an uplift in the ocean floor causing a massive earthquake and tsunami. We have a similar subduction zone on our side of the ocean, called the "Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ)." It is located just a short distance off shore, running parallel up the U.S. Pacific coastline for 800 miles from northern California to British Columbia.

The CSZ is where the Pacific Oceanic plate "sub-ducts" under our North American plate and has been the scene of many major seismic events in the past. The last significant event occurred in January 1700, slightly over 312 years ago. Geological evidence shows that the resultant earthquake and tsunami then was as great as what occurred two years ago in Japan.

Given the recorded average time frame between past CSZ events, the risk is now very high of it recurring soon. Emergency managers from California to British Columbia are very much aware of this threat and have been busy preparing catastrophic response plans and preliminary damage models for an expected 9.0 earth quake and severe coastal tsunami.

Those damage models indicate that a CSZ event could cause over 10,000 casualties and over \$60 billion in property damage. The greatest loss of life, infrastructure and property damage will occur along the pacific coastal areas from the earthquake and tsunami inundation. Although less severe inland, there will still be extensive ground shaking damage out to and perhaps beyond the I-5 corridor.

In the Puget Sound areas, including Seattle, tsunami inundation is expected to be only minimal, but moderate to significant earthquake damage to buildings, roads, and bridges, including highway overpasses is expected. This could result in immediate loss of electrical power (lasting several weeks or more). Cell and microwave towers could be down and land lines severed, meaning that all phones service (including 911) could be lost. Water and gas mains could be ruptured. All transportation including trains, buses, and personal cars would be severely restricted.

As result all of us could find ourselves stuck in a damaged house, without power, heat, water, and communications for week(s). Outside assistance can't be counted upon because state and federal emergency responders will be responding to the worse hit areas first, and local emergency responders (police and fire) are likely to be overwhelmed. For days or weeks after such a major catastrophic event, most individuals and families would have to be self-sufficient until vital services are restored and/or help arrives. How well individual, families and the communities survive or cope will depend upon their prior level preparation.

The first step to becoming prepared for disasters or emergencies should include a visit to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). It has excellent information and provides three major steps with details of each to be prepared: "**get a kit, get a plan, and get informed.**" Every family should have an emergency kit of essentials supplies such as water, food, personal medicine, flash lights/batteries, cash, extra clothes, blankets, and important items to be self sufficient for at least three days. The plan should include things you should know in advance to do after an emergency; how to communicate with family members if separated and phones don't work, how and where to evacuate, how to shut off gas, how to provide for pets, how to perform first aid, how to safeguard important documents, among others. To get informed, the website provides specific information on what you should know and do before, during and after any disaster.

Communities can be better prepared by developing plans and programs to identify and help people with special needs during those days and hours after a disaster strikes. As good neighbors, we can help this process by making ourselves aware of any neighbors who are elderly, handicapped, with medical conditions or other needs that could use assistance in the event of an emergency. Then when disaster strikes, we can be prepared to provide such assistance, to include evacuation, food, shelter, water, first aid, comfort, or help with their pets. Civic groups, schools and churches can also make plans on how they can be ready when disaster strikes to lend a similar helping hand. This lending hand is often crucial to a successful recovery effort as most individual and communities will find the road to recovery a steep uphill climb.

When it comes to disaster preparedness and being better able to recover afterwards, having adequate insurance is always the best plan, including earth movement and flood, which is not covered by normal homeowners insurance. This is important. No one should rely solely on the government for more than just a helping hand because Federal and State assistance is very limited and not designed to make anyone whole.



For example, following disasters, FEMA can provide some help directly to eligible individuals in grants up to \$28,800 per family if they qualify. This assistance includes temporary lodging and rental expense, home repair, household good replacement, medical, and funeral expenses. Travel trailers can be provided for temporary housing as well as an opportunity to apply for a low interest SBA loan. This assistance starts with a phone call to 1-800-621-FEMA through their website ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)).

FEMA also provides public assistance (PA) to public entities, such as municipalities, counties, school and fire districts as well as certain public non-profit organizations. PA also covers some non-insured repairs to buildings, roads and bridges, as well as the costs of debris removal, emergency protective measures (overtime for police, fire, and public works employees), public utility restoration, repairs to water and sewage control facilities, as well as public parks and recreation facilities.

Despite the availability of this assistance, the bottom line is that no matter where you may live, the best chance to survive and successfully recover from any disaster is to be aware of what can happen in your locale, find out what is needed to become prepared, and then do it.

**Lee Champagne is a Certified Emergency Manager® and is on the DERA Board of Directors.**  
Lee may be contacted at [lee.champagne@disasters.org](mailto:lee.champagne@disasters.org)

# Written – Loud and Clear



**by Stefan Pollack**

*Founder and CEO, IMLCORP*

If this article from Emergency Management Today doesn't make a solid case for portable, deployable loudspeaker systems with power and high-level clarity, I don't know what will.

<http://www.emergencymgmt.com/disaster/Do-Alert-Notifications-Fail-Expectations.html>

In looking at best practices for emergency mass notification, the Colorado wildfires show how telephone systems don't always reach out and touch those who need to get the messages. Lines or cell towers go down during disasters, and the increasingly ubiquitous Internet-based phones don't work when power goes out. Authorities can't make telephone connections when citizens don't provide phone numbers. As a result, telephone alerting systems were used often as 32,000 people were evacuated from their homes – BUT calls to at least 20,000 homes failed.

One likely reason for the failure to reach so many people is that nearly 25% of the people in two affected counties – almost 134,000 people – didn't sign up for notifications. Another likely reason for failure was that all the voice and data traffic probably exceeded the infrastructure's capacity.

Let's be very clear about one thing: Effective emergency mass notification must rely on multiple means of communication for timely evacuations. If emergency vehicles equipped with high-power, high-clarity loudspeaker systems can get to disaster sites (and people can evacuate), the message will reach those not reached by phone, text or email. Voice Emergency Mass Notification is critical.

We're sure emergency responders and victims faced similar problems when Super Storm Sandy struck in New York and New Jersey. Some had no power or any communications capabilities for more than a week.

Similar communications breakdowns occur on college campuses and in other large public spaces, such as ports, hospitals and office parks, where not everyone

is registered with or connected to a phone, text or email system. Only portable, deployable loudspeaker systems can fill the void.

Money may talk in the case of voice alerts on campuses. A bill in the U.S. legislative hopper could impose very stiff fines on institutions of higher education that don't quickly alert students of a campus emergency. The "Michael Pohle Jr. Campus Emergency Alert Act" would give the Department of Education authority to fine such schools 10% of the money the Department had given the school the year before. The bill was introduced in May on the fifth anniversary of the Virginia Tech shootings. Virginia Tech was fined the maximum allowable, \$55,000. The school is appealing.

It's time to put our money where our mouths are. It's time to invest in effective voice systems to complete our mass notification systems.

*Stefan is on the DERA Board of Directors and has generously furnished public address and Sound Commander systems to DERA conferences and field exercises for over fifteen years.*

Stefan may be contacted at [stefan@imlcorp.com](mailto:stefan@imlcorp.com)

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## DERA Seeks Volunteers

DERA is looking for member volunteers for the following positions:

- **Online EOC Watch Officers**
- **Web Manager**
- **Speakers Bureau Manager**
- **Membership Committee Members**
- **Conference Bridge Manager**

*All jobs can be performed from home! If you are interested in helping out in any of these important positions, please send email to:*

[dera@disasters.org](mailto:dera@disasters.org)



# **Membership Invitation**



Founded in 1962

## **MISSION**

**Preparedness - Communications - Logistics - Professional Association**

**DERA is a Nonprofit Disaster Service and Professional Organization.**

***Our members work together as a world-wide network of disaster preparedness specialists, response and recovery teams, trainers, consultants, technical experts, researchers and project managers.***

We help disaster victims by improving planning, communications and logistics, conducting training events and community preparedness programs, and by sponsoring emergency response teams.

***We sponsor a school awards program that encourages students to study the effects of disasters and to initiate projects that reduce local hazards and improve community preparedness, safety and environmental protection.***

As an international professional association, our membership is composed of key leaders in the field of emergency management from around the world, including government officials, volunteers, consultants, business managers, researchers, educators, students and wide range of charitable groups.

***Our newsletter, DisasterCom, brings current information about developments in emergency management and reports on the activities of our global membership.***

We sponsor research projects and the publication of emergency management guides, case studies, technical assessments, preparedness materials, and an annual peer-reviewed journal.

***If you share our vision of commitment and service, we would welcome you as a member.***

*Please complete the application that follows or contact us for further information.*

**DERA  
P.O. Box 797  
Longmont, CO 80502**

**[www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)**

*Professional Affiliation*  
**Membership Application**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country, if not USA or Canada: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Radio Callsign: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Select Membership Classification*  
**Enclose Check or Money Order for Dues Payment**  
*Amounts are in U.S. Dollars*

**Individual Membership**  
\$20.00 per year  
\$450.00 Lifetime Membership

**Nonprofit Organization**  
\$35.00 per year

**Sponsor Level Membership**  
\$35.00 per year

**Governmental Office**  
\$35.00 per year

**Executive Sponsor**  
\$75.00 or more

**Small Business**  
\$50.00 per year  
*Please contact us for corporate membership*

**Foreign currency and drafts are credited at commercial exchange rates. All checks must be payable through a U.S. bank.**  
*Add \$5 per year if you wish newsletter sent by Airmail, or \$25 for Global Priority Mail. Rates are valid for 2013.*

*You are welcome to pay multiple years in advance.*

**Join online with any major charge card at [www.disasters.org](http://www.disasters.org)**

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Please tell us if a member referred you so we can thank them: \_\_\_\_\_