

SALEM COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (C.E.R.T.)



Selecting a GMRS Radio

There are many choices out there for what to buy. The first thing is to get your GMRS license. No test required and only cost \$35.

GMRS Radio Suggestions

[Baofeng GMRS-9R](#) – Why? It is programmable for GMRS, FRS, Weather, monitor local emergency services and monitor local amateur radio emergency stations. Can program private channels. It is waterproof and has a full 5 watts on GMRS and limits FRS to the 2-watt maximum. Some have FM radio. Cost around \$30. Repeater able.

[BAOFENG GMRS Radio GM-15 Pro 8W](#) – Like its little brother in many way with several important improvements. First, this is an 8-watt transceiver. USB-C charging and comes in a 2-pack for around \$52. Repeater able.

[Baofeng GMRS-9R Tactical](#) – For \$48 this setup comes with the same radio as the 9R about but with a lot of useful gear such as a tactical high gain antenna, two batteries, a microphone, and a charging station. Repeater able.

[Baofeng UV-9R Pro](#) - For those with an Amateur radio license (and a GMRS license) this radio for \$33 is a pretty good choice. Forget the old Baofeng UV-5R, this is a solidly built 8-watt waterproof very programmable radio. Not only can you have your favorite ham stations programmed in, you can also program in everything the GMRS-9R has. You just have to obey the rules of wattage.

[Motorola T605 Talkabout](#) – Not interested in a programmable? This is a good choice but pricy at \$139.99. It delivers on GMRS a full 7 watts and 2 watts on FRS. Has privacy channels as well. You don't have to ability to use repeaters though.

There are many other choices out there but no matter what you get you need to make certain for GMRS it is a true 5 watt or better radio and for FRS it is a true 2-watt radio as many still on the market are just ½ watt. Most GMRS radios such as the Motorola, Midland, and others are both GMRS and FRS. Again, look at wattage.

Mobile GMRS Radios

In an emergency sometimes to need for extra power is a must. Mobile GRMS radios range from 10 watts to 50 watts. Most can be set up as a mobile or a base station. Better yet have both. Motorola and Midland makes some pretty good rigs ranging from \$165 to \$400.

GMRS Repeaters

Want your family all on GMRS (you can with your GMRS license) and want them all to be able to communicate with one another within a reasonable distance? A repeater

might be the answer. The one I use is a [Retevis RT97S Portable GMRS Repeater](#). I have a Pre tuned 462MHz-467MHz UHF Amateur Vertical Base Antenna, GMRS Base Station Antenna mounted on a 12-foot fiberglass pole on my roof. Built into a cable TV amplifier box, the RT97S is water-resistant and pretty tough. I power mine with solar panel and a 10-amp hour lithium battery. The repeater comes with power cable and a USB programming cable is also included, so you can program the repeater to your channel and CTCSS/DCS tones of choice. This also portable and can be used on camping trips and such to extend the range of your hand-held radios.

It's important to remember it is unlawful to transmit on GMRS without a license. You could face steep fines if caught. The FCC service rules for the GMRS are located in [47 C.F.R. Part 95 Subpart E](#). You can find information about GMRS licensing in the rules.

The opinions concerning GMRS gear are strictly mine alone and may be contrary to some CERT doctrine which suggest using FRS radio. Please see my presentation of Why GMRS and NOT FRS. In my opinion FRS is not a good choice for those in willing to get a HAM license yet still want to provide their family with a more reliable communication system. As a licensed HAM and GMRS license holder I have done a deal of research and testing for GMRS.