



DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS

ESF # 2 Communications Annex - as defined in the National Response Framework

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Note: This section of the plan contains no specific tactical information and simply outlines the procedures that could potentially be followed during a disaster or critical incident. All actions outlined in this plan may not necessarily be followed in every situation.

VANCE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Updated: November 24, 2008

I. PURPOSE

This section describes the County's emergency communication/notification and warning system.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Vance County operates a Central Communication Center located in the Courthouse at 156 Church Street, Suite 002, Henderson, NC. This center also serves as the 911 Center and County Early Warning Point.
2. Day to day operations require three Telecommunicators with four typically present during peak hours of call volume. The volume of traffic during times of disaster will require additional personnel to assist.
3. The communication center is designed and intended to be a secure facility and is not open to the public.
4. The County Communication Center is often the first point of contact for the general public.
5. Vance County Emergency Communications is heavily dependent on the commercial telephone network.
6. Remote radio units that are tied directly into the 911 Communications Center primary radio system are located in the primary EOC. These remotes are available for all public safety agencies in the City and County. Amateur radio capabilities are limited. One low band radio and one Sat radio/telephone are located in the EOC.
7. **Special needs** groups, persons in group quarters, or schools may require special

warning and/or notification.

8. Emergency Management has the capability to use the **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** to deliver warnings to the public.
9. Residents of the County utilize scanner radios extensively, providing another means of alerting or warning the public.

B. Assumptions

1. Use of all available forms of warning and notification will not provide sufficient warning to the general public and special needs population.
2. Emergency and disaster occurrences could have a detrimental effect on the County's communication system.
3. The commercial telephone system serving Vance County is vulnerable to the effects of emergencies and disasters and to possible system overload due to increased usage.
4. Commercial electric power may be shut off during significant emergencies, necessitating the use of auxiliary power.
5. It is possible for communities within the County to be isolated from communications for extended periods of time.
6. Loss of the communication tower(s) or the County's law enforcement, Fire or EMS repeater system could hamper communication or the ability to page emergency personnel throughout the County.
7. The ability to repair damage to the County communication system is contingent upon the availability of private commercial repair technicians.
8. State assistance may be needed to procure supplemental communication equipment or to locate available repair technicians following a major disaster.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATION

A. General

1. The County Warning point will initiate notification and warning of appropriate personnel according to established procedures. Telephone, radio communications or pagers may be utilized to notify public officials, EOC staff, emergency personnel and others as required.
2. Emergency service vehicles equipped with public address systems may be used to warn the general public.
3. The National Weather Service may issue weather watches or warnings directly to the public and Communication Center.
4. The Communication Center is operated 24 hours a day and serves as the Vance County Warning Point.
5. The N. C. Highway Patrol's Raleigh Communication Center Serves as the State Warning Point.
6. Notification of governmental officials and emergency personnel by the County Warning Point will follow established procedures and be at the expressed direction of the Emergency Operations Director or his designee.
7. Emergency communications standard operating guidelines will be implemented.

Backup capabilities will be activated automatically as necessary.

8. The County Manager or Emergency Operations Director must authorize the use of the **Emergency Alert System (EAS)**.
9. Emergency warning may originate at the national, state, or local level of government. Timely warning requires dissemination to the public by all available means:
 - Local Radio and Television Stations
 - NOAA Weather Radio (National Weather Service)
 - Sirens, Horns, Mobile PA Systems
 - Telephone
 - General Broadcast Over All Available Radio Frequencies
 - Newspapers
10. Field emergency service personnel utilize the County emergency communications networks to communicate with the EOC.
11. Amateur Radio volunteers can augment primary communications; the Central Branch Office will operate an amateur radio station during periods of activation.
12. The Central Branch Office will assist the National Weather Service (NWS) with dissemination of severe weather advisories and forwarding of related information, situation reports, etc., as needed by the County.

B. Specific

1. *Telephone Service*
 - a. Commercial telephone service is provided by Sprint.
 - b. Mobile phone capability exists within the County and is provided by multiple parties. It should be understood that during disasters, this service may not be available..
 - c. Sprint will be furnished a restoration priority list for telephone service prior to and/or following a major disaster.
 - d. During emergencies, personnel will staff information telephone in the EOC to respond to questions from the general public.
2. *Two-Way Radio Systems*
 - a. The County's Communications System is designated as the principal system to be used for direction and control activities. Principle users are as follows:
 - (1) Law Enforcement
 - (2) Emergency Management
 - (3) Fire/Rescue
 - (4) Emergency Medical Service
 - (5) Public Utilities
 - (6) Medical Facilities
 - (7) County/Municipal Administration
 - b. *Other two-way communications systems which may be used to communicate with the State EOC during emergencies include:*
 - (1) Division of Criminal Information
 - (2) State Emergency Management FM voice radio network
 - (3) Commercial Telephone (Fax)
 - (4) Amateur Radio Emergency Service
 - (5) Computer network