



Disaster Communications
ESF – 2 – Communications Annex
As defined in the National Response Framework
ESF Coordinator – US Department of Homeland
Security
National Communications System



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: April 4, 2019

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. Vance County also operates a fully redundant Backup Communications Center located at 900 S. Beckford Drive, in Henderson, NC. This center is fully integrated with the Primary Communications Center and is capable of working in tandem or operating in a standalone capacity.
3. Day to day operations requires a minimum of three Telecommunicators to be on duty at all times with four being the optimum staffing level. The volume of traffic during times of disaster will require additional personnel in order to meet the needs of the public and our public safety partners.
4. The communication center is designed and intended to be a secure facility and is not open to the public.
5. The County Communication Center is often the first point of contact for the general public to obtain basic information during a disaster.
6. Vance County Emergency Communications is heavily dependent on the commercial telephone network.
7. Computer Radio Consoles are tied directly into radio transmitters that are located within each communications center. These transmitters key Intelirepeaters that are on the State 800 MHz VIPER radio system in order to broadcast. The Emergency Operations Center utilizes plug and play remotes to access the same radio transmitters that are located on site. These remotes are available for all public safety agencies in the City and County to use during an activation.

Amateur radio capabilities are limited to what ARES members are able to bring in and use on their own.

8. Special needs groups, persons in group quarters, or schools may require special warning and/or notification.
9. Emergency Management has the capability to use the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to deliver warnings to the public.
10. Vance County utilizes a mass alert and notification system that allows us to warn large numbers of people simultaneously utilizing land line phones, mobile phones, email, technology assisted devices and social media.

B. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Use of all available forms of warning and notification will not provide sufficient warning to the general public.
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 911 Communication Center is operated 24 hours a day and serves as the Vance County Early Warning Point.

5. The N. C. Highway Patrol's Raleigh Communication Center Serves as the State Early Warning Point.
6. Notification of governmental officials and emergency personnel by the County Early 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:
 - a. Local radio and television stations
 - b. NOAA Weather Radio (National Weather Service)
 - c. NAWAS Alert System
 - d. Social Media
 - e. Community Alert System
 - f. Sirens, Horns and mobile public address systems
 - g. Telephone
 - h. General radio broadcasts over public safety channels
 - i. Newspapers and print media
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 North Carolina State Emergency Operation Center will operate an amateur radio station during periods of activation.
12. North Carolina State Emergency Operation Center 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 local network providers.
 - 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. Telephone system providers will be furnished a restoration priority list for telephone service prior to and/or following a major disaster if that information is available to EOC Personnel.
 - 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 Services
5. Public Utilities
6. Medical Facilities
7. County / Municipal Administration
8. Fire Marshal

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 VIPER Radio System
3. City / County VHF Radio System / Public UHF Radio System
4. Commercial Telephone / FAX
5. Email
6. Computer Network (WebEOC)