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Frequently Asked Questions

This page contains a comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that pertain not only to the NCS but also to the various services and programs that we offer.

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National Communications System (NCS) FAQ

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What is the mission of the National Communications System (NCS)?

The mission of the NCS is to assist the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Office of Management and Budget, in the coordination of the planning for and provisioning of national security and emergency preparedness communications for the Federal Government under all circumstances, including crisis or emergency, attack, recovery and reconstitution.

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What is the current structure of the NCS?

On April 3, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed Executive Order (E.O.) 12472 which defined the NCS' national security and emergency preparedness (NSEP) capabilities and superseded President Kennedy's original 1963 memorandum that established the NCS. The NCS expanded from its original six members to an interagency group of 22 Federal departments and agencies, and began coordinating and planning NSEP telecommunications to support crises and disasters. The NCS membership currently stands at 23 members, with the addition of the Department of Homeland Security in 2003.

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Describe the link between Government and industry. What roles and relationships does each have in the NCS?

The NCS Committee of Principals (COP) -- and its working body, the Council of Representatives (COR) -- represents the member organizations of the NCS. The COP -- formed as a result of Executive Order 12472, provides advice and recommendations through the NCS to the National Security Council on NSEP telecommunications and its ties to other critical infrastructures. The NCS also participates in joint industry-Government planning for the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) with the NCS' National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC), and with its Telecommunications Information Sharing and Analysis Center (Telecom-ISAC).

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Who is the Executive Agent?

Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff serves as the Executive Agent of the National Communications System. The Secretary of Homeland Security assumed duties of the Executive Agent on March 1, 2003 when sponsorship of the NCS transferred from the Defense Department to the Department of Homeland Security.

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Who is the Manager?

The Department of Homeland Security's Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection, is the Manager of the NCS. Mr. Robert Stephan was appointed by President George W. Bush on April 8, 2005 to serve as the Assistant

Secretary for Infrastructure Protection.

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Who is the Deputy Manager of the National Communications System?
Dr. Peter M. Fonaash is the Deputy Manager and Director of the NCS. He is responsible for the day-to-day policy, technical, and programmatic oversight of all Federal government-wide activities in national security and emergency preparedness communications.

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National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) FAQ

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- ▶ **Must the NSTAC, the IES and other subcommittee meetings be open to the public?**
- ▶ **Who may have access to the records of the NSTAC?**

What is the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC)?
The National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee consists of up to 30 Presidentially appointed industry leaders (usually chief executive officers) representing telecommunications industry. The NSTAC advises the President on national security telecommunications matters. Executive Order 12382, signed on September 12, 1982, established the NSTAC and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) governs its operations. In its advisory role to the President, the NSTAC provides industry-based analysis and recommendations on a wide range of policy and technical issues related to telecommunications, information systems, information assurance, infrastructure protection and other NS/EP concerns.

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What is the purpose of NSTAC?
The NSTAC provides industry-based analysis and recommendations to the President and the executive branch regarding policy and enhancements to national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications.

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How often does the NSTAC meet?

The NSTAC conducts face-to-face meetings annually in May to report on its activities and provide recommendations to the President. In addition, the NSTAC membership conducts quarterly meetings via conference calls to discuss ongoing work and potential issues between principals and senior government leaders.

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Who can be NSTAC members?

Executive Order 12382 provides for no more than 30 NSTAC members who "shall have particular knowledge and expertise in the field of telecommunications and represent elements of the Nation's telecommunications industry." In addition, the Executive Order requires that each member be a U.S. citizen. The Executive Order also states that NSTAC that means not all 30 members should come from the same segment of the telecommunications industry or be from large companies. Only the President may appoint or terminate a member. Any member may resign.

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Which companies are currently represented on NSTAC?

As of January 13, 2006 the following companies are represented on the President's NSTAC:

- Advanced Micro Devices
- AT&T
- Bank of America
- BellSouth
- Boeing
- Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association (CTIA)
- Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)
- EDS
- Lockheed Martin
- Lucent Technologies
- Microsoft
- Motorola
- Northrop Grumman
- Nortel Networks
- PanAmSat
- Qwest Communications
- Raytheon
- Rockwell Collins
- Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

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- Sprint Nextel
- Teledelec
- Unileys
- United States Telecom Association (USTA)
- VeriSign
- Verizon Communications

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Who or what does the NSTAC principal represent?

The principal represents the member company. If the President appointed a member to provide advice as an individual, the Government would consider the member as a "Special Government Employee" and subject to the conflict of interest statutes. If a principal leaves the company, the company may nominate a new principal for the President's consideration. The former principal does not take the NSTAC membership to his or her new company. Two NSTAC companies that merge may have only one NSTAC principal to represent the surviving company.

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Who is the Designated Federal Official (DFO) for NSTAC and what is the DFO's role?

The FACA requires that each Federal advisory committee have what is called a Designated Federal Official. For NSTAC, the DFO is the NCS Manager. The DFO attends or chairs, and adjourns each meeting. No committee meeting may be held in the absence of the DFO or without his advance approval. There is a difference in the duties of the DFO of the NSTAC, a Presidential Federal advisory committee, and non-presidential Federal advisory committees. FACA does not require that the DFO of a presidential advisory committee approve the meeting agenda.

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What is the Industry Executive Subcommittee (IES)?

Executive Order 12382 authorizes the NSTAC to establish subcommittees. The NSTAC Principals, in accordance with its committee by-laws, established the IES. The purpose of the IES is to assist the NSTAC on matters concerning procedures, plans, and policies for the telecommunication and information systems that support national security and emergency preparedness. The IES may establish working group, task forces, and ad-hoc groups to address pertinent issues. Each member of the NSTAC may appoint one member of the IES.

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May the IES provide advice to the Government?

No. The IES is not a Federal advisory committee. Should it appear to be giving advice, it could become an unauthorized de facto Federal advisory committee. IES members may be polled individually for their opinions and the responses consolidated by the Government. However, the result of the poll of individual IES members does not constitute a formal NSTAC endorsement of a product and should not be represented as such. Only matters voted upon by NSTAC Principals represent NSTAC products.

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What is the role of the NCS in regards to the NSTAC, the IES and other subcommittees?
Executive Order 12472 assigns the NCS the role of providing staff support and technical assistance to the NSTAC, and therefore the IES and other subcommittees. The NCS Manager is the Designated Federal Official of the NSTAC. The NSTAC bylaws name the NCS Deputy Manager as the non-voting IES Chair. Since the IES is not an advisory committee, the Deputy Manager is not a formal Designated Federal Official.

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Must the NSTAC, the IES and other subcommittee meetings be open to the public?
The purpose of the FACA was to allow the public to be aware of the advice its Federal Government was getting and who was giving it. Federal advisory committee meetings are generally required to be open to the public. However, the FACA does contain a national security exception to the general rule and it is on that basis that NSTAC closes most its meetings. IES and other subcommittee meetings are not subject to the openness requirements of the FACA since they are not Federal advisory committees.

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Who may have access to the records of the NSTAC?
The FACA established the public's right to be kept informed with respect to the number, purpose, membership, activities and cost of Federal advisory committees. The Federal Register publishes notices of meetings. Unless the meeting is closed for national security reasons, interested persons are permitted to attend. FACA requires that "...the records, reports, transcripts, minutes, appendices, working papers, drafts, studies, agenda, or other documents which were made available to or prepared for or by each advisory committee shall be available for public inspection." For NSTAC purposes, this means the material presented by the IES to the NSTAC itself, not any subcommittee material, be made available. The NSTAC fulfills this responsibility by posting the reports on its website. The national security exception may be applied to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) does not apply to the NSTAC since it is a Federal agency. The information that is provided to the NSTAC by the NCS in its role as the provider of support and assistance to the NSTAC can be deemed NSTAC material and not releasable under FOIA.

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National Communications System Committee of Principals (COP) FAQ

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▶ Does the COP have subcommittees?

What is the Committee of Principals (COP)?
The Committee of Principals (COP) is an essentially designated interagency group that provides advice and recommendations on national security and emergency preparedness telecommunications to the Executive Office of the President. High-level Government officials representing Federal operational, policy, regulatory, and enforcement organizations compose the COP. Its diverse representation across 23 Federal departments and agencies embraces the full spectrum of Federal telecommunications assets and responsibilities. As an interagency group, it serves as a forum for members to review, evaluate, and present views and recommendations on current or prospective NCS programs to the Manager, NCS, the Executive Agent (the Secretary of Homeland Security), and the Executive Office of the President (EOP).

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What Federal Organizations Maintain Seats on the Committee of Principals

- The Department of State
- The Department of Defense
- The Department of Treasury
- The Department of Justice
- The Department of Commerce
- The Department of Interior
- The Department of Energy
- The Department of Agriculture
- The Department of Health and Human Services
- The Department of Transportation
- The Department of Veterans Affairs
- The Department of Homeland Security
- The Joint Staff (DOD element)
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS element)
- The National Security Agency (DOD element)
- The Central Intelligence Agency
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (DOC element)
- The Federal Reserve Board
- The General Services Administration
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- The Federal Communications Commission
- The United States Postal Service

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Who chairs the COP?

The Manager of the National Communications System chairs the Committee of Principals.

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What are the responsibilities of each COP representative?

The COP consists of representatives from their parent organization on policy, technical, and programmatic NSEP telecommunications issues. Principals ensure that written reports, comments, and recommendations are made available to the Committee through the Executive Secretary (the NCS Deputy Manager). Principals also participate as members of subordinate groups, as required, and provide guidance and direction to their respective organizations' representatives.

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What is the Council of Representatives (COR)?

The Committee of Principals formally established the Council of Representatives (COR). The COR is a permanent advisory body that represents NCS interests. Each of the COPs has a representative to the Council of Representatives (COR). The Office of the Manager, NCS, provides support to the COP, COR, and their subgroups.

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How often does the COP meet? What is a COP meeting like?

The COP meets a minimum of twice annually. At these meetings, the COP receives a series of reports, which are designed for action or information. The Committee is asked to recommend forwarding a report or issuance to the Executive Office of the President. It is by the COP's consensus and direction that the majority of the programs and activities of the NCS take place. The COP bylaws outline these procedures.

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How often does the COR meet? How are they tasked?

As the working group of the COP, the COR normally meets on a quarterly basis. At COR meetings, members consider initiatives from various sources, for forwarding to the COP. For example, the Executive Office of the President or the National Security Council may task the COP to investigate a specific area and produce recommendations for action. The Committee, in turn, often tasks the COR to study that area and provide a report within a specified period of time. The COR may convene a subcommittee to fulfill the COP request. As another example, Chairman NCS may create a new program or project to be considered by the COR and the COP. Alternatively, an NCS member organization may present a briefing for NCS consideration.

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Does the COP have subcommittees?

As needed, the CUI or CUIA establishes working groups or implementation teams to address specific issues and technical matters. These subordinate working bodies play an important role in the NCS and its deployment of NS/EP communications programs.

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National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC) FAQ

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- ▶ [Is there information available on the NCC and the National Communications System?](#)
- ▶ [Do the major telecommunications companies in the U.S. provide status reports at a regular frequency to the NCC?](#)
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- ▶ [When did the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications activate in reaction to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?](#)

What is the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC)?

The National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications is an Industry-Government operations center, established in 1984. The NCC mission is to assist in the initiation of national coordination, restoration, and reconstitution of national security/emergency preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications service or facilities under all conditions, crisis or emergency. Full and partial telecommunications and data operations are provided to the NCC by all telecommunications companies operating in the United States. The NCC provides a permanent operational focal point for all Government/industry NS/EP telecommunications response across the spectrum of emergencies.

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Who is the Manager of the NCC?
The NCC Manager is Mr. Donald Smith.

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Is the NCC a joint effort between the Government and industry?

Yes, the NCC is a joint effort between Government and industry. In addition to the NCS, there are nine Federal Participants (as of 2/22/06) – Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Commerce, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Transportation, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Emergency Management Agency (part of the Department of Homeland Security), Federal Reserve Board, and the General Services Administration.

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How many industry members belong to the NCC?

There are 28 industry members (as of 01/13/06) – Americom, AT&T, Avici, BellSouth, Boeing, Cincinnati Bell, Cingular, Cisco Systems, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association (CTIA), EDS, Inmarsat, Intrado, Juniper Networks, Level 3, Lockheed Martin, Lucent Technologies, McAfee USA, Nortel Networks, Northrop Grumman, Qwest, Sawis, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), Sprint Nextel, Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), U.S. Telecom Association (USTFA), VeriSign, Verizon.

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What type of liaison exists between the telecommunications industry and Government representatives in the NCC?

The telecommunications industry and the Government staff work together to coordinate support to national security and emergency preparedness issues and to prevent and mitigate impact on the national telecommunications infrastructure.

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Is there any coordination between the NCC and other similar coordinating centers?

Yes, the NCC coordinates with Federal departments and agencies, and telecommunications companies.

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Is the information received in the NCC available to the community at large?

Information is normally sensitive or proprietary, and not releasable to the public.

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Is the FCC represented in the NCC?

The FCC's a non-resident member of the NCC, participates in weekly meetings, and supports the NCC in the event of an emergency.

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Is there information available on the NCC and the National Communications System?

Information on the NCC is available through its Web Site at <http://www.ncs.gov/ncs/>.

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Do the major telecommunications companies in the U.S. provide status reports at a regular frequency to the NCC?
Except for regulated reports to the FCC, all reports to the Government, or to other industry, are voluntary. During periods of crisis, NCC industry representatives work closely with the Government to provide updates on telecommunications provisioning and restoration and other issues. Daily voluntary sharing of information occurs within the Telecom-ISAC function of the NCC.

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Will the general public be able to call the NCC for information about their telecommunications service?
No. The public should contact their telecommunication providers for problems. Although the NCC will be monitoring potential problems, it is the responsibility of the telecommunications companies to speak about their areas of responsibilities and to interface with their customers. The NCC does not speak on behalf of the telecommunications companies.

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When did the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications activate in reaction to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?
The National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC) activated minutes after the report of the first plane hitting the World Trade Center in New York.

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Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) FAQ

The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) list of Frequently Asked Questions is maintained by the GETS Management Team on the [GETS website](#).

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Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program FAQ

The Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) list of Frequently Asked Questions is maintained by the TSP Management Team on the [TSP website](#).

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Wireless Priority Service (WPS) FAQ

The Wireless Priority Service (WPS) list of Frequently Asked Questions is maintained by the WPS Management Team on the [WPS website](#).

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SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) High Frequency Radio Program FAQ

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- ▶ [What is the make-up of the SHARES network?](#)
- ▶ [How does the SHARES program service the Federal Government community?](#)
- ▶ [Who is responsible for the SHARES program? Who manages the everyday operations of SHARES?](#)

What is the mission and purpose of the SHARES Program?
SHARES combines existing high frequency (HF) assets from 93 Federal, state, and industry organizations into a single emergency voice and data message handling network, supporting national security and emergency preparedness (NSEP) when normal communications are destroyed or unavailable.

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What is the make-up of the SHARES network?
As of June 2003, the SHARES network consists of 1105 HF radio stations, representing 93 Federal, State, and industry resource contributors. There are SHARES stations situated in every state and at 20 overseas locations. Nearly 200 emergency planning and response personnel also participate in SHARES. Over 150 HF frequencies are earmarked for use in SHARES. The National Communication System publishes the SHARES HF Radio Program Bulletin, to periodically keep members updated on program activities. They can be accessed at <http://www.ncs.gov/NS/Shares/Shares.htm>.

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How does the SHARES program service the Federal Government community?
SHARES provides the Federal community a forum for addressing issues affecting HF radio interoperability. The SHARES HF Interoperability Working Group (IWG), established as a permanent standing committee under the NCS Council of Representatives, is responsible for providing guidance and direction for the SHARES radio network and for fostering interoperability of Federal HF radio systems through examination of regulatory, procedural, and technical issues. The SHARES HF Interoperability Working Group currently consists of 146

US/IN/MS/IS, representing various separate participating organizations.

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Who is responsible for the SHARES program? Who manages the everyday operations of SHARES?
Overall support for the SHARES HF Radio Program is the responsibility of the Manager, National Communications System. The Chief, Critical Infrastructure Protection Division, Office of the Manager, NCS, is responsible for administering the SHARES program. The Manager, National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications, is responsible for day-to-day operations of SHARES.

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One-Stop Shop Service (OSSS) FAQ

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- ▶ [What NCS programs and services are included in the OSSS?](#)
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- ▶ [How are the processes of the various OSSS services being implemented?](#)
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What is the purpose of the One-Stop Shop Service (OSSS)?
The purpose of the NS/EP Priority Communications One-Stop Shop Service (OSSS) is to enable National Communications System (NCS) customers to acquire information on NCS priority communications services, participate in the OSSS as a single source by consolidating user support, operational, subscription, and help-desk services for the NCS telecommunications information.

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What organization in Department of Homeland Security implements the OSSS?
Within the DHS, the NCS Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Division provides NS/EP priority telecommunications services to Federal, State, and local governments, industry, and other authorized NS/EP organizations that participate in the OSSS.

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What NCS programs and services are included in the OSSS?
The One-Stop Shop Service (OSSS) consolidation began its implementation in September 2002 and includes user and operational support for the following programs:

- **Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS)** - The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) provides NS/EP personnel emergency access and priority use in an emergency or crisis situation during which the probability of completing a call over normal or other alternate telecommunication means has significantly decreased.
- **Wireless Priority Service (WPS)** - The Wireless Priority Service (WPS) provides a means for NS/EP telecommunications users to obtain priority access to available wireless radio channels when necessary to initiate emergency calls.
- **Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program** - The Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program, managed and operated by the NCS, that provides for priority provisioning and restoration of critical NS/EP communications assets/circuits. Critical NS/EP circuits are defined as those that are critical to maintaining a state of readiness for, responding to, or managing telecommunications during an event or crisis that could cause harm to the population, damage property, or threaten the security of the United States.
- **SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program** - The SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program provides a single, interagency emergency message handling system by bringing together existing HF radio resources of Federal, state and industry organizations when normal communications are destroyed or unavailable for the transmission of national security and emergency preparedness information.

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How do NCS customers use the OSSS?

As an initial step toward implementation, the NCS created a telephone connectivity OSSS Call Center by creating a NS/EP consolidated virtual call center. The objective is to have a single number for all NCS customers to call for priority communications services. The OSSS Call Center contact information is: 1-866-NCS-CALL [(866)-627-2255], or in the metro Washington, D.C. area at (703)-676-CALL [(703)-676-2255]. This call center provides one centralized access point with multiple selections for the various NCS NS/EP telecommunications services.

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Can I obtain OSSS service using the worldwide web?

The NCS also implemented a consolidated web-based approach for NS/EP priority communications services using a web portal to maximize the overall benefits of one-stop service. The NCS home page will act as the portal and will provide top-level information on the various priority communications services available. Users will then be automatically linked to the appropriate web pages for specific services. NS/EP program, service, and operational information can be obtained via the NCS homepage at <http://www.ncs.gov>.

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How are the processes of the various OSSS services being implemented?

The architecture used for consolidation of the technical/information processes for all NCS priority telecommunications services/programs will utilize web-based technology and a web-based information delivery service. Consolidation of the technical/information processes for administration and operations of these services/programs provides an efficient method for continuing to process them on an on-going basis while transitioning to the consolidated environment. Partitions or other security measures will be established to protect

more sensitive information as required.

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What is the future goal of the OSSS?

OSSS provides an efficient and effective means of managing and supporting the consolidated operations/user support missions and functions of the NCS and provides all NCS users/customers with priority communications services and coordination/help-desk services and operations during any circumstance. Support for the operational/administrative process activities for all NSIEP communications services under a single organizational environment allows continuity and integrity of management for the services/programs. The goal is to understand the needs of the organizations with NSIEP responsibilities across all levels of government, industry, and critical infrastructure sectors and determine how to assist them with services provided by the NCS under the OSSS implementation. As NCS implements OSSS, it envisions that it will be able to provide services not only to the NSIEP programs and services but also to other services and programs that are supported by the NCS.

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Who do I contact for further information on OSSS?

Additional information may be obtained by contacting the OSSS Coordination Group, Telephone: 1-866-NCS-CALL [(866)-627-2259], or in the metro Washington, D.C. area at (703)-676-CALL [(703)-676-2255]; Fax: [(703)-607-4984], or Website - <http://www.ncs.gov>.

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Emergency Response Training (ERT) Seminars FAQ

- ▶ What are ERT Seminars?
- ▶ What is the purpose of ERT Seminars?
- ▶ What is the Seminar Concept?

What are ERT Seminars?

The Telecommunications Emergency Response Training (ERT) seminars, a joint venture between the NCS, General Services Administration (GSA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the telecommunications industry, train emergency responders at the Federal, regional, State and local level on telecommunications resources and procedures that are available to support emergency response operations.

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What is the purpose of ERT Seminars?

The NCS conducts ERT seminars nationwide to reach emergency responders and planners in the Ten Federal Regions. A core program delivered within an 8-hour period is augmented by specifically designed presentations tailored to regional interests and operational requirements. The seminar provides an overview of current and

tures telecommunication services and capabilities for use during disasters and emergencies. Course content varies depending on regional participant's interests and always includes information on emergency plans and activities with regard to:

- The National Response Plan (NRP), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Emergency Support Function #2 (Communications), operations at national and regional levels.
- Operational support provide by the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC) and the NCS Regional Managers.
- Priority telecommunication programs that support NS/EP requirements

In addition to providing training, the seminar facilitates the development of working relationships among telecommunications emergency responders. During the seminar, participants discuss essential processes and procedures and share their experiences on emergency response and operations coordination. Throughout the one-day program, seminar participant interaction is emphasized; participants are encouraged to agree to disagree, with a primary goal of facilitating communication.

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What is the Seminar Concept?

The seminar format of instruction combines lecture-style presentations with interactive discussions by the seminar participants. The subject-matter presentations establish a baseline of knowledge among all the seminar participants by providing information about organizational structures and priority communications programs. The interactive discussions allow all participants to exchange knowledge and experiences of communications programs. The seminar encourages participants to share their experiences and to discuss the challenges they face. The seminar encourages discussion of key processes and procedures that can facilitate communications interoperability. In addition to providing training, the seminar's goal is to facilitate the development of working relationships among telecommunications emergency responders.

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Alerting and Coordination Network (ACN) FAQ

- ▶ [What is the Background of the ACN?](#)
- ▶ [What is the mission and purpose of the ACN Program?](#)
- ▶ [Who is responsible for the ACN program? Who manages the everyday operations of ACN?](#)

What is the Background of the ACN?

Prior to January 1, 2001, the National Telecommunications Alliance (NTA) managed and operated the Alerting and Coordination Network (ACN) - a switched, private line network - to provide emergency communications among the Regional Bell Operating Companies, their suppliers and certain Government agencies. When NTA dissolved on January 1, 2001, the ACN was in jeopardy of being disbanded. Because the ACN provides emergency back-up communications capabilities that could help coordinate response to and recovery from a

widespread network outages, the Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), directs the NCS to establish a rapid response capability to address the critical needs of the ACN. Operational responsibility for the ACN has been incorporated into the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC) operations to serve as a vital coordination resource in the event of severe congestion or catastrophic damage to the Public Switched Network.

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What is the mission and purpose of the ACN Program?

The ACN provides a stable emergency voice communications network connecting telecommunications service providers, Emergency Operations Centers, and Network Operations Centers in ACN units. National Security Agency (NSA), National Security Agency (NSA/EP) and other agencies provide network restoration coordination, transmission of telecommunications requirements and priorities, and incident reporting when the Public Switched Network (PSN) is inoperable, stressed, or congested. The ACN provides a telecommunications network that is independent of the Public Switched Network (PSN).

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Who is responsible for the ACN program? Who manages the everyday operations of ACN?

Overall support for the ACN Program is the responsibility of the Manager, National Communications System. The Chief, Critical Incident Response Mission, Office of the Manager, NCS, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the ACN Program. The Manager, National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications, is responsible for day-to-day operations of the ACN.

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NCS Augmentee Program FAQ

- ▶ [What is the Augmentee Program?](#)
- ▶ [What is the IMA Mission?](#)
- ▶ [Who sponsors the IMA Program?](#)
- ▶ [What experience is needed?](#)
- ▶ [What training is needed?](#)

What is the Augmentee Program?

The National Communications System established the Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) Unit to provide a cadre of skilled civilian and military reservists to enhance the efforts of the Office of the Manager, NCS (OMNCS), the National Coordinating Center for Telecommunications (NCC), and NCS Regional Managers (NCS RMs).

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What is the IMA Mission?

The NCS initiated the NCS IMA program in 1988 to provide emergency telecommunications support to the OMBNS during mobilization and wartime. More recently, the NCS has expanded the IMA mission to reflect the all-hazard emergency telecommunications support mission of the NCS. The NCS IMA program is a key component of the NCS's emergency telecommunications support capabilities, including Emergency Support Function #2 (ESF #2 Communications) under the National Response Plan (NRP). NCS IMA personnel augment various NCS staffs during national and regional crises and emergencies. IMA personnel are deployable to support OMBNS headquarters, the NCC, Emergency Operations Teams (EOT), the RMs, or the Federal Emergency Communications Coordinator (FECC) at the Joint Field Office (JFO).

As a general rule, NCS IMAs serve as Regional Emergency Staff Officers who are regionally trained and centrally managed by the IMA Program Manager. The NCS IMAs are U.S. Army Reserve officers with military and civilian training and experience in communications and information systems planning and operations.

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Who sponsors the IMA Program?

The U.S. Army Reserve sponsors the NCS IMA Program. The USAR, assigns senior reserve officer personnel to fill the IMA positions. The IMA positions are filled by officers who are currently serving in a transition to war, mobilization for war, and other national security exercises, as well as all-hazard emergency preparedness and response activities. Within this context, IMAs' assignments assist the OMBNS to fulfill NSEP requirements within the 10 Federal Regions and the National Capital Region.

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What experience is needed?

NCS IMAs are normally U.S. Army Signal Corps field grade officers with staff officer experience and demonstrated leadership and organizational skills required to fulfill the responsibilities expected of NCS IMAs. IMAs are staff officers who are currently serving in a transition to war, mobilization for war, and other national security exercises, as well as all-hazard emergency preparedness and response activities. Within this context, IMAs' assignments assist the OMBNS to fulfill NSEP requirements within the 10 Federal Regions and the National Capital Region.

To be fully functional in their assigned NCS positions, IMAs must obtain experience in and/or knowledge of the following:

- NSEP telecommunications procedures
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Telecommunications planning and operations supporting the FRP
- NCS organization, functions, authorities, and intergovernmental relationships
- National and regional telecommunications capabilities and guidelines for the management and control of telecommunications activities and personnel
- Appropriate employment of Telecommunications Service Priority in commercial telecommunications restoration and service ordering
- Use of automated resources to manage and track NSEP actions and prepare accurate and timely

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situation reports concerning emergency operations.

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What training is needed?

Participation in and support to emergency response efforts provides peacetime training of IMAs that, in turn, prepares them to assume the higher-level responsibilities of their mobilization positions immediately upon call to active duty during a national security crisis or emergency. Training of NCS IMAs begins with the understanding that individuals considered for the program are normally U.S. Army Reserve Signal Corps field grade officers or other branch-qualified officers with civilian training or experience in telecommunications and information systems planning and operations.

The OMMNCS IMA Training Plan provides a curriculum that focuses on the functional requirements defined in the IMA position descriptions and the requirements of the U.S. Army as outlined in Army Regulation 140-145, Individual Mobilization Augmentation (IMA) Program, dated November 23, 1994. As reservists, NCS IMAs are required to attend annual training (AT) for one 2-week period each year. In addition, Drilling IMAs participate in Inactive Duty Training (IDT) with 48 drill periods for pay annually. During annual training and the IDTs, every effort is made to ensure that IMAs perform the same duties to which they would be assigned during an emergency. NCS IMAs are required to attend a one-week initial orientation training at the NCS Headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, and a 2-week NS/EP training course at the NCS/EP Center in Quantico, Virginia. The NCS/EP course meets telecommunications requirements. Additionally, IMAs may enroll in distance learning course sponsored by the FEMA Emergency Management Institute. This training ensures that the NCS IMAs are fully integrated into the NCS NS/EP mission and support peacetime emergency telecommunications contingencies.

IMA Deployments

NCS IMAs also derive on-the-job-training benefits from actual NCS deployments in support of exercises and peacetime natural disasters, crises, and other emergencies. Since 1995, NCS IMAs telecommunications emergency response activities consisted of various natural disasters, man-made incidents and national special events.

Some of the significant events were: Northwest and Southeast floods; wildfires in Florida and the western states; Hurricanes Charlie, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne; ice storms, typhoons and tropical storms; earthquakes in California and Washington state; and terrorist bombings in Oklahoma City, Atlanta, and New York City, and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the NCS IMAs participate in regional interagency exercises to enhance the unit's level of readiness for activation to support real-world events.

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Network Design and Analysis Capability (NDAC) FAQ

- ▶ [What is the NDAC?](#)
- ▶ [Why was the NDAC developed?](#)
- ▶ [What features does the NDAC support?](#)

► [VIEW AND SAVE CAPABILITIES OF CURRENT STUDIES USING THE INQUIRY.](#)

What is the NDAC?

The Network Design and Analysis Capability (NDAC) is a modeling and analysis tool designed to view the Public Switched Network (PSN) [including the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), Internet Protocol (IP), and Next Generation Packet Networks, and wireless and satellite infrastructures] under various stress conditions. NDAC software resources include the tools, models, and documentation used to create the network performance and analysis models. The NCS continuously refines and expands the NDAC through software updates, the acquisition of new data sets, and application module development.

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Why was the NDAC developed?

NCS developed the NDAC because of heavy NSIEP reliance on the PSN. The NDAC works to model natural and man-made disruptions to the PSN, perform vendor independent analyses, develop models, and methodologies to identify vulnerabilities and congestion, identify interdependencies between the PSN and other critical systems, and help identify critical elements of the PSN. The NCS designed the NDAC to detect and help mitigate damage caused by accident or attack and to assist in reconstitution.

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What features does the NDAC support?

- NSIEP communications planning
- Custom modeling/simulation studies under a variety of conditions
- PSN dependability and resiliency analyses
- Examine effect of new technologies on the PSTN and Internet Infrastructure
- Laboratory test bed perspectives on network performance resulting from emerging technologies
- Flexibility to customize network architectures and routing schemes, introduce new carrier network data, and emulate the effects of emerging technologies.

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What are some examples of current studies using the NDAC?

- Backup Dial Tone (BDT) study - uses NDAC to examine methods and technology approaches to enhance the communications reliability in the Washington metropolitan area under emergency conditions.
- Next Generation Networks (NGN) study - uses NDAC to develop likely NGN architectures and traffic streams, and compare traffic overloading scenarios to identify potential network bottlenecks. Cyber attack and nuclear attack scenarios are also applied to the simulated NGN architectures to assess their impact on performance.
- Internet Service Provider (ISP) study - uses NDAC for an Internet modeling capability that captures the physical and logical interdependencies between ISPs from both architectural and traffic perspectives.

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- Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) study – uses NDAC to model the interaction and dependency between SCADA and telecommunications systems, enabling detailed vulnerability analyses
- Internet Disruption Impact Analysis (IDIA) – uses NDAC to determine and quantify the likelihood and effect of potential Internet disruption scenarios on critical infrastructures.

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Telecommunications Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (Telecom-ISAC) FAQ

- ▶ What is the mission of the Telecom-ISAC?
- ▶ What are the operational goals of the Telecom-ISAC?
- ▶ What criteria must companies meet for membership in the ISAC?
- ▶ Who are the members of the Telecom-ISAC?
- ▶ How is information shared among the Telecom-ISAC members? (as of 10/6/03)
- ▶ Is there a watch function to support the Telecom-ISAC?

What is the mission of the Telecom-ISAC?

The Telecom-ISAC mission is to facilitate voluntary collaboration and information sharing among Government and industry in support of Executive Order 12472 and the national critical infrastructure protection goals; to gather information on vulnerabilities, threats, intrusions, and anomalies from multiple sources and perform analysis with the goal of averting or mitigating impact upon the telecommunications infrastructure. The scope of the Telecom-ISAC's mission is all hazards, which include natural and man-made disasters and physical and cyber attacks.

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What are the operational goals of the Telecom-ISAC?

Telecom-ISAC Operational Goals:

- Be an honest and impartial information broker
- Facilitate voluntary collaboration to support both Government and industry information sharing requirements
- Foster working liaisons with external sources and liaison partners
- Add value—provide information not available elsewhere, filter appropriately, perform high quality analysis
- Ensure protection of information and the rights of data owners

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What criteria must companies meet for membership in the ISAC?
Membership is open to companies that provide telecommunications or network services, equipment or software to the communications and information sector and to select professional associations or companies with participation/presence in the communications and information sector. Currently, the Telecom-ISAC membership consists of thirty companies and three associations that together represent the majority of the telecommunications infrastructure.

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Who are the members of the Telecom-ISAC?

Twenty Eight Companies:

- Americom
- AT&T
- Avici
- BellSouth
- Boeing
- Cincinnati Bell
- Cingular Wireless
- Cisco Systems
- Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)
- EDS
- Intelsat
- Intrado
- Juniper Networks
- Level 3 Communications
- Lockheed Martin/COMSAT General
- Lucent Technologies
- McLeodUSA
- Motorola
- Nortel Networks
- Northrop Grumman
- PhotonEx
- Qwest Communications
- Raytheon
- Sawtis
- Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)
- Sprint Nextel
- VeriSign

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- [T-Mobile](#)
- [Verizon](#)

Three Associations:

- [Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association \(CTIA\)](#)
- [Telecom Industry Association \(TIA\)](#)
- [United States Telecom Association \(USTA\)](#)

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How is information shared among the Telecom-ISAC members? (as of 10/6/03)

All information received from NCC Telecom-ISAC members and liaison partners is deemed sensitive and proprietary, whether or not it is specifically marked as such. Only the originator of information may approve its release to anyone or any entity. The information owner retains its rights regardless of the location of the information within the NCC Telecom-ISAC facility.

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Is there a watch function to support the Telecom-ISAC?

The NCS operates the on-site, continuous (twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week) Telecom-ISAC watch and analysis operation (WAO). The WAO consists of senior analysts closely integrated with the Government NCC operations staff and industry representatives from Telecom-ISAC member companies. The Telecom-ISAC watch and analysis operation serves a dual function as the operational arm of the Telecom-ISAC and as one of The Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection watch and analysis centers.

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