

**KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN
EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION 2
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND WARNING**

PRIMARY AGENCIES King County Department of Executive Services

SUPPORT AGENCIES King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO)
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
King County Department of Transportation

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this Emergency Support Function (ESF) is to organize, establish and maintain the communications capabilities necessary to meet the operational requirements of King County in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

It also provides guidance for rapid alerting and warning to key officials and the general public of a potential or occurring emergency or disaster.

B. Scope

ESF 2 discusses the use and maintenance of telecommunications systems for emergency management functions within King County government during times of disaster. Those systems include voice, data and radios. Specific operating procedures and protocols are addressed in procedure manuals of participating departments.

II. POLICIES

The King County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will use normal communications and warning systems day-to-day and during disasters in a manner consistent with the King County Office of Emergency Management Communications Section Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

The County EOC and King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) Communications Center, will provide communications and warning support if possible to field responders, county departments, cities, special purpose districts, and the public.

Priority in establishing communications systems within King County is life safety first, followed by the re-establishment of critical government functions and the protection of public property, the economy and the environment. Following a disaster, communications and warning systems belonging to King County Government will be restored in accordance with the King County Resource Prioritization Strategy as stated in the Basic Plan.

III. SITUATION

A. Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

King County will periodically experience emergency situations, which require heavy use of current communications systems. Due to natural or technological disasters described in the Basic Plan and Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis, some communications systems may be damaged or destroyed. When the need for communications equipment is highest, we may have fewer resources, dictating a need for reprioritization or reallocation of working systems.

Emergency or disaster warning may originate from any level of government or other sources. Some weather related disasters are foreseeable for several days prior to the incident. Weather warnings, watches and advisories are issued by the National Weather Service well in advance whenever possible. Floods and fires sometimes build over several hours or days, allowing some time for warning and preparation. Other incidents such as earthquakes or hazardous materials releases offer no opportunity for warning though in some cases impacts may be lessened by actions taken after the incident.

B. Planning Assumptions

No single warning system exists in King County that will alert all citizens of every threatening disaster or emergency situation.

There will be occasions when there is no time or mechanism to provide warning.

Communications systems are vulnerable and may be damaged, destroyed, or overwhelmed during and following an emergency or disaster. Due to disrupted transportation routes, weather conditions, a lack of resources, or the level of damage, repairs to communications equipment and the infrastructure could take days, weeks or months.

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) transmits warnings initiated by federal, state or local authorities, relying on radio and television broadcasters to relay messages to the public. Broadcasters are not required to relay state or local warning messages, yet are required to relay presidential messages initiated by the National Warning Center. Once the initial warning is accomplished, public information

officers within the County EOC will keep the public informed of what actions to take to prevent injury or property loss. (Basic Plan, Appendix 2).

Alternate communications systems such as amateur radio will be used in a manner consistent with the King County Office of Emergency Management's Communications Section SOP.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

Reliable communications capabilities are necessary for day-to-day government operations, warning the public of impending events, management of response and recovery efforts, search and rescue missions, and coordination with other organizations. Communications capabilities must be available for emergency management functions in the Emergency Operations Center, alternate EOCs, and in the field.

Methods of warning key officials and the public of threatening situations include EAS, National Weather Service, media broadcasts, telephone or radio notification, public address announcements, person-to-person contacts and the Internet.

The King County EOC and the KCSO Communications Center maintain multiple levels of redundant voice and data communications capabilities (including backup power generation), for notification and warning of key officials and the public. Each site also maintains redundant systems for receiving and sending warning messages. Procedures addressing the operations of communications equipment in the EOC are located in multiple documents including:

- KC OEM Communications Section SOP
- National Warning System Operations Handbook
- Central Puget Sound Region EAS Plan

Specific systems in place include: Facsimile machines and broadcast fax, Internet communications, pagers, telephones, satellite phones, and cellular phones; local television, satellite television, AM/FM radio and data links within the county and via modems. Radio systems in place in the EOC include UHF, VHF, 800 MHz, 2 meter, HF, low band, and 2-meter packet. Dedicated phone lines are in place with the National Warning System (NAWAS) and Seattle EOC.

Radio transmitting and receiving capabilities include all county agencies using the 800 MHz trunking system as well as VHF and UHF frequencies. Non-county agencies including the American Red Cross, Washington State Emergency Management and local hospitals are also linked by radio to the EOC. Weather Radio and Emergency Management Weather Information Network (EMWIN) provide warning from the National Weather Service of weather related events.

B. Organization

During day-to-day operations, there are several county offices that develop, coordinate and maintain communications systems. The Department of Executive Services (DES) Information & Telecommunications Services (ITS) Division maintains responsibility for county telephone and Internet communications systems, as well as operation of the countywide 800 MHz trunked radio system. The King County Department of Transportation maintains and operates a separate radio system for its Transit Division. The King County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinates amateur radio resources for the EOC to support county department's response and recovery efforts..

C. Procedures

When disaster conditions disrupt communications systems within King County, all missions received in the EOC will be coordinated in accordance with the current EOC SOP. The Information and Telecommunications Division will address 800MHZ radio, telephone and Internet issues. The Transit Division will address transit's radio issues, and the King County OEM will address amateur radio issues.

Procedures addressing the operation of communications equipment in the EOC are located in various documents including:

- King County EOC Procedures Manual
- State Emergency Management NAWAS Handbook
- Central Puget Sound Region Emergency Alert System Plan

D. Mitigation/Preparedness Activities

All primary and support agencies will ensure that personnel and equipment are protected from the effects of disasters by complying with Paragraph V, of the Basic Plan.

E. Response/Recovery Activities

All response and recovery activities are detailed in department/division procedures and SOPs, and appropriate state and federal recovery guidelines.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Primary Agency - Department of Executive Services

The Department of Executive Services (DES) Information & Telecommunications Services (ITS) Division is responsible for coordinating the maintenance and continued operations of 800 MHz radio, landline telephone, and Internet communications during times of disaster.

By working with telephone service and equipment providers, ITS personnel will provide telephone service for emergency management functions as soon as possible following a disaster. Should normal systems be unable to handle the volume of calls, additional service and equipment will be procured.

The 800 MHz trunked radio system is managed and maintained by the ITS Division. If disaster conditions cause the radio system to fail, the first priority will be to re-establish the system. Amateur radio service for the EOC will be initiated and coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management.

ITS will coordinate assessment and restoration of Internet connectivity for the EOC immediately following any disaster.

OEM will develop and maintain operational procedures for activating and testing the Emergency Alert System (EAS). OEM will coordinate with the KCSO Communications Center, alternate EAS origination centers within King County, as well as federal state and local agencies and members of the media regarding improvements to EAS activation procedures.

OEM will coordinate with federal and state agencies regarding the use of state and federal communications on a daily basis and during emergencies and disasters.

B. Support Agencies

Support agencies such as the King County Department of Transportation and the King County Sheriff's Office depend on radio and telephone infrastructure remaining intact. Personnel in these departments with technical skills in the area of communications will work with personnel in Information and Telecommunications Services and the private sector to re-establish compromised systems.

The Department of Natural Resources and Parks will maintain a warning system through the Flood Warning Center for county departments, cities and special purpose districts, and citizens who reside along river basins.

The KCSO Communications Center will continue to serve as the primary warning point for the National Warning System, as stated in the National Warning System Operations Handbook. They will also serve as the primary originator of EAS

warning messages throughout King County as referenced in the Central Puget Sound Regional EAS Plan. Alternate originators include Eastside Communications Center, KC OEM, and the Seattle Division of Emergency Management.

VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Sufficient technical and support staff will be provided from ITS for 24/7 operations until critical communications systems are established. Equipment and supplies should be secured so that basic functions can be established even if transportation routes in the region are compromised.

VII. REFERENCES

Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
Title 47 U.S.C. 151, 154 (i) & (o), 303 ®, 524 (g) & 606; and 47 C.F.R. Part 11, FCC Rules & Regulations, Emergency Alert System.

VIII. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

See appendix 4 to Basic Plan

Agency Approval:

Date Approved: