NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Services

The National Communications System (NCS) was formed in 1963, in response to communications deficiencies during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and was transferred to the newly created Department of Homeland Security in 2003. NCS' mission, as defined by Executive Order 12472, is to provide priority telecommunications services and other related programs to support national security and emergency preparedness efforts across Federal, State, and local organizations.

The NCS is comprised of 23 Federal departments and agencies that share the responsibilities to assist the President, the National Security Council, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and now the Department of Homeland Security, in assuring the availability of National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications under all circumstances, including crisis or emergency, attack, recovery, and reconstitution. Building on its experience in Government-industry coordination and NS/EP telecommunications, NCS leads national telecommunications efforts in critical infrastructure protection and in coordinating key Government and industry entities for the nation's well being.

NCS provides priority telecommunications services, coordination and information sharing operations, and other related programs to support NS/EP efforts across Federal, state, and local government, critical infrastructure industry and other authorized NS/EP organizations. NCS services support the initiation, coordination, and restoration of NS/EP telecommunications during crises, emergencies, or national disasters.

The NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Services enable NCS customers to acquire information on NCS priority communications services, programs, and operations from a single source by consolidating user support, operational, subscription, and help-desk type services for the NCS telecommunications information. One-Stop Shop Services can be reached at 866.NCS.CALL (866.627.2255), or in the metro Washington, DC area at 703.760.CALL (703.760.2255). This call center provides one centralized access point with multiple selections for the various NCS NS/EP telecommunications services. In addition, NS/EP program, service, and operational information can be obtained via the NCS homepage at www.ncs.gov.

For more information on One-Stop Shop Services contact:

Department of Homeland Security
National Communications System

Building 410 (Mail Stop 8500)
245 Murray Lane
Washington, DC 20528-8500

Tel: 866.NCS.CALL (866.627.2255) or 703.760.2255

Normal hours of operation: Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 6 PM Eastern

Web: www.ncs.gov

Priority Telecommunications Services

National Communications System

1 ONE-STOP SHOP SERVICES

for Priority Telecommunications include the following:

Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) ✓

Wireless Priority Service (WPS) ✓

Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program ✓

SHAred RESources (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program ✓

National Coordinating Center (NCC) Watch ✓

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dial 1 for Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS)

GETS is a nationwide, priority telecommunications service that facilitates NS/EP communications by providing emergency personnel access and priority processing in the local and long distance segments of the Public Switched Network (PSN) during disasters or other national security and emergency events. GETS provides access authorization and priority treatment in the surviving telephone networks through a unique dialing plan with personal identification numbers. Its intended use is in an emergency or crisis situation during which the probability of completing a call over normal or other alternate telecommunication means has significantly decreased.

dial 2 for Wireless Priority Service (WPS)

WPS allows authorized NS/EP personnel to initiate calls during an emergency when cellular networks may be congested. In emergency situations when landline networks are damaged, cellular telephones often provide the primary means of communication. Increased cellular phone usage regularly results in extreme network congestion, preventing key NS/EP personnel from obtaining network access. To facilitate completion of critical calls during these high usage events, WPS gives authorized NS/EP personnel priority cellular access before subscribers who do not have WPS. In addition, WPS is complementary to, and can be used in conjunction with GETS. This ensures a high probability of call completion in both the landline and cellular portions of the Public Switched Network (PSN). WPS serves NS/EP needs while minimizing the impact on the general public's access to the same cellular infrastructure.

dial 3 for Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program

The TSP Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program, managed and operated by the NCS that identifies critical NS/EP circuits and prioritizes their telecommunication services that support national security or emergency preparedness missions. The TSP priorities are for the provisioning and reconstitution of NS/EP telecommunications services, which 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. The service vendors will restore TSP-assigned telecommunications services before any non-TSP services. Federal, state, local, and foreign governments, as well as certain private sector organizations, may also have services that qualify for a TSP assignment.

dial 4 for SHAred RESources (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program

The SHARES HF Radio Program brings together the assets of nearly 1,100 HF radio stations worldwide to voluntarily pass emergency messages when normal communications are destroyed or unavailable. SHARES uses common radio operating and message formatting procedures and more than 250 designated frequencies. Participation in SHARES is open to all Federal departments and agencies and their designated affiliates on a voluntary basis. More than 60 Federal, state, and industry organizations currently contribute resources throughout the United States and in 26 countries and U.S. possessions.

dial 5 for National Coordinating Center (NCC) Watch

The National Coordinating Center (NCC) is a joint industry-government collaborative body established in 1984. The NCC mission is to assist in the initiation, coordination, restoration, and reconstitution of NS/EP telecommunications services or facilities under all conditions, crises, or emergencies. The Telecommunications Information Sharing and Analysis Center (Telecom-ISAC) is a function of the NCC established in 2000 to support Presidential Decision Directive 63 for sharing critical NS/EP telecommunications information among Government and industry with an added focus on cyber and information security issues. The operational arm of the NCC/Telecom-ISAC is its 24x7 watch and analysis operation, the NCC Watch.

dial 0 for Additional Information