ESF Coordinator:

Department of Homeland
Security/National Protection and
Programs Directorate/Office of
Cybersecurity and Communications

Primary Agencies:

Department of Homeland
Security/National Protection and
Programs Directorate/Office of
Cybersecurity and Communications
Department of Homeland
Security/Federal Emergency
Management Agency

Support Agencies:

Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Homeland Security
Department of the Interior
Federal Communications Commission
General Services Administration

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #2 – Communications supports the restoration of communications infrastructure, coordinates communications support to response efforts, facilitates the delivery of information to emergency management decision makers, and assists in the stabilization and reestablishment of systems and applications during incidents.

Scope

ESF #2 acts to meet the telecommunications and essential elements of information needs of local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal Government agencies; nongovernmental organizations; industry essential service providers; other private sector partners; and individuals, families, and households, including individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The following are responsibilities of ESF #2:

- Provides disaster emergency communications, which consists of the technical means and modes required to provide and maintain operable and interoperable voice and data communications in an incident area.

- Supports the temporary reestablishment of the basic public safety communications infrastructure and assists in the initial restoration of the commercial telecommunications infrastructure.

- Coordinates the provisioning of priority and other telecommunications services at incident support facilities, provides capabilities and services to aid response and short-term recovery operations, and ensures a smooth transition to long-term recovery efforts.

- Leads communications planning, training, exercising, and coordination of the enterprise capabilities of the Federal Government to support a whole of government approach to disaster response.

- Facilitates the delivery of mission critical information to maintain situational awareness for emergency management decision makers and support elements.

- Develops and maintains a cyber and communications common operating picture with federal, state, and industry partners.

- Develops cyber and communications restoration priorities during disasters.

- Coordinates and deconflicts incident radio frequencies in disaster event areas of operation.

The ESF #2 structure may be used in non-Stafford Act and non-disaster situations where the National Response Framework applies.

RELATIONSHIP TO WHOLE COMMUNITY

This section describes how ESF #2 relates to other elements of the whole community. Basic concepts that apply to all members of the whole community include:

Local, State, Tribal, Territorial, and Insular Area Governments

- Gain situational awareness through reporting that occurs at each level: from local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal governmental agencies; nongovernmental organizations; industry essential service providers; other private sector partners; and residents. Information and support requests generally flow from the incident level, though operations and coordination centers, to decision makers. At the same time, decision makers and operations and coordination centers provide accurate, actionable, and relevant information to support incident operations.

- Initiate actions to save and sustain lives, reduce human suffering, and provide additional resources and assistance to response efforts. ESF #2 accomplishes this by providing assistance to stabilize and reestablish critical communications infrastructure quickly and efficiently, coordinating requests for additional support, identifying and integrating resources and capabilities, and coordinating information flow.

Local authorities are responsible for obtaining required waivers and clearances related to ESF #2 support.

Private Sector/Nongovernmental Organizations

The private sector owns or operates most of the Nation's communications infrastructure and is a partner and/or lead for the rapid restoration of their networks.

Through planning and coordination, private sector entities provide critical information for incident action planning and decision making during an incident. Private sector mutual aid and assistance networks also facilitate the sharing of resources to support response.

Federal Government

Communications management primarily occurs on a bottom-up basis—decisions are made at the lowest level possible; only issues requiring adjudication or additional resources are referred to the next higher management level. Issues of national security may also be handled at a higher level.

Agencies that provide communications assets in support of incident response control their own organic assets and coordinate location and use with the Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC) Group.

Specific information on Federal Government actions are described in the following section.

CORE CAPABILITIES AND ACTIONS

ESF Role Aligned to Core Capabilities

ESF #2 supports the core capability of Operational Communications. The following table lists specific ESF #2/agency actions that support this capability. Though not listed in the table, all ESFs, including ESF #2, support the core capabilities of Planning, Operational Coordination, and Public Information and Warning.

Core Capability	ESF #2 – Communications
Operational Communications	• Coordinates with state and federal partners to ensure the capacity to communicate with both the emergency response community and the affected populations. • Coordinates the establishment of interoperable voice and data communications between local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal first responders. • Re-establish sufficient communications infrastructure within the affected areas to support ongoing life-sustaining activities; provide basic human needs, including the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; and transition to recovery.

Agency Actions

Primary Agency	Actions
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	**National Protection and Programs Directorate/Office of Cybersecurity and Communications** • Coordinates the planning and provision of national security/emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications for the Federal Government under all circumstances, including crisis or emergency, attack, stabilization, and reestablishment. • Coordinates the restoration of communications infrastructure and supports Federal departments and agencies in procuring and coordinating NS/EP communications services. • Coordinates with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and support agencies to develop ESF #2 documentation, policies, and procedures. • Coordinates with FEMA and support agencies to train and deploy personnel to support ESF #2 operations. • Acts to achieve, maintain and enhance interoperable emergency communications capabilities; and to support and promote the ability of emergency response providers and relevant government officials to communicate in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters. • Provides a consultative structure to coordinate the cybersecurity activities of participating agencies and ensures the Federal agencies have access to and receive information and intelligence needed to execute their respective cybersecurity missions. • Provides shared situational awareness and recommendations on cybersecurity risks, incidents, analysis, and warnings for Federal and non-Federal entities to enable real-time, integrated, and operational actions. • Provides timely technical assistance, risk management support, and incident response capabilities to Federal and non-Federal entities with respect to cybersecurity risks and incidents, which may include attribution, mitigation, and remediation. **Federal Emergency Management Agency** • Activates Federal ESF #2 under the Stafford Act as required. • Provides short-term restoration support to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area government emergency communications. • Provides personnel to support ESF #2 operations. • Coordinates with the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications (CS&C) and support agencies to develop appropriate documentation, policies, and procedures. • Provides communications support to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area first responders as requested by the State Coordinating Officer and as approved by the Federal Coordinating Officer. • Coordinates activities to assist with the restoration of public safety communications systems and first responder networks as requested by the State Coordinating Officer and approved by the Federal Coordinating Officer. • Provides communications and information technology (IT) to Federal response/recovery facilities within the area of operation.

Support Agency	Actions
Department of Agriculture/Forest Service and Department of the Interior	Provides communications resources, including: • Radio communications systems to support firefighters, law enforcement officers, and incident response operations. • Engineers, technicians, and liaison staff to assist the DEC Group. • National Interagency Radio Support systems for damage reconnaissance teams and other applications. • A communications officer to accompany radio systems for user training and operator maintenance indoctrination. • Additional radio systems.
Department of Commerce	**National Telecommunications and Information Administration** • Manages the use of the Federal radio frequency spectrum. • Coordinates Federal radio frequency interoperability. • Coordinates Federal telecommunications assistance to local, state, tribal, territorial, and insular area governments. • Resolves radio frequency use conflicts.
Department of Defense	• Promptly notifies the DEC Group of all communications requirements and assets deployed to the incident area. • Provides resources and capabilities to disaster response operations upon request should other Federal resources and capabilities become overwhelmed.
Department of Homeland Security	**Office of Infrastructure Protection** • Provides situational awareness, cross-sector coordination, and prioritized recommendations regarding critical infrastructures and key resources.
General Services Administration (GSA)	• Provides Regional Manager staffing support for disaster or event response operations when requested by the Director, National Coordinating Center for Communications (NCC). • The GSA Office of Mission Assurance ESF #2 Program Coordinator coordinates and authorizes deployment of Regional Managers.

Support Agency	Actions
Other Federal Agencies	• All other Federal agencies: – Use organizational resources to meet their mission requirements before requesting emergency communications support. – Notify the Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) or unified coordination staff promptly of all communications requirements and available assets to eliminate the possibility of service duplications and ensure prompt provision of needed services and facilities to the proper user. – Coordinate with the RRCC or unified coordination staff when a representative of an organization at an incident location has requested regional communications resources or support. – Coordinate with the NCC as necessary for any required national-level communications support. – Notify the RRCC or unified coordination staff of any radio frequency devices being brought to the incident area. – Notify the RRCC or unified coordination staff when communications resources are to be withdrawn or discontinued. – Notify the RRCC or unified coordination staff when communications resources provided by ESF #2 are no longer required.