

ANNEX B - COMMUNICATIONS (ESF# 2)

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to outline communications procedures and capabilities to be employed between organizations in the event of a disaster or large-scale emergency.

II. MISSION AREAS AND LIFELINES

A. Mission Areas

1. Protection: Through planning of communications during severe storms and other incidents, the ability to communicate is protected through development of redundant and resilient equipment and procedures.
2. Mitigation: Communications infrastructure is reinforced and placed in areas less vulnerable to storm damage as a means of mitigating gaps in communication during severe weather events.
3. Response: Communications activities are the first to be activated during large-scale or severe weather events as first responders convey their observations and directions to dispatch centers, and then that information is relayed to the EMA Director, the EOC, or other appropriate officials. Communications is the last service to demobilize as message transfer and information sharing must take place until the incident is ended.
4. Recovery: Communications continue during recovery as restoration and replacement of infrastructure and services takes place. That restoration is critical to readiness for the next incident and therefore, communications must be maintained during this phase.

B. Lifelines

1. Safety and Security

- a. Communications is a critical service that allows safety and security goals to be met. Without communications, calls for assistance from emergency responders could not be managed, and communication of hazards could not be shared. Protective actions would be difficult to communicate to all necessary parties without communications.

2. Communications

- a. The infrastructure that supports hard-wired and wireless telephone communication provides a means for warnings, notifications, and transfer of critical incident information between survivors, responders, and service providers.
- b. Broadcast television through buried or overhead wires, or satellite service through broadcast towers allows detailed incident information to be shared with the general population.
- c. Internet service, either through hard-wired, wireless or satellite services, allows for financial transactions, information sharing, and directive dissemination.
- d. Two-way radio communication allows responders to communicate with one another from the field and to link to dispatch services to manage the need for additional resources.
- e. Dispatch services use all types of communication to relay information from one source to another so that warnings and alerts can be sent out, responders can address immediate needs for resources in the field, safety can be maintained on scene and in the general

area, and requests for additional assistance can be conveyed to those who can meet those needs.

III. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Emergencies may occur in Shelby County, which will require auxiliary or additional communications capability in order to conduct a coordinated response.
2. Special communications capabilities may be needed to supplement or replace standard communications operations during special events or power outages.
3. Agencies in Shelby County use a variety of communications resources (equipment and systems) for their daily communications.
4. In severe situations, augmentation may be required from state sources, local volunteer groups, or other agencies acting in a support role.

B. Assumptions

1. There are two Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) for 911 in Shelby County. One is located in the Shelby County Sheriff's Office and the other in the Sidney Police Department.
2. Shelby County and City of Sidney dispatch centers will operate during large-scale emergencies as long as they remain functional.
3. Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) is used by some agencies in Shelby County. Agencies with MARCS capacity include EMA, Law Enforcement, Fire Services, EMS agencies, villages, the hospital and Public Health.
4. Amateur Radio volunteers (ARES and RACES) provide critical communication support and have the capability and will be engaged to provide two-way radio amateur radio communications between locations of disaster responders when necessary.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Core Capabilities

1. Planning
 - a. Planning allows for the use of multiple types of communication equipment and systems to come together during an incident to provide overall command and direction of any incident.
2. Operational Coordination
 - a. Communications allows for the creation of a common operating picture for all responder through the sharing of information, resource deployment, and command directives in a manner that facilitates unity of effort and smooth information flow.
3. Public Information and Warning
 - a. Warnings and notifications, emergency communications, situational information sharing, delivery of actionable directives to the public, and public information sharing is enabled by communications during an incident.
4. Infrastructure
 - a. Communications towers, transmission lines (buried and overhead), base stations, repeaters, transmitters, and mobile units are all part of community infrastructure that

allows communication to take place as needed between public, private and external parties.

5. Operational Communications

- a. Shelby County uses SCARES/RACES, low-band, VHF and UHF radio frequencies, MARCS radio 700/800 MHz radio and data transmission, and VOIP telephone communications during incidents as well as traditional telephone, Internet, and broadband transmission lines.
- b. These methods allow for uninterrupted and resilient communications capability to maintain open lines of information exchange between first responders, utility services, health and medical providers, mass media, and residents.

B. County Operations

1. The Shelby County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) provides dispatch and communications services for county law enforcement, fire, EMS, and the Shelby County Hazardous Materials Response Team (HazMat Team) from their facility in Sidney. They also have a two-way radio system for communication with other agencies.
2. A mobile command vehicle with emergency communication capability is maintained by the Shelby County Hazardous Materials Response Team for use when needed by all responders.
3. The City of Sidney Police Department may also provide communications support for the Sheriff's Office.
4. The EMA Director will activate the Shelby County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (SCARES)/ Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) to activate and staff the EOC radio room when the EOC is functioning or when additional communications are needed.
5. When shelters are activated, the Red Cross will require support from the SCARES/RACES volunteers to establish communication with the EOC.

C. City Operations

1. The City of Sidney Police Department provides dispatch and communication services for all city response agencies, including water and street departments from their facility in Sidney.
2. The Shelby County Sheriff's Office provides alternate emergency dispatch and communication services for the City of Sidney.

D. Both PSAPs have the ability to roll over to one another to act as back-up. For redundancy, Shelby County PSAP's partnered with Logan County Sheriff and Bellefontaine Police Department PSAP for back up and overflow 911 calls.

E. EMA Operations

1. Communications
 - a. The EMA is served by amateur radio operators who have registered as volunteers with the EMA office and organized under the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) structure to support emergency communications needs for Shelby County.
 - b. SCARES/RACES members staff and operate the Communications Room at the EMA for special duty, exercises, and activations.

- 1) Shelby County EMA owns and maintains certain radio equipment for use by SCARES/RACES during these events. This includes a range of mobile, base, suitcase, and portable radios, along with computers and video transmitting equipment.
 - 2) Most SCARES/RACES volunteers have private equipment, which they may use to supplement EMA equipment as needed.
 - c. Team members also provide amateur radio communications support at the EOC, in the field, whether on-scene or at alternate locations as assigned.
 - 1) Requests for support should be made to the Shelby County EMA Director
2. Communications Room
- a. The Shelby County EMA has an equipped and established Communications room available for conducting emergency communications during an activated Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
 - 1) Communications Room equipment includes amateur radios covering several bands and modes, a MARCS base station, a VHF radio for communication with public safety agencies, multiple computers for operation of various programs, and a weather station.
 - b. The Communications Room is a vital part of the primary and alternate EOC. Its purpose is to provide communications support for the EOC and other participating agencies as applicable during major emergencies.
 - c. The Communications-Room can be operated continuously for the duration of the emergency. Maximum staffing will be maintained during periods of full activation of the EOC. Communications staff will establish work shifts based on the situation.
- F. Alternate EOC
1. In the event the primary or alternate EOC is unavailable for activation, a mobile support unit, incident command post, or virtual EMA may be established.
 2. The EMA maintains a selection of mobile equipment for communications that may be taken to another facility or location in support of emergency operations, as needed.
- G. Alternate Communications Support
1. SCARES/RACES will provide alternate emergency communications to any response group or area in Shelby County. These volunteers can be accessed by contacting the Shelby County EMA Director.
 2. During large-scale emergencies, communications personnel will support response efforts and assist other agencies/departments with the provision of communications capabilities to the extent possible.
- H. Health Department Operations
1. Sidney, Shelby County Health Department currently has radio communications through the Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS). This allows them to communicate from an incident scene to the Health Department Office, and with other agencies having MARCS capability.
 2. The Sidney Shelby County Health Department will provide facilities and telephone support for operation of a Health Hotline during medical emergencies that require one. This will be

ordered at the discretion of Health Commissioner, and/or Health Department staff and coordinated with EMA and other county departments, as needed.

3. EMA will provide support through the SCARES/RACES Volunteers as needed for communications with response agencies.

I. Wilson Memorial Hospital Operations

1. The hospital has communication capabilities, including both MARCS and conventional UHF/VHF radios, to send and receive emergency communications from county and city law enforcement, fire, EMS, and the health district. (DO they use HEAR, LEARN, or another standardized emergency channel?)
2. MARCS radios will allow direct communication between the hospital and EMA. Communications between the hospital and the EOC will be through telephone/cell phone, MARCS radio, amateur radio support, and/or FAX.
3. Portable radios with on-site capability are in place to support hospital communication between floors and with off-site hospital facilities in the event that phone systems are down.
4. Communications support will be available through the SCARES/RACES Volunteers upon request, by contacting the EMA Director / EOC.

V. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. The Shelby County Communications Officer is the 9-1-1 Coordinator for Shelby County.
 - a. The EOC communications officer is the radio officer of the EOC communications team.
 - b. EOC communications team operators, while functioning in the EOC, will report to the EOC Communications Officer.
 - c. EOC communication team radio operators assigned outside the EOC will report to the agency they are supporting and check in with the EOC every two hours.
 - d. Primary communications of the EOC will be conducted by telephone when possible. If telephones are inoperable, information will be relayed by radio. Amateur radio operators will be assigned to support shelters, feeding facilities, and other areas, as needed.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. Shelby County
2. Communications Officer
 - a. Report or send a representative to the EOC upon its activation.
 - b. Facilitate smooth communication between dispatch, response, and EOC representatives.
 - c. Advise and update EOC representatives on new situations or status of response efforts.
3. EOC Communications Officer
 - a. Report to the EOC upon notification of activation.
 - b. Provide direction for EOC communication activities.
 - c. Coordinate with EOC representatives in matters relating to communications.
 - d. Supervise SCARES/RACES volunteers in the EOC or the field.

- e. Establish appropriate schedules for communications team members in order to provide necessary staffing for the EOC and field support operations.
 - 4. SCARES/RACES Volunteers
 - a. Provide communications in an emergency.
 - b. Retain a message log.
 - c. Handle messages in accordance with Standard Operating Guidelines.
 - 5. Agency EOC Representatives
 - a. Agency or department representatives reporting to the EOC during a disaster will bring a portable radio on their frequency, when possible, to facilitate communication with their agency and keep phone lines open.
 - b. Each agency representative in the EOC will provide periodic updates of activities, and status of their agency's operations.
 - c. All agencies participating in the incident will coordinate with the County Public Information Officer for emergency and other public information releases. (See Annex D, Emergency Public Information)
 - d. EOC representatives will maintain a log of communications sent or received during their shift in the EOC. Representatives may take a copy of their log; however, the original logs are part of the EOC archive record. See Tab 1, EOC Communication Log.
- C. Integration of Additional Resources
- 1. Arriving communications personnel, teams, and resources will report to the assigned check-in location assignment to an area in need of support.
 - a. Once assigned, they will report to the agency or group leader in that area.
 - b. When released, they will return to the check-in location to sign out or be reassigned.

VI. DIRECTION & CONTROL

A. Radio Control

On-scene response units are to use assigned (VHF or UHF?) two-way radio channels whenever possible for inter-departmental communications. This will help maintain open channels for the incident commander and law enforcement or dispatch personnel.

County and city agencies use a variety of digital and analog radio equipment. Although these systems cannot communicate directly with each other, the county and city dispatchers can patch these communications when needed.

B. Multi-Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS)

- 1. The MARCS is a statewide trunked radio system that allows many agencies to communicate. The system connects local responders, county agencies, and state agencies together in a radio network. The system works through a series of talk groups that are programmed into the equipment.
- 2. MARCS radios are located at the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, City of Sidney Fire and Police Departments, EMA, Health Department, and at Wilson Memorial Hospital. Some volunteer fire departments, police departments, and villages have access to MARCS capabilities, as well as the EOC. This system of radios will allow these agencies to

communicate with each other during major emergencies without using normal emergency channels. (Does the EOC have a MARCS radio, or do they use the EMA radio?)

VII. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

- A. In the absence of the County Communications Officer, duties will be assigned by the Shelby County Sheriff.

- B. In the absence of the EOC Communications Officer, the EMA Director will designate:
 - 1. SCARES /RACES Assistant Radio Officer (as stated in the SCARES Communications Plan).
 - 2. SCARES/RACES member, as necessary.

- C. Refer to Appendix 3, Procedures for the Relocation and Safeguarding of Vital Records in the Basic Plan and Appendix 1, Procedures for the Protection of Government Resources, Facilities, and Personnel in Annex N, Resource Management.

VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

- A. Training and Exercises
 - 1. Radio operators of emergency response organizations/ agencies are trained by their respective departments.
 - 2. Communications will be tested in disaster response exercise at least once every four years.
 - 3. Communications performance will be assessed whenever relevant during local drills and exercises.

- B. Reports and Forms
 - 1. Communication Logs will be maintained using designated forms by each agency representative in the EOC and retained by the Emergency Management Agency. Individual representatives may take a copy of this log for their records. See Tab 1, EOC Communication Log.
 - 2. Paper message forms will be used by EOC representatives to provide the message text to the EOC. These forms will be retained in official records following the end of an event.

IX. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The Shelby County Communications Officer and the EOC Communications Officer are responsible for working with the Emergency Management Director to review and update this annex as needed, including submittal of new/updated information for necessary changes and revisions.

- B. Updates will be made when deficiencies are identified through exercises, actual occurrences, or a change in recommended practices as recognized by the Communications Officers or the EMA Director.

- C. The EMA Director will coordinate, publish and distribute this annex and will forward all revisions to the appropriate organizations.

- D. All departments are responsible for developing and maintaining Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and personnel rosters including 24-hour emergency notification telephone numbers.

X. AUTHORITIES

A. Authorities

- 1. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules and Regulations

B. References

- 1. Shelby County ARES/RACES Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Plan.
- 2. State of Ohio Emergency operations Plan, ESF #2 – Communications.

XI. ADDENDA

Tab 1 – EOC Communication Log

Shelby County Communications Frequency, Equipment, & Capabilities information is maintained at the Emergency Operations Center. (This is considered secure information under ORC 149.433 and will only be available on a need-to-know basis.)

XII. AUTHENTICATION

Shelby County Sheriff Dispatch Supervisor

Date

Shelby County EMA Director

Date

EOC Communication Log					
Name / EOC Position _____				Date _____	
Message To	Message From	Detail	Time Sent	Time Received	Need Reply?