

Emergency Support Function # 2 – Communications

Primary Agencies

Emergency Management
Information Technology Department

Secondary/Support Agencies

Sheriff's Office
Police Department
Amateur Radio

Introduction

Purpose:

Communications supports public safety and other county agencies by maintaining continuity of information and telecommunication equipment and other technical resources. ESF #2 uses available communication resources to respond to an incident by:

- Alerting and warning the community of a threatened or actual emergency;
- Continuing to communicate with the community through a variety of media to inform of protective actions; and
- Provide guidance, when appropriate, to help save lives and protect property;

This ESF describes the locality's emergency communications/notification and warning system. The locality will coordinate with the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) should additional assistance and resources be required.

Scope:

ESF # 2 works to accurately and efficiently transfer information during an incident. ESF #2 also:

- Informs the community of a threatened or actual emergency;
- Ensures Rockbridge County, City of Buena Vista, and the City of Lexington has the ability to notify the community of a disaster or emergency;
- Provides for the technology associated with the representation, transfer, interpretation, and processing of data among people, places, and machine; and
- Supports Rockbridge County, City of Buena Vista, and the City of Lexington with the restoration, emission or reception of signs, signals, writing images, and sounds or intelligence of any nature by wire, radio, optical, or other electromagnetic systems.

Policies:

The following policies are reviewed and revised as necessary:

- The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and serves as the 911 center and the locality's warning point.
- The ECC is accessible to authorized personnel only;
- Support personnel to assist with communications, logistics, and administration will also be designated. The Director of Emergency Management will be available for decision making as required, and
- The ECC will initiate notification and warning of appropriate personnel.

Concept of Operations

General:

The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) provides guidance for managing the use of transportation services and request for relief and recovery resources.

The Emergency Communication Center (ECC) is the point of contact for receipt of all warnings and notifications of actual or impending emergencies or disasters. The dispatcher on duty will notify other key personnel, chiefs and department heads as required by the type of report and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

The ECC is accessible to authorized personnel only. The ECC is most often the first point of contact for the general public.

The ECC has the capability to access the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to deliver warnings to the public. Use of all available forms of warning and notification will not provide sufficient warning to the general public and special needs population.

The telephone companies will ensure that communications essential to emergency services are maintained. During a major disaster, additional telephone lines may be installed in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate emergency operations. At least one phone with a special publicized number will be reserved for "rumor control" to handle citizen inquiries. The Emergency Management Coordinator will coordinate with the telephone company to provide these services.

Amateur radio operators may provide emergency backup radio communications between the Rockbridge County/City of Buena Vista/City of Lexington Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC), should normal communications be disrupted. They may also provide communications with some in-field operators.

It is important that while communicating, standard or common terminology is used so multiple agencies are better able to interact and understand each other.

Should an evacuation become necessary, warning and evacuation instructions will be disseminated via radio, television, use of mobile public address systems, and, if necessary, door-to-door within the affected community. The Public Information Officer will develop and provide public information announcements and publications regarding evacuation procedures to include recommended primary and alternate evacuation routes, designated assembly points for those without transportation, rest areas and service facilities along evacuation routes, if appropriate, as well as potential health hazards associated with the risk.

Emergency Public Information regarding potential secondary hazards (i.e. landslides from flooding) and protective actions, such as shelter-in-place, and other information as determined by the event, will also be disseminated via radio and television.

Organization:

The Emergency Management Coordinator will assure the development and maintenance of SOPs on the part of each major emergency support function. Generally, each designated agency should:

- Maintain current notification rosters;
- Establish procedures for reporting emergency information;
- Develop mutual aid agreements with like agencies in adjacent localities; and
- Provide ongoing training to maintain emergency response capabilities.

When an emergency threatens, available time will be used to implement increased readiness measures as listed in each emergency support function annex to this plan. The Emergency Management Coordinator will assure that all actions are completed as scheduled.

The Public Information Officer (PIO) will represent and advise the Incident Commander on all public information. This includes rumors that are circulating the area, what local media are reporting, as well as warnings and emergency public information.

Rockbridge County, City of Buena Vista, and the City of Lexington emergency communications are heavily dependent of the commercial telephone network. The telephone system is vulnerable to the effects of emergencies and disasters and to possible system overload due to increased usage. Technical failure or damage loss of telecommunications equipment could hamper communications or the ability to communicate with emergency personnel and the public throughout the locality. Mutual aid repeaters in contiguous jurisdictions may not be available or may not be able to provide sufficient coverage or channel loading to compensate for technical failure or damage to telecommunications resources in the locality during an emergency.

Amateur radio operators and other non-governmental volunteer groups used to assist with emergency radio communications support will be under the authority of the Director of Emergency Management or the Emergency Management Coordinator, or the Information Technology Department. The amateur radio and other non-governmental volunteer operators will be required to actively participate in regular training and exercises established by the Office of Emergency Management and the Information Technology Department.

Actions/Responsibilities:

- Initiate notification and warning of appropriate personnel, utilizing landline telephones, voice or data—2 way radio, and wireless telecommunications devices, as required;
- Develop and maintain primary and alternate communications system for contact with local jurisdictions, state agencies, non-governmental and private sector agencies required for mission support;
- Emergency Services vehicles equipped with public address system may be used to warn the general public;
- The Emergency Management Coordinator or designee must authorize the use of the Emergency Alert System;
- Emergency warning may originate at the federal, state, or local level of government. Timely warning required dissemination to the public by all available means:
 - Emergency Communications Center
 - Emergency Alert System
 - Local radio and television stations
 - NOAA Weather Radio—National Weather Service
 - Mobile public address system (bullhorns or loudspeakers)
 - Telephone
 - General broadcast over all available radio frequencies
 - Newspapers
 - Amateur Radio volunteers
- Ensure the ability to provide continued service as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for incoming emergency calls;
- Ensure communication lines and equipment essential to emergency services are maintained by the appropriate vendor;
- Provide additional staffing in the EOC to assist with communications functions;
- Develop and maintain an emergency communications program and plan;
- Develop and maintain a list of bilingual personnel;
- Provide telephone service providers with a restoration priority list for telephone service prior to and/or following a major disaster; and
- Maintain records of cost and expenditures and forward them to the Finance Section Chief.

Tab 1 to Emergency Support Function #2
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Until the EOC is activated, the ECC will notify the following officials upon receipt of a severe weather warning, other impending emergency, or when directed by an on-scene incident commander:

Official	Home Phone	Work Phone
Director of Emergency Management /County/City Administrator		
Emergency Management Coordinator		
Sheriff/Police Chief		
Public Information Officer		

Table 2.1 – Emergency Notification Procedures

Once operational, the local Emergency Operations Center will receive messages directly from the VEOC. It is then the responsibility of the Communications Center of the locality to monitor message traffic and ensure that messages reach the Director of Emergency Services or his designee.

A full listing of contact numbers is maintained in the Communications Center.

Tab 2 to Emergency Support Function #2
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES
Media Contact

Newspaper	Address	Contact	Phone Number(s)
The Rockbridge Advocate	7 East Washington St. Lexington, VA 24450	Doug Harwood	540-463-2062 540-463-9455 (Fax)
Daily News Leader	11 N. Central Avenue Staunton, VA 24402	News Room	540-213-9119 540-885-1904 (Fax)
The News Gazette	20 West Washington St. Lexington, VA 24450	Darryl Woodson	540-463-3113 540-464-6397 (Fax)
Richmond Times	300 East Franklin St. Richmond, VA 23219	News Room	804-649-6990 804-775-8059 (Fax)
The Roanoke Times	201 W. Campbell Ave. P.O. Box 2491 Roanoke, VA 24010- 2491	Rex Bowman	540-981-3100 800-346-1234 540-981-3341 (News Room) 540-981-3346 (Fax)
Rockbridge Weekly	107 Washington St. Lexington, VA 24450	Jerry Clark	540-464-6600 540-464-6603 (Fax)
Radio Stations	Address	Contact	Phone Number(s)
3WZ	392 East Midland Trail Lexington, VA 24450	Station Manager	540-463-2161 540-463-2162
WYYD	3305 Old Forest Rd. Lynchburg, VA 24501	Station Manager	434-385-8298 434-385-7279 (Fax)
Television Stations	Address	Contact	Phone Number(s)
WDBJ 7 – Roanoke	2807 Hershberger Road Roanoke, VA 24017	News Director	540-344-7000 800-777-9235 540-985-3600 (News Room) 540-343-7269 (Fax)
WSLS 10 – Roanoke	401 3 rd Street Roanoke, VA 24011	News Director	540-981-9110 800-SEE-NEWS 540-981-9126 540-343-2059 (Fax)
WSET-13	2320 Langhorne Road Lynchburg, VA 24501	News Director	800-NEWS-TIP 800-639-7847

Table 2.2 – Media Contacts

**Tab 3 to Emergency Support Function #2
Available Methods of Communication**

Equipment	Organization and Address	Contact	E-Mail	Phone
HAM Radios	Amateur Radio	Bob Gay	Bob2vrwa@yahoo.com	540-261-3490 540-570-1119

Table 2.3 – Methods of Communication