

2014  
Polk County  
ESF #2  
Communications

Public Version

DRAFT

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Purpose of ESF #2: Communication .....	3
1.2 The role of ESF #2: Communications .....	4
1.3 Core Capabilities List.....	4
Infrastructure Systems.....	4
2. Participating Agencies-Communications Unit .....	5
2.1 Concept of Operations.....	5
2.2 Activities of Polk County Emergency Management Agency and Participating Agencies.....	5
3. Participating Agencies-Communications Infrastructure .....	8
3.1 Concept of Operations.....	8
3.2 Activities of Polk County Emergency Management Agency and Participating Agencies.....	9
3. Maintenance .....	11

DRAFT

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of ESF #2: Communication

The purpose of the plan is to establish a framework by which Polk County Emergency Management Agency can coordinate the Emergency Support Function #2 Communication. This response may consist of federal, state, and local government agencies and private industries.

The public version of ESF #2: Communication 'FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION' is designed to provide the public with the following information regarding the plan:

- **Section 1** provides the introduction and purpose of the emergency support function.
- **Section 2** is a description of the roles and responsibilities of the agencies that will respond.
- **Section 3** contains important contact numbers.

Please note that the ESF #2: Communication is a living document. It may undergo a major revision every three years and can be updated annually from submitted and committee approved changes.

**For more general information** please contact Polk County Emergency Management Agency at 515-286-2107 or your local emergency manager.

## 1.2 The role of ESF #2: Communications

The role of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #2: Communication-Communications Infrastructure is to facilitate restoration of residential and commercial communications systems in support of response and recovery activities.

The role of Emergency Support Function (ESF) #2: Communication-Communications Unit is to provide redundant and interoperable communications capability to Polk County, municipal and township government entities, response agencies and other Emergency Support Functions, voluntary relief organizations, and State or Federal agencies requiring communications to perform their emergency response, recovery and disaster assistance missions.

## 1.3 Core Capabilities List

The National Preparedness Goal identified 31 core capabilities—these are the distinct critical elements needed to achieve the goal.

These capabilities are referenced in many national preparedness efforts, including the National Planning Frameworks. The Goal grouped the capabilities into five mission areas, based on where they most logically fit. Some fall into only one mission area, while some others apply to several mission areas.

ESF #2: Communications includes the following Core Capabilities:

### Infrastructure Systems

- **Mission Area:** Response, Recovery
- **Description:** Stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore and revitalize systems and services to support a viable, resilient community.

## 2. Participating Agencies-Communications Unit

### **ESF COORDINATOR:**

Polk County Emergency Management

### **PRIMARY AGENCIES:**

Des Moines Police/Fire Communications

Polk County Sheriff's Communications

Westcom

### **SUPPORT AGENCIES:**

Polk County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

Landline telephone providers

Cellular telephone providers

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers

City of Des Moines Radio Service

Racom Corporation

Motorola Solutions

Electronic Engineering

## 2.1 Concept of Operations

The Communications Unit is responsible for developing plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities; installing and testing of communications equipment; supervision of the Incident Communications Center; distribution of communications equipment to incident personnel; and the maintenance and repair of communications equipment.

The ability of responders to work together across agencies during emergency incidents of all types depends heavily on their ability to communicate. Communications capabilities must be built around the operational goals and objectives of responding agencies.

## 2.2 Activities of Polk County Emergency Management Agency and Participating Agencies

### **A. Communications Unit Leader**

#### **Activities:**

Plan and manage the technical and operational aspects of the communications function during an incident or event

#### **Tasks:**

- Review communications resource requirements
- Prepare Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)
- Designate specific frequencies, talk groups and/or communications systems for use
- Restrict access to specific frequencies, talk groups when needed

- De-conflict frequency use with other operators of radio equipment
- Address interoperable communications needs
- Establish Incident Communications Center
- Order and manage personnel staffing the Polk County EOC Communications Room
- Establish needed capabilities (radio, phone, internet, satellite communications)
- Participate in incident action planning
- Ensure that communications systems are installed and tested
- Ensure testing and maintenance of auxiliary power and alternate communications
- Ensure that an equipment accountability system is established
- Ensure that personal portable radio equipment from cache(s) is distributed per radio plan
- Provide technical information as required on:
  - Adequacy of communications systems currently in operation
  - Geographic limitations on communications systems
  - Equipment capabilities
  - Amount and types of equipment available
  - Anticipated problems in the use of communications equipment
- Supervise Communications Unit activities
- Maintain records on all communications equipment as appropriate
- Ensure that all equipment is tested and repaired
- Maintain communications with local, county and state government
- Prepare report of communication activities during disaster situation
- Recover equipment from relieved or released units

## **B. Technical Specialists**

### Activities:

Technical Specialists is a “catch-all” position that allows for the formal incorporation of personnel who may not be “qualified” in a specific NIMS/ICS position. These specialists support incident communications without being directly involved in operation of communications equipment.

### Tasks:

- Telephone/Computer Technicians: provides installation, repair and maintenance of Incident Communications Center equipment
- Interoperability Gateway Specialist: provides repair and technical assistance on the proper application of interoperable gateway devices
- Cache Radio Specialist: distributes, maintains, and accounts for and recovers radio cache inventory
- GIS Specialists: Assist with radio propagation mapping, mapping of existing communications asset location and mapping of supplemental incident communications assets

## **C. Incident Communications Technician**

Activities:

Responsible for supporting the technical activities of the Communications Unit

Tasks:

- Determine radio system coverage
- Provide radio programming
- Maintenance and repair of communications equipment
- Gateway management. Gateway devices shall not be left unattended
  - Incorrectly managed, joined audio sources can create major operational problems
  - Mobile Gateways are not “plug and play” and have the potential to cause connected communications networks to fail
  - Failure to adjust audio levels correctly will result in difficult to understand audio from different sources
  - Not fully understanding the methodology used in the gateway can result in the “ping-pong” effect and other issues that make a combined system unusable
  - Gateways must be used as a part of a coordinated plan at an incident; knowing where they are and what they are patching is essential for the Communications Unit Leader.

**D. Incident Communications Center Manager**

Activities:

Manage the operational aspects of the Communications Unit

Tasks:

- Supervise Radio Operators
- Establish and maintain the Incident Communications Center (ICC)
- Ensure radio traffic is monitored continuously and calls to the Incident Communications Center are answered promptly
- Assist the Communications Unit Leader as needed
- Maintain quantities of supplies at a level to prevent shortage of any basic items needed
- Assign messages runners if needed to supplement communications flow

**E. Radio Operator**

Activities:

Staff a radio at the Incident Communications Center and document all radio and telephone messages. These could be public safety dispatchers or Amateur Radio operators

Tasks:

- Receive and transmit messages within and external to the incident
- Maintain files of ICS form 309. The Communications Log is used to record all communications that occur during any period of the activation
- Maintain a record of unusual incidents or occurrences

- Maintain files of ICS form 210. The Status Change form is used to record status change information received on resources assigned to the incident
- Maintain files of ICS form 213. The General Message is used to record incoming messages that cannot be orally transmitted to the intended recipients or for transmission via radio or telephone to the addressee
- Request service on any inoperable or marginal equipment
- Provide a briefing to relief personnel on:
  - current activities
  - equipment status
  - any unusual communications situation

**F. Incident Dispatcher/Tactical Dispatcher**

Some local agencies have trained public safety dispatchers as Incident Dispatchers or Tactical Dispatchers to operate from a mobile command post or other field location to provide incident communications support. Their activities and tasks are similar to that of the Radio Operator.

### **3. Participating Agencies-Communications Infrastructure**

**ESF COORDINATOR:**

Polk County Emergency Management

**PRIMARY AGENCIES:**

Landline telephone providers  
Cellular telephone providers  
Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers

**SUPPORT AGENCIES:**

Depending on the nature and scope of the incident, all agencies and jurisdictions support ESF #2 and are responsible for providing appropriate support as may be required.

### **3.1 Concept of Operations**

Communications is necessary to support other critical infrastructures, response, recovery and mitigation activities. Various lists are in circulation that identify and group critical infrastructures. The separation of these infrastructures into different domains tends to obscure the real interdependencies that sustain the effectiveness and daily operations of each one.

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 infrastructure could take days, weeks or months.

Local, regional, state and federal governments play a critical role in response to local communications emergency. Emergency restoration of essential public utilities and ensuring positive communications restoration following an emergency/disaster may

require the joint efforts of local, regional and state government. It is the general role of Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center to support to the extent possible, public utilities and on-scene operations in large magnitude, complex, and/or multiple incident situations. These resources are usually not under the direct control of Emergency Management, but rather are provided through multi-agency coordination under a comprehensive emergency response plan.

ESF #2 – Communications closely coordinates with communications utilities operating in Polk County to ensure the integrity of communications systems are maintained during emergency situations and any damages incurred are repaired and service restored in an efficient and expedient manner afterward. ESF #2 – Communications will have primary responsibility to monitor and coordinate the availability of landline, cellular and voice over internet protocol communications services. ESF #2 – Communications will also monitor and coordinate the restoration of communication services for normal community functioning.

### **3.2 Activities of Polk County Emergency Management Agency and Participating Agencies**

#### **A. Communications Providers**

Activities:

Ensure adequate steps have been taken to mitigate the risk of disruption to communications infrastructure

Tasks:

- In conjunction with Polk County Emergency Management, ensure that preparations have been made to optimize communications systems for disaster response and recovery
- Coordinate the provision of back-up power to communications infrastructure
- Testing, security, maintenance and emergency repair and/or restoration of communications systems
- Provide information on areas of service outages and anticipated time of restoration
- Where possible facilitate redundant or back-up communications capabilities

#### **B. Communications Group Supervisor**

Activities:

Monitor the status of commercial and residential communications infrastructure in order to integrate communications response and recovery requirements into operations.

Tasks:

- Assess anticipated/actual damage to communications infrastructure, and coordinate service provisioning and restoration as required.

- Work with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to identify possible cyber threats to communications pathways
- Monitor cyber-attack, natural hazards, or human actions/threats to critical communications infrastructures.
- If infrastructure is threatened, assist the Planning Section in the development of plans to protect these assets and/or develop contingency plans.
- Continuously evaluate and analyze communications requests, update assessments of the communications service situation and status of the affected area(s), and provide recommendations on allocation of communications resources and contingency plans.
- Coordinate efforts with corresponding private-sector organizations
- Provide Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff with guidance for organizing, establishing, and maintaining the communications and information system capabilities
- Identify critical infrastructure essential to emergency/disaster response communications
- Conduct communications planning for short-term and long-term incident management and recovery

#### **C. Cellular Communications Task Force Leader**

##### Activities:

Coordinate the efforts of the Cellular Communications Task Force to conduct assessment of cellular disruption and coordinate restoration of communications systems

##### Tasks:

- Assess anticipated/actual damage to communications infrastructure, and coordinate service provisioning and restoration as required.
- Identify vulnerable communication locations
- Assure that all emergency response agencies have appropriate emergency contact procedures
- Assist with the development of preplan emergency plans
- Assure appropriate communications/disaster response
- Assess the need for rapid deployment solutions provided by cellular emergency response teams. This could include Satellite Cell on Light Trucks (SatCOLTS), Fly-Away-Kits, Cell on Wheels (COW), and other products to support communications.

#### **D. Landline Communications Task Force Leader**

##### Activities:

Coordinate the efforts of the Landline Communications Task Force to conduct assessment of landline disruption and coordinate restoration of communications systems

##### Tasks:

- Assess anticipated/actual damage to communications infrastructure, and coordinate service provisioning and restoration as required.
- Identify vulnerable communication locations
- Assure that all emergency response agencies have appropriate emergency contact procedures
- Assist with the development of preplan emergency plans
- Assure appropriate communications/disaster response

#### **E. Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Task Force**

##### Activities:

Coordinate the efforts of the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Task Force to conduct assessment of landline disruption and coordinate restoration of communications systems

##### Tasks:

- Identify vulnerable communication locations
- Assess anticipated/actual damage to communications infrastructure, and coordinate service provisioning and restoration as required.
- Assure that all emergency response agencies have appropriate emergency contact procedures
- Assist with the development of preplan emergency plans
- Assure appropriate communications/disaster response

### **3. Maintenance**

#### **Mandatory Review Requirements**

As required in Iowa Administrative Code, Section 605, Chapter 7, this annex will be reviewed and revised if necessary, at a minimum of every 5 years. A draft will be presented to the Polk County Emergency Management Commission for their approval and adoption.

#### **Voluntary Review**

The Polk County Emergency Management Commission will attempt to evaluate this annex continuously and revise annually based on input and feedback from support agencies and corrective action plans as recommended by after-action reporting. A draft will be presented to the Polk County Emergency Management Commission for their approval and adoption.

#### **Plan Distribution**

This annex and any subsequent revisions of this annex will be distributed to the primary and alternate Commission Members representing Polk County and all city governments within the county. The annex will also be shared with the specific primary and support agencies named at the beginning of this annex

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## Summary

It is hoped that this public version plan will provide the reader with an understanding of Polk County Emergency Management Agency and participating agencies' roles in the event of an incident.

The processes and agency roles and responsibilities specified may change without notice contingent upon the magnitude of the emergency or catastrophic event, as well as the actual availability of emergency response and emergency support personnel.

The ESF #2: Communications Public Version was developed for public distribution and excludes specific information that is protected from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and similar State and local disclosure laws, and from use in civil litigation and regulatory actions.

Access to the full plan is restricted to ESF #2: Communications emergency first responders and contains Security Sensitive Information that is For Official Use Only.

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