

ESF 2: Communications

Primary Agency

Pacific County Communications (PACCOM)
Pacific County Emergency Management Agency (PCEMA)

Support Agencies

Pacific County Amateur Radio Operators
Pacific County Department of Public Works (DPW)
Washington State Emergency Management Division (WSEMD)

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

1. To establish, organize, operate, and maintain a system of radio, telephone, and other communications systems for alert, warning, response, and recovery operations that will meet emergency communication needs.

B. Scope

1. Communications involves the provision and coordination of communications services, personnel, equipment and facilities within Pacific County and the cities of Ilwaco, Long Beach, Raymond, and South Bend during preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery phases of an emergency or disaster including the resources of the PCSO, Pacific County DPW, PACCOM, commercial telephone and cellular systems, the NAWAS, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), amateur radio, and the all hazard outdoor broadcast system.

C. Policies

1. The county relies on the hazard warning capabilities of federal and state government, industry, and the media. Citizens are expected to be aware of a hazardous situation for which there is significant media attention, such as severe weather or flooding. When there is a demonstrated need, particularly if timeliness is crucial to protect life and property, the county may supplement existing warning systems. Supplemental measures will depend on the nature of the hazard, the quality and quantity of information available, resources available, media attention, and other situational factors. Supplemental measures will focus on enhancing or amplifying the information being provided through existing sources and, to the extent practicable, upon participatory systems activated at the neighborhood or community level.

II. Situations and Assumptions

A. Situations

1. Pacific County is at all times subject to a variety of emergencies or disasters as outlined in the Pacific County Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis. These events may require rapid notification of local officials and dissemination of warning and/or other emergency information to the general public. A significant emergency or disaster may severely limit or prohibit timely communications within Pacific County.

B. Assumptions

1. Normal modes of communication will be used to communicate with local and state agencies provided those communication forms are operational.
2. Reliable communication capabilities are necessary at all levels of government for day-to-day communication, warning of impending disasters, disaster response and recovery operations, search and rescue operations, and coordination between the state, local governments, and response agencies.
3. Pacific County is subject to a variety of emergency or disastrous events requiring rapid dissemination of warning and/or other emergency information to local officials and/or the public. Emergency or disaster warning may originate from any level of government; however, most disaster forecasting resources are located within the Federal Government.
4. The NAWAS, established by the Federal Government, is the primary means of receiving and disseminating warning(s) to state and local officials within Washington State. The WSEMD operates the Washington State Warning Point 24 hours a day with operational assistance provided by the Washington State Patrol. Pacific County's primary NAWAS receiving point is PACCOM, a 24-hour facility. A secondary NAWAS receiving point is in the Pacific County EOC.
5. The management and operation of communications systems is highly situational and dependent upon flexibility, adaptability, and redundant systems. At any point in time one or more communications systems may fail.
6. Notification of a disaster or emergency may also come via NOAA Weather Radio, ACCESS (A Central Computerized Enforcement Service System), a low band FM radio system for emergency communications and control called CEMNET, volunteer amateur radio systems, internet, email, social media, and the general public.
7. Initial reports of damage will be fragmented and provide an incomplete picture of the extent of damage to telecommunication facilities.
8. Weather, damage to roads and bridges, and other factors will restrict entry of

emergency communications nodes into the area.

9. Tests of local warning systems will be conducted periodically to familiarize government and the public with their use.
10. Pacific County Emergency Management accepts the responsibility to notify all citizens, including hearing-impaired and non-English speaking residents. The Pacific County telephone warning system supports telecommunications devices for the deaf. In addition, Pacific County recognizes that most deaf individuals use text via their cell phone and works to encourage all citizens to enroll in a system which delivers messages via text to cell phone. Pacific County Emergency Management will strive to deliver messages in alternate languages and methods in all instances of emergency notification.

III. Concept of Operations

A. Communications

1. PACCOM, a 24-hour facility, is located at 300 Memorial Drive, Public Safety Building, South Bend, Washington. PACCOM functions as the countywide 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and provides dispatch services over two-way public safety radio for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical agencies, and Pacific County Public Works. PACCOM serves as the initial communications, alert, and warning point for Pacific County Emergency Management. See Attachment 2 Pacific County Communications, for a description of the PACCOM organization and services.
2. Once activated, the capability exists for PACCOM to provide emergency communications in coordination with the Pacific County EOC.
3. The EAS operates through the Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties Emergency Alert System Local Area Plan. Implementation of the Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties EAS plan is dependent upon coordination with commercial radio companies whose coverage area includes Pacific County geographic areas.
4. Emergency communication between local, state, and federal government is provided through and in coordination with the WSEMD EOC.
5. Communication capabilities presently available to Pacific County include commercial telephone, commercial cellular phone, law enforcement radio, fire radio, public works radio, CEMNET radio, NAWAS, amateur radio, and internet, and the all hazard outdoor broadcast system.
6. Actions, messages, and notifications in response to an emergency or disaster will be coordinated through the Pacific County EOC.
7. The Pacific County EOC and PACCOM are served by redundant emergency

power sources.

B. Warning

1. Whenever Pacific County emergency management officials are alerted to the threat or occurrence of a hazardous event that could lead to or has resulted in a disaster, the EOC will be activated at the appropriate level and the situation monitored. Depending on the circumstances, monitoring could be a prolonged activity or result in the immediate activation of the local information and warning system.
2. Monitoring will consist of the accumulation, display, and evaluation of relevant information, release of appropriate public information advisories, and alerting response agencies and organizations of the situation.

Media and key officials contact lists are updated and maintained by the Emergency Management Office and included in the Activation Guide for the EOC Manager and Public Information Officer.

- a. Media includes local, regional, and national newspapers, radio, and television contacts. Key officials includes community, city and county agencies and organizations and other emergency management organizations.
3. As soon as it is apparent that the public must take action to prepare or protect itself, a local warning system will be activated, as appropriate, and as time and resources allow. Warning could take the form of one or more of the following: activation of the EAS to disseminate urgent information; activation of emergency telephone notification system; broadcast facsimile; email and social media postings; Fire District and Law Enforcement apparatus providing warnings along specific routes using public address systems and sirens; activation of volunteer resources; posting of signs; activating a call response center in the EOC; providing local warning information to regional television and radio stations; public safety two-way radio (Attachment 1); and other mechanisms as appropriate.
4. Specific warning and notification may be provided to facilities that may house, employ, or keep in their care, large numbers of citizens.
5. Public information, advisories, and warnings will be updated as necessary until the hazard has subsided.

IV. Organization

The Pacific County EOC operates under principles of the incident command system. The Public Information Officer position will be filled upon activation of the EOC. Amateur radio volunteers will be activated depending on situation and/or as appropriate.

V. Actions

A. Initial

1. Coordinate ESF 2 within the Admin/Finance Section of the Pacific County EOC and/or at other locations as required.
2. Coordinate needs and response actions with each responding agency and EOC Section.
3. Establish and maintain of a system to support EOC and on-scene communications needs and to coordinate entities as appropriate.
4. Coordinate with Finance and Admin Section Chief and/or EOC Manager to prioritize, and implement strategy for the initial and ongoing communications requirements.
5. Establish communications between EOC and appropriate field personnel to ensure readiness for timely response.
6. Observe, report, and maintain situational awareness.
7. Monitor and direct communications resources and response activities to include positioning for response/relocation due to the potential impact(s) of the emergency situation.
8. Participate in EOC briefings, development of Incident Action Plans, and Situation Reports, and meetings.
9. Upon request and direction, coordinate all communications resources into the affected areas from designated staging areas.
10. Relay all emergency traffic conditions/regulations to all affected personnel.

B. Continuing

1. Maintain documentation of all communications.
2. Continue to provide support as required until response activities are concluded.
3. Assist in operations of the EOC.
4. Support agencies providing necessary emergency transportation.
5. Provide personnel with the appropriate expertise to participate in activities designed to reduce or minimize the impact of future disasters.
6. Conduct planning with ESF 2 support agencies and other emergency support

functions to refine communications operations.

7. Provide rapid damage assessment reports per field surveys.
8. Prepare and maintain emergency operating procedures, resource inventories, personnel rosters, and resource mobilization information necessary for implementation of the responsibilities of the lead agency.
9. Assign and schedule sufficient personnel to implement ESF 2 tasks for an extended period of time.
10. Ensure lead agency personnel are trained in their responsibilities and duties.
11. Develop and implement emergency communications strategies.
12. Maintain liaison with other emergency response agencies, participate in All Hazards training and exercises involving the Finance/Admin Section.

VI. Responsibilities

A. Primary Agency

1. Pacific County Communications
 - a. Develop and maintain appropriate plans and procedures to ensure, to the extent practicable, the integrity of emergency communications systems.
 - b. Develop and maintain procedures to share disaster related information with the EOC, when activated.
 - c. Assist with the dissemination of information and warnings as requested by the EOC Manager or the Public Information Officer.
 - d. In coordination with PCEMA, conduct tests and exercises of the communication and warning system.
2. Pacific County Emergency Management Agency
 - a. In coordination with PACCOM, conduct tests and exercises of the communication and warning systems.
 - b. Develop EOC procedures for gathering, displaying, and evaluating relevant information.
 - c. Develop and maintain appropriate notification lists and procedures for activating the information and warning system. Include consideration of special populations such as the access and functional needs population, schools, day care centers, and nursing homes.

- d. Coordinate public information and warnings with local jurisdictions and surrounding counties, as appropriate.
- e. Maintain the EOC in a configuration to support the warning system and efficient and effective communications. See Emergency Operations Center Communications Attachment 4.
- f. Include communications and warning as part of the countywide emergency management training program.
- g. Coordinate public information and instructions and media relations as defined in ESF #15 External Affairs.

B. Support Agencies

1. Pacific County Amateur Radio Operators

- a. Coordinate Amateur Radio Operations in support of EOC function. See Attachment 4 Tab A, Amateur Radio Operational Plan.

2. Fire Agencies

- a. In coordination with Emergency Management, develop and maintain procedures to provide communications and warning support and services when requested from the EOC.
- b. In coordination with Emergency Management, train personnel in proper warning methods.

3. Pacific County Sheriff's Office

- a. In coordination with Emergency Management, develop and maintain procedures to provide communications and warning support and services when requested from the EOC.
- b. In coordination with Emergency Management, train personnel in proper warning methods.
- c. When requested, as feasible and without jeopardizing their primary mission, make Search and Rescue units and volunteers available to the EOC to assist in the warning effort.

4. Pacific County Department of Public Works

- a. Develop and maintain appropriate plans and procedures to ensure, to the extent practicable, the integrity of the county telephone and radio systems.

- b. Develop and maintain means to expeditiously notify emergency management of information to be posted to the County's website.

Washington State Emergency Management Division

WSEMD will coordinate and disseminate messages generated by the National Weather Service, NOAA, and NAWAS through the Pacific County EOC and PACCOM.

VII. References

- A. PCEMA EOC Activation Guide
- B. Pacific County R.A.C.E.S. Plan
- C. Region 3 Mutual Aid Agreement for Public Safety Communications Services
- D. Region 3 Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan
- E. Region 3 Tactical Interoperable Communication Field Guide
- F. Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- G. National Response Framework

VIII. Attachments

- A. Attachment 1 - Pacific County Communications Frequencies
- B. Attachment 2 - Pacific County Communications
- C. Attachment 3 - State and Federal Support Organizations and Services
- D. Attachment 4 - Emergency Operations Center Communications