

## UPSHUR COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

### ANNEX B: COMMUNICATIONS

<b>Related Federal ESFs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESF #2: Communications</li> </ul>
<b>Related State Annexes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annex C: Communications</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upshur County Office of Emergency Management (UCOEM)</li> <li>• Upshur County E 9-1-1 Communications Center</li> </ul>
<b>Support Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Amateur Radio Operators</li> <li>• West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM)</li> <li>• United States Department of Homeland Security (USDHS)</li> </ul>
<b>Authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WV Code, §7-1-3cc, as amended</li> <li>• WV Code, §15-3, as amended</li> <li>• WV Code, §15-5-21, as amended</li> <li>• WV Executive Order No. 13-07</li> </ul>
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APPROVED

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UPSHUR COUNTY COMMISSION



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## **I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this annex is to outline communications guidelines and capabilities to be employed in the event of an emergency in Upshur County.

### **B. Scope**

This annex applies to all emergency situations in Upshur County.

## **II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

### **A. Situation**

1. The Upshur County E 9-1-1 Communications Center and emergency operations center are located in the same facility at 181 Pallottine Drive in Buckhannon.
2. There is sufficient capability within the E 9-1-1 Communications Center to provide the communications necessary for most emergencies. In a severe or long-duration emergency, augmentation may be required.
3. The hazards that are most likely to necessitate large-scale communications efforts including:
  - a. Floods,
  - b. Severe winter storms,
  - c. Hazardous material incidents, and
  - d. Industrial accidents.
4. It is significant to note that there is a difference between communications facilitated from the Upshur County 9-1-1 Communications Center and communications from the emergency operations center.
  - a. E 9-1-1 communications are primarily public safety communications with response agencies.
  - b. Communications from the emergency operations center are more support in nature, such as procuring resources for response agencies and support entities such as hospitals, the Red Cross, etc.

**B. Assumptions**

1. The E 9-1-1 Communications Center can be used to meet two of the four basic communications requirements for an emergency: the direction and control of units engaged in emergency operations utilizing communications and the interchange of information between units of government. (The other two requirements – warning and public information – are addressed elsewhere in this plan.)
2. Law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services units have adequate communications equipment to communicate with each other and with the 9-1-1 center.
3. During an emergency, amateur radio operators may be utilized to augment communications capabilities.

**III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

- A. All emergency-related communications should be transmitted in plain language, utilizing no codes or uncommon acronyms.
- B. Upshur County is a participant in the West Virginia Interoperable Radio Project and is developing the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network.
- C. Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan
  1. Upshur County maintains a *tactical interoperable communications plan* that details the specific communications systems and other communications equipment resources that are in use throughout Upshur County.
  2. Upshur County also participates in the West Virginia Homeland Security Region IV regional interoperable committee.
  3. The regional interoperable committee serves as a coordinator of the tactical interoperable communications plans for all of the counties in the region. All of those are combined in the *West Virginia Homeland Security Region IV Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*.

**IV. DIRECTION, CONTROL, AND COORDINATION**

- A. The E 911 Director or Asst E 911 Director should report to the emergency operations center upon its activation.

- B. Field forces of supporting agencies/departments should report activities and current status of operations to the emergency operations center through the Incident Command Post, E 9-1-1 Communication Center, and either the 911 Director or Asst. E 911 Director.

#### V. INFORMATION COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND DISSEMINATION

- A. E 9-1-1 Communications Center personnel will apprise the Upshur County Office of Emergency Management Director of emergency situations per the notifications guidelines mutually developed by the Office of Emergency Management and the E 9-1-1 Communications Center (see Annex C: Notification and Warning).
- B. The Emergency Management Director will make the decision to activate the emergency operations center based on incident conditions. (See Annex A: Direction and Control)  
If the Emergency Operations Center is activated, the Emergency Management Director will notify staff members directly, utilizing landline and/or cellular telephone.
- C. The E 9-1-1 Communications Center should notify on-scene units that the emergency operations center is activated.

#### VI. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. On-Scene Communications
  1. The on-scene Incident Commander should ensure that communications are maintained on-scene.
  2. The incident command post should serve as a communications link between on-scene personnel from various responding departments.
    - a. On-scene personnel should communicate with each other through their normal mobile/portable radios.
    - b. On-scene personnel should communicate with the E 9-1-1 Communications Center by using regular mobile radios on appropriate frequencies. Landline and cellular telephones may be used as backup systems between the scene and the E 9-1-1 Communications Center and Emergency Operations Center.

- c. Technical issues – including ensuring that radios are in working order, proper frequency usage, and interoperability – may be delegated to members of the Logistics Section of the command staff at the discretion of the Incident Commander and in coordination with the communications director.
3. The Communications Unit within the Logistics Section of the incident command structure, if activated, should ensure that communications are sufficient with external organizations such as hospitals and support agencies such as the office of emergency management, county E 9-1-1, Red Cross, etc. (If the emergency operations center is *not* activated). The Incident Commander should ensure adequate communications exist with off-site, non-public safety agencies if the communications unit is not activated.
  4. The Upshur County Office of Emergency Management's mobile communications trailer can augment on-scene communications capabilities. In many cases, when the on-scene incident command system expands beyond the command staff, the communications trailer may be deployed.
- B. E 9-1-1 Communications Center Capabilities (including alternate facility designation)**
1. In the event that the primary E 9-1-1 Communications Center/ emergency operations center is not available, a backup communications center should be established at the same location or as close as possible to the alternate Emergency Operations Center.
  2. The mobile communications trailer will be available for use as a temporary backup E 9-1-1 Communications Center.
  3. In coordination with Verizon, 9-1-1 calls from Upshur County can be "switched" to Lewis County. In such a scenario, though, Lewis County can only accept the calls; Lewis dispatchers cannot deploy Upshur County units. Lewis dispatchers would need to contact (via telephone, radio, etc.) Upshur representatives to advise them of calls received.
  4. Although some communications capabilities exist at the Buckhannon and Banks District fire stations, no formal backup facility to the E 9-1-1

Communications Center has been designated.

5. As the communications infrastructure of the county is enhanced, there may be future backup capabilities at the Tallmansville tower site.
- C. Communications Capabilities within the Emergency Operations Center
1. The emergency operations center can provide support to the E 9-1-1 Communications Center and/or on-scene response personnel.
  2. The emergency operations center staff contains a Communications Officer that coordinates the communications efforts of the operations center. The communications officer should work with the E 911 Director or Asst. E 911. Director to identify equipment needs and procure equipment in accordance with National Incident Management System recommendations.
  3. The communications officer can assist in quickly identifying and overcoming communications shortfalls during response operations. To rapidly resolve any shortfalls that do arise, the communications director can maintain contact with resource management personnel (and the emergency management director) if procuring backup communications resources (including available fire and law units) becomes necessary.
  4. The county Office of Emergency Management maintains access to Eteam, which is a network-based computer program utilized for transmitting messages to the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and can serve as an additional means of communicating from county to county.

## VII. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Organization
1. Emergency response personnel should only communicate essential information via radios.
  2. The E 9-1-1 Communications Center is responsible for dispatching response agencies.
  3. The county Emergency Operations Center can provide support to the E 9-1-1 Communications Center and/or on-scene response personnel.

**B. Responsibilities**

**1. Primary Agencies**

**a. Upshur County Office of Emergency Management**

- i. Coordinate, as necessary, with the 9-1-1 center when activating and operating the emergency operations center.
- ii. Designate the Communications Officer and alternates.
- iii. Relocate the emergency operations center if necessary.
- iv. Communications Director
  - Manage the Communications Section of the emergency operations center and supervise the communications personnel assigned there.
  - Support any joint information center operations on an as-needed basis.
  - Ensure that the communications staff properly operates their assigned equipment.
  - Ensure that communications staff follows established radio protocols and guidelines for voice transmissions and message handling.
  - Ensure that communications staff screens and logs information as is appropriate and routes incoming calls (or gives messages) to the appropriate emergency operations center sections.

**b. Upshur County 9-1-1 Communications Center**

- i. Dispatch responders.
- ii. Appropriately relay communications messages.

**2. Support Agencies**

**a. Local Amateur Radio Operators**

- i. Establishes communications if requested by emergency authorities.
- ii. Follows proper communications protocols (delineated by the county, state, and Federal Communications Commission) if utilized as a backup communications system.

**b. West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency**



**Management**

- i. Supports local requests for communications resources.
  - ii. Manages Mine and Industrial Accident Rapid Response System and the state emergency operations center, when activated.
  - iii. Develops and maintains communications standard operating guidelines for the state.
  - iv. Identifies state communications (and telecommunications) needs.
  - v. Coordinates, as necessary, with federal personnel.
- c. **United States Department of Homeland Security:** Coordinates *National Response Framework* Emergency Support Function #2 operations.

**VIII. ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND LOGISTICS**

**A. Administration**

1. Message logs and other records should be kept in order to maintain an accurate account of the response, including the support that was provided.
2. Continuity of Government
  - a. The communications director position is designated by the county emergency management director, who also designates alternates to the position.
  - b. The communications officer is a member of the Upshur County Emergency Operations Center staff. The county emergency operations center should operate in accordance with the standard operating guidelines maintained by the Upshur County Office of Emergency Management. These standard operating guidelines include job aids for the communications officer to ensure that any member of the emergency operations center staff can successfully fill in for the regular communications officer. (See Appendix 1 to Annex A: Direction and Control).
3. Training
  - a. The county should ensure that E 9-1-1 dispatchers are properly trained.

- b. Additional, response-oriented training and practice may be required and may be scheduled as necessary by various emergency authorities.

**B. Finance:** Communications records should be provided to the Upshur County Office of Emergency Management Director or Upshur County Administrator within **30 days** of the conclusion of major operations if they are necessary for requests for reimbursement.

**C. Logistics**

1. Equipment that is purchased should be National Incident Management System compliant. Also, per homeland security grant requirements, equipment should be compliant with the statewide interoperable radio network.

2. The following systems and capabilities may be available in the E 9-1-1 Communications Center.

- a. Commercial Telephone Service – Used as a backup system for field units and as the primary system for communications between units of government and other fixed sites (including neighboring county emergency operations centers).

- b. National Warning System (NAWAS) – Dedicated telephone circuit providing state and national information.

- c. Emergency Alert System – A federally-coordinated warning system using commercial and public radio and television stations to broadcast emergency warnings to the general public.

- d. Weapon/Nets – A telephone system used by law enforcement agencies to transmit data on a statewide and nationwide basis.

- e. West Virginia State Police – Only monitoring capabilities are present in the E 9-1-1 center.

3. Communications Protection

- a. Radio

- i. Using standard lightning protective techniques during severe weather should guard against lightning.

- ii. Wind and other hazards can damage antennas.

- b. Telephone
    - i. Jammed circuits are possible during emergency situations since telephone use increases dramatically. To prevent an overload condition from jamming available telephone circuits, a measure known as the "Line Load Limit Control" can be imposed by the telephone company. This restricts telephone usage to essential callers.
    - ii. All essential personnel have access to (GETS) Governmental Emergency Telecommunications Service. Through the Dept of Homeland Security.
    - iii. Priority of service restoration should be negotiated by the appropriate telephone company and the emergency operations center.
  - c. Cellular Telephone
    - i. Cellular towers can be damaged by a variety of hazards, including high winds, significant snowfall, and significant rainfall.
    - ii. In the case of busy server all essential personnel have access to (WPS) Wireless Priority Service through the Dept of Homeland Security.
    - iii. With sufficient warning, protective measures can be taken.
    - iv. The emergency operations center should coordinate the correction of service interruptions with the appropriate company.
  - d. Internet (Network)
    - i. Network maintenance is necessary due to E-team requirements.
    - ii. In the event the system goes down, the emergency operations center should coordinate with the service provider.
4. Security
- a. Because of the role of communications and warning and the vulnerability of communications facilities and equipment during emergency operations, security is necessary.
  - b. If available, local law enforcement can provide security to the E 9-1-1 Communications Center and Emergency Operations Center (and

alternate facilities).

- c. The E 9-1-1 Director, E 911 Asst Director and/or Emergency Management Director can reserve the right to conduct background investigations on any person assigned to work in the E 9-1-1 Communications Center or emergency operations center.

5. State and Federal Support

a. State

- i. Various state agencies provide oversight and support for the statewide interoperable radio network.
  - These agencies are working diligently to provide the system in all areas of the state.
  - The West Virginia Interoperable Steering Committee and West Virginia Interoperability Working Group have been formed to monitor the implementation of the *West Virginia State Interoperability Plan* and to determine statewide priorities related to interoperable communications.
- ii. The state emergency operations center has access to a variety of communications systems that can receive warning information. If warnings are received, the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management may disseminate that information to potentially affected areas in the state.
- iii. The state's mobile operations center and other equipment may be available to provide mobile communications throughout the state.
- iv. The West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management also coordinates the Eteam software for use throughout West Virginia. This coordination includes the provision of training and ensuring that the system is periodically upgraded and working properly.

b. Federal

- i. The General Services Administration/Federal Technology Service appoints a Department of Homeland Security/Information Analysis

**b. Federal**

- i. The General Services Administration/Federal Technology Service appoints a Department of Homeland Security/Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection/National Communications System (DHS/AIP/NCS) Regional Manager in each of the ten federal regions and the National Capital Region. This Regional Manager is a telecommunications specialist who can assume the duties of the Federal Emergency Communications Center (FECC). The FECC is the single federal point of contact in the incident area.
- ii. The FECC coordinates the federal telecommunications industry's response in the incident area.
  - Emergency Support Function #2 of the *National Response Framework* coordinates federal actions to provide temporary National Security and Emergency Preparedness telecommunications and restoration of general telecommunications infrastructure.
  - The FECC may be located at either the regional response coordination center or in the joint field office, as dictated by incident needs.
- iii. The FECC coordinates with state communications officials to ensure federal communications requirements do not conflict with state needs.
- iv. Local officials access the FECC through the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

**IX. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE**

- A. The regional interoperability committee should offer guidance as to communications planning throughout Homeland Security Region IV. In that sense, it is the planning committee informing communications.
- B. Locally, the UCOEM Director, E 911 Director and E 911 Asst Director should collaborate in the maintenance and improvement of this annex.
- C. The annex should be reviewed, updated, and modified as necessary, but not less than annually.