

Concept of Operations	Emergency Support Function (ESF) # 2 Communications
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Lead Agency	Franklin County Sheriff’s Office (FCSO)
Support Agencies	Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) Apalachicola Police Department (APD) Carrabelle Police Department (CPD) FairPoint Communications Inc (FairPoint) Franklin County Emergency Management Department (FCEMD) Liberty Communications Inc (Liberty Communications) MediaCom Cable Inc (MediaCom) Williams Communications Inc (Williams Communications)

Table of Contents

1.0 – Introduction	1
1.1 – Purpose	1
1.2 – Scope.....	2
1.3 – Assumptions	2
2.0 – Concept of Operations	2
2.1 – General	2
2.2 – Organization.....	2
2.3 – Primary Activities	3
2.3.1 – Land Line Telephones	3
2.3.2 – Cellular Telephones.....	3
2.3.3 – UHF / VHF and 800 MHz Radios.....	3
2.3.4 – Satellite Communications	3
2.3.5 – Internet Communications.....	4
2.3.6 – NOAA Weather Radio.....	4
2.3.7 – Public Safety Access Point (PSAP).....	4
2.3.8 – Response Actions – Pre-Impact	4
2.3.9 – Response Actions – Post-Impact.....	4
3.0 – Responsibilities – Lead and Support Agencies	5
3.1 – Lead Agency	5
3.2 – Support Agencies.....	5

1.0 – Introduction

1.1 – Purpose



The purpose of this ESF is to provide guidance to agencies and organizations involved in providing communications activities within the county before, during and after disasters or emergencies.

1.2 – Scope

The FCSO is responsible for coordinating and assisting in the provision of communications support to response and recovery agencies before, during and in the aftermath of disasters.

1.3 – Assumptions

In the aftermath of a major hurricane the number of communications systems that would be operational cannot be determined, due to power outages, flying debris, downed transmission lines, uprooted trees and damaged towers.

Should local resources be overwhelmed, support will be requested from the SEOC¹.

2.0 – Concept of Operations

2.1 – General

Modes of Communications

Primary – The primary mode of communications from the county EOC will be landline telephone and internet communications to all response and recovery agencies.

Secondary – The secondary mode of communications from the county EOC will be cellular telephone communications and ESATCOM² to all response and recovery agencies.

Tertiary – The tertiary mode of communications from the county EOC is broken into several categories:

- UHF / VHF and 800 MHz radio to all response and recovery agencies.
- Satellite telephone to all response and recovery agencies.
- Amateur radio operations to designated response and recovery agencies.
- Runners to other facilities.

2.2 – Organization

¹ State Emergency Operations Center

² Emergency Satellite Communications System



This ESF is part of the Operations Section of the county's EOC³. The county's EOC utilizes the ICS⁴ structure during all activations.

2.3 – Primary Activities

2.3.1 – Land Line Telephones

Land line telephone systems are the primary means of communication within the county during emergencies. FairPoint is responsible for maintaining and repairing the telephone system within the county. Priorities for restoration of service are as follows:

- FairPoint's internal communications network
- Public Safety Access Point (9-1-1 Dispatch)
- County EOC
- County and city law enforcement agencies
- County Volunteer Fire Departments
- Electrical, water and waste water providers
- George M Weems Memorial Hospital
- Essential state, county and city government agencies

2.3.2 – Cellular Telephones

Cellular telephones provide a secondary level of communications within the county. As such the county EOC will be responsible for establishing contact with cellular telephone providers to assess cellular telephone coverage in the aftermath of a severe hurricane.

Cellular telephone towers are designed to remain operational during severe wind events up to a category 4 hurricane.

2.3.3 – UHF / VHF and 800 MHz Radios

The county utilizes UHF, VHF, and 800 MHz radio systems to communicate with response agencies and other essential local agencies.

Radio towers are designed to be operational up to a category 4 hurricane.

2.3.4 – Satellite Communications

The county has access to ESATCOM the statewide satellite emergency communications system with the ability to transmit voice, high-speed data, facsimile and video communications throughout the network. ESATCOM is maintained by FDEM⁵.

³Emergency Operations Center

⁴ Incident Command System



FCEMD has a single mobile satellite phone that can be utilized for voice only communications.

2.3.5 – Internet Communications

The county is served by several companies providing DSL and Cable access to the internet.

As a primary communications tool for the county EOC priority restoration for services is the same as for land line telephones.

2.3.6 – NOAA Weather Radio

This system provides continuous broadcasts of meteorological conditions affecting the county.

Protective action bulletins can be broadcast on the system at the request of the FCEMD.

2.3.7 – Public Safety Access Point (PSAP)

The FCSO is responsible for operating the county's PSAP⁶ under normal conditions as well as during emergencies.

The back-up location for the county's PSAP is the county EOC.

2.3.8 – Response Actions – Pre-Impact

Begin assessing needs to pre-stage communications assets for rapid deployment into an affected area.

Determine what assets are available and nearest to the affected area and the time frame for deploying those assets.

2.3.9 – Response Actions – Post-Impact

Assess the need for and obtain telecommunications industry support as required.

Prioritize the deployment of services based on available resources and critical needs.

⁵ Florida Division of Emergency Management

⁶ Public Safety Access Point



Coordinate communications support to all quasi-governmental and volunteer agencies as required.

3.0 – Responsibilities – Lead and Support Agencies

3.1 – Lead Agency

Franklin County Sheriff's Office – Is responsible for coordinating all aspects of communications operations. This includes providing and maintaining communications capabilities during emergency operations and serving as the designated 24-hour CWP⁷.

3.2 – Support Agencies

Amateur Radio Emergency Services – Has the capability to provide radio communications via a variety of amateur radio frequencies.

Apalachicola Police Department – Is responsible for assisting the FCSO in maintaining communications for first response organizations throughout the county.

Carrabelle Police Department – Is responsible for assisting the FCSO in maintaining communications for first response organizations throughout the county.

FairPoint Communications Inc – Is responsible for repairing telecommunication systems for critical facilities and the general public following service disruptions.

Franklin County Emergency Management Department – Is responsible for assisting the FCSO in maintaining communications capabilities.

MediaCom Cable Inc – Is responsible for internet access systems for critical facilities and the general public following service disruptions.

Liberty Communications Inc – Is responsible for maintaining and repairing the UHF, VHF and 800 MHz systems in the county.

Williams Communications Inc – Is responsible for maintaining and repairing the UHF, VHF and 800 MHz systems in the county.

⁷ County Warning Point

