

ESF – 2 Communications

Purpose

This ESF describes the systems and procedures for communicating during a disaster. It addresses:

- Communications interoperability among field response units
- Primary and back-up communications systems
- Communications to and from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Sources for communications augmentation such as Amateur Radio
- Other communications systems to support emergency operations

ESF-2 Communications also addresses warning and notification, as well as information technology and telecommunications.

Scope

This ESF Annex is designed to provide a flexible organizational structure capable of meeting the varied requirements of many emergency scenarios with the potential to require activation of the Sumner County Emergency Operations Center (SuCoEOC) and implementation of the Sumner County Emergency Operations Plan (SuCoEOP).

ESF-2 is a functional annex to the SuCoEOP and to the extent possible, information contained in other sections of the EOP will not be repeated in this document.

Policies

ESF-2 applies to all agencies and organizations with assigned emergency responsibilities in the SuCoEOP.

REFERENCES:

- Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Center Standard Operating Procedures
- Sumner County Emergency Operations Center Standard Operating Procedures
- Kansas Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, Chapter 23 of the Session Law of 1987
- Title III Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Section of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1968, Public Law 99-499

Concept of Operations

General

The Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Director is designated as the coordinator for ESF-2. As ESF coordinator, this person coordinates meetings, plans, exercises, training and other activities with the private sector and the ESF-2 support agencies.

Sumner County has a wide variety of emergency communications equipment including: radios (fixed, mobile and hand-held), ACU-1000 cross-band bridge, pagers, telephones (including cellular and satellite), fax machines, portable command trailer, etc.

Communications in the field will normally be established by radio. Each department or agency having a radio system will designate personnel to operate their system and maintain communications with the Sumner County EOC.

Communications with state and federal government will be through landline telephone links, cellular telephones and/or radio contact.

Numerous county and municipal agencies have communications capabilities and field units can communicate among each other and with the EOC primarily by radio using the 400 Megahertz System.

Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications maintains a list of the radio frequencies used by response agencies in the area. Through the use of the ACU-1000, Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications can communicate directly with responding agencies from surrounding counties and state agencies.

The Sumner County Information Technology Department (information services) provides information management support to county government departments and offices in general, and maintains the county's wide-area network (WAN).

If electronic emergency information systems are not available, paper logs will be used to record events, communications & messages, damage assessments, situation reports, resources utilized, man-hours expended, etc.

Event logs and communications traffic records are vital for documenting emergency actions for possible post-emergency investigation or after-action reports.

Records documenting the number of people involved in communication activities, whether paid or volunteer are needed for possible reimbursement under Presidential disaster declarations.

Any lease, rental or mutual aid agreements related to the augmentation of communications equipment should also be kept.

Organization

When activated, the Sumner County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will serve as the central location for interagency coordination and executive decision-making, including all activities associated with ESF-2.

Sumner County Emergency Operations Plan

Primary dispatching capabilities in the county exist with the Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Center. The 9-1-1 Center provides 24-hour dispatching capability for all county fire districts/departments, the Sumner County Sheriff's Department, all county police departments, all county EMS departments, Sumner County Emergency Management, Kansas Highway Patrol, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Sumner County has a designated the 9-1-1 call taking backup center located in Mulvane with radio dispatch located in the Sumner County EOC, and the South Central Kansas Region has a back-up dispatch center located in Hutchinson that is available for short term use if necessary.

The ESF-2 team members are critical members of the EOC Team and will work within the EOC structure as described in ESF-5 Emergency Management.

Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications is responsible for planning, installing and maintaining radio communications systems for the county's dispatch center and repeaters. Each response agency is responsible for its' own equipment. Equipment outages due to power failures are non-critical to the dispatch center and to most of the county repeater sites due to generators and/or battery backup systems.

Notifications

Sumner County Emergency Management Director will notify the Emergency Communications Center of county EOC activations and may request that a representative report to the county EOC to coordinate emergency communications activities. This is typically accomplished by radio broadcast or telephone contact.

The Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Director, or designee will rapidly assess the need for communications support and identify, acquire and deploy resources to support critical emergency operations.

The Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Director, or designee will establish procedures to ensure field operations can maintain communications links with both each other and the county EOC.

Actions

Preparedness

- Ensure alternate or backup communications systems are available.
- Coordinate common communications procedures.
- Develop and test emergency procedures.
- Develop mutual aid agreements.
- Develop and/or review procedures for the crisis augmentation of resources.
- Review departmental Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and maintain personnel call up lists.
- Participate in Sumner County Emergency Management training and exercises.

Response

- Maintain existing equipment and follow established procedures for communicating with organization personnel performing field operations.

Sumner County Emergency Operations Plan

- Implement procedure to inspect and protect communications equipment.
- Make arrangements to ensure emergency communications equipment can be repaired on a 24-hour basis.
- Keep the Sumner County EOC informed of their operations at all times and maintain a communications link with the SuCoEOC.

Recovery

- Continue to perform tasks necessary to expedite restoration and recovery operations.
- Evaluate response, and make necessary changes in this ESF Annex to improve future operations
- Phase down operations, as appropriate.
- Clean, repair, and perform maintenance on all equipment before returning to normal operations or storage.
- Participate in after action reports and meetings as requested.

Prevention

- Ensure methods are in place to protect communications equipment, including cyber and telecommunications resources.

Direction and Control

Communication activities for disaster events will be coordinated through the Sumner County EOC serving as the source of all direction and control.

The Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Director, as the primary agency for this ESF provides direction and control for ESF-2 to include mission assignments, mutual aid, contracts for goods and services and recovery and mitigation activities relating to communications.

Responsibilities

All Tasked Agencies will:

- Develop applicable standard operating procedures, guidelines and/or checklists detailing the accomplishment of their assigned functions.
- Use "plain text" when communicating by radio transmission during disaster situations.
- Provide ongoing status reports as requested.
- When requested, deploy a representative to the EOC to assist with communications activities.
- Maintain updated resource inventories of supplies, equipment, and personnel resources, including possible sources of augmentation or replacement.
- Document all costs and expenses associated with response and recovery activities taking care to clearly segregate disaster related work in the event that reimbursement becomes available from the state and federal government.
- Maintain up-to-date rosters for notifying personnel and 24-hour EOC staffing capabilities.
- Perform other emergency tasks as needed or assigned.

Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Director

- Activate warning system.
- Provide representative to the Sumner County EOC when activated.
- Maintain county radio systems.

Fire Departments

- Provide mobile public address units if necessary.
- Provide manpower for door-to-door warning if necessary.

Law Enforcement

- Provide additional siren equipped mobile units where necessary to supplement warning coverage.
- Provide manpower for door-to-door warning if necessary.
- Maintain a communications link with the Sumner County EOC.
- Provide a representative to the Sumner County EOC when requested.

Sumner County Emergency Management

- Provide trained spotters in the field to report to the EOC during weather related events.
- Along with the National Weather Service and local city officials, direct sounding of storm siren systems.
- Contacts the appropriate local, state and federal agencies of hazardous materials events.

Communications:

Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Center

- Provide communications necessary for the county & city governments to communicate to all governmental entities as well as higher echelons of government assistance.
- Support mutual aid communications of adjacent counties.
- Coordinate and maintain the operation of the communication systems as needed to fulfill a total communication capability within the county.

Sumner County Information Technology Department (information systems)

- Maintain the countywide WAN service.
- Provides for service and integrity of the county's telephone service.
- Ensures the operability of the technological aspects of the Sumner County EOC.

Sumner County Emergency Management

- Assigns personnel for proper operation of the communications within the SuCoEOC.

Administration and Support

Support

Requests for emergency assistance will be resolved at the lowest level direction and control facility with appropriate response resources capabilities. Unresolved assistance requests will normally flow upward from cities to the county, and/or field deployed command posts to the Sumner County EOC, from there they will be requested from responsible representatives in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), and as required to other states or the federal government for assistance support.

Agreements and Understandings

All agreements and understandings entered into for the purchase, lease, or otherwise use of equipment and services, will be in accordance with the provision of laws and procedures.

The Proclamation of a State of Local Emergency by the Sumner County Board of County Commissioners or a State Disaster issued by the Governor may suspend selected rules and regulations that affect support operations. The primary agency will determine the specific impact of the situation and inform the ESF group members.

Status Reports

The Sumner County Emergency Management Agency and the Sumner County E-911 Emergency Communications Department will maintain status of all outstanding assistance requests and unresolved ESF related issues. This information will be summarized into periodic status reports and submitted in accordance with applicable operating procedures.

Expenditures and Recordkeeping

Each ESF agency is responsible for establishing administrative controls necessary to manage the expenditure of funds and to provide reasonable accountability and justification for federal reimbursement in accordance with the established guidelines.

The first source of funds for expenditures by agencies in response to an emergency, imminent disaster, or recovery from a catastrophic incident, is to be from local budget funds such as the County General Fund.

Critiques

Following the conclusion of any significant emergency event/incident or exercise, the primary agency representative will conduct a critique of the group activities during the event/incident/exercise.

Support agencies will provide written and/or oral inputs for this critique and the primary agency representative will consolidate all inputs into a final report and submit it to the Sumner County Emergency Management Director.