

ESF 2 Communications

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1 Introduction: Purpose and Scope

ESF 2 organizes, establishes, and maintains the communications capabilities among appropriate agencies/entities necessary to meet the County's operational requirements in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters. This ESF also outlines the structure and operation of the warning systems used to alert key officials and the general public of a potential or occurring emergency or disaster. Emphasis is placed on technical considerations of communication functions. Collection, control, and dissemination of emergency public information are covered by ESF 15 External Affairs.

2 Policies and Agreements

The National Warning System is the primary method of communicating alert and warning messages from national to state authorities and between state and local authorities or warning points. The EAS is the primary method of communicating alert and warning messages to the public.

In addition, the following agreements are in place within Marion County:

- Marion County and Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES). September 8, 1994. This agreement provides licensed, amateur radio operators to support County communications during times of emergency or disaster.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Portland District, National Weather Service (NWS), and Marion County. May 1993. This agreement lays out the responsibilities of participating agencies as it relates to the Detroit Dam Warning System.
- Marion County Public Works and METCOM. In the works. This agreement provides for notification services during off hours, weekends and holidays.

3 Situation and Assumptions

3.1 Situation

Marion County has a large service area (1,175 square miles). As of 2013, the population of Marion County was approximately 323,614. During severe weather or other types of emergencies, much of the population could be isolated from major cities and resources. The need to warn the public of impending danger could arise at any time. To reduce loss of lives, adequate and timely warnings must be provided. Appropriate action-oriented information must be supplied. A warning period will be available for most emergency situations, although the amount of lead time will vary from hazard to hazard. Weather warnings may come from the NWS, health and medical alerts from the County or State Health

Department, and terrorist related notifications from State or Federal agencies. Proper use of adequate warning will save lives, reduce injuries, and protect property. The EAS and television and radio stations will be the primary system for warning residents.

3.2 Assumptions

Adequate communications are vital for effective and efficient warning, response, and recovery operations. Current communications may be neutralized by a particular hazard occurrence. Additional communications equipment required for emergency operations will be made available from amateur radio operators, citizens, businesses, and/or other governmental agencies. There are two Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) within the County. They are staffed on a 24-hour basis by certified telecommunications (dispatch) personnel. Equipment is available to provide communications necessary for emergency operations. Telephones, cell phones and pagers, to the extent possible, will be considered the primary system for notification of key officials and critical workers.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Lead Agencies

Marion Area Multi-Agency Emergency Telecommunications (METCOM)
Willamette Valley Communication Center (WVCC)

SUPPORT AGENCIES/ENTITIES

Private or Non-governmental Organizations

Marion County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
Local radio and television stations
Local cable companies

City/Special Districts

Local Fire Protection Districts
Local Law Enforcement Agencies
Local Public Works Departments

County

Marion County Emergency Management
Marion County Sheriff's Office
Marion County Department of Public Works (Communications Chief)
Marion County Information Technology Department
Marion County Search and Rescue Communications

State (available without request through OERS)

Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon State Police

Federal

Emergency Alert System
National Warning System
National Weather Service

The following agencies/organizations are involved in the planning, implementation, and coordination of emergency telecommunications for Marion County, and specific responsibilities are noted for each entity:

- Marion County Interoperability Council: Coordinates radio use and future planning needs for Marion County.
- Individual agencies are responsible for maintaining communications capabilities and interoperability with local, regional, state and Federal agencies. The Sheriff's Office supports public safety communications.
- Willamette Valley Communication Center and Marion Area Multi-Agency Emergency Telecommunications: Serve as the PSAPs within Marion County.
- Marion County EM: Supervises ARES and provides alert and warning to public including the EAS.
- Marion County Fire Defense Board: Supports public safety communications.
- EMS Ambulance Services: Supports public safety communications.
- Marion County Public Works: Supports public safety communications and recovery operations.
- Marion County Health Department: Supports public safety communications during a public health emergency.
- Marion County Sheriff's Office.

A communications coordinator (Sheriff or designee) will be assigned to the ECC command structure and will be responsible for managing ARES and establishing radio frequencies. The coordinator also ensures county radio sites and systems are operational and available for emergency communications with public agencies. Status of interoperability with local, state, and Federal agencies during an emergency is tracked and managed by the communications coordinator or designee.

5 Concept of Operations

5.1 Interoperable Communications

Normally, emergency calls from the public are received by three Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP)s, or 9-1-1 centers. These centers dispatch public safety agencies in response to the calls received.

There are numerous public safety/service radios operated by County and city personnel that can be used as the primary means of communication in case of telephone failure.

Marion County ARES volunteers are prepared to initiate a communications network between ECCs and other critical facilities. These networks, along with phones, if working, are the primary method of communication between ECCs during incidents.

The County Mobile ECC van has full radio capability to function as a mobile communications center.

The Marion County Sheriff's Office has full radio capability in their mobile command post including radio cross banding equipment.

The Marion County ECC has a complete array of phone lines and networked computer systems for voice and e-mail communications. There is also an ECC radio room with low band, very high frequency (VHF), ultra high frequency (UHF), 800 megahertz and amateur radio packet capabilities.

5.2 Warning Services

When a major emergency or disaster occurs or is imminent, OERS provides 24-hour alert, warning, and notification service to county/local warning points and notifies appropriate county, State, Federal, and volunteer entities.

A warning process will be implemented through County EM or other designated agencies providing support to the County ECC to notify various agencies, partners, support staff, and public officials during an emergency. During off hours including weekends and holidays, METCOM provides notification services for Marion County through a mutual aid agreement.

The EAS may be activated to disseminate emergency information via radio and television. The Capitol Operational Area (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties) EAS Plan has been updated. Currently, the EAS for Polk, Marion, and Yamhill counties can be activated through the OERS at 1-800-452-0311. All agencies will be notified upon completion of the updated Capitol Area EAS procedures. **Refer to the Marion County Resource Directory, Section E for sample EAS messages.**

The County communications system and news media will be used for dissemination of warnings. Warning dissemination will be under the supervision of the County EMD. Upon receipt of warning information, County and city emergency service coordinators, the private sector, cities, and the public will be instructed to immediately initiate appropriate actions based on the nature of the potential hazard and the time available prior to impact.

Emergency warning and notification systems in place within Marion County include the following:

- EAS; composed of radio and TV stations and cable companies, the EAS can be activated by any level of government. To activate, see the Marion County Resource Directory, under EAS. Ref Greater Capitol Area EAS Plan.
- Media; including newspapers for slow-developing emergency situations (i.e. inclement weather, drought, etc.).
- Sirens and Public Address Systems, mounted on emergency vehicles.
- Door-to-door warning, taking care to keep unprotected workers from entering hazardous areas.
- Telephone/cell phone.
- Special Populations: Groups working with special populations may assist with groups such as the hearing impaired, non-English speaking, physically handicapped, homebound, etc.
- Broadcast fax for pre-designated list.
- Broadcast computer e-mail.
- City Watch, broadcast computer voice messaging/broadcast computer text messaging at the Marion County Sheriff's Office.
- EverBridge through METCOM.
- Health Alert Network (HAN).
- Detroit/Big Cliff Dam Flood Warning System

6 Supporting Plans and Procedures

Capitol Operational Area (Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties) Emergency Alert System Plan. 2005/2006/2007/2008.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Radio Frequency List

Appendix 2 Marion County Radio Channel Plan