MADISON COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN
ANNEX B
COMMUNICATIONS
Updated: January 28, 2009

Primary Agency:	Communications
Support Agencies:	Sheriff
	Fire Departments
	Emergency Management
	Others as required or requested

I. PURPOSE

This annex describes the county's communications systems and presents available communications sources, policies and procedures to be used by county government agencies during emergency situations.

II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Emergency communications systems and services used by the county are controlled by the Madison County Communications Director.

2. The Emergency Communications Center is operated 24 hours a day and serves as the County Warning Point.

3. The Emergency Communications Center will be expanded as required.

4. Emergency communications procedures will be implemented and backup capabilities activated as necessary.

5. Appropriate communications personnel will be notified.

6. Within the National Response Framework, communications is an emergency support function (ESF-2).

B. Specific

1. Telephone Service

a. Telephone service in the county is provided by Verizon , US Cellular, Nextel, AT&T, and Sun Com.

b. The telephone companies will be provided with a list of essential users of telephone service.

c. Essential users will receive priority telephone service during emergencies.

2. Two-Way Radio Systems

a. The County two-way radio system is designated as a principal system to be used

for Direction and Control activities. It provides voice communications between mobile units operated by department heads or chiefs of emergency services and the County Emergency Communications Center. The principal operators are:

- Sheriff
- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Fire Chiefs
- EMS Coordinator
- Towns of Hot Springs, Marshall and Mars Hill/Police/Maintenance

b. The following county departments, agencies and organizations operate two-way radio systems:

- Sheriff's Department
- Board of Education
- County Volunteer Fire Department(s)
- Towns of Hot Springs, Marshall and Mars Hill Police Department
- Towns of Hot Springs, Marshall and Mars Hill Public Works Department
- County Emergency Medical Service
- Madison County Emergency Management
- Madison County Health Department
- Madison County Transportation Department

c. The following county volunteer organizations operate two-way radio systems:

- Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)

d. Other two-way communications systems which may be used to communicate with the State EOC during emergencies include:

- Division of Criminal Information (DCI)
- North Carolina Inter-City Police Network
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) (Mayland Amateur Radio Club)
- National Warning System (NAWAS)
- State Emergency Management FM Voice Radio Network
- Commercial Telephone
- Satellite Radio and Telephone

e. The following communications systems can be accessed from the Communications Center:

- Sheriff's Department Radio System
- County Fire Protection Network
- The Local Area Police Network
- The Public Works/Utilities Network
- Amateur Radio Emergency Services

f. Other Communications Systems
The following communications systems are available but not operated from the Communications Center:

- Madison County Transportation Authority

III. ORGANIZATION

A. Organization

1. The Communications Director is the principal coordinator for planning and developing the emergency communications system.

2. The County Warning Point is the central control point for coordinating communications.

IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. The Madison County Emergency Management Coordinator will be notified when a major emergency situation has occurred or is imminent. The County EMC will then inform county officials in accordance with the county procedures.

B. Authority to direct and control the use of communications systems and services available to county departments and agencies is delegated to Chief Dispatcher through the Madison County Communications Center.

V. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

The line of succession is:

A. Madison County Communications Director

B. Chief Dispatcher

C. Emergency Management Coordinator

D. County Manager

VI. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

A. Facilities and Equipment

1. The County Emergency Communications Center is equipped with communications equipment (radio, telephone, computers, etc.) allowing contact within the county, contiguous counties, and the State EOC.

2. The organizations involved in emergency communications will follow the administrative and logistical procedures established by their individual agencies.

B. Training and Exercises

Radio operators of emergency response organizations are trained by their respective agencies.

C. Security

1. Communications equipment is vulnerable during time of emergency particularly during periods of national emergency.

2. Communications personnel must possess appropriate security clearances to send or receive classified information.

EOC

☐ Communications Director/Chief Dispatcher or designee reports to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to provide communications support, technical advice and assistance. Serve as the EOC Communications Officer or designate a qualified person to do so.

☐ Serve as communications technical advisor in the EOC.

☐ Receive a situational briefing at the EOC. Ask questions and address concerns during the briefing.

☐ Receive mission assignments.

☐ Operate or assign personnel to operate communications equipment (i.e. two-way radios, satellite phone, telephone, computers, etc.).

Communications Center Supervisor/Chief Dispatcher

☐ Check all two-way radio equipment including primary and secondary systems to ensure operation and communications capability between the Communications Center, EOC, Incident Commander and units in the field.

☐ Brief all communications personnel regarding the emergency.

☐ Ensure the primary functions of the department are carried out (i.e. receipt and dispatch of emergency calls for service, etc.).

☐ Issue communications equipment as necessary to communications personnel and/or field personnel.

☐ Advise communications personnel to log all overtime hours and promptly report those hours.

☐ Receive and dispatch calls for service according to procedure.

☐ Track emergency services resources (law enforcement, fire, EMS, etc.) and have knowledge of the location and availability of each unit, including total number of personnel.

☐ Monitor all available radio frequencies and computer traffic for messages or information that may be of value and report that information to the Emergency Operations Center communications officer.

☐ Advise the Emergency Operations Center when calls for services are exceeding or about to exceed the capabilities of the 911 system.

☐ Advise the Emergency Operations Center when there are insufficient communications personnel to promptly address the number of calls being received and dispatched and no other qualified personnel are available.

- ☐ Request additional personnel as needed.

- ☐ Request, as necessary, assistance through the EOC.

- ☐ Implement mutual aid agreements as needed.

- ☐ Provide food and essential supplies for on-duty communications personnel.

- ☐ Monitor primary radio system for system failures.

- ☐ If primary radio system fails, switch to secondary or backup systems according to procedure. Report the failure according to procedure.

- ☐ Test all backup power sources regularly. Switch to backup power sources as needed according to procedure.

- ☐ Backup all computer files regularly. Anticipate computer and network failures.

- ☐ Debrief communications personnel and arrange for CISD (Critical Incident Stress Debriefing) as necessary or requested.

- ☐ Perform other duties or carry out assignments as required or requested within the scope of emergency communications.