

ANNEX B

Communications

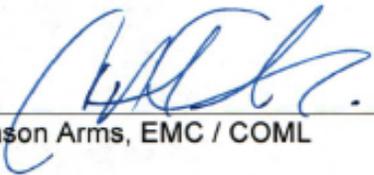
City of Pharr, Texas



APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Annex B

Communications



Jason Arms, EMC / COML

07/01/15

Date

NOTE: The signature(s) will be based upon local administrative practices. Typically, the individual having primary responsibility for this emergency function signs the annex in the first block and the second signature block is used by the Emergency Management Coordinator, Mayor, or County Judge. Alternatively, each department head assigned tasks within the annex may sign the annex.

ANNEX B

COMMUNICATIONS

I. AUTHORITY

See Basic Plan, Section I.

II. PURPOSE

This annex provides information about our communications equipment and capabilities available during emergency operations. Our entire communications system is discussed and procedures for its use are outlined.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

CATV	Cable TV
COG	Council of Government
DDC	Disaster District Committee
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EMP	Electromagnetic Pulse
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IC	Incident Commander
JIC	Joint Information Center
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRF	National Response Framework
SOC	State Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
TLETS	Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System
TRCIP	Texas Radio Communications Interoperability Plan

B. Definitions

Local Computer Network	Local, Metropolitan, or Wide-Area Networks.
State Warning Point	Warning Point for the state operated by the SOC.

IV. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. As noted in the general situation statement in the basic plan, we are at risk from a number of hazards that could threaten public health and safety and personal and government property. A reliable and interoperable communications system is essential

to obtain the most complete information on emergency situations and to direct and control our resources responding to those situations.

2. We operate two dispatch / communication centers located at 118 S Cage Blvd and 1900 S Cage Blvd. Both are staffed on a 24-hour basis by the Pharr Police and Pharr Fire dispatchers. Equipment is available to provide communications necessary for emergency operations.

B. Assumptions

1. Adequate communications are available for effective and efficient warning, response and recovery operations.
2. Any number of natural or manmade hazards may neutralize or severely reduce the effectiveness of communications currently in place for emergency operations.
3. Additional communications equipment required for emergency operations will be made available from citizens, business, volunteer organizations, and/or other governmental agencies.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. A common operating picture within our jurisdiction and across other jurisdictions provides the framework of our communications capabilities. This framework is made possible by interoperable systems. Extensive communications networks and facilities are in existence throughout Pharr to provide coordinated capabilities for the most effective and efficient response and recovery activities. A diagram of the communications network is in Appendix 1.
2. Our existing communications network consisting of telephone, computer, teletype, and radio facilities will serve to perform the initial and basic communications effort for emergency operations. Landline circuits, when available, will serve as the primary means of communication with other communication systems as back up.
3. During emergency operations, all city departments will maintain their existing equipment and procedures for communicating with their field operations units. They will keep the EOC informed of their operations and status at all times via assigned methods of communications.
4. To meet the increased communications needs created by an emergency, various state and regional agencies, amateur radio operators, and business/industry/volunteer group radio systems will be asked to supplement communications capabilities. These resource capabilities will be requested through local and regional mutual-aid agreements and/or the Disaster District, as required.

B. Activities by Phases of Emergency Management

1. Prevention

- a. Maintain a current technology based, reliable, interoperable, and sustainable communications system.
- b. Ensure warning communications systems meet jurisdictional needs.
- c. Ensure intelligence and other vital information networks are operational.
- d. Ensure integrated communications procedures are in place to meet the needs and requirements of (County/City).

2. Preparedness

- a. Review and update this communications annex.
- b. Develop communications procedures that are documented and implemented through communications operating instructions (include connectivity with private-sector and nongovernmental organizations).
- c. Thoroughly and continually review the system for improvement including the implementation and institutionalized use of information management technologies.
- d. Ensure communications requirements for Emergency Operations Center and potential Joint Information Center (JIC) are regularly reviewed.
- e. Review After Action Reports of actual occurrences and exercises and other sources of information for lessons learned.
- f. Ensure the integration of mitigation plans and actions into all phases of emergency management as applicable.
- g. Acquire, test, and maintain communications equipment.
- h. Ensure replacement parts for communications systems are available and make arrangement for rapid resupply in the event of an emergency.
- i. Train personnel on appropriate equipment and communication procedures as necessary.
- j. Conduct periodic communications drills and make communications a major element during all exercises.
- k. Review assignment of all personnel.
- l. Review emergency notification list of key officials and department heads.

m. Provide the Smartcom Telephone, LLC with a list of circuit restoration priorities for essential governmental systems.

3. Response

a. Select communications personnel required for emergency operations according to the incident. This includes COMT, COML and Telecommunication Officers.

b. Incident communications will follow ICS standards and will be managed by the IC using a common communications plan and an incident-based communications center.

c. All incident management entities will make use of common language during emergency communications. This will reduce confusion when multiple agencies or entities are involved in an incident. No "codes" are to be used.

d. Ensure that emergency onsite radio programming services, as well infrastructure support services is available 24 hours a day during annex activation.

e. Initiate warning procedures as outlined in Annex A, Warning, if required.

4. Recovery

All activities in the emergency phase will continue until such time as emergency communications are no longer required.

VI. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

1. Our emergency communications system is operated by both the police and fire department and includes a variety of government-owned and operated equipment as well as equipment owned and operated by certain volunteer groups. The departments, and groups that are part of our communications system are listed in Section VII.C.

2. The I.T. Director will ensure that warning information received at our warning point, the Dispatch/Communications Center, is disseminated to city officials and, where appropriate, to the public. The responsibility of ensuring the communications system is operational and incorporates all available resources rests with the I.T. Director, who may appoint a EM Communications Coordinator to carry out this task.

3. Pharr police and fire communication centers will maintain their own call-back rosters to facilitate support to demand of traffic.

B. Task Assignments

1. I.T. Director will:

a. Be responsible for all activities enumerated in this annex in Section V.B, Activities by Phases of Emergency Management.

b. Supervise the EM Communications Coordinator.

2. EM Communications Coordinator will:

- a. Coordinate common communications procedures.
- b. Develop and maintain a communications resource inventory (See Annex M, Resource Management).
- c. Ensure a communications capability exists between the Dispatch/Communications Center of the both the police and fire departments and the Emergency Operations Center to include coordination with the telephone company for dedicated telephone lines into the Dispatch/Communications Center and/or EOC.
- d. Ensure communication restoration procedures are developed and exercised annually.
- e. Ensure that the local telephone company is forwarded a list of circuit restoration priorities and applicable "TSP Codes".
- f. Ensure procedures are in place for dissemination of message traffic to appropriate persons.
- g. Coordinate the inclusion of business/industry and amateur radio operators into the communications network.
- h. Develop and maintain SOPs to include message-handling procedures and recall rosters for essential personnel. Pharr police and fire communication centers will maintain their own call-back rosters to facilitate support to demand of traffic.

3. EM Radio Operators will be:

Responsible for proper use and maintenance of the equipment and for correct message handling procedures, including routing of all incoming messages and logging all incoming and out-going messages. EM Radio Operators require specific training to route appropriate message via proper format.

4. EM Public Information Officer will be:

Responsible for monitoring commercial radio and telephone broadcasts for accuracy of public information.

5. Switchboard Operators will be:

All switchboard operators, administrative, police and fire will responsible for proper screening and routing of all incoming telephone calls.

VII. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. General

1. The I.T. Director establishes general policies for emergency communications.
3. The EM Communications Coordinator is under the supervision of the I.T. Director and is directly responsible for facilities, equipment, and operation of the EOC Communications equipment (phones, radios and similar) as well as all radio infrastructure and cache of radio equipment.
4. Communications personnel from individual departments and support groups, while under control of their own department and operating their own equipment, are responsible for knowing and following the procedures outlined in this annex.
5. **During emergency situations involving multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, the various code systems used for brevity will be discontinued and normal speech will be used to insure comprehension. In addition, local time will be used during transmissions.**
6. During emergency situations, communications will be maintained between the Disaster District and the Pharr EOC in the form of a dedicated phone line or assigned calling channel via channel plan (ICS-205).

B. Continuity of Government

Each department with communications responsibilities shall establish a line of succession for their communications personnel.

C. Existing Communications Systems

1. Local Networks
 - a. The City of Pharr operates its own radio system that encompasses each department of the city and has established “common channels” for use in emergency operations.
 - b. The City of Pharr operates on the RGV Regional Radio System for purposes of interoperability and has access to common channels.
 - c. The City of Pharr operates on all established VHF/700/800 Mhz NPSPAC Channels for purpose of interoperability as needed.
2. Other Networks
 - a. Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) is a statewide telecommunications network connecting the State Warning Point (the SOC), with approximately 1,292 city, county, state, federal, and military law enforcement agencies in Texas. Emergency communications between state, district, and local governments will be transmitted through this system. The City of Pharr principal terminal is located at 1900 S Cage Blvd (Police Communications Center).

- b. [Joint Information Center \(JIC\), Joint Operations Center \(JOC\), and SOC.](#)
- c. Individual Amateur Radio Operators
- d. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a state sponsored program composed of amateur radio operators. It is used to supplement state and local government communications systems in emergencies or disaster operations and is optional. Members of this organization must be registered with the City of Pharr prior to activation and an appropriate background check is required.
- e. Business/Industry/Volunteer Group Radio Systems

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

A. Readiness Level IV - Normal Conditions

See the [prevention](#) and preparedness activities in paragraphs V.B.1 and V.B.2 above.

B. Readiness Level III - Increased Readiness

1. Alert key personnel.
2. Check readiness of all equipment and facilities and correct any deficiencies. Special attention to generators at both tower sites, city hall and police facilities.

C. Readiness Level II – High Readiness

1. Alert personnel for possible emergency duty.
2. Monitor situation of possible issuance of warning or alerts.

D. Readiness Level 1 – Maximum Readiness

1. Institute 24-hour operations.
2. Conduct periodic communication checks of all systems.

IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. Facilities and Equipment

A complete listing of equipment is included in Appendix 1 of Annex M.

B. Maintenance of Records.

All records generated during an emergency will be collected and filed in an orderly manner so a record of events is preserved for use in determining response costs, settling claims, and updating emergency plans and procedures.

C. Preservation of Records

Vital records should be protected from the effects of disaster to the maximum extent feasible. Should records be damaged during an emergency situation, professional assistance in preserving and restoring those records should be obtained as soon as possible.

D. Communications Protection

1. Radio

a. Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP)

One of the effects of a nuclear detonation that is particularly damaging to radio equipment is EMP. Plans call for the disconnection of radios from antennas and power source when an Attack Warning is issued. A portable radio unit will then be employed as a backup to maintain limited communications with field units. This procedure will be used until an All Clear is announced. Telephones will also be used while operable.

b. Lightning, Wind, and Blast

- 1) Standard lightning protection is used including arrestors and the use of emergency power during severe weather.
- 2) Damaged antennas can be quickly replaced with spare units kept in the Innovation & Technology department.
- 3) Mobile repeaters kept in the Technical Response Unit (TRU) can be quickly positioned at predetermined locations to resume radio communications in the event of damage to radio towers.
- 4) Use of alternate fixed sites to use for communications is available. IT Radio Services staff or the Pharr COML will switch units from failed systems with the coordination of the fire/police communication centers.

2. Telephone (Common Carrier)

a. Overloaded Circuits

To avoid overloaded circuits during emergencies, citizens will be advised to listen to EAS for information and to use telephones only if they have a genuine emergency. If overloaded circuits do become a problem, coordinate with SmartCOM Telephone, LLC. to begin immediate restoration of priority circuits.

b. Emergency Service

During major emergencies, a direct line to the SmartCOM, LLC telephone company is activated in the EOC for emergency service calls.

3. Computer Equipment and Facilities

The physical protection of computer equipment and facilities will be maintained under normal and emergency operations to help ensure continuity of communications.

E. Security

1. Measures will be taken to ensure that only authorized personnel will have access to the various communications centers operated in the city.
2. Communications security will be maintained in accordance with national, state, and local requirements.

F. Training

1. Each department or volunteer organization assigning personnel to the EOC for communications purposes is responsible for making certain those persons are familiar with the department's operating procedures.
2. The Chief of the communications center will provide additional training on emergency communications equipment and procedures as necessary. (call routing and information routing)

G. Support

If requirements exceed the capability of local communications resources, the EMC will request support from nearby jurisdictions or state resources from the Disaster District in Weslaco.

X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The I.T. Director will be responsible for maintaining this annex. Each department will develop SOPs that address assigned tasks for their use.
- B. This annex will be updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section X of the Basic Plan.

XI. REFERENCES

- A. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG-101)
- B. Division Of Emergency Management *Local Emergency Management Planning Guide*. (DEM-10)

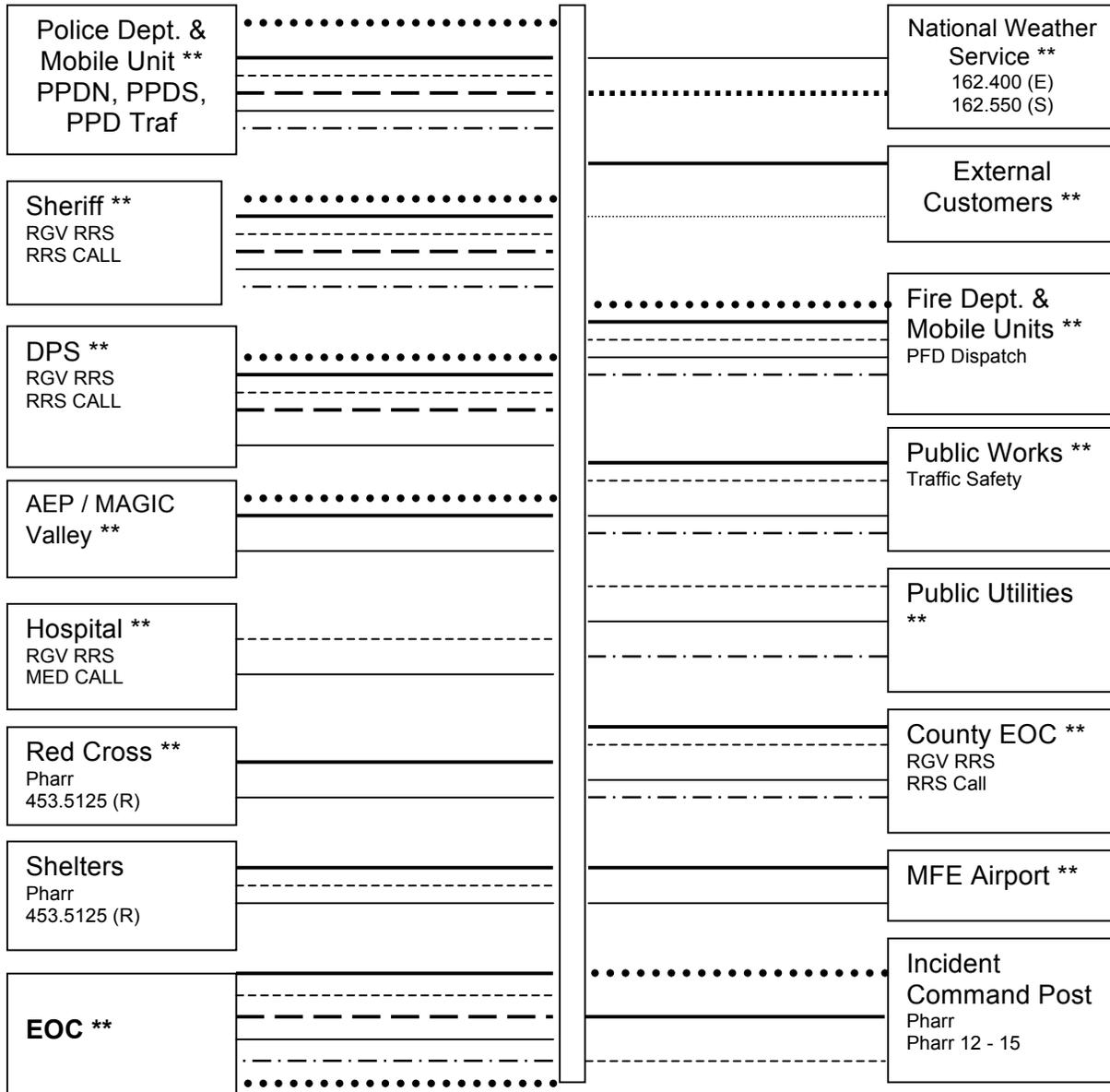
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Communications Diagram & Table

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Common Communications SOP
2. Communications Restoration Guide
3. Amateur Radio Support Agreement

COMMUNICATIONS DIAGRAM



ALL COMMUNICATIONS INDICATED ARE TRANSMIT AND RECEIVE CAPABLE

LEGEND:

- Radio
- CATV or Satellite
- _____ Telephone and/or Fax
- RACES
- - - - - Local Computer Network
- Satellite Phones
- _____ Cell Phones
- - - - - TLETS
- ** Internet Access & E-mail

FACILITY	COMMUNICATIONS									
	Cable TV Or Satellite	Phone/Fax	TLETS	RACES	Radio 700/800	Radio HF	Cell Phones	Satellite Phones	Local Computer Network	Internet E-mail
MFE Airport		X			X		X			X
Department of Public Safety	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
County EOC	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
EOC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Works	X	X			X		X		X	X
Fire Department & Mobile Units	X	X			X		X		X	X
Hospital	X	X			X					X
Public Utilities	X	X			X		X		X	X
National Weather Service	X	X	X			X				X
Police Department & Mobile Units	X	X	X		X		X		X	X
AEP / MV Utilities	X	X					X	X		X
Public Works	X	X			X		X		X	X
Red Cross		X			UHF		X			X
Shelters		X			UHF					
Sheriff's Office	X	X	X		X		X	X		X