

# Somerset County Emergency Operations Plan

## ANNEX B - COMMUNICATIONS

### I. PURPOSE

The Communications annex provides information on establishing, using, maintaining, augmenting, and providing backup for all types of communication devices needed during emergency response operations. The annex describes the communication systems in place and the responsibilities and procedures for using them.

### II. SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### A. SITUATION

1. The need to communicate between government officials, emergency responders and the emergency management officials can occur at any time. Which communication medium is used will vary with each incident depending on location, equipment interoperability, reliability, timeliness and what is being communicated.
2. The primary means of communication between the Somerset County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Incident Commander and First Responders will be by 2-way radio, Ham Radios will be used as a first backup and. Cell phones will be used as a secondary backup.
3. The primary means of communication between the County EOC and established Municipal EOCs will be radio via County FM frequency. Local shelters will be by landline telephone. If phones are not working, HAM Radios will be tried, followed by cell phones, and runners. Messages that are not urgent may be sent by the internet e-mail, if available.
4. The County EOC will communicate with the State EOC by landline phone, 2-way radio (provided State frequency), HAM Radio, or the Internet.

#### B. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Communication systems and equipment are established and maintained in operational condition. These systems will include the telephone system, the Internet, HAM Radios, and the County and Municipal radio system.
2. During a major disaster or utility outage event, the telephone system may become inoperative and cell phone system may become overused. Certain radio frequencies may also be overused if a great many emergency responders are trying to communicate on the few radio frequencies that are available.
3. The local EMCOMM/RACES organization will provide HAM Radios and operators when requested.
4. Maine National Guard communications capabilities may be requested if needed during a communications outage or during a terrorist event involving weapons of mass destruction. National Guard assets will include satellite communications.

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### III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. TELEPHONE SYSTEM: When functioning, the telephone system will be used by the Somerset County EOC and the Regional Communications Center (RCC) to communicate with one another, with the control centers of other emergency management and response organizations, with private relief organizations, and the local media. The other emergency management and response organizations include the State EOC, municipal EOCs, municipal officials, fire, police and EMS departments, mass care shelters, utility companies, hospitals, and other County EOCs and RCCs. The telephone system will be used for voice communications, fax transmissions, pager activations, and internet transmissions. The dedicated phone numbers established for EOC Operations upon activation are as follows:

1. **COMMAND/POLICY GROUP/ PUBLIC INFORMATION** (207) 474-7404  
Public Information Officer/Safety Officer/Administrative
2. **OPERATIONS** (207) 474-6788  
Emergency Management/Police/Fire/Rescue &  
EMS/HAZMAT/Public Works
3. **PLANNING** (207) 858-4317  
Incident Action Plan/Damage Assessment/Technical  
Assistance/Situation Tracking
4. **LOGISTICS**
  - Facility Services** (207) 858-0634  
Health/Social Services/Sheltering
  - Incident Support** (207) 858-0634  
Medical/Resources/Security
  - Communications** (207) 858-0523  
Message Center/ARES-EMCOMM/EOC Radio Console
5. **FINANCE** (207) 858-0634  
Issues/Procurement/Cost Recovery
6. **Dedicated Reporting** (207) 858-4216  
Fax Phone Line –  
Electronic E-Mail Address-  
[EmergencyManagement@SomersetCounty-ME.org](mailto:EmergencyManagement@SomersetCounty-ME.org)

B. CELLULAR TELEPHONE SYSTEM: Though very convenient, the cellular phone system is not considered to be a reliable communication method during an emergency. However, when functioning, the cellular phone system will be used by the Incident Commander, First Responders, and County Sheriff's Department to communicate when a landline phone is not available. The cellular phone system will be used for voice communications and pager activations. Each county and municipal department procures, maintains and operates its own cellular phone handset assets. The County EOC will have communication with the Incident Commander (IC) on scene with the County ICS frequency which normally functions as the County Homeland Security Alert Notification Systems.

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C. EMERGENCY RADIO NETWORK: The emergency 2-way radio network will be used by all emergency responders when in the field to communicate with one another and with the County RCC and EOC. The radio net is not secure and must not be used to transmit sensitive or classified information. The radio system will be used for voice communications and radio-pager activations. Several radio frequencies are retransmitted using repeaters which allows for an individual radio operator to communicate to any other location in the county. However, most frequencies are not supported by repeaters and transmit from radio to radio; thereby greatly reducing the range of radio transmissions. Each county and municipal department procures, maintains and operates its own radio assets.

D. HAM RADIO NETWORK: The HAM Radio network will be used by licensed and trained HAM Radio operators from the private sector. The HAM Radios have exceptional range and clarity; however these radios and their operators are very limited in number. The radio net is very unsecured and will not be used to transmit sensitive or classified information. The HAM radio system will be used for voice communications and message traffic. Due to the limited number, HAM Radios will be primarily used to provide communication between the County EOC, the mass care shelters and the hospitals and State EOC. A few sets may be used in the field to establish communication between the Incident Commander and the County EOC or with deployed Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT'S).

E. SATELLITE TELEPHONES: Somerset County does not have any satellite phone systems in inventory or use at this time. Satellite phones are very convenient in that they can transmit from nearly any location to any other on the planet. However, they are very expensive to procure and maintain. If satellite telephones are deemed necessary by the County EMA Director, a request will be made to the State EOC for State satellite communication assets. These assets are maintained and operated by the Maine Emergency Management Agency and the Maine National Guard.

F. SECURE TELEPHONES: Somerset County does not maintain any classified-information capable secure telephones. Maine military installations do have these assets.

### IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The following EOC Staffing Positions are tasked with Annex B Communications duties during an emergency event and EOC Activation:

County Commissioners: (COMMAND) (207) 474-7404 Has the overall responsibility to provide policy and financial support to maintain the County communication system assets. Located in EMA Directors Office.

EMA Director: (OPERATIONS) (207) 474-6788 Oversees and tracks status, reliability, and inventory of all County EOC Communication systems. Has the authority to activate all county communication systems. Located in EOC. Located in Operations.

Warning Coordinator: (LOGISTICS) (207) 858-0523 The Director of the Somerset County Regional Communication Center oversees and tracks status, reliability, and inventory of all County RCC Communication systems. Has the authority to activate all county communication systems. Located in Message Center.

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Communications Officer: (LOGISTICS) (207) 858-0523 Will test and operate all EOC communications systems, supervise EOC radio operations and will receive and release all radio messages. Located in Message Center.

Damage Assessment Coordinator: (PLANNING) (207) 858-4317 Will maintain communication with all municipal, county, and state damage assessment teams in the field. Located in Disaster Analysis/Planning (Resource/Utilities/Finance)

Medical Emergency Services Coordinator: (OPERATIONS) (207) 474-6788 Will maintain communication with all EMS teams in the field and with the local hospitals and pharmacies. Located in Operations.

Facility Maintenance Manager: (LOGISTICS) (207) 858-4709 Will contact the local telephone company when telephone service is out in the County EOC. Located in Logistics.

Fire & Rescue County Coordinators: (OPERATIONS) (207) 474-6788 Will maintain communication with all municipal fire departments at their stations or in the field. Located in Operations.

Protection Services Officer: (OPERATIONS) (207) 474-6788 Will maintain communication with all municipal, county, state, and federal law enforcement departments at their stations or in the field. Located in Operations.

Public Information Officer: (COMMAND) (207) 474-7404 Will maintain communication with all local media networks. Located in Command .

Resource Officer: (LOGISTICS) (207) 858-4709 Will maintain communication with the local telephone utility companies, with the cellular phone providers, radio equipment suppliers and maintainers, and internet service providers. Located in Logistics.

Shelter Coordinator: (LOGISTICS) (207) 858-4709 Will maintain communication with all shelters established in the County. Located in Logistics.

### V. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

A. ACCOUNTING & REIMBURSEMENT: (FINANCE) (207)858-0634 All major communication system or equipment purchases must be pre-approved by County Warrant signed by the County Commissioners. A payment request and copies of all bill statements for smaller costs, such as repairs for handheld radios, purchases of batteries and accessories for phones and radios will be provided to the County EMA office for payment. This information will be provided to the Finance Officer located in the EOC.

B. EQUIPMENT REPAIR POLICY: The Somerset County Clerk has developed a form to be used for Telephone Maintenance. The form will be completed and submitted to the Finance Officer, location Disaster Analysis/Planning in the Somerset County Communications Center for Computer Maintenance. The County has a contracted Information Services Technician.

C. SUPPORT AGREEMENTS & MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS:

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1. The Somerset County Communication Center (RCC) provides communication and dispatch support to all the municipalities in the County. Policies and agreements are developed by a User Board of Directors and approved by the County Commissioners and Municipal Officers.
2. Currently, there are communication support agreements with Verizon, the local telephone service provider for the PCP.
3. Somerset County uses Yankee Communications of Winslow, ME (207) 453-2000) for radio maintenance, repair, and procurement. The EMA Director is authorized to contact CCC and to commit funds for emergency repairs.

D. COMMUNICATION ROSTERS: All telephone, radio, pager, and internet contact information for government offices, emergency management agencies, emergency response organizations, private relief organizations, utility companies and the local media are maintained by the County EMA Administration Secretary on the County EMA Administration computer and files.

### VI. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

REVISIONS: A continuous file on recommended changes or improvements will be maintained by the Somerset County EMA. The EMA Director reviews this annex annually and ensures that all procedures, policies, data and responsibilities are current and reflect actual assignments.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: County and municipal agencies are responsible for the development and maintenance of their organizational policies and procedures.

### VII. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

SLG 101, September 1996, Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning.

Emergency Management Agency & Central Maine Power Company Operating Guideline for a Communication/Coordinating Plan, June 10, 2003.