Emergency Support Function #2
COMMUNICATIONS

Lead Agencies

- Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Support Agencies and Organizations

- Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF)
- Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)
- Virginia State Police (VSP)
- Other State Agencies with Communications Assets

Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #2 supports the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) by assisting state agencies, local governments, private-sector entities, and voluntary organizations requiring communications and Information Technology (IT) related equipment and services.

Scope & Applicability

For the purposes of this ESF, communications will be defined as information transfer. It involves the technology associated with the representation, transfer, interpretation, and processing of data among persons, places, and machines.

Activities within the scope of ESF #2 include: the coordination, provision, support and/or restoration of all state-managed communications and infrastructure during incident response and training; and the coordination of outage reporting and restoration planning for all private telecommunications service providers operating with the Commonwealth. These actions will be consistent with VITA, VDEM, Commonwealth of Virginia, and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules, regulations, and policies. ESF #2 services can be extended to localities upon request and as circumstances permit.

Policies

- All agencies assigned responsibilities within this ESF will develop and maintain the necessary plans, standard operating procedures, mutual aid agreements, and model contracts to successfully accomplish their tasks.

- VITA will provide Federal Communications Commission (FCC) policy guidance and frequency coordination services to VDEM and other state agencies, as needed, during incidents of any nature or magnitude.

- This ESF may be utilized to assist in response to a communications incident (systems failure, etc.) at the Virginia Emergency Operations Center. However, it is the responsibility of IT staff assigned to the VEOC to address the issue first.

Organizational Structure

VITA, with assistance from VDEM, provides oversight of emergency communications and infrastructure during augmentation and/or declared emergencies.

The VDEM Communications Officer in coordination with ESF #2 will integrate the communications capabilities of available federal,

state, public/public-private partnerships and volunteer organizations into a viable system to support emergency and disaster operations. The VDEM Communications Officer is appointed by the State Coordinator and upon direction of the Governor, will assume control over all state telecommunications assets.

ESF #2 will continue to implement and be responsible for the coordination of FCC policies as it pertains to oversight of radio spectrum use and implementation. These activities will be coordinated with the VDEM Communications Officer.

Concept of Operations

As a lead Agency for ESF #2, VITA will ensure sufficient staffing in accordance with mission requirements and coordinate communications and infrastructure support to meet mission requirements.

Operations are dependent upon the availability of resources and assets, including personnel, from VITA. These operations are intended to compliment those activities and roles outlined in the Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resiliency Strategic Plan (VCIPR).

Generally, state-managed communications within the Commonwealth are dependent upon the VITA Information Technology Partnership (ITP) assets, user and leased commercial telephone lines, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), broadband providers and/or leased IT networks, the VSP microwave radio system and STARS affiliated facilities. ESF #2 will leverage equipment and services offered from the ITP, but may need to utilize resources beyond the ITP if dictated by the mission requirements.

Roles & Responsibilities

Virginia Information Technologies Agency

- Coordinate the information flow regarding the status of communications and infrastructure between the VEOC

and ITP and/ or telecommunications service providers.

- Coordinate spectrum policy as it applies to specific events and tasks.

- Assist and coordinate with the ITP and private sector telecommunications carriers to ensure the provision/restoration of communications and IT services, as required.

- Supply technical expertise, direct technical support and maintenance of Commonwealth communication assets within the scope of existing contracts and maintenance agreements during an activation or declared emergency.

- Provision and support infrastructure required for the incident response and recovery activities outside of the VEOC facility (i.e. fields offices, state managed shelters, etc.).

Virginia Department of Emergency Management

- Coordinate with VITA for staffing and SOPs.

- Coordinate other State communications Assets

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

- Provide personnel, equipment, supplies and expertise as requested by the VERT to support communication operations and other requests for assistance such as establishing a 24/7/365 dispatch facility with Statewide Agencies Radio System capabilities.

Department of Military Affairs

- Provide the following as a secondary communications means for statewide direction and coordination of emergency/disaster operations: Tactical Communications Packages, Mobile

Command Post, and Joint Incident Site Communication Capability (Mobile).

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

- Provide support to the VERT with personnel and equipment as a secondary means of communication with a 24 hour, 7 day dispatch facility with capabilities of Statewide Agencies Radio System.

Virginia Department of Health

- Maintain automated alerting capabilities with the Health Alert Network (HAN) system.

- Maintain voice and video over the internet conferencing capabilities with Health Departments and Regional Hospital Coordination Center (RHCC) sites throughout the Commonwealth.

- Maintain redundant voice and web-based communications capabilities with hospitals and healthcare providers throughout the Commonwealth.

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services

- Provide secondary communications means for statewide direction and coordination of emergency/disaster operations.

Virginia State Police

- Provide a technical communications representative for support as required.

- Operate and maintain the STARS radio system.

- Provide communications equipment and other resources as needed.

Other State Agencies with Communications Assets

- Provide communications equipment and other resources as requested.

Authorities & References

Authorities

- Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Laws

- VDEM memorandum establishing the position of Communications Officer, October 25th, 2010

- Code of Virginia § 2.2-2006 – Information Technology Definitions

- Code of Virginia § 2.2-2005 - § 2.2-2031

References

- Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resiliency Strategic Plan (VCIPR).

- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) 4.6.3: The emergency operations/response plan shall identify and assign specific areas of responsibility for performing essential functions in response to an emergency or disaster. Areas of responsibility to be addressed include: communications.

- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) 4.10: Communications and Warning