ANNEX B: COMMUNICATIONS AND WARNING

Primary Department/Agency: Direction and Control
Support agency: 911 Center, OEM, Police Department, Fire Department

I. PURPOSE

The Purpose of the Communications and Warning Emergency Support Function is to provide instruction on establishing, using, maintaining, and augmenting backup for all types of communication devices needed during emergency response operations.

II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

A. Severe weather can occur any time of the year; therefore equipment and procedures to warn the public of impeding emergency situations must be in place and ready to use at anytime.

B. Power outages may disrupt television and radio systems that carry warning messages and provide public advisories.

C. Back-up communications systems must be regularly maintained and tested to ensure operational status.

D. Provisions must be made to provide warning to special needs groups.

E. Some people who are threatened by a severe weather hazards may ignore, not hear, or not understand warnings issued by the City.

F. City of Newport News Schools and government buildings staff will have to self-monitor the weather using NOAA weather radios, Newport News Radio Station AM 1700, or local news broadcast with severe weather/tornado warnings because of the limited warning time.

III. ORGANIZATION

Law Enforcement ESF is the primary implementation and coordinating agency, with assistance from other City agencies as needed. The Law Enforcement ESF will manage warning and evacuation of the hurricane risk areas, special needs program members, elderly citizens, and handicapped citizens.

Information Technology ESF is the primary agency for maintenance for all communications systems within the 911 Center and the Emergency Operations Center and ensures all equipment is maintained 24-hour operability including the 800 MHz Radio System, Dialogic Communicator Emergency Notification System, Essential Technology Incident Master, 911 Center CADS System, alternate 911 Center, Emergency Information Center, all telephone communications systems and Newport News Radio Station AM 1700.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The decision to evacuate areas in the City is made by the Direction and Control ESF1 Director (City Manager/Assistant City Manager). Only the governor can direct mandatory evacuation. The Law Enforcement ESF will be responsible for managing the evacuation.

The primary official means that the community will receive severe weather warnings will be through the EAS stations listed in the attachment to this procedure, through the State Warning and Alerting System (SAWAS) and through the NOAA weather radio. Emergency action messages are disseminated through the local primary station for the City of Newport News. The OEM Coordinator or his designee may activate the EAS, Cox Cablevision Cable Override System, the Dialogic Emergency Notification system as deemed necessary to implement life saving measures. The PIO will post non-life threatening emergency information and protective measures on the City AM Radio station as needed.

Sirens, public address equipped vehicles assigned to the police, fire and other City departments will be utilized, in addition to automated emergency alerting systems, accomplish door-to-door notification to warn citizens within the risk areas as required.

The Administrative Management Support Team (AMST) in coordination with the PIO will provide non-life threatening emergency information to the public and City departments and agencies as required. TDD machines are located in the Emergency Information Center (EIC) and E-911 Center allowing for communication with the hearing impaired. AMST members are trained on emergency operations and communications equipment as required to maintain proficiency.

When the OEM Coordinator deems it necessary to advise evacuation, the OEM Director will be notified and approval requested. The State EOC will be contacted and request a governor directed mandatory evacuation for potential affected areas. Once the governor's mandatory evacuation has been announced, evacuation advisories will be disseminated to the public as described in the Communications and Warning ESF procedure of the Newport News EOP.

Emergency shelters and transportation for the areas affected by the mandatory evacuation will be determined and implemented by the Mass Care ESF and Evacuation ESF.

Newport News EOC will receive normally receive official Tropical Cyclone Forecast Advisories data via Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) from the State EOC when a storm system appears to threaten the Commonwealth of Virginia within 120 hours (5 days). VCIN is the primary warning system to local governments. VCIN is a disaster-resistant, secure network with a terminal located in the City of Newport News 911 Center. VCIN is used for official State EOC messages concerning weather products, immediate emergency information, time-sensitive information and coordination.

In the event of VCIN failure, Newport News EOC can receive weather warnings via warning circuit and/or telephone from VDEM. Significant weather information, such as watches and specific advisories, will be sent via email, fax, RACES, received by telephone, and/or placed on the VDEM web site.

In the event of telephone or VCIN failure, information can be received or transmitted by RACES, warning circuits or HF radio.

All City departments and agencies will make notification to their staff as required to keep them updated on the emergency situation.

COMMUNICATIONS AND WARNING ACTIONS

The National Weather Service starts issuing statements 5 days in advance, in the case of a hurricane. The following readiness conditions are based on time periods before landfall. In the case of Nor'easters and other severe weather events, conditions may not be applicable and responsibilities outlined in those conditions may or may not be completed within the lead up time to the event.

CONDITION 5 **Routine Operations**	
Forecast: Normal Weather Conditions	Period: None
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Develop and maintain severe weather plans	EOP, Severe Weather Response Plan
☐ Conduct Communication and Warning drills regularly	Tornado Drill, 800 MHZ radio drill
☐ Monitor daily weather conditions	VCIN/NOAA Weather Radio
☐ Maintain all communication services and outlets	EAS stations, local radio and TV contacts
☐ Maintain communication and warning equipment	Inspect all sirens and public address equipment
☐ Review and update procedures and checklist on the	Each ESF review and update their ESF

Incident Master System or WebEOC.	procedures and checklist on the Incident Master Server or WebEOC.
CONDITION 4 **Alert and Notification Status**	
Forecast: Tropical Storm Force Winds Expected	**Period: 3-5 Days**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Monitor all Severe Weather Alerts. All local government agencies to monitor their NOAA Weather Alert Radio and other available emergency notification systems for emergency information.	VCIN/NOAA Weather Radio, National Weather Service (NWS)
☐ Monitor Emergency Alerting Systems for emergency information and advisories	National Weather Service, EAS station
☐ Bring amateur radio services to notification status	Contact RACES Emergency Coordinator for required support.
☐ Provide warnings to special needs population	Special Needs Registry/Communicator
☐ Maintain all communication services and outlets	EAS stations, local radio and TV contacts
☐ Maintain communication and warning equipment	Ensure public notification systems and equipment is operational. Coordinate with PIO for emergency messages.
CONDITION 3: **Emergency Mobilization Phase**	
Forecast: Tropical Storm Force Winds Expected	**Period: 72 Hours**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Begin mobilizing hurricane response teams	Communicator Emergency Notification system/agency notification rosters and procedures.
☐ Begin mobilizing AMST/Emergency Information Center and EOC staff for activation	911 Center checklist, Communicator Emergency Notification System and EIC Activation Procedures
☐ Continue to monitor and broadcast storm activity	City Email system, City AM Radio, Emergency Alerting System (EAS) NOAA Weather Radio
☐ Test backup communications systems	800 Mhz Radio Systems. Satellite Communication System.
☐ Check available supplies	SOP Emergency Operations Checklist
☐ Continue to provide warnings to special needs populations	Special Needs Registry/Communicator
☐ Test Redundant Satellite System EMNET, Data and Voice Satellite	To be installed July 2008

CONDITION 2: Emergency Mobilization Phase	
Forecast: Tropical Storm Force Winds Expected	**Period: 48 Hours**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Continue to mobilize hurricane response teams	Fire and Police personnel
☐ Continue mobilizing Emergency Information Center and 911 Center staff for activation	911 Center checklist and EIC Activation Procedures
☐ Attend EOC staff briefings as necessary	ESF Representatives for EOC.
☐ Provide necessary administrative and logistical support	AMST Supervisors
☐ Begin mobilizing communications and warning equipment	Confirm emergency notification systems are operational to include the Communicator and vehicle public address systems. Coordinate Newport News specific with the State EOC and EAS system.
CONDITION 1: Emergency Response Phase	
Forecast: Tropical Storm Force Winds Expected	**Period: 24 Hours**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Respond to EOC activation	Recall essential staff and begin 24-hour emergency operations status
☐ Activate Emergency Information Center (EIC)	Recall 911 Center staff and EOC Administrative Support Team staff and begin EIC operations.
☐ Deploy hurricane response teams	Fire and Police personnel
☐ Deploy communications and warning equipment	Siren trucks and public address equipment
☐ Monitor City Manager's directives for ordering evacuations	Direction and Control ESF
☐ Disseminate warnings of evacuation if directed	Siren trucks and public address equipment
LANDFALL Emergency Response Ceased	
Forecast: Tropical Storm Force Winds are Present	**Period: Current Time**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Monitor storm	NOAA Weather Radio, National Weather Service (NWS)
☐ Provide necessary administrative/logistical support	Stay in contact with first responders
☐ Continue to attend briefing	EOC Liaison
☐ Support Communications systems for reentry and rescue operations	Fire and Police personnel
REENTRY AND RECOVERY Recovery Response Phase	
Forecast: Normal Weather Conditions Resume	**Period: Within 24 Hrs After Storm Passes**
Actions	**Methods**
☐ Support Communications systems for reentry and rescue operations	Information Technology ESF.
☐ Determine citywide communication system status and essential priorities for repair	Information Technology Personnel

TYPES OF WARNING

Warning Type	Definition
Severe Weather	Severe weather warnings are issued by the National Weather Service when severe thunderstorms are expected to affect an area producing winds in excess of 57 mph, or hail ¾ inch or greater.
Tornado Watches and Warnings	Tornado Watches and Warnings are issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for tornadoes to develop, or one has been sighted or reported.
Marine Advisories	The National Weather Service issues marine advisors on a regular basis. Those related to tropical weather systems are issued every 6 hours to report the location and strength of a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane. In addition, to this information, the marine advisory provides predicted strength and forecast positions of the storms at 12, 24, 36, 48, and 72 hours.
Hurricane/Tropical Storm Watches and Warnings	Tropical Storm/Hurricane Watches and Warnings are issued as part of the marine advisory when a storm may, or is expected to affect a landmass. A Watch is generally issued when a storm might affect an area within 36 hour, while a Warning is issued when a storm is expected to affect an area within 24 hours. Since Hurricanes contain both hurricane force winds (74 mph or greater) and tropical storm force winds (40-74 mph), both may be established for a coastal area. The Hurricane Watch/Warning will be issued for the area where the hurricane force winds are expected or are possible, whereas the Tropical Storm Watch/Warning will be issued for areas on either side of the Hurricane Watch/Warning.
Gale Watch and Warning	A gale warning is an advisory issued by the National Weather Service in the United States Territorial Waters about the existence of winds of gale force or above or the imminent occurrence of gales at sea. The purpose of gale warnings is to allow shipping to take precautionary actions to ensure their safety at sea. Gale force winds range of 39 to 54 miles or approximately 34 to 48 knots.