Communications
Gaston County Emergency Operations Plan

Coordinating Agency:	Communications Division
	Gaston County Police Department
Cooperating Agencies:	Emergency Management
	Fire Departments
	Rescue Squads
	Others as required or requested

Attachments	
Attachment 1	Preparedness / Response Checklist
Also see	
Annex	Notification and Warning
Plan	Catawba and McGuire Nuclear Plan

I.   PURPOSE

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

II.   SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A.   **Situation**

1. Communications play a critical role in emergency operations. Communications networks and facilities exist and operate throughout the county. Properly coordinated, these facilities provide for effective and efficient response activities.

2. The Emergency Communications Center is located in the Gaston County Emergency Services

Building at 615 North Highland Street, in the City of Gastonia. Gastonia Police Department is the back-up communications center. Should situations dictate relocation of the primary Emergency Operations Center the Mobile Command Post will be located at the selected facility to assist in providing communications needs.

B. **Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that the communications system will survive and/or withstand the effects of a disaster. This annex will provide coordination of all communications systems during an emergency situation facilitating timely response activities.

2. Within the National Response Framework, communications is an Emergency Support Function (ESF-2) and incorporates coordination with telecommunications and information technology industries as well as restoration and repair of telecommunications infrastructure.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. **General**

1. The Gaston County Police Department controls emergency communications systems and services used by Gaston County's agencies.

2. The County Warning Point (704-866-3300) is operated 24 hours a day and serves as the Emergency Communications Center.

3. Emergency calls are generally received through an Enhanced 911 telephone service and dispatched according to Communications Center standard operating procedures and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).

4. As the emergency escalates the staffing of the Emergency Communications Center may be expanded as required. Appropriate backup communications personnel will be notified when needed for the expansion of communications capability.

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

6. The City of Mount Holly, Cherryville and Dallas receive most of their emergency police calls at communications centers located at the municipal emergency service agencies. However, occasions occur when calls are received and dispatched or routed through Gaston County Communications.

B. **Specific**

1. Telephone Service

   - AT&T Telephone Company provides telephone and 911 services in the county.

   - Essential users will receive priority telephone service and restoration during emergencies.

   - Through registration with Federal TAP program, by law the Gaston County 911 Center will receive the highest service restoration priority within Gaston County.

2. Two-Way Radio Systems

- 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:
  - Gaston County Police Department
  - Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies
  - Gaston County Office of Emergency Management
  - Fire Departments
  - Rescue Squads
  - Emergency Medical Services
  - Gaston County Local Government agencies
  - Gaston County Sheriff's Department

- The following City/County departments, agencies and organizations operate two-way radio systems:
  - Sheriff's Department
  - County Volunteer Fire Department(s)
  - Gastonia Police Department
  - Gastonia Fire Department
  - City/Town Public Works Departments
  - County Volunteer Rescue Squad(s)
  - Gaston County Hospital
  - Gaston County Emergency Medical Service
  - Gaston County Office of Emergency Management
  - Gaston County Police Department
  - ACCESS (Central Transportation)

- Other two-way communications systems that may be used to communicate with the State EOC and surrounding counties during emergencies include:
  - Division of Criminal Information (DCI) computer
  - National Attack Warning Alert System (NAWAS)
  - Commercial Telephone
  - ARES
  - State VIPER 800 MHz radio network

- The following communications systems can be accessed from the County Communications Center:
  - City / County Police and Sheriff's Department Radio Systems
  - County Fire Protection Network
  - Hospital System
  - EMS/Rescue Squad Radio System
  - The Local Area Police Network
  - Duke Energy DEMNET Line (Nuclear power stations)
  - National Attack Warning Alert System (NAWAS)
  - Gaston County Police Radio System
  - The County ARES Network
  - State VIPER Network
  - NCEMS Medical Network

- Other Communications Systems

  The following communications systems are available but not operated from the Communications Center:
  - Civil Air Patrol Squadron
  - Gaston County ARES Network

IV. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. The Gaston County Office of Emergency Management Administrator or designee will be notified when a major emergency situation has occurred or is imminent. The Emergency Management Administrator or designee 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 the Communications Director through the Gaston County Police Department.

V. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

The line of succession is:

A. Communications Center Director

B. Chief Gaston County Police

C. Assistant Chief Gaston County Police

Attachment 1
Communications Preparedness / Response Checklist

EOC

☐ Communications Center Director 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

☐ 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.