

SEDGWICK COUNTY
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN
2025-2030



ESF-2 - Communications

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ESF 2- Communications

Coordinating Agency:

Sedgwick County Emergency Management

Primary Agency:

Sedgwick County Emergency Communications
Sedgwick County Division of Information Technology

Support Agencies:

Adjutant General's Office, Kansas Division of Emergency Management
Adjutant General's Office, Office of Emergency Communications
Amateur Radio Operators (ARES)
City of Wichita Communications Division
City of Wichita Department of Information Technology
Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)
Sedgwick County Communications Office

I. Purpose and Scope

Purpose

The purpose of ESF 2 is to provide resources of member agencies to support emergency communications needs in Sedgwick County including:

- Establish and maintain communication between and among the key facilities that are integral to efficient disaster operations.
- Ensure that the Emergency Communications Center is prepared to respond to emergencies, recover, and mitigate their impacts.
- Ensure that the Emergency Communications Center is prepared to provide the mission essential communications services required during normal operations.

Scope

ESF 2 coordinates actions to provide temporary communications to support incident management and facilitates the restoration of the communications infrastructure. Specifically, ESF 2 addresses the following:

- Communications interoperability among field response units
- Primary and back-up communications systems
- Communications to and from the Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)
- Sources for communications augmentation such as Amateur Radio
- Other communications systems to support emergency operations.

II. Policies, References and Authorities

Local/Regional

- Sedgwick County Code of Ordinances Chapter 9.

- Kansas Homeland Security Region G- Hazard Mitigation Plan

State

- Executive Order 05-03, Use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS);
- Kansas Statutes Annotated (KSA), 48-9a01, Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC);
- Kansas Response Plan.

Federal

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 C.F.R 1910- 29.
- 42 U.S.C. 11001-11050 Emergency Planning & Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).
- National Response Framework (NRF).
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) – 5: Management of Domestic Incidents.
- Presidential Policy Directive (HSPD) – 8: National Preparedness.
- Comprehensive Planning Guide (CPG) 101.

III. Assumptions

1. A disaster may have negative impacts on the existing communications infrastructure requiring the use of alternative communications systems.
2. Response activities may require the utilization of enhanced and/or specialized communications solutions.
3. Expanded response activities may require the provision of supplemental communications capabilities.
4. Organizations will work within their existing city, county, and regional plans and partnership agreements to meet the communications needs of disasters.
5. Critical infrastructure protective actions have been implemented to ensure communications systems remain operable.

IV. Concept of Operations

General

ESF 2 is organized consistent with the Sedgwick County Emergency Operations Center, the requirements of the National Response Framework, the National Incident Management System, and the Incident Command System. This structure and system support incident assessment, planning, procurement, deployment, and coordination and support operations to Sedgwick County through the Sedgwick County Incident Response Network, Area Operations and Regional Incident Support Teams (ISTs) to provide a timely and appropriate response to an emergency or situation.

Procedures, protocols and plans for disaster response activities are developed to govern staff operations at the Sedgwick County Emergency Operations Center and in the field. These are in the form of Emergency Operations Plan (i.e., Base Plan) and corresponding Appendices, Incident Annexes, Support Annexes and Standard Operating Guidelines, which describe ESF 2 capabilities. Periodic training and exercises are also conducted to enhance effectiveness.

Sedgwick County Emergency Management Serves as the Coordinating Agency for ESF-2. The EOC Manager or designee is responsible for contacting primary and support agencies as well as providing situational awareness briefings to these agencies. Sedgwick County EOC will serve as the central location for interagency coordination and executive decision-making, including all activities associated with ESF #2.

Primary dispatching capabilities in the County exist with the Sedgwick County Emergency Communications 911 Dispatch Center. The 9-1-1 Center provides 24-hour dispatching capability for Derby Police Department and Fire Department, Wichita Police Department and Fire Department, Sedgwick County Sheriff and Fire District #1, Sedgwick County Emergency Management, Sedgwick County Emergency Communications, Sedgwick County Division of Public Safety, and Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

ESF #2 team members are critical members of the EOC Team and will work within the EOC structure as described in ESF #5 –Information and Planning.

Sedgwick County Division of Information and Technology and Radio Shop are responsible for planning, installing and maintaining radio communications systems for all county-operated public safety communications centers. Redundancies in equipment, as well as alternate methods to maintain communications links render most equipment outages non-critical.

In accordance with a mission assignment from ESF 2, each primary and/or support organization assisting ESF 2 will retain administrative control over its own resources and personnel but will be under the operational control of ESF 2 or as assigned.

Sedgwick County Emergency Communications will notify the “on call” Emergency Management Duty Officer (DO) when Sedgwick County has been threatened or impacted by an emergency or disaster event as provided in the County Warning Point procedure. The DO through monitoring and/or communication with Emergency Communications is responsible for providing initial notification to the Emergency Management Director or designee to initiate EOC activation and notification procedures. EOC activation is further detailed in ESF-5 "Information and Planning".

Sedgwick County Emergency Management and partners are responsible for liaison roles with their respective state or other governmental entities as needed. In a large event requiring local or state mutual aid assistance. ESF 2 will work with its support agency counterparts to seek and procure, coordinate and direct the use of any required assets.

In a large event requiring local or State mutual aid assistance, ESF 2 will work with its support agency counterparts to seek and procure, plan, coordinate and/or direct the use of any required assets.

Throughout the response and recovery periods, ESF 2 will evaluate and analyze information communications requests; develop and update assessments of the communications service situation and status in the impact area; and undertake contingency planning to meet anticipated communications demands or needs.

When an event is focused in scope to a specific type or response mode, technical and subject matter expertise may be provided by an appropriate person(s) from a supporting agency with skills pertinent to the type of event, who will advise and/or direct operations within the context of the Incident Command System structure.

Sedgwick County Emergency Management, working with other ESF-2 partners will support the establishment of communications between key facilities in the absence of or loss of services if required.

The communication systems identified for Sedgwick County are provided below and are grouped in order based upon their level of priority for repair and restoration.

Communications infrastructure. The emergency communications center is located on the second floor of the Public Safety building (714 N Main) and is staffed on a 24/7/365 basis. Sufficient communications, warning equipment, and personnel are available to provide communications necessary for most emergency situations. In severe emergencies augmentation may be required. The County has a wide variety of emergency communications equipment including radios (fixed, mobile and handheld), pagers, telephones (including mobile and cellular), fax machines, etc..

Communications Capabilities

Sedgwick County Emergency Communications will be the lead agency for emergency incident internal communications management through the established radio system. Communications in the field will normally be established by radio. Each department or agency having a radio system will designate personnel to operate their system and maintain communications with the County EOC. Sedgwick County Emergency Communications is the primary answering point for 9-1-1 calls in Sedgwick County and provides dispatch services for the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office, Sedgwick County Fire Department, and Sedgwick County Emergency Medical Service. Additionally, they provide dispatch services for the Wichita Police and Fire Departments, as well as outlying municipalities including Andale, Bel Aire, Cheney, Clearwater, Colwich, Derby, Eastborough, Garden Plain, Goddard, Haysville, Kechi, Maize, Mt. Hope and Park City. The County operates its communications on a digital 800MHz system and shares interoperability capabilities with other counties within the state of Kansas.

Communications with state and federal government will be through landline telephone links, cellular telephones and/or radio contact. A listing of multi-agency radio zones with assigned channels are attached to this annex.

Numerous county and municipal agencies have communications capabilities and field units communicate among each other and with the County EOC primarily by radio using the 800 MHz trunked system.

The Sedgwick County Radio Shop maintains a list of the radio frequencies used by response agencies in the area.

The Sedgwick County Division of Information Technology Services department provides information management support to county government departments and offices in general, and maintains the county's wide area network (WAN).

If electronic emergency information systems (9-1-1 dispatch) are not available, paper logs will be used to record events, communications & messages, damage assessments, situation reports, resources utilized, man-hours expended, etc. Sedgwick County Emergency Communications will initiate their continuity procedures in cases of service loss. A backup site has been designated by Sedgwick County Emergency Communications in the event of a failure of the 714 N Main Street Public Safe Building location at the Wichita-Sedgwick County Law Enforcement Training Center. Additional limited backup of southern

Sedgwick County may be provided by Sumner County 9-1-1 dispatch. If needed partnering response agencies will activate their alternative communication procedures to ensure they continue to provide services safely. The repeaters and communication infrastructure that is present in Sedgwick County operates on back generator power if there is a loss of power.

If there is a still need for capabilities beyond local availability Sedgwick County Emergency Communications can coordinate a request with Emergency Management through the EOC resource assistance with the state through the State Emergency Operations Center. Sedgwick County Emergency Management's Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) volunteers also provide amateur radio support to the EOC and partners in the event of a disaster, with field assigned personnel and hospital sites and other key locations as needed.

The communications between on-scene and off-site personnel will be primarily managed by what tools are feasible during the incident. Mainly through the 800 MHz system, phone, and the use of RACES. The EOC and response partners will ensure that communications are maintained where necessary.

Information and communications will be relayed to the Sedgwick County EOC and dispersed among the represented agencies along with the Public Information Officer and the Joint Information Center (JIC) if established. Public information will be relayed from the EOC as determined by the lead response agencies and the Incident Commander in the field.

Event logs and communications traffic records are vital for documenting emergency actions for possible post-emergency investigation or after-action reports.

Records documenting the number of people involved in communication activities, whether paid or volunteer are needed for possible reimbursement under Presidential disaster declarations.

Classification of Emergency Calls

Law Enforcement

- Priority "E" - Calls where a life-threatening situation exists or a serious felony crime is in progress.
- Priority "1" – A serious crime has just occurred or is imminent, bodily injury has occurred or is imminent or another agency requires immediate law enforcement assistance.
- Priority "2" – A crime has just occurred of a non-life-threatening nature and immediate response is not needed to arrest the offender or an incident which indicates a potential, but no certain probability, of a more serious situation than indicated.
- Priority "3" – Does not require a rapid response to prevent injury or property damage. Typically report calls.

Fire and EMS

- Priority "E" – Calls where a life-threatening medical problem exists or serious trauma. Includes all incidents with a person trapped. Example: person not breathing, house fire with persons trapped, motor vehicle accident with someone trapped.
- Priority "1" – Incidents where there is a potential for a problem to worsen, but no one is in immediate danger. Ex: House fire, grass fire.

- Priority “2” – Non-life-threatening medical situations, but where a response is still needed. For fire departments, it is checking a situation which is now under control or not an immediate problem. Ex: fall with a single injury to the patient, sick person who is conscious and breathing okay. Gas odor outside, check a fire that is out.

Public Warning and Notification

Sedgwick County Emergency Management utilizes AlertSense through CivicPlus to send emergency messages through the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS). IPAWS activates multiple components of emergency public notification at the same time: Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) in the form of text messages to cell phones; traditional media, such as radio and TV, through the Emergency Alert System (EAS); and newer technology, such as highway message boards, as well as Internet apps and widgets that are designed to receive the emergency messages. If the local connection to AlertSense and IPAWS fails, there are multiple backups: Emergency Management can call the provider’s emergency number and they will send the message we dictate. The state EOC and/or the local National Weather Service office also will send IPAWS messages for Sedgwick County upon request. The AlertSense software also has a reverse 911 component where Emergency Communications can generate an outbound message to citizens who have signed up and entered a valid telephone number.

Another important component of our emergency messaging is social media. The Sedgwick County Communications office will be pushing the message through all the county’s Social Media platforms, and other affected jurisdictions and agencies will be doing the same. These avenues give the ability to send messages in languages other than English. This saturation approach to information sharing: WEA’s, EAS, Internet apps, message boards, Reverse 911, and social media, is designed to make sure we alert as many people as possible, including those with access or functional needs, low literacy skills, and non-English speakers.

Sedgwick County Emergency Management also operates a system of outdoor warning devices that are used to alert communities throughout the county to take shelter in times of severe weather. Sirens are activated for tornadoes based on National Weather Service issued polygons in instances of severe weather. Sedgwick County Emergency Management has the capability to activate and selectively sound outdoor warning devices as a backup.

Communication Infrastructure

The process for monitoring and reporting the status of, and damage to will be a part of the damage assessment process outlined in ESF-3/ESF-14. Sedgwick County Emergency Communications will advise the EOC of any outages or damage so those are prioritized during damage assessment efforts.

Event logs and communications traffic records are vital for documenting emergency actions for possible post-emergency investigation or after-action reports.

Records documenting the number of people involved in communication activities, whether paid or volunteer are needed for possible reimbursement under Presidential disaster declarations.

Any lease, rental or mutual aid agreements related to the augmentation of communications equipment should be kept.