WILSON COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN
COMMUNICATION/NOTIFICATION AND WARNING
ESF-2

I. PURPOSE

This section describes the County's emergency communication/notification and warning system.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

    A. Situation

        1. Wilson County operates a Central Communications Center located at a secure facility. Wilson County Emergency Communications Center serves as the 911 Center and the County warning point. The County also operates a fully operational back-up communications center. Both facilities are fully capable of operating all the County's communications systems. Both facilities are equipped with full back-up electrical power.

        2. Day to day operations require five dispatch positions, however, the volume of traffic during times of emergency/disaster may require additional personnel to assist.

        3. The Communications Centers is designed are secure facilities.

        4. The Communications Center is usually the first point of contact for the general public in contacting emergency service agencies.

        5. Wilson County emergency communications are heavily dependent on the commercial telephone network.

        6. The Wilson County EOC is equipped with remote radios to allow emergency services agencies to communicate with their field units. Amateur radio capabilities are unlimited and consist of quickly deployable communication equipment and vehicles equipped for communications support.

        7. Special needs groups, persons in group quarters, or schools may require special warning and/or notification.

        8. Emergency Management has the capability to access the Emergency Alert System to deliver warnings to the public.

        9. Scanner radios are utilized extensively by residents of the County, providing another means of alerting or warning the public.

       10. Wilson County and the City of Wilson utilize Code Red as a local emergency notification system to advise citizens of emergency information. The system is also utilized for severe weather warnings, automatically, when the national weather service issues warnings.

    B. Assumptions

        1. Use of all available forms of warning and notification should provide sufficient

warning to the general public and special needs population prior to an incident.

2. Emergency/disaster occurrences could have a detrimental effect on the County's communication system.

3. The commercial telephone system serving Wilson County is vulnerable to the effects of emergencies and disasters, and to possible system overload due to increased usage.

4. Commercial electric power may be shut off during significant emergencies, necessitating the use of auxiliary power.

5. It is possible for communities within the County to be isolated from communications for extended periods of time.

6. Loss of the communication tower or the County's law enforcement, fire, or EMS base stations could hamper communication, or the ability to page emergency personnel throughout the County.

7. The ability to repair damage to the County communication system is contingent upon the availability of private commercial repair technicians.

8. State assistance may be needed to procure supplemental communications equipment or to locate available repair technicians following a major disaster.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATION

A. General

1. The County Warning Point will initiate notification and warning of appropriate personnel. Telephone, radio, communications, the Code Red system or pagers may be utilized to notify public officials, EOC staff, emergency personnel, and the general public as necessary.

2. Emergency service vehicles equipped with public address systems may be used to warn the general public.

3. The National Weather Service may issue weather watches or warnings directly to the public and the Communications Center. Warnings are automatically disseminated through the Code Red System. Code Red has the ability to notify through telephone message, text message (and TDD), and e-mail.

4. The Communications Center is operated 24 hours a day and serves as the Wilson County Warning Point.

5. The NC Highway Patrol's Raleigh Communications Center serves as the State Warning Point.

6. Notification of governmental officials and emergency personnel by the County Warning Point will follow established procedures (Emergency Communications Center).

7. Emergency communications standard operating guidelines will be implemented.

Back-up capabilities will be activated as necessary.

8. The County Manager or Emergency Management Director must authorize the use of the Emergency Alert System/Emergency Notification System

9. Emergency warning may originate at the national, state, or local level of government. Timely warning requires dissemination to the public by all available means:

   a. Local Radio and Television Stations
   b. NOAA Weather Radio (National Weather Service)
   c. Mobile PA Systems
   d. Telephone
   e. General Broadcast Over All Available Radio Frequencies
   f. Newspapers
   g. Code Red System

10. Field emergency service personnel utilize the County emergency communications networks to communicate with the EOC.

11. Amateur Radio volunteers can augment primary communications. The NCEM Central Branch office will operate an amateur radio station during periods of activation.

12. The Central Branch Office will assist the National Weather Service with dissemination of severe weather advisories and forwarding of related information, situation reports, etc., as needed by the County.

B. Specific

1. Telephone Service

   a. Century Link Telephone provides commercial telephone service.
   b. Mobile telephone capability is provided by several companies in the area.
   c. Century Link Telephone will be furnished a restoration priority list for telephone service prior to and/or following a major disaster.
   d. During emergencies, personnel will staff information telephones in the EOC to respond to questions from the general public.

2. Two Way Radio Systems

   a. The County's Communications System is designated as the principal system to be used for direction and control activities. Principle users are as follows:

      1. Law Enforcement
      2. Emergency Management
      3. Fire / Rescue
      4. Emergency Medical Service
      5. Public Utilities
      6. Medical Facilities

   b. Other two-way communications systems which may be used to

communicate with the State EOC during emergencies include:

     1.   Division of Criminal Information (DCI)
     2.   State Emergency Management Radio Network
     3.   NAWAS (National Warning System)
     4.   FAX
     5.   Amateur Radio Emergency Service

3.   The Emergency Communications Center Director will be responsible for maintaining the operational readiness of the Primary and Back-up Communication Centers.

4.   Code Red System – The Emergency Communications Center has access to the Code Red System, as does Emergency Management. Response field supervisors can request a message to be disseminated to the public. That message will be formulated and disseminated in the geographic area prescribed by the field supervisor. The Code Red System can be accessed through any computer system or mobile device.

(10 July 19)