



FEMA

Fact Sheet

DISASTER EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

A new Disaster Emergency Communications function has been established by FEMA's Disaster Operations Directorate that is designed to coordinate federal emergency communications support for state, local and tribal emergency responders during major incidents. The goal is a system that will effectively integrate emergency communications among federal, state, local, and tribal responder agencies during emergencies and disaster operations.

DEC will be responsible for the deployment, installation, operation, maintenance and protection of tactical telecommunications and operations assets in disasters; establishing Joint Field Offices (JFO) and providing for their operational communications and systems needs; and assisting in the evaluation of post-disaster communications needs in support of the restoration of the communications infrastructure. This capability will be managed through the DEC Division in the Disaster Operations Directorate.

As part of the DEC function, tactical communications assets can be deployed during incidents to support critical operable and interoperable communications needs using FEMA's Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) Program assets and the communications capabilities of other federal agencies, coordinated and integrated through the DEC Branch in Joint Field Offices (JFO).

The DEC Branch in the JFO also provides communications support for national response teams, including FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs), Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Task Forces, and the Department of Health and Human Services' National Disaster Medical System.

Other important DEC elements are the Regional Emergency Communications Coordination (RECC) Working Groups that are being established in each of the ten FEMA Regions to work with federal, state, local and tribal agencies at the regional level to facilitate planning and coordination of emergency communications resources and operations. The RECC Working Groups will serve as a key coordination point for regional emergency communications issues.

DEC is also supporting the development of regional and state operational plans used to help mitigate identified communications risks in advance of an incident. Led by FEMA, the operational-based plans are developed in conjunction with state and local response agencies.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.