



Disaster Emergency Communications

As a national leader in the field of Disaster Emergency Communications (DEC), FEMA coordinates the federal government's response, continuity efforts and restoration of essential communications before, during, and after an incident or planned event. Working closely with federal, state, tribal, and other mission partners, FEMA helps to unify the efforts of all responders around one common communication goal: the delivery of information to emergency management decision makers. Having a single, shared communications vision promotes an interagency system of interoperable communications capabilities across all levels of government to ensure mission-critical information and situational awareness.

Communications and information systems

Establishing and maintaining effective disaster emergency communications and information systems is critical to FEMA's role in coordinating the federal government's response, continuity efforts, and restoration of essential services. The DEC Division in the Response Directorate ensures effective communications by:

- Providing and supporting tactical operable and interoperable voice, video, and information systems for emergency response teams
- Developing effective command and control communications frameworks
- Supporting the coordination and delivery of secure communications solutions
- Identifying and documenting mission-critical disaster emergency communications and information systems capabilities, requirements, solutions, and mitigation strategies
- Promoting communications interoperability with federal, state, tribal, and local emergency response providers

Rapidly deployable equipment

FEMA's DEC Division can rapidly deploy Mobile Emergency Response Support (MERS) capability to provide secure and non-secure voice, video, and information services, operations, and logistics support to response operations, FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs), Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) teams, National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) teams, and other joint federal and State response teams in resource-constrained environments. MERS can build out and support Interim Operating Facilities (IOFs), Joint Field Offices (JFOs), Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs), and other

incident infrastructure. Additionally, MERS can bridge disparate communications systems to integrate Essential Support Functions (ESFs), National Guard, and federal departments and agencies with regional, state, tribal, and local partners.

FEMA's DEC Division and the DEC Branch in the JFO execute FEMA's ESF #2 co-primary responsibility to support public safety communications during a disaster and, in conjunction with the National Communications System and ESF #2 support organizations, coordinate the restoration of commercial radio, broadcast, and other communications systems and capabilities.

Preparedness and coordination

To further facilitate preparedness and coordination, FEMA DEC supports the development of regional deliberate and catastrophic disaster plans to include state-specific communications annexes, and supports the Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups (RECCWGs) in all 10 FEMA regions to address key emergency communications issues. RECCWG membership includes emergency response organizations from federal, state, tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities.



“FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.”