

# Western Massachusetts Emergency Communications Strategies



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Prepared for:

**WRHSAC**  
Western Region Homeland  
Security Advisory Council



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# Western Massachusetts Emergency Communications Strategies

September 2012

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# Western Massachusetts Emergency Communications Strategies

## Executive Summary

In September 2011, the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC) contracted with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), with assistance from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, to conduct an analysis of emergency communication strategies in the western Massachusetts region, consisting of 101 cities and towns located in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, and Berkshire Counties. Research and outreach was conducted to develop a baseline understanding of emergency communications within and between emergency response agencies (interagency communications), and communications with the public. Based on the results of this research, key findings and recommendations were developed in regard to current practices and identified gaps in both interagency and public communications in each of the four counties.

## Key Findings

The key findings are presented below, in no particular order of importance:

### Emergency Responder Interagency Communications

1. Radio capabilities in the region have been improved greatly in recent years, though there are still areas of the region with limited radio access (and cell phone coverage) due to hilly terrain. Identified issues with radio include the lack of trained Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) in the state, lack of procedures for using radios during larger events, and unfamiliarity with the use of radios by agencies that do not use them on a day to day basis. The *Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperability Field Operations Guide* (MIFOG) document recently released by MEMA will hopefully help with coordination during larger events.
2. Significant investment will be needed over the next ten years to upgrade the radio equipment and infrastructure in the region. At the same time, funding from the Department of Homeland Security, which has been used to support infrastructure and equipment improvements in the region, is decreasing. An effort is underway to create a non-profit Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Council (WMRIC) to continue the work of the WRHSAC Interoperability Sub-Committee into the future.

3. Currently the use of amateur radio for emergency communications in the region is largely informal, and could be built upon to provide a reliable back-up radio system in the event that the primary system fails.
4. Data sharing capabilities do not exist throughout the region. Within each county, police departments are capable of data sharing, but cannot interface with surrounding counties or other disciplines.
5. The lack of a high-speed, secure internet connection is a problem in the more rural areas of the region. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute's MassBroadband 123 fiber-optic network will be completed in 2013, and will provide the region with an opportunity to develop increased wireless communications capabilities. Efforts will still be needed to extend coverage to all areas of the region (what is known as the "last mile").
6. Monitoring of social media for situational awareness information does not currently take place. The lack of staffing resources at MEMA and on the local level was identified as one issue. The Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team is adding a member to the team for this purpose, and could be drawn upon as a resource during an event. Trainings and online information on the use of social media are now available for emergency personnel.
7. A reliable web-based tool or network is needed for securely sharing information among agencies. There are mixed opinions in the region about the use of MEMA's WebEOC, which failed to function properly in recent events, but has since been upgraded.
8. Procedures are needed for coordinating communication and information sharing among multiple agencies and jurisdictions during large events. Private sector stakeholders and non-governmental organizations should be included in the development of procedures and subsequent exercises. These procedures could contribute to the development of a Joint Information System – the written plans, procedures, and agreements that help facilitate a coordinated effort to share information – for the region.
9. The lack of a legally recognized regional authority was identified as an obstacle in coordinating communication during larger events. Despite this, emergency responders and managers have coordinated information-sharing in past events through a Joint Information System or other means of collaboration.
10. The regional PSAPs are used as a contact point for emergency information, and are a good resource for sharing information among local jurisdictions during an event, but may not have sufficient staff and resources to perform this function effectively. Varying response procedures in Berkshire County pose challenges for dispatch across the region.

## Emergency Communication with the Public

1. Current strategies for communicating with the public are generally effective. However, redundancy and accessibility for specific population groups, such as functional and access needs populations, could be improved, and as “new” modes of communication, such as Twitter and Facebook, become increasingly used by the public to get their information, emergency personnel will need to be able to provide information to residents via these communication modes. Power outages severely compromise communication, especially in the hill towns and rural locations, emphasizing the need for individuals, families, and communities to be prepared to communicate without the electrical grid for at least 72 hours.
2. There are limited resources currently available for training existing personnel and investing in the various new technologies and the additional personnel necessary to improve emergency communication.
3. Automated control of television and radio, and oftentimes distant management contacts, interferes with local authority to interrupt programming in order to broadcast timely and accessible information to local populations, but local radio and cell phones were widely used in Haiti after the earthquake when there was no power for days.
4. Members of the general public are interested in spontaneously volunteering while emergencies are occurring. These volunteers can be at risk if not properly trained or incorporated into other response efforts. Methods need to be established for effectively channeling these desires into public communication about how they can assist in response efforts in an integrated manner.
5. Social media is generally not currently utilized by emergency management officials and many emergency management officials, especially in areas with limited cell service and limited broadband internet, have significant concern about the effectiveness and reliability of social media in alerting the public about emergencies. The major reason for this concern is a perceived risk of misinformation and the potential spreading of incorrect information. Once emergency management officials become comfortable with Twitter and other social media modes of communication, they will be able to use it to get to their residents who rely on this form of communication in the event of a disaster. Therefore the concern about inaccurate information will be eliminated as local emergency personnel will be the ones providing the accurate information. And as noted, with a power outage, smart phones may be residents’ only way of obtaining information.

## Recommendations

The final recommendations that resulted from this process are summarized below, prioritized in terms of what can be accomplished in the short term (next five years) and the long term (five to ten years).

## **Emergency Responder Interagency Communications Short-Term Recommendations (5 years)**

1. Provide education and outreach on Joint Information Systems (JIS) to local officials and emergency responders and advocate for the establishment of JIS as part of Standard Operating Procedures to coordinate Public Information and Risk Communications. Education should include what a JIS is; how to establish a JIS; who can establish a JIS; examples of when a JIS could be activated; and agreements and procedures that should be in place prior to any incident/disaster.
2. Develop a Joint Information System (JIS) Functional Annex for the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) in order to facilitate the coordination of public information between multiple jurisdictions during an event. The annex should pull together all of the information needed to effectively coordinate public information on a regional scale, such as tools and methods for communicating with other jurisdictions and the public, pre-scripted messages for the media, and contact information for response agencies, NGOs, utility companies, interpreters, the media, etc. Accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Annex should be developed that would provide a checklist of actions to take when the JIS is utilized.
3. Hold trainings and exercises for initiating and utilizing the Joint Information System for events that impact multiple jurisdictions. The H1N1 response After Action Report could be used as guidance for how a JIS can operate during a real response. Involve multiple stakeholders in exercises, such as utility companies, owners of high hazard dams, media, and other private sector stakeholders.
4. Train more first responders, emergency professionals, and members of MRC, CERT, faith-based organizations, and other response partners in the region for communication roles such as Public Information Officer (PIO), Liaison Officer, and Communications Unit Leader (COML).
5. Agencies should periodically review statewide mobilization plans to remain current on procedures outlined in the plans.
6. Increase awareness of amateur radio emergency communications capabilities in the western Massachusetts region among emergency managers. Develop formal agreements between ARES and EMDs that outline the roles of amateur radio operators during a response, and integrate amateur radio operators into EOCs, Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST) or Virtual Information Operations Support (VIOS), regional sheltering, the Incident Management Teams (IMTs), and other response teams and functions in the region. Operators should receive relevant ICS training, and be included in exercises.
7. Build the capacity in the region to monitor social media for situational awareness and rumor control through trainings and exercises for emergency personnel, CERT and MRC members, and other volunteers. Develop a Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) to assist with monitoring social media and disseminating approved messages during large incidents.

8. Support the implementation of regional data sharing efforts in the region. Attention should be paid to developing the capability to share data across counties and across disciplines.
9. Support the creation of the Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Council to continue the work of the WRHSAC Interoperability Sub-Committee into the future.
10. Work with MEMA to educate end-users on the current and planned capabilities of WebEOC, and incorporate the use of WebEOC into exercises in order to practice using the tool prior to a real event.
11. Explore developing a secure web-based information sharing network among emergency response stakeholders that is internet based. In the short term, an assessment could be conducted to determine the opportunities for developing such a network, including how a network could operate, what equipment would be needed to use the network, what type of applications and user interface is desired by different disciplines, etc. In addition, the assessment could examine how the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's *AXIA MassBroadband 123*, a next generation fiber optic infrastructure currently being deployed in western Massachusetts, could be utilized to support this network. A longer term project (see below) could be to implement a region-wide network that incorporates multiple disciplines and jurisdictions.

### **Emergency Responder Interagency Communications Long-Term Recommendations (5-10 years)**

1. Implement a region-wide secure web-based information sharing network that incorporates multiple disciplines and jurisdictions (see the short term recommendation above for more information). A governance structure would need to be worked out to ensure continued maintenance and evolution of the network. The WMRIC is a potential entity that could serve as a steering committee for such an effort, or develop a sub-committee to act in such a capacity.
2. Establish one or more Regional EOCs or Multi-Agency Coordination Centers (MACCs) in the region to better facilitate interagency communications during large-scale events.
3. Conduct a study of the various response procedures for the towns in Berkshire County, and work with police, fire, and EMS departments to develop a strategy for revising procedures to improve dispatch in the region.

### **Emergency Communications with the Public Short-Term Recommendations**

1. Establish relationships with the following organizations to assist in more effective communications with the public:

- a. Partnership for Public Warning, a national public-private partnership currently assisting California with creating a governance system for their public emergency communications system.
  - b. Massachusetts Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and individual, nationally-certified sign language interpreters in order to provide emergency management interpreting at local television stations, shelters, evacuation sites, and disaster scenes.<sup>1</sup> Interpreters and Emergency Management Directors should develop a close relationship so that interpreting services can be utilized efficiently during an emergency.
  - c. UMass Collaborative Adaptive Sensing of the Atmosphere, in order to initiate relationships that can lead to the development of an Integrated Warning Team for the region and perhaps create an alliance that can secure a mix of grant and private funding to deploy their technology and improve forecasting for the region.
  - d. Regional broadcast meteorologists and National Weather Service forecasters assigned to this area, to become members and participants in an Integrated Warning Team that will work collaboratively to improve public messaging about weather prediction and contribute to preparedness education and response and recovery from emergency weather events.
2. Continue research into the perceptions and attitudes of the region’s residents regarding emergency alerts, in order to customize templates for common warning messages and establish localized foundations for public education campaigns. Feedback should also be solicited from the public for all recommendations in this report, as they are implemented.
  3. Incorporate a public information component into drills, tabletops and exercises, in order to assist in better execution of both initial notifications of the public and follow-up explanations and information that is disseminated.
  4. Review and update public communications strategies in all local and regional emergency plans. Plans should include processes, protocols, and procedures that require the development of draft news releases; media lists; and contact information for elected/appointed officials, community leaders, private-sector organizations, and public service organizations to facilitate the dissemination of accurate, consistent, accessible, and timely public information.
  5. Work with municipalities and regional responders to develop written protocols for use of social media and the internet during emergencies, in order to identify and formally decide what information is appropriate for dissemination through this communication mode.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Massachusetts Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, contact [president@marid.org](mailto:president@marid.org).

6. Emergency personnel in the region should consider creating Twitter accounts and start “following” a few key resources, such as: AACO Emergency Management @AACO\_OEM , Francisco Sanchez @DisasterPIO, and Kim Stephens @Kim26stephens. This would enable them to become more familiar with using social media and potentially to address concerns about inaccurate information.
7. Develop procedures for monitoring media outlets during emergencies and ensure they convey accurate information. To facilitate accuracy, emergency management officials and/or the public information officer should be in constant contact with reporters, television stations, and radio stations.
8. Develop system for monitoring social media during emergencies in order to collect intelligence on real-time emergency situations and understand public opinion and sentiments about the emergency. Monitoring of social media will also allow for awareness about spontaneous volunteer efforts that are occurring and provide a method for integrating these efforts into the overall regional response.
9. Conduct a statewide exercise similar to the Joint Information Virtual Exercise (JIVE) conducted in New Hampshire last year during National Emergency Preparedness Month in September, when pre-scripted preparedness messages were provided to agencies to send out to the public via various social media. By providing assistance on using different social media platforms, the goal would be to reach as much of the public as possible, as well as help agencies get used to using social media before an emergency happens.
10. Continue to work to fill in the gaps in alert systems available so interested municipalities can provide distribution of emergency alerts to residents on preferred devices and formats.
11. Continue to explore the role of IPAWS and its ability to address gaps. Note: The MEMA smart phone alert system is scheduled to be up and running in fall 2012.
12. Educate the public, prior to emergencies, about the public communications modes of which they should be aware. If new systems or communication strategies are established, the community should be informed about how to interact with responders, and vice versa, before an emergency occurs.
13. Conduct an intensive survey and outreach campaign for people with functional and access needs and those who, for any reason, require assistance for self-care and survival. Multiple goals can be achieved through this effort, including identifying the spectrum of communication needs (language and modality) and educating the public about personal preparedness.
14. Facilitate necessary outreach and education to lay the groundwork for a possible separate governing structure, similar to what exists in California, or for an expanded scope of the current proposed interoperability governance structure to incorporate all of the requisite elements for establishing,

implementing and continuously improving the infrastructure for alerts and warnings in western Massachusetts.

15. Hold a meeting of local radio and television stations to determine how best to interrupt programming during an emergency. Local stations can be used as anchor institutions and integrated with the region's public communications infrastructure more effectively, since they already have much of the relay equipment necessary for conveying messages to emergency officials and the public during an emergency. Radio and television stations could be trained in the use of ham radio, so that they can quickly receive messages from emergency officials and broadcast these to the public.
16. Develop a list of foreign language and American Sign Language interpreters in western Massachusetts so that it is available for reference in an emergency.
17. Promote relationships between local television stations and ASL interpreters, in order to facilitate the negotiation and establishment of interpreting services on television during emergencies.
18. Provide a video relay service (VRS) training to emergency dispatches to replace now-outdated Teletype Printer (TTP) services, for more effective communication with the deaf.

### **Emergency Communications with the Public Long-Term Recommendations**

1. Establish a permanent Joint Information Center (JIC) to serve as a regional, state, and national resource for training and back-up emergency communications support. The facility would serve to train EMDs, first responders, and volunteers in effective communications with the public, including how to effectively reach out to specific population groups. The Holyoke Fusion Center is one potential location identified as a site for the JIC.
2. Highlight the value and importance of the role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) to interface with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The PIO will gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate accurate, accessible, and timely information on the incident's cause, size, status, and the resources committed. Only one PIO should be designated per incident. In large-scale incidents or where multiple command posts are established, the PIO should participate in or lead the Joint Information Center (JIC) in order to ensure consistency in the provision of information to the public.
3. Establish a combined response and preparedness website, possibly with funding for a permanent supervisory position to train and monitor all emergency managers, communication coordinators, and potential or prospective PIOs in the region in the applied uses of online tools for public emergency communication. This site could be built up and promoted as the authoritative "go to" site for any emergency in western Massachusetts. In the event of a natural or human-caused disaster, the currently assigned staff person and permanent supervisor will actively update the

website and monitor media and public input about the emergency. In the course of day-to-day events, the currently-assigned staff person will receive training in researching and posting links to relevant blog entries and educational videos, contributing to town and emergency management Facebook pages, staying current on Twitter feeds of interest, and disseminating information of general interest to first responders.

4. Institutionalize drills and trainings involving members of non-English speaking populations in order to expose first responders to the special communication challenges they must be prepared to handle. Involve professional simultaneous interpreters to enable substantive learning conversations with people fluent in other languages and allow first responders to experience and assess the use of interpreters in the field.
5. Consider developing a separate governance structure, similar to California, or expand the scope of the existing or proposed interoperability governance structure to incorporate all of the requisite elements for establishing, implementing and continuously-improving the infrastructure for alerts and warnings in western Massachusetts.



## Introduction

In September 2011, the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC) contracted with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) to conduct an analysis of emergency communication strategies in the western Massachusetts region, consisting of 101 cities and towns located in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, and Berkshire Counties. Over the course of the next 11 months, staff of these two regional planning agencies (RPAs) worked under the direction of WRHSAC's Planning and Pandemic Flu Subcommittee to develop an understanding of emergency communications in the following two primary areas of concern:

- 1. Emergency Responder Interagency Communications**—FRCOG staff researched available tools and models of communication available to first responder officials for internal communications and situational awareness across disciplines and jurisdictional boundaries regarding the coordination of unified emergency public information messages to the public and unified updates to all departments. In addition, staff researched governance models for internal first responder officials' communication networks.
- 2. Emergency Communication with the Public**—PVPC staff identified available tools to communicate with the public in the event of and during a local and/or regional emergency incident or disaster and researched governance models for public emergency communication systems.

A review of existing plans and reports was conducted to develop a baseline understanding of current emergency communications in western Massachusetts. In particular, recent After Action Reports (AARs) for the June 1, 2011 tornadoes and for the August 28, 2011 Tropical Storm Irene were integral in developing an understanding of the current communications strengths and weaknesses in the region during large-scale events involving multiple jurisdictions, response agencies and partners. Input from the regional sheltering project, funded through the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, was also integrated into this report.

Outreach to key stakeholders was then conducted to obtain additional details on existing communications tools and strategies, what currently works well, and what the identified needs are for the region. FRCOG and PVPC were assisted in this process by staff from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, who conducted key outreach activities in Berkshire County. Research into communications tools and strategies throughout the country provided further information into the needs identified by stakeholders and the AARs.

We also obtained feedback from members of the public and volunteer emergency responders, including care providers serving individuals requiring additional assistance or who have functional needs requiring communication accommodations such as the cognitively-disabled (who may need pictures and/or repetition); the deaf (who require interpretation into ASL and/or live captioning of speech into text); and immigrants fluent in languages other than English, (who require translation and interpretation services).

Based on the results of this research, key findings were developed in regard to current practices and identified gaps in both interagency and public communications in each of the four counties. Draft recommendations were developed and presented to stakeholder groups for feedback and were then revised. The final recommendations that resulted from this process are presented in this report, prioritized in terms of what can be accomplished in the short term (next five years) and the long term (five to ten years).

Following is a summary of the sources consulted in developing this report. A detailed list of sources is located in Appendix A.

- June 2011 Tornado and Tropical Storm Irene After Action Reports and Improvement Plans
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) documents and training materials
- Regional Emergency Planning Committees (REPCs) and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs)
- Key individual stakeholders
- State, regional, and local communications and emergency management plans
- Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team (NWMIMAT)
- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
- NERAC 2005 study
- Region-wide alerting systems supported by both the Southeast and Central Homeland Security Councils
- Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) members
- Alert and Warning Report to the California State Legislature
- California Alert and Warning Initiative Implementation Plan
- Revealing Americans' Awareness and Preparedness Surrounding Emergency Situations
- Conferences and workshops
- Tabletop exercises in Montague, Westfield and Holyoke
- Internet websites and blogs

## Emergency Responder Interagency Communications

### Background

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) provides a consistent nationwide framework to enable federal, state, tribal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents, regardless of cause, size, location, or complexity. The Communications and Information Management component of NIMS outlines the following objectives for emergency communications:

- Common Operating Picture – An overview of an incident created by collating and gathering information of any type (voice, data, etc.) from agencies/organizations in order to support decision-making. In order to maintain situational awareness, communications and incident information must be updated continually.
- Interoperability - Allows emergency management/response personnel and their affiliated organizations to communicate within and across agencies and jurisdictions via voice, data, or video in real time, when needed, and when authorized. Interoperability plans should include considerations of governance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), technology, training and exercises, and usage within the context of the stress and chaos of a major response effort.
- Reliability, Scalability, and Portability - Communications and information systems should be flexible, reliable, and scalable in order to function in any type of incident, and should be suitable for operations within a single jurisdiction or agency, or multiple jurisdictions/agencies. Scalability allows responders to increase the number of users on a system, while portability facilitates the interaction of systems that are normally distinct.
- Resiliency and Redundancy – Resiliency is the ability of communications systems to withstand and continue to perform after damage or loss of infrastructure. It requires systems to not rely solely on a sophisticated but vulnerable network of support systems. Redundancy is both the duplication of identical services, and the ability to communicate through diverse, alternative methods when standard capabilities suffer damage.<sup>1</sup>

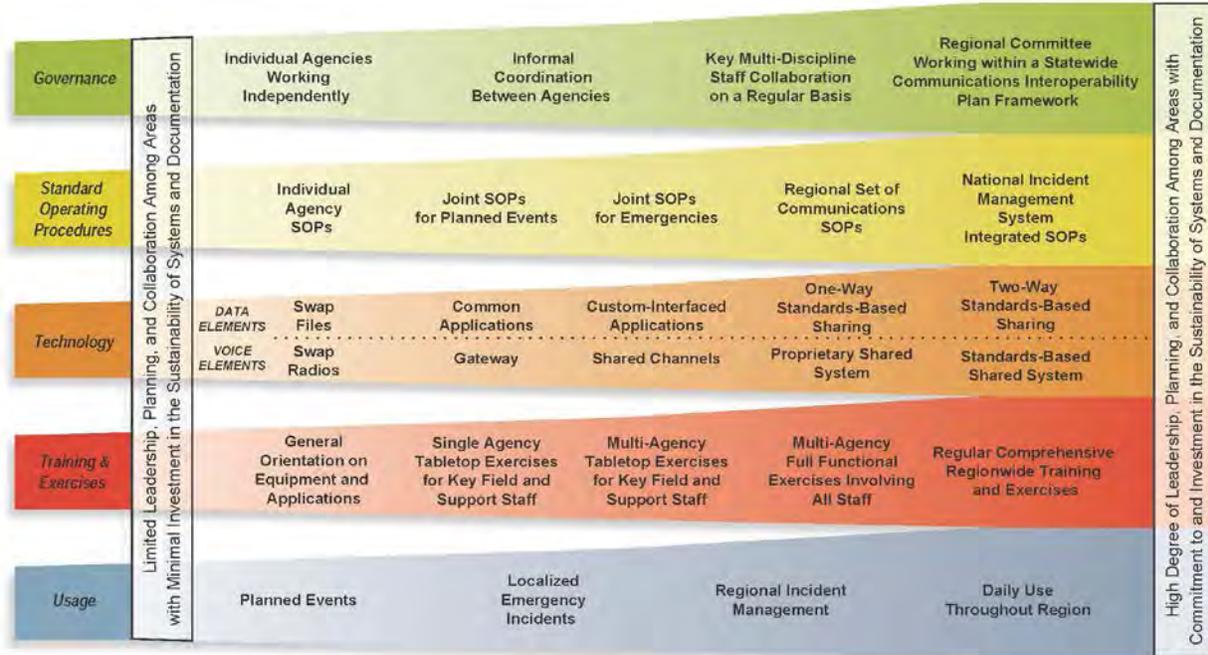
Some of the elements of NIMS that facilitate meeting these objectives are discussed in this section. More information on NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS) is located in Appendix F.

Building upon the goal of communications interoperability outlined in NIMS, the Interoperability Continuum was developed to provide guidance to emergency response agencies and policy makers to plan and implement interoperability solutions for voice and data communications. The continuum is comprised of five elements that must be addressed to achieve true interoperability amongst agencies and jurisdictions: governance, standard operating procedures (SOPs), technology, training and exercises, and usage (see Figure 1 on the following page). The ultimate goal is to have multi-disciplinary jurisdictions working together across a region, pursuant to formal written agreements defined within the larger scope of a state plan, utilizing a regional set of SOPs that are integrated with NIMS, using technology that allows for real-time information sharing among many agencies, with regular training and exercises and daily usage of equipment throughout the region.

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<sup>1</sup> *National Incident Management System*, Department of Homeland Security, December 2008.

Figure 1: SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum<sup>2</sup>



## Existing Conditions in Western Massachusetts

Following is an overview of existing tools and methods that agencies and disciplines currently use to communicate during emergencies, as well as the governance structure for interagency communications in the region.

### Communication Tools and Methods

**Radio Communications** – Radio is used throughout the region for daily use and to communicate during larger events. There is a diversity of radio systems available in the region for use by multiple disciplines. Regional systems utilized by police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) include the Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (WMLEC) system, the Franklin County Emergency Communications System (FCECS), Hampshire County VHF system, and the Berkshire County VHF and UHF systems. Statewide radio systems include the Massachusetts State-wide 800MHz system, the Central Medical Emergency Direction system, the Emergency Medical Services system, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation system. In addition each town has a radio to communicate with MEMA. National channels also are available for tactical use.

<sup>2</sup> *Interoperability Continuum: A Tool for Improving Emergency Response Communications and Interoperability*, SAFECOM program of the Department of Homeland Security. [www.safecomprogram.gov](http://www.safecomprogram.gov)

Much work has been completed and is underway to improve the interoperability of these systems for events that require communications across agencies and jurisdictions. In a 2011 assessment based on the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum categories of Governance, SOPs, Training, and Usage, Franklin and Hampshire Counties were considered to have “established” interoperability capabilities, Hampden County was considered to be at an “intermediate” stage of capability, and Berkshire County was at an “early” stage of capability. The only county in Massachusetts achieving an “advanced” capability assessment was Norfolk County. An assessment of performance during two real-world events in 2011, the June 1 tornadoes and Tropical Storm Irene, showed that Hampden County and Berkshire County performed at an “established” level of interoperability.<sup>3</sup> Some common challenges from these two events, according to the assessments, were the lack of trained Communications Unit Leaders (COMLs) in the state (currently there are three certified COMLs in western Massachusetts), therefore hindering communications planning for the incident over multiple operational periods and among multiple response agencies, and a lack of familiarity with radio systems and procedures by agencies that do not use radio on a day to day basis.<sup>4</sup>

In April 2012, MEMA released the *Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperability Field Operations Guide (MIFOG)* to serve as a technical reference for “establishing solutions to support communications during emergency incidents and planned events.” The guide contains information on the different radio systems and channels across the state, communications assets and how to request them, key contacts, and ICS forms related to communications, and is meant to help alleviate the problems identified above and other issues related to radio interoperability. In addition, a *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP)* is currently being developed for the Western Homeland Security Planning Region. The plan will document the communications resources available in the region, and the contacts and procedures for use of the resources. The plan will serve as a guide for emergency responders for events that expand beyond the local level.

Several additional challenges for radio communications, according to outreach conducted for this report, deal with equipment and infrastructure. The hilly terrain in the region makes regular use of radio difficult in a few areas of Berkshire County and the hill towns. Additionally, it is recognized that within the next ten years, substantial investment will be needed to upgrade radio equipment and infrastructure throughout the region. Some communities are already struggling to fund the narrowbanding of their operations, which has been mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The governance section, below, will provide more details into possible solutions to sustain investment in communications infrastructure in the region.

Radio infrastructure can be susceptible to weather conditions, particularly ice. For this reason, redundant means of communication are needed when primary systems fail. The use of amateur radio operators (often called “ham” radio operators) is one option. Amateur radio also requires electricity to

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<sup>3</sup> Franklin and Hampshire Counties were not assessed for these events.

<sup>4</sup> Office of Emergency Communications/Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program *Massachusetts Capability Overview*, as presented at the Statewide Communications Interoperability Conference, May 3, 2012; *Response Level Communications Tool* for Hampden County Tornado and Berkshire County Tropical Storm Irene.

broadcast similar to primary systems, but there is no central server that would be out of power. If the amateur radio broadcast site has a generator, then it continues to be operational. Currently the use of amateur radio operators in the region for emergency communications is sporadic. Some municipalities have formal agreements with the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), where amateur radio operators are integrated into their EOCs. In other towns and cities amateur radio operators are utilized by the American Red Cross and municipalities in shelters, while in some they are used very little or not at all. Many EMDs may not be familiar with the services that organizations like RACES or the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) can provide.<sup>5</sup> For the most part, the use of amateur radio in the region during emergencies is informal. In order to further facilitate the use of amateur radio during emergencies, EMDs need to be provided with information on how operators can assist in an emergency, and operators need to be trained in ICS and NIMS (many members of RACES and ARES in our region are also members of MRC or CERT, so have already had some of this training). Formal agreements could be developed between towns and the western Massachusetts chapter of ARES to formalize the use of amateur radio operators and clarify their roles in an emergency.<sup>6</sup> EMDs can also be trained and licensed as ham radio operators. Since the events of 2011, there has been a push to incorporate amateur radio operations into town EOCs by installing the necessary equipment. A regional amateur radio exercise is planned for September 2012 to test amateur radio communications between hospitals, EOCs, and other stakeholders.

In addition to voice communications, the amateur radio system called NBEMS (Narrow Band Emergency Message System) can be used for data sharing, including using ICS forms. New digital modes have been developed in the last few years, such as radios with high frequency network automatic link establishment (ALE) capability. These systems allow detailed text messages and data to be sent even when the internet has been shut down in the sending area, as long as the receiving entity still has internet access. Detailed requests for supplies, spreadsheets, or even photos can be sent this way if needed. Few such systems have been utilized in western Massachusetts to date due to the cost of the systems and the lack of individual operators trained to utilize the new technologies.

**Internet** – Currently, internet access varies widely across the region, with relatively good access in more urban areas, and remote areas relying on slow dial-up connections or having no access at all. Use of the internet is also reliant on a power source, since computers, phones, and other devices that are used to connect to the internet require electricity. Email and Google documents, among other tools, are used for sharing information among responders and emergency management within EOCs and in the field when internet access is available. The use and availability of mobile data terminals in the region also varies widely. In 2011, an estimated 50% of safety responses in Hampden County used mobile data, 30%

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<sup>5</sup> The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a standby radio service provided for in Part 97.407 of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and regulations governing amateur radio in the United States. When activated, RACES will consist of only those amateur radio operators who have previously registered with State and local governments to provide emergency radio communications for them in times of emergency. Other amateur radio operations would be suspended by the President. RACES has not been activated since its creation in 1952. The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) provides emergency communications in the conventional Amateur Radio Service without the need for an emergency declaration from the government.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B for a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

in Berkshire County, 25% in Franklin County, and 10% in Hampshire County.<sup>7</sup> Data sharing capabilities exist between police departments within each county (with the exception of Franklin County, where this capability does not exist for all departments). However the ability to share data across county lines, and across disciplines, does not currently exist. Police departments across the four counties do have access to the Western Massachusetts Sheriffs Information Network, which connects the information systems from the four county jails in order to allow departments to search records from all four jails through one portal.

Statewide web-based communication and information sharing tools include MEMA's WebEOC, and the Department of Public Health's Health and Homeland Alert Network (HHAN). HHAN is a communication system that interfaces with pagers, fax, phones, email and wireless devices. The system alerts the response community regarding public health and bioterrorism situations, and provides each community with rapid and timely access to emergent health information, trained personnel, and practices and procedures for public health preparedness, response, and service on a 24/7 basis. WebEOC is a Crisis Information Management Software (CIMS) system used to manage emergency events, and is utilized on a daily basis by MEMA to track incidents across the state. It is available to any local emergency management program for reporting incidents and coordinating information. It is intended to be used to both communicate and share information with MEMA, and to facilitate the development and maintenance of a Common Operating Picture among multiple departments and agencies during larger events. However, during Tropical Storm Irene, WebEOC was overloaded by users trying to log on and enter information and, hence, crashed. Since then, MEMA has made improvements to WebEOC to reduce the likelihood that this would happen again, and have tested WebEOC's ability to handle at least 700 users at once, without having an issues. Feedback for this project demonstrates that some stakeholders in the region are open to giving WebEOC another chance, while others remain very skeptical.

Currently WebEOC can be used by communities to track their own daily incidents and events, without needing to share this information with MEMA. However the system is not set up in a way to make it easy to use on a regional, daily basis for smaller scale events. There is no way to filter information by region, and information must either be shared with all users statewide, or only shared with users from one community, making information sharing among a small subset of communities difficult. Planned improvements to WebEOC include the ability to filter information by region, as well as the ability to enter information into ICS forms online, greatly improving the documentation function of the tool. These improvements are due to be completed by February 2012, accompanied by training for users. Overall, there is a consensus in the region that a secure, web-based tool is needed for data and information sharing, whether it is WebEOC or another system. There is also some interest in implementing WebEOC or similar CIMS functionality sub-regionally (such as on a county-wide basis) if and as funding allows.

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<sup>7</sup> Office of Emergency Communications/Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program, *County Capabilities Report on Interoperable Communications*.

As mentioned above, many areas in the region lack high speed internet access, which was identified as a significant problem by numerous stakeholders. The region will soon have high-speed internet capabilities through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's AXIA MassBroadband 123 next generation fiber-optic network that is currently being deployed to over 120 communities in western and north central Massachusetts.<sup>8</sup> The network provides a tremendous opportunity to further develop wireless emergency communications in the region. Many public safety facilities will act as Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) for the network, where fiber optic cable will be brought directly to the facility. The Department of Conservation and Recreation is also assisting with the deployment of the network by allowing its fire towers be used to extend coverage in the region. At the same time, a nation-wide public safety wireless broadband network is planned that will use dedicated public safety spectrum (as opposed to a commercial network). By developing and using wireless broadband technologies in western Massachusetts now, the region will be better prepared to transition to the nationwide public safety dedicated network when it is available. An example of an existing public safety wireless network is PSNet, based in the Metro-Boston area. More information on the applications and governance of the network can be found in Appendix B.

The use of social media by responders and emergency management for interagency communications and pulling in information from the public for situational awareness is currently limited. Monitoring information being shared via social media, while not an authoritative source, can help verify information from other sources, provide leads into developing situations, and give a picture of what is being said about an incident and the response, and what information the public is seeking. The last point especially allows an agency to respond to the public with accurate information, dispelling the spread of rumors and misinformation.

MEMA maintains a Twitter and Facebook presence, which several stakeholders in Berkshire County found helpful during Tropical Storm Irene as a source of information on the situation throughout the state. Currently there is no staff at MEMA dedicated to monitoring social media for situational awareness. According to MEMA's Public Information Officer (PIO), they hope to be able to do more with social media in the future, both in terms of monitoring and disseminating information, if resources allow. The Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team is in the process of adding a team member for this purpose, and could be drawn upon as a resource during emergencies when the team is activated. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently developed an on-line social media training that provides an overview of the different social media tools and platforms, and how they are being used today by the public and emergency personnel before, during, and after emergencies.<sup>9</sup> In July 2012, WRHSAC launched a "training blog" on social media for emergency personnel in western Massachusetts to help answer questions about how social media can be used to connect to the public and gain information on a developing emergency situation, and is offering several training sessions in September 2012.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.massbroadband.org/Network/mbi123.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is42.asp?tw\\_p=tw](http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is42.asp?tw_p=tw). Excerpts from this training are provided in Appendix D.

<sup>10</sup> <http://westernmassmem.wordpress.com/>

While training for emergency management and response personnel is important in building the capacity in the region for using social media for situational awareness, during a large-scale emergency, the amount of information being generated through social media may become overwhelming. The use of trained volunteers in assisting with monitoring social media, relaying important information to appropriate staff, and disseminating approved messages through social media platforms is becoming more common throughout the country. One avenue is to train existing members of CERT, MRC, or volunteers from non-governmental organizations, or recruit new social media savvy volunteers to CERT or MRC, to perform this function either within an EOC or remotely. Another concept, developed by emergency managers, that has emerged in the last few years is the Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST). A VOST is a team of “trusted agents,” such as emergency management professionals not involved in the response as well as trained volunteers, who work together to support the on-scene EOC. VOSTs often work remotely, so are not vulnerable to power outages in the affected area, and focus on establishing and monitoring social media communication with the public and other information sources. A team leader maintains contact with the EOC to relay information back and forth.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the obstacles for emergency response agencies in adopting the use of social media include existing policies that restrict the use of social media by employees at work, the learning curve required to use the tools and evolve with the technology, and the abundance of tools and applications available, making it difficult to know what to focus on. A big concern with the use of social media for emergency communications is liability – who is responsible for the information shared, and any mistakes that may arise?<sup>12</sup> A recent study specifically addresses this concern, and outlines strategies to reduce liability among digital volunteer groups, namely: the development and use of policies; the adoption of a non-profit organizational model or a model that is integrated with formal response agencies; purchase of insurance; the use of agreements and disclaimers; and consultation with legal counsel.<sup>13</sup> The Public Emergency Communications section goes into more detail about the benefits and challenges to using social media for emergency communications.

**Phones** – Cell phones, landline phones, and texting are all utilized in the region. Satellite phones do not appear to be used in the region for emergency communications primarily due to cost-benefit decisions and questions about their reliability. Some hospitals and health agencies in the region have satellite phones, such as Northern Berkshire Healthcare, but they are not regularly used. Issues related to phones include spotty or no cell coverage in areas with hilly terrain or that lack cell towers. In addition cell phones need a power source, though they can be charged in cars or by a hand crank charger if available. Older landline phones can be used during power outages, but most models now require electricity. Landline phones can be susceptible to weather conditions such as high winds and ice storms that can damage the lines.

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<sup>11</sup> An overview of the VOST concept, and areas of the country where it is being implemented, can be found at <http://vosg.us/>. Additional information is included in Appendix D.

<sup>12</sup> St. Denis et al., *Trial by Fire: The Deployment of Trusted Digital Volunteers in the 2011 Shadow Lake Fire*, Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> International ISCRAM Conference – Vancouver, Canada, April 2012.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/science-and-technology-innovation-program>

Conference calls can be an effective means of communicating with multiple stakeholders before and during an event. During the 2009 H1N1 response, public health officials in Franklin County held regular conference calls to coordinate messages to the public. Leading up to Tropical Storm Irene, conference calls between various stakeholders in Hampshire County facilitated the set-up of a regional shelter, a staging area for equipment, and the dissemination of flood mitigation information to municipal departments and the public. State agencies are now routinely using scheduled conference calls, coordinated by MEMA, as a means to coordinate efforts and share information during an incident.

**Pagers** – Pagers are used routinely in more remote areas of the region where radio, internet, and cell phone coverage is spotty. Overall this technology is no longer widely used.

**Printed materials** – As already mentioned, data sharing capabilities across departments and jurisdictions is not present throughout the region. Printing and faxing of hard copy material is still relied upon. Information then needs to be manually re-entered into a digital format, which wastes time and adds to the chance that mistakes could be made. Sometimes hand written materials, such as the ICS 205 Incident Radio Communications Plan, are copied and distributed in an EOC and at the site of the incident. When multiple agencies are involved in an incident, keeping track of various forms, and ensuring the most up-to-date form is being used by everyone involved, could be a challenge. For instance, during Tropical Storm Irene, in Berkshire County there was no central location for ICS 205 forms from various agencies, making it difficult to coordinate radio communications across the region.

## **Governance**

The Home Rule tradition in Massachusetts means that public safety is first and foremost a local responsibility. Elected officials and emergency management in each town and city are responsible for the welfare of their residents. The lack of county government in western Massachusetts has been identified by some as a challenge to emergency communications, leaving room for increased efficiencies and capacity. However, the region has been on the forefront of working together in a regional capacity through mutual aid agreements, and efforts accomplished through regional entities such as the Regional Emergency Planning Committees (REPCs), Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs), Public Health Coalitions, Councils of Governments (CoGs), and the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC). When local resources are taxed, towns can rely on mutual aid from surrounding communities. When mutual aid resources are expended, statewide resources can be requested through MEMA and statewide mobilization plans for fire, EMS, and police. In some areas of the region mutual aid agreements exist beyond state lines, such as the Tri-State Mutual Aid agreement between Franklin County fire departments and southern Vermont and New Hampshire fire departments.

This section will discuss governance in terms of infrastructure and operations.

## Infrastructure

As mentioned above, there are various radio systems in the region which are owned and maintained by different entities. The Franklin County Emergency Communications System (FCECS) is owned by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), and governed by an oversight committee with representatives from fire, police, EMS, dispatch, FRCOG and the Tri-State Fire Mutual Aid system. This committee oversees the maintenance, continued system build-out and operations of the system. The Berkshire County Sheriff's Communication Center (BCSCC) operates and maintains five towers, and serves as the regional Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in Berkshire County for 21 towns. The Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (WMLEC) system is owned and operated by a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. These and other systems have been supported by Homeland Security funds administered through WRHSAC.

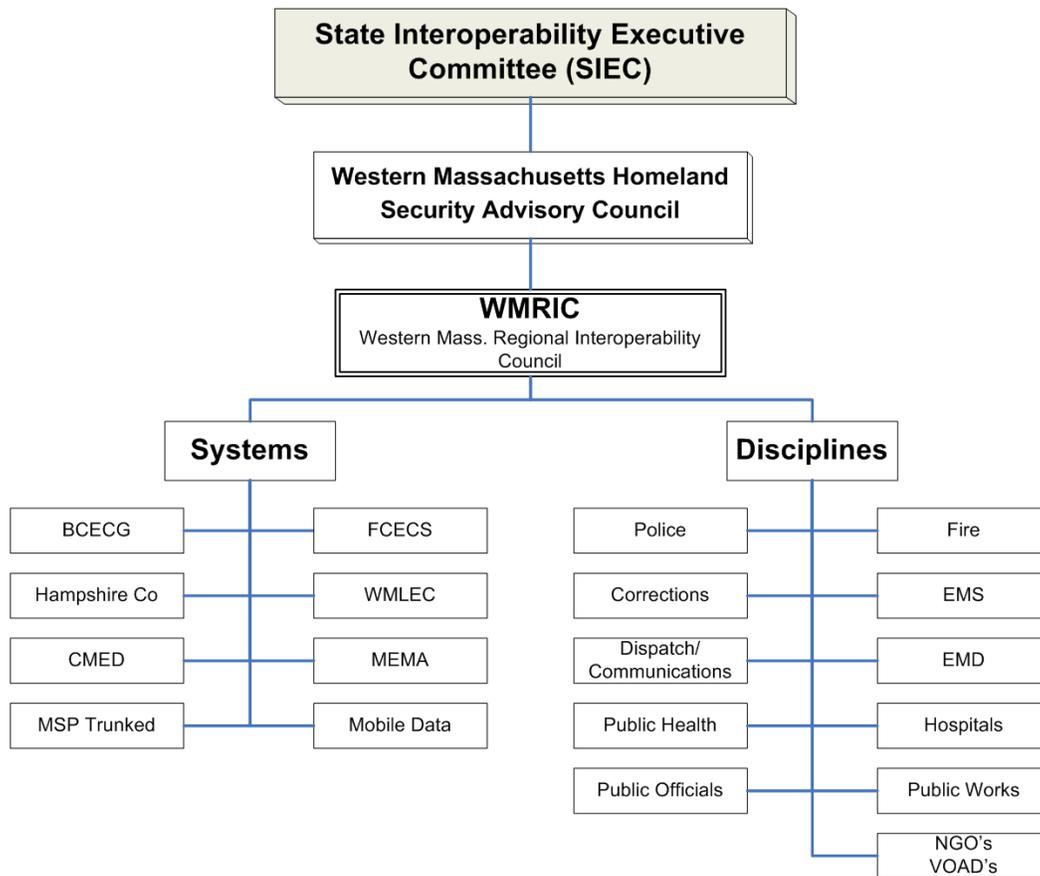
Interoperability efforts in Massachusetts are led by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), a participating state agency on the State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC). The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is divided into five Homeland Security regions, each of which has a Communications Interoperability Sub-Committee that meets to determine the needs of its area in accordance with guidelines established at the state level and any specific regional needs.<sup>14</sup>

Interoperable communications in the western Massachusetts region are coordinated by the Communications Interoperability Sub-Committee of the WRHSAC. In order to provide long-term sustainability in emergency communications interoperability in the region, the Sub-Committee is working on creating a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, the Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Council (WMRIC), in order to continue supporting infrastructure and equipment improvements in the region as funding from the Department of Homeland Security decreases.

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<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts Western Homeland Security Planning Region, *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*, Draft V2-4, June 2012.

Figure 2: Proposed Interoperable Communications Governance Structure<sup>15</sup>



## Operations

One of the overarching findings from the outreach and research for this report is the need for communications procedures for sharing of information among multiple agencies during a regional event. This was identified as a need in order both to develop a common operating picture among multiple stakeholders and jurisdictions, and to coordinate messages to the public and control the spread of misinformation. It was also emphasized that private sector stakeholders and nongovernmental organizations must be included in communications planning, exercises, and procedures. Current SOPs within local Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) could be improved to include procedures and additional information to assist with communications on a regional level.

Regional coordination in other areas of the country is often accomplished through the use of regional EOCs, which are typically on the county level in states where county government still exists. In western Massachusetts, MEMA has the capability of activating a regional EOC at its Agawam facility; however, the events of 2011 demonstrated the need for regional coordination in each of the counties in order to better communicate with MEMA and the individual response agencies in the region. In both Berkshire and Franklin Counties, regional command structures were set up during Tropical Storm Irene and did aid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

in coordinating the response, but were not formally recognized by MEMA and had no real authority. Currently there is no legal authority for the regional EOC concept in western Massachusetts. A separate project funded by the WRHSAC will research this issue further to see what the options may be for regional EOCs or Multi-Agency Coordination Centers (MACCs) to play this critical role.

A Joint Information System (JIS) is an element of the National Incident Management System that can accomplish regional coordination of information with a focus on providing accurate, timely information to the public. On the most basic level a JIS is an agreement, formal or informal, between agencies to communicate with each other during events impacting their respective populations. It can be as simple as a phone call between two public information officers. On a larger scale, it typically involves written plans, procedures, and agreements that help facilitate a coordinated effort to share information. Although the focus is on public information, a JIS by nature also facilitates interagency communication.

Key elements of a JIS include the following:

- Interagency coordination and integration.
- Gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating consistent messages.
- Support for decision-makers.
- Flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

The departments, agencies, organizations, or jurisdictions that contribute to joint public information management do not lose their individual identities or responsibility for their own programs or policies. Rather, each agency/organization contributes to the overall unified message.<sup>16</sup> Joint Information Systems (JIS) are normally utilized by public information officers from various agencies and organizations involved in a response. The JIS can be initiated by any PIO who feels the need exists for coordinating information among various agencies and organizations during an event. The extent that the system is used depends on the extent of an event, and is flexible to expand and contract depending on the number of agencies involved. In some states, formal Joint Information Systems are established by Public Information Officer associations or similar organizations. They can also be established through county emergency management offices where they exist. However no governance structure is required to set up a JIS, it merely requires the cooperation of those involved in a response. This can be formalized ahead of time through an adopted plan, MOUs, and/or agreed upon procedures. It is not necessary to set up a physical Joint Information Center (JIC) in order to utilize a Joint Information System (see below for information on JICs). There are real benefits seen, both in terms of economies of scale and interagency communication, where such JICs are organized, co-located, or jointly managed with regional EOCs or MACCs.

On the state level, MEMA utilizes a Joint Information System frequently through activation of the State EOC, where all state agencies are represented at the EOC. Public health officials in Franklin County utilized a JIS during the H1N1 response, where regularly schedule conference calls were held to

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<sup>16</sup> Department of Homeland Security, *National Incident Management System*, December 2008. Sample JIS and JIC plans and documents are located in Appendix C.

formulate consistent public messages and identify and address misinformation being disseminated in the media. The Southern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee (SBREPC) also acts as a type of JIS. The members are in close contact with each other prior to and during events through email, phone, pagers, and text messaging. They also utilize the staff at Fairview Hospital (where they hold their monthly meetings) as a hub of information flow. An example of how they work together is that a SBREPC member requested signage from MEMA on behalf of the group in preparation for Tropical Storm Irene. Each individual agency is still responsible for communicating messages to their respective audiences.

A Joint Information Center (JIC) is a central location that facilitates operation of the JIS, where personnel with public information responsibilities perform critical emergency information functions, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. A JIC can be established at various levels of government, or be a component of Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Groups or EOCs. JICs require staffing and communications equipment, and can be difficult to set up and maintain when resources are already scarce. According to MEMA, a Joint Information Center is rarely set up in the state, though anytime a federal disaster is declared a JIC will be set up and run by federal personnel. This occurred last year during the multiple events in our region, and a JIC was set up in Westfield for about a year during recovery from the June tornadoes, Tropical Storm Irene, and the October snowstorm. It was staffed mostly by federal personnel, with a handful of MEMA personnel. Local communities were not physically represented in the facility, but liaisons in the JIC were used to connect with local officials.

There are multiple Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) who answer 9-1-1 calls throughout the region, some serving individual towns and others serving multiple towns. The three largest regional PSAPs are Shelburne Control, serving Franklin County towns (except for Montague and Greenfield), and Northampton Control, serving a number of towns in both Hampshire and Hampden Counties (both of these PSAPs are owned and operated by the Massachusetts State Police), and the Berkshire County Sheriffs Information Center (BCSCC).. In addition to receiving emergency calls and conducting dispatch, these PSAPs also perform important regional communications functions such as serving as a contact point for the National Warning System (NAWAS), a control point for fire and EMS mobilization plans, a warning point for dam failures, nuclear power events, air medical coordination, weather emergencies, etc., and as the control center for a mass casualty incident. Lacking a regional emergency operations entity to coordinate communications during larger events, keeping the regional dispatch centers informed of important information, such as when EOCs are activated or deactivated, roads are washed out, or when staging areas are set up, is one way to help share information among responding agencies on a regional level, in addition to communicating with MEMA.

In Berkshire County, there are seven other PSAPs, in addition to the BCSCC. Each of the 32 municipalities in the county has individually crafted policies and procedures regarding responses. There is no cohesive, consistent set of policies and procedures among the towns and cities, which requires each of the eight PSAPs in the county to accommodate their towns and cities as best as possible, and there are concerns that response times and responders themselves can be affected by the lack of consistent procedures. Feedback from some stakeholders indicated that it would be beneficial to conduct outreach to the eight

PSAPS and the 32 towns to find out what the respective procedures are, analyze them, and make recommendations to the towns and PSAPs about how to revise them in order to increase response times and decrease confusion during responses.

## Emergency Communication with the Public

### Background

Western Massachusetts currently utilizes established systems for enabling various levels of government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to communicate effectively with one another. However, the communications infrastructure for providing the public with emergency information and warnings is in transition, as new modes of communication and technology are developed and used both by the public and the governments and organizations that serve them. To date, significant improvements in communications infrastructure in western Massachusetts have focused on enhancing interagency communications among and between emergency responders and aid organizations, and have not yet addressed the challenges of effectively warning and informing citizens in a comprehensive manner.

The long-standing tradition of self-sufficiency among New England's citizens can result in difficulties for government and other first responders working to assist a public that may not be inclined to accept such assistance. The Home Rule doctrine in Massachusetts also encourages local control of emergency communications, resulting in municipally controlled communication methods that do not necessarily integrate effectively with each other. In general, there is limited agreement on standards or standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are necessary for maintaining a robust system of emergency communication with the public.

Despite the lack of uniformity and established protocols for public communications strategies practiced by emergency responders in western Massachusetts, overall, the public has been effectively informed and warned about previous emergencies. Current communication methods—which range from door-to-door canvassing to alerts sent out to television and radio stations—have accomplished their objective for most residents. The low casualty rate during the record-setting number of natural disasters in 2011 is a critical indicator of the ability of the region's emergency management officials, volunteers, and residents to persevere during emergencies, though there is concern that the outcome could have potentially been significantly worse during a larger, more immediate emergency. Some specific successes from 2011 in communicating with the public included:

- Use of newly-acquired road signboards that allow a total of nine words, using short phrases such as “Phone Out, Verizon Work,” “911 Out,” and “Shelter Open.”
- Use of traditional warning methods of knocking on doors to alert citizens about the status of shelters.
- Use of Reverse 911 or other similar reverse notification systems.

At the same time that the tornadoes, tropical storm, earthquake, and snowstorm of 2011 (as well as recent public health-related events) demonstrated the successes of public communications in western Massachusetts; these experiences also demonstrated some gaps and shortcomings. Some of these gaps include the following:

- The natural disasters of 2011 were either relatively small in the scope of their damage or provided some advanced warning. It is possible that given a more sudden, changing emergency, the existing communications would have been challenged more and the result might have been a less positive outcome.
- Lack of updating of accurate and timely information regarding shelter specifics (locations, hours, needs, etc.).
- Frustration from the public and responders with failed phone communication via reverse notification systems when electricity was out (affecting land lines) and/or when cell towers were inoperable (affecting cell phone service). The lack of a back-up system was exposed.
- Limited interpretation resources for members of minority language communities (such as the deaf).
- Lack of translation resources for speakers of languages other than English.
- Lack of up-to-date, accurate information regarding road conditions when dialing 211. The existence of this information resource was not widely-known, and 511 remains largely unknown to the public and was also not utilized.
- Minimal knowledge by the public regarding how to access public information, such as the water gauge installed by the Army Corps of Engineers to monitor the Harriman Dam.
- Disparate protocols used by each of the Five Colleges (though a coordinated system is currently being developed and tested).
- Limited use of social media by emergency responders to provide validation of hazards, share updates and guide recovery, and manage information and misinformation.
- Emergency responders being required to answer citizen inquiries about animal sheltering individually, and people refusing to leave home because of uncertainty about pet care.
- Breaching of sensitive information, such as identification of the facility from which WMECO was working, causing individual citizens to show up and slow overall response efforts. Note: While information leaking is beyond the scope of this report and more research into the topic is

needed, the recommendations for better public communications included will indirectly address this issue by developing more systematic procedures for communications.

- No coordinating messaging system across municipalities and state emergency officials, meaning that during disasters information is disseminated out of Boston to the entire state that has no relevance to western Massachusetts and information from individual towns may be in conflict with each other. During Tropical Storm Irene, MEMA Boston was not aware of the flooding problems in North Berkshire and Franklin Counties and gave conflicting information about what was opened and not, what people should be doing/not doing, etc. and nobody at the state level asked the locals either. In addition, local officials were not aware of what each other was saying either and the local messages ranged from “minor flooding” to “mass evacuations needed.” During the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, DPH Boston was saying the schools should close when there were no cases in the Franklin/Berkshire County schools. During the incident in summer 2012 when a chemical plume originated in New York State, DEP Boston was saying that outdoor air quality was dangerous when the people on the ground in Berkshire County said there was nothing happening. Also DEP/DPH did not contact the local REOC (which was operating in West Stockbridge) to coordinate information and the REOC was learning about things after they were published. Thus, the messages ranged from “stay inside this is really dangerous” to “don't worry.” During fall 2012, facing threats from West Nile Virus and EEE, there was no attempt to coordinate public information around Berkshire County about outdoor activities after dusk and spraying for mosquitoes. As a result, advisories issued by local Boards of Health on these questions varied considerably.
- It is important to note that the scope of this report covers all of the 101 cities and towns in western Massachusetts, ranging from the largest city of Springfield (with a population of over 150,000 people, more than half with limited access to a car, often speaking limited or no English, and many living at the edge of the poverty line in a city with a robust communications infrastructure) to the smallest town of Monroe (with 121 people, no cell service and only dial-up internet access). It may be that people in Springfield rely on their cell phones and could therefore be very well served by emergency communication targeting that mode of communication—via text messages (that often go through when calls will not) sent as part of their free subscription to Twitter. Meanwhile, people in Monroe (and communities like Monroe) will need to rely on other modes of communication that are not dependent on access to the internet or the availability of electricity unless they have smart phones and gas in their vehicles.

The challenges of notification and preparedness are not unique to western Massachusetts, but are being grappled with by emergency managers and first responders in jurisdictions across the country. Just as the tragic events of 9/11 precipitated a wave of improvements to inter-agency communication, so did the horrible aftermath of Hurricane Katrina serve as a painful wake-up call to the need to improve emergency communication with the public, especially members of vulnerable populations, who might not have access to traditional means of communication and who might not trust the government.

Communicating with the public in times of emergency is challenging. There is no one homogenous “public,” rather, communities are composed of diverse populations and demographic groups. Among these groups are:

- Elderly people
- Segments of the population with limited digital access to cable or the internet
- People (often younger demographics) who are accustomed to using social media
- Rural populations
- People living in poverty
- Immigrants who have limited English speaking ability
- Deaf people who use American Sign Language
- Cultural groups who do not watch or listen to the same media as the general population
- People with functional access needs
- People concentrated in group homes and care-giving facilities and people with medical dependencies isolated in independent locations

There is no one communication tool that can reach all these public stakeholders. Because of this, the overarching strategy for improving public communications must be three-fold:

- 1) Robust use of multiple different communications modes that are technologically-integrated (“seamless”) for the delivery of emergency warning messages.
- 2) Comprehensive standards for distributing follow-up information and engaging with diverse populations and demographic groups through the communication channels they are accustomed to using.
- 3) Engagement with citizens in order to understand the varying needs of different population groups.

The next section sets the foundations for use of different communication modes by assessing the advantages and disadvantages of specific methods.

## Existing Conditions in Western Massachusetts

The following is a list of communication modes that can be used to relay information to the public during emergencies. Modes have been separated into categories based on how they inform the public:

- Public alert systems
- Mass media (also known as traditional media—television, radio, newspapers, etc.)
- Social media (web- and mobile-based technologies, such as Twitter and Facebook)

Information on potential governance strategies for owning and maintaining these systems is provided in the next section.

## Public Alert Systems

**Sirens** – Sirens served as one of the earliest forms of mass public warning; during World War I and World War II most of the population was familiar with the use of sirens. However, over the last several decades controversy and debate about their effectiveness has led to inconsistency in their use. Emergency management officials have indicated that a critical reason for this was a lack of available resources for maintenance.

A nationwide survey by Federal Signal Safety and Security Systems (2012) found that more than half of Americans do not know when sirens in their area are tested, and one in four respondents to their survey did not know if their community has a warning siren system. Research by Emily Laidlaw (2010) found that emergency managers believe weather radios used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) are more effective than sirens but feel pressured to install sirens because of an expectation from the public.<sup>17</sup>

Sirens are used at the campus of University of Massachusetts – Amherst. When they are used, they are always accompanied by explanation via text and electronic mail messages, examples of social media. There is currently no database listing the region’s colleges and towns operating sirens, reducing the knowledge about and utility of this warning method. There is also no local research regarding how well siren use is understood by residents of western Massachusetts. Our research found that many communities in Berkshire County (one of the sub-regions in western Massachusetts that is very under-served by broadband and cell towers) still utilize sirens for general emergency warnings. In Franklin County, sirens are located in the 10-mile-radius evacuation zone around the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant located just over the border in Vernon, Vermont for use only in a nuclear emergency.

**NOAA Weather Radio** – NOAA developed the Warning Alarm Tone (WAT) in the 1960s, which was transmitted through the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) and weather radios.<sup>18</sup> They immediately discovered the need for human judgment in utilizing these technologies. The warning tone, they realized, would continue until someone intervened. Sometimes warnings needed to be re-sent, and someone at each station had to determine when the warning message was over and flip the right switch to resume programming. In 1985, the National Weather Service (NWS) developed a digital protocol, Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME),<sup>19</sup> to enable the delivery of coded, digital information at the beginning and end of weather radio messages. The NOAA weather radio warning system has been the most comprehensive system of public warning in the United States because its notifications are available not only to media outlets but also to individuals – it is the first technology that can be used to “pull in” desired communication as well as “push out” crafted messages. In June 2012, NOAA began sending out “Wireless Emergency Alerts” (WEA) through the NWS, directly to any and all WEA-capable

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.weatherwise.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/2010/January-February%202010/controversy-abstract.html>

<sup>18</sup> Another system, CONELRAD, dates its use of an emergency alert tone since 1951. “Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Discussion: Key Industry and Federal Experts on Access and Functional Needs.” FEMA.

<sup>19</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specific\\_Area\\_Message\\_Encoding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specific_Area_Message_Encoding)

cell phones.<sup>20</sup> WEA is an alternative acronym for the same system known as CMAS (described below) and PLAN (Personal Localized Alerting Network). Alerts of three pre-defined types are eligible to be sent free to WEA-capable phones: Presidential Alerts, Imminent Threat Alerts, and AMBER Alerts. A caveat regarding the service is that because calls are free, carriers are not required to provide the capability. There is not yet a searchable database available to determine if individual phones are WEA/CMAS-capable, which means individuals must call their carriers to inquire.

**Emergency Alert System (EAS)** – The Emergency Alert System also uses the SAME protocol. The first nationwide test of the EAS system was conducted on November 9, 2011. Television, cable, satellite and radio broadcasters were required to participate and file reports.<sup>21</sup> The goal of the test was to determine breakdowns in the current daisy-chain system, which is the traditional electronic configuration of sequences or rings used to deliver SAME protocol alerts from station-to-station throughout an entire system. Failures in the EAS could be due to technological incompatibility, human error, or other reasons. The FCC reported many breakdowns that were identified during the test - at the technical level (double audio and in accurate timestamps, for instance, which delayed broadcast) and at the level of State EAS Planning.<sup>22</sup> Even before the test, the FCC was engaged in several rule-making procedures to augment the daisy-chain with a new Common Alert Protocol (CAP) that relies on the internet. The goal is to integrate Internet Protocol (IP) messaging into the existing system as a transitional step to the next generation of mass public notification,<sup>23</sup> specifically IPAWS – Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.

**Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)** – This system will use Internet Protocol Common Alert Protocol (IP-CAP) but will also still be able to transmit messages through a range of earlier-version warning systems using the SAME protocol, such as the EAS and NOAA’s weather radio. Additionally, IPAWS will function with social media and also with the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS, also known as WEA or PLAN), which is capable of sending warnings direct to cell phones. This last capability will extend the reach of warnings considerably. In particular, a great deal of emphasis has been placed in communication accessibility with assistive technologies for specific publics, such as people who are blind (Braille readers, NPR Text-to-Braille), persons with mobility disabilities (LCD Scroll device), the culturally deaf or hard-hearing (Bed Shaker), and people with other accommodation needs that require the use of a local notification system (such as Alertus). Kim Stephens (co-author of the Western MA SMEM website), in Module 21: Text Message Alerts and Warnings explains some of the unsolved problems including the possibility of cellphone carriers blocking the messages. The project is behind schedule, perhaps because of an overly ambitious scope, including the ability to receive and verify alerts, re-distribute them over almost any digital media to designated locations and in the modality (text-only, voice-only, Braille-reader compatible, etc.) or language (Korean, Spanish, American Sign Language) specified by recipients. FEMA’s information about IPAWS emphasizes the need for redundancy: IPAWS is a supplement to existing methods of communication with various publics, not a replacement for traditionally-effective methods.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.noaa.gov/features/03\\_protecting/wireless\\_emergency\\_alerts.html](http://www.noaa.gov/features/03_protecting/wireless_emergency_alerts.html)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.awareforum.org/2011/10/fcc-releases-special-handbook-and-web-forms-for-national-eas-test/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.awareforum.org/2011/11/fema-holds-webinar-on-national-eas-test-results/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.broadcastlawblog.com/2011/06/articles/emergency-communications/updates-on-eas-a-nationwide-test-and-lots-of-questions-about-cap-implementation-including-whether-more-time-is-needed/>

**Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS)** – This is the system described above as Wireless Emergency Alerts, or WEA. It enables agencies to send short text messages (up to 90 characters) to all cell phones communicating with a cell tower in a specified geographic region. Location-based alerts can be sent by participating local agencies (police, fire, or other designated public safety officials) as well as by officials in remote locations (the state or federal level). Also called PLAN, CMAS allows customers who own an enabled mobile device to receive geographically-targeted text-like messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in their area.”<sup>24, 25</sup> California began working with this technology two years ago. CMAS is currently being rolled-out across the country; it requires IPAWS compatibility. “FCC rules for the new CMAS for wireless devices require that the devices must include an audio attention signal and vibration cadence, to meet the needs of subscribers with disabilities.”<sup>26</sup> However alerts are currently available only in English.<sup>27</sup> New Yorkers got a taste of CMAS alerts on July 18, 2012, on which day the National Weather Service posted its first wireless emergency alert for a flash flood warning; reactions (posted to Twitter) were mixed.<sup>28</sup>

## Mass Media

Declaring an emergency or disaster to the public is a somewhat vague process, as no standard exists as to how quickly an official needs to make a public announcement regarding a known or suspected hazard. The University of Massachusetts requires a public announcement to the campus community within 30 minutes. Generally, emergency management directors have media contacts programmed into their cell phones and can “gang email” reporters by grouping their e-mail addresses together so that one message reaches all news outlets at the same time. Getting and keeping reporters on one’s side is crucial to managing the flow of accurate and non-alarmist information. This remains true even after a Public Information Officer (PIO) is designated because first responders need to deal with reporters wanting to get close to the action, which can raise safety and security issues.

**Television** – According to a 2012 survey, roughly one-third of Americans still want to receive warnings and information about emergencies through television. As one the most established sources of disaster information it seems that television will remain a foundational component of public emergency communication. However, this technology may become limited to an older audience as more and more young people choose to “watch TV” via their computers or “on demand” skipping real-time broadcasts. Local issues with traditional television warnings include corporate (rather than local) ownership, which complicates the authority protocols for interrupting programming for smaller and more localized emergencies. Using local community access TV was not identified as a resource. The Stavros Center for Independent Living filed complaints with the FCC against Channel 40 and Channel 22 (both in Springfield) for failure to provide live captioning during the 2011 tornadoes and other subsequent

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<sup>24</sup> <http://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/services/plan.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.policemag.com/channel/technology/articles/2012/05/getting-the-word-out.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> Moore, Linda K. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and All-Hazard Warnings. Congressional Research Service. December 2010. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesecc/RL32527.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.awareforum.org/2012/07/breaking-down-language-barriers-for-better-alerts-and-warnings/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.awareforum.org/2012/07/public-showing-mixed-reactions-to-recent-cmas-messages/>

events of 2011. The response from the stations pointed to the difficulties of responding to a breaking weather event where the situation unfolded quickly and the information was continuously changing, making it difficult to present information graphically. There are presently no systematic provisions for urgent communication with non-English-speaking or non-hearing audiences. Regional emergency managers are only now being systematically informed of routine concentrations of deaf people in particular places, such as at Holyoke Community College. There are available sign language interpreters throughout the region who are able to assist television stations during an emergency, however currently negotiations or discussions between stations and interpreters is limited.

**Radio** – Issues with radio are similar to the issues with television. Non-local ownership and mass-market automatic programming leave people without access to live emergency information. During the late October snowstorm of 2011, for instance, WHMP (FM 96.9, AM 1400/1240) continued with canned programming for several hours while emergency operations were underway. Much of the region is in what is called a split-media market, with programming transmitted from Albany, New York as well as Springfield and Boston, Massachusetts. Station managers and owners are reluctant to give time to reporting on events that affect only a small portion of their listening area. Anecdotal information from Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 indicated that many people relied on locally run radio stations for all their information on disaster response and recovery. The use of local low-power FM radio stations should be explored further.

**Reverse Notification Systems** – Systems of automatic calling began with landlines, allowing a central information source to send a pre-recorded message to multiple phones in a very brief time span. Recent technological innovations have de-coupled the system from landlines and users can select whether to receive notifications at home or on their cell phone or both, and depending on the level of extra services, choose which kinds of alerts they would like to receive. Several towns in Hampshire and Hampden Counties use reverse notification systems (Reverse 911, Blackboard Connect, Code Red, Everbridge, etc.). According to the Franklin County REPC, some towns have purchased this service but many have not. Coordination, when it occurs to save costs, happens at the lowest level between schools and individual towns rather than at the regional level where the most could benefit. Concerns with town-school bundling are significant. When setting up the system, municipalities need to establish enrollment options that allow users to select which specific events they would like to be notified about. If these enrollment options aren't provided, users can potentially receive notifications about non-emergency events and learn to disregard the system. Additionally, even if enrollment options are programmed into the system, recipients need to be trained in the enrollment options so that they know the type of notifications they are deciding to receive.

Reverse notification systems are a kind of registry that requires voluntary participation from the end user and also requires them to learn and choose which kinds of notifications they would like. Support and training for guiding members of specific segments of the population through the process may be required. The Franklin REPC has suggested the need to train the initiators of calls on how to call sub-sets of numbers, when to call the whole town, and so on. Also important is which device the call is made to and under what carrier. Prepaid calling card numbers, for instance, routinely get dropped, and power outages disproportionately affect cable/internet phones. Cell phones continue to function if cell towers

are functioning (and the towers are proving to be quite robust). Additionally cell phones can be recharged in cars with the proper adaptor. As long as gasoline is available, people can maintain cell phone access and thereby receive important information, especially if they have smart phones with internet access. A member of the Hampshire County REPC indicated that the towns that have R911 rely on it heavily, and considered it very useful during the four emergency events in 2011. Before power was lost during the snowstorm in October of 2011, shelter locations were announced very effectively through the system. R911 is reported to have the best effect when used exclusively for emergency warnings and emergency-specific follow-up information. An unstated implication of effectiveness is use with a single language. Emergency managers rely on bilingual individuals to voluntarily interpret emergency information.

**Summary** –Western Massachusetts, like the rest of the country, experienced an unprecedented number of natural disasters in 2011. According to a 2012 public safety survey (see Appendix G), FEMA issued 99 major disaster declarations in 2011, which “is a shocking figure compared to the annual average of just 37 over the past 50 years” (p. 3).<sup>29</sup> All six of the declared disasters in Massachusetts involved weather, highlighting the same challenges of under-sized stormwater infrastructure incapable of handling the extreme rain events, hilly terrain with lots of trees, which limits cell towers and internet access and makes electricity wires vulnerable to falling trees, weather hazards (ice and wind), and dependence on power that confront inter-agency communications. EMDs in the region generally believe that they are doing all that they can, although most say they lack the resources and/or knowledge to cover all the bases. There is consensus that getting reliable and accurate warning information out to the public in a timely manner, including guidance for safe action, can be improved.

**Public Attitudes Regarding Emergency Warnings** – The emphasis from emergency management professionals on warning *delivery* can sometimes overshadow warning *reception*. Research into public perceptions and interpretations of emergency warnings is growing. Over the last decade, an interdisciplinary alliance of meteorologists and social scientists (economists, psychologists, sociologists, communication specialists, etc.) has devoted considerable research into public responses to emergency communications. Weather and Society\*Integrated Studies (WAS\*IS)<sup>30</sup> has been especially concerned by patterns in public disregard for storm and weather-related warnings. Economist Jeff Lazo, for instance, researched public perceptions of storm surge in hurricane-prone areas, discovering points of confusion by respondents in interpreting meteorological terms and symbols and also preferences for what is and is not useful information (2011). Adding to the confusion, “Even though 2011 had a historic number of natural disasters a new survey of 2059 adults conducted this June shows Americans have an indifferent

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<sup>29</sup>[http://www.fema.gov/disasters?field\\_state\\_tid=All&field\\_disaster\\_type\\_term\\_tid=6855&field\\_disaster\\_declaration\\_type\\_value=All&items\\_per\\_page=10](http://www.fema.gov/disasters?field_state_tid=All&field_disaster_type_term_tid=6855&field_disaster_declaration_type_value=All&items_per_page=10) Retrieved 22 July 2012.

<sup>30</sup> WAS\*IS is sponsored by the Societal Impacts Program, National Center for Atmospheric Research, with funding (until this year) from the U.S. Department of Commerce. One of its major innovations is the Integrated Warning Team, an alliance of broadcast meteorologists.

attitude toward communication preferences and behaviors regarding emergency preparedness and response.”<sup>31</sup>

A service assessment from the National Weather Service on the May 22, 2011 tornado in Joplin, Missouri suggests a high rate of so-called false warnings are part of the problem with public indifference to preparedness and response. The authors advocate for storm-based warnings rather than “current dissemination systems [that] are based on geo-political boundaries and jurisdictions (e.g., counties), including EAS and NWR.” This is because warnings issued by adjacent and nearby jurisdictions can conflict and cause confusion. Storm-based warning is another way of referring to geo-located warnings, such as those beginning to be delivered by CMAS. The survey cited above, *Revealing Americans’ Awareness and Preparedness Surrounding Emergency Situations*, also reports more Americans now prefer alert notification systems (e.g., like R911 or CMAS) to conventional television and radio warnings. These individualized alerting systems are possible because of the same technologies that enable social media.

In addition to increasing the redundancy in communication leading to more publicity and circulation of warning news and information, another need is to improve the accuracy of prediction and the effectiveness of warning communication. These needs are addressed through an Integrated Warning Team (IWT) consisting of collaboration between meteorologists, local National Weather Service forecasters, emergency responders, and academics. Using words and symbols that make sense to the local audience is a crucial area for improvement requiring cooperation among experts in different fields and research/input from members of the public. Also, poor and inaccurate forecasts often occur because the national radar grid cannot deliver the resolution required for more precise prediction. However, western Massachusetts is home to an evolutionary technology, CASA – Collaborative Adaptive Sensing of the Atmosphere, developed and now being piloted by a team at UMass-Amherst, which increases the accuracy of weather forecasts.<sup>32</sup> The June 2011 tornado outbreak was on the outer edge of their local radar installation – proving the point that a larger network of smaller dishes is required to refine weather forecasting.

The June 2011 tornadoes were unpredictable with current technology and while the October 2011 snowstorm was predicted; its severity was not anticipated. Nonetheless, warnings were effective and loss of life was averted through existing communications systems. The effective response to the snowstorm may have been partially a result of it occurring so soon after the tornadoes, meaning people were primed to respond.

Understanding the complicated processes of weather forecasting is a matter of public education that fits within the scope of emergency preparedness education. Members of the region’s publics need to already know how and where to access information in order to validate a hazard before a disaster happens. After an event has occurred, they need to be able to rely on this established knowledge in order to enter the public conversation as contributors and aid in recovery efforts. This will position a

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<sup>31</sup> Tanja Fransen, summarizing findings from the 2012 Third Annual Public Safety Survey to the WAS\*IS Facebook Group, 20 July 2012.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.casa.umass.edu/>

significant percentage of affected individuals to engage the event as a kind of response partner rather than as a victim or bystander complicating response and recovery. One method of enabling the public to do this is social media. A Red Cross survey of web users found that 69% of public respondents said that emergency responders should be monitoring social media sites in order to quickly send help, and half of these respondents believe that agencies are already doing this. Many people are choosing social media channels as first choice for communication during a crisis and the desire to assist during emergencies by using social media is increasing. The next section addresses how social media can be utilized effectively as part of emergency communications with the public.

## **Social Media for Emergency Management**

The acronym, SMEM, is a description of the activity of using Social Media for Emergency Management and is also the name for a growing group of first responders and emergency management professionals within the United States who are committed to the use of social media as a positive and productive communication tool for:

- 1) Situation awareness – to gain a common operating picture, for Incident Command, in a faster manner and
- 2) General public communication – to bring the most people along the path of response and recovery as quickly as possible.

The first use of internet communications in emergency management was “crowdsourcing” during Hurricane Katrina. Based in statistics, crowdsourcing developed originally in business as a way of driving down costs by opening up competition and bringing in many people with the same skill so that the lowest bidder could be hired. Crowdsourcing in emergency response means asking volunteers to track and record specific information so that it can be aggregated into maps. This technique is popular in international humanitarian aid situations; it has not yet been used in any significant way for U.S.-based emergencies. During Katrina, crowdsourcing was used to generate what is called “crisis mapping.” Crisis mapping uses the real-time communication and computation capabilities of the internet to collect large amounts of information from many different people very fast, combine that information into a visualization, and analyze the information for patterns.<sup>33</sup> Crisis mapping has since been applied in many major disasters, including wildfires, flooding, and the Haiti earthquake.

The United States’ domestic uses of social media for emergency management (SMEM) have focused more on tracking spontaneously generated user data during a disaster. Sponsored by efforts of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), emergency management professionals have actively monitored Twitter during the Shadow Lake Fire in Oregon (August 2011), the Northwest Floods (January 2012), and Hurricane Irene (August 2011). Incident Command for these events directed their PIO or Operations Chief to engage with the massive uses of social media that occurred during these hazardous situations, developing situational awareness for a common operating picture and contributing official

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<sup>33</sup> <http://irevolution.net/2011/01/20/what-is-crisis-mapping/>

information to counter rumors and minimize the spread of misinformation. Volunteers undertake much of the SMEM work during these events and this trend continues, though there are complicating issues for professional emergency responders in utilizing volunteers and incorporating public information into response efforts.

The Western Homeland Security Advisory Council has funded a social media and emergency management training project for the communities of western Massachusetts. As part of this project, an in-person training was held in Northampton in mid-September, with the purpose of teaching emergency officials and volunteers in the region about how to utilize social media. In addition to the in-person training, the project includes a website (<http://westernmasssmem.wordpress.com>) that contains various training resources. Training resources included the first steps for setting up a social media account, the types of content that should be disseminated, best practices for staff use policies of social media accounts, and how to integrate twitter with text message alerts and warnings. A list of western Massachusetts towns that use social media for emergencies and their respective social media pages can be found on the website as well as in Appendix D of this document.

The website also provides a link to the Massachusetts Social Media Legal Guidance Toolkit, a document development by the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance, which municipalities can use for developing social media policies and ensuring all legal requirements concerning social media are covered.

**Twitter** – Twitter is a micro-blogging site that provides users with a platform for short text messages of up to 140 characters that may include web links, attached pictures, and links to videos. Twitter is an extremely efficient and fast way for the public and emergency responders to find out what is happening during an emergency. During the October snowstorm, Twitter was active, as it was during Tropical Storm Irene. Twitter usage is currently growing exponentially, across all demographics, around the entire world, though it is more prevalent in urban areas, particularly among young adults and teenagers.

In a recent presentation on what he calls “open source security,” NATO Admiral James Stavridis presented a visualization of Twitter use across the globe, saying: “You bet we want to be in those networks.”<sup>34</sup> The visualization is, in his words, “a perfect evocation of that great demographic of the six largest nations in the world, in descending order: China, India, Facebook, the United States, Twitter, Indonesia.” Not only is the number of Twitter users huge, the speed at which information can travel by Tweet is extraordinary. The August 23, 2011 East Coast earthquake generated “40,000 earthquake related tweets in the first 60 seconds, and a peak of 5500 tweets per second.”<sup>35</sup>

The volume of Tweet messages, their geographic origin, as well as their content all provide emergency managers with vital, real-time intelligence from the public that can contribute to developing a common operating picture. People utilizing Twitter for response efforts mark the content of their messages using

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.ted.com/talks/james\\_stavridis\\_how\\_nato\\_s\\_supreme\\_commander\\_thinks\\_about\\_global\\_security.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/james_stavridis_how_nato_s_supreme_commander_thinks_about_global_security.html)

<sup>35</sup> <http://blog.tweetsmarter.com/twitter-stats/east-coast-earthquake-twitter-stats-and-responses/> retrieved 20 July 2012.

a “hashtag” (the # symbol).. The hashtag signals a category of related tweets; for instance #Irene, #DCquake, #snotober, (hashtags are determined by popularity, whichever one people like is the one they will reTweet). Googling “#smem” without the quotation marks enables emergency management officials and members of the public to quickly see what disaster-related tweets are being sent out. Twitter is less susceptible to local power outages because the network of users is so large and varied in location. While users in a particular area may not be able to send/receive Tweets, Tweeters in other areas will continue to generate relevant information that will be available to bring people up to date when power is restored.

**Facebook** – Facebook is a peer-to-peer social networking website that allows short blog posts, text chat, inbox, pictures, video, live-streaming video, etc. The best regional example of Facebook is the Monson Facebook group, which was spontaneously created and maintained by town residents after the June 2011 tornadoes. Holyoke also reported extensive use of Facebook during the snowstorm. Disaster-related Facebook groups tap already-established networks of family, friends, neighbors and co-workers, spreading information about an event to many of the people who will most want or need to know what has happened, what to do (or not do), whether to evacuate, the locations of shelters, and other information relevant to the particular incident.

**Non-Profit Humanitarian Organizations (International)** – Crisis Commons (<http://crisiscommons.org/>) is a non-profit organization that brings together citizen volunteers, government agencies, response organizations, aid organizations, non-profits, and the private sector. They were an instrumental response partner in Haiti. Ushahidi (<http://ushahidi.com/>) is an online platform for crisis mapping that aggregates mobile, social, and location data gathered from multiple sources into a visual map or timeline. Ushahidi is in widespread use internationally.

**American Red Cross (ARC) Digital Operations Center** – In March 2012, the ARC in cooperation with Dell Computers opened a “Listening Command Center” to monitor social media and support response and recovery efforts. The operations center was largely created in response to the earthquake in Haiti, which caused an enormous number of requests for help and required the managing of many varied aspects of the relief effort. The information received from social media could be better used to make strategic decisions about response actions, including “what kind of help we’re going to provide, where we were going, and what information we need to be giving out.”<sup>36</sup> In the first six months, ARC has determined that features of Dell’s platform (Radian 6<sup>37</sup>) such as the heat map, allows responders to “see in an instant, the moment something starts to happen, anywhere in the world . . . faster than any other news indicator.”<sup>38</sup>

**Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST)** – According to its creator, Jeff Phillips, an emergency manager from New Mexico and a founding father of the US-based SMEM movement, a VOST is “a virtual team whose focus is to establish and monitor social media communication, manage communication

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<sup>36</sup> Gloria Huang, Social Engagement Specialist, (video) <http://www.radian6.com/resources/library/american-red-cross-digital-operations-center/>

<sup>37</sup> Dell’s (for profit) platform for Social Media Listening, Monitoring and Engagement

<sup>38</sup> Wendy Harman, *ibid.*

channels with the public, and handle matters that can be executed remotely through digital means such as the management of donations or volunteers. In times of need, the support of a VOST can be enlisted to extend communication capacities and provide operational support.” Specifically, these functions are to be integrated into emergency management operations by “trusted agents” – individuals with the requisite qualifications who are already known to the Incident Commander and/or PIO. In addition to already being known, the qualifications are strong technical skills, social media savvy, and emergency management experience.

The VOST concept was developed in March of 2011<sup>39</sup> and since then VOSTs have been used as a response to several disasters.<sup>40</sup> Phillips’ team was pulled into service by Public Information Officer Kris Eriksen of the Portland Team of the National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) for the 2011 Shadow Lake Fire in Oregon. The results of that deployment were analyzed as a case study and published. Kim Stephens lists the five key ingredients in the team’s success: leadership, team building, a clear mission, a virtual flagpole (a common online space to connect and keep shift records, in the Shadow Lake case they used Skype), and feedback.<sup>41</sup> In addition to these factors for success, the research study outlines issues and challenges, suggesting there is more work to be done in refining the concept and achieving the most effective with Incident Command. The event lasted three weeks, which required a larger team than the recommended size of four to nine members. Managing volunteers was occasionally an issue, and Eriksen re-named the labeled the group as a Virtual Information Operations Support (VIOS) team. Her relabeling may reflect a more precise position of the VIOS within emergency operations planning and situational awareness, rather than under the PIO.

More studies are forthcoming. A new field of study called *Crisis Informatics* has been created, with a new journal for publishing research in this emerging sub-field of crisis communication.

**NIMS and SMEM** – Coursework on social media is under development. Hal Grieb, an emergency manager from Texas who is an expert in social media, explains that not using social media could potentially put an agency or jurisdiction into non-compliance because the founding NIMS document specifically promotes the adoption and use of new technologies. The rapid development of crisis mapping and open knowledge about these social media technologies raises concern for emergency management about liability, standards of practice, authorization and integration of these tools into an efficient and effective public communication system for warning and guiding response. The State of California is a few years ahead of the curve.

## Governance

Many of the challenges regarding governance of public communication systems in western Massachusetts are similar to those faced by inter-agency communications discussed earlier in this report. Developing effective region-wide capacity for communicating with the public will involve many

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<sup>39</sup> <http://vosg.us/history/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2012/02/24/new-case-study-virtual-operations-support-team-trial-by-fire/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2012/02/24/new-case-study-virtual-operations-support-team-trial-by-fire/>

strategies that integrate and utilize the same or similar governance strategies as inter-agency communication.

As discussed earlier in this report, a survey of existing conditions for public communications in western Massachusetts indicates that the current methods and strategies used for informing residents are generally effective. The primary challenges faced in communications involve ways in which the existing communications infrastructure – both in terms of technology and standards of practice – could be made to operate more effectively and efficiently. In addition, much of the communications infrastructure used to alert the public is owned and maintained by private entities—television and radio companies, cable companies, internet providers—and the Federal government. Because of this, the primary focus on governance for public communications systems in western Massachusetts is primarily operational rather than infrastructural. Taking a cue from the State of California, shifting the balance of emphasis from inter-agency communication to public emergency communications may be a strategic funding tactic.

An exception to this operational focus is alert sirens, which exist to varying degrees throughout the region and are owned by municipalities. It is recommended that MOUs, similar to those found in Appendix B, be utilized for establishing protocols for the maintenance and use of these sirens to assure consistent use of sirens wherever they are used in western Massachusetts. The reality is that municipal boundaries do not matter in the event of an emergency and residents in all the communities of our region need to trust that the use of a siren means the same thing no matter where they hear it from.

With a focus on operational improvements, standard criteria and templates should be developed for the type and scope of public communications during an emergency. Procedures that should be agreed upon by municipalities, emergency management officials, LEPCs, REPCs, and WRHSAC, include the following items:

- Content and wording of specific messages for events that occur before, during, and after an emergency (opening of shelter, evacuation, need for volunteers, etc.).
- Procedures for use of specific communication methods and situations and context in which each should be utilized.
- Best practices for communicating with functional needs, limited mobility, and limited English proficiency residents and agreement that they will be followed.

**State of California Case Study** – In addition to these operational recommendations, the State of California serves as a useful case study for examining another potential, long-term solution to governance. The State has developed an extensive “Alert and Warning Initiative Implementation Plan” and includes recommendations for a public-private partnership for governance. California’s public-private partnership is being envisioned along similar lines as a non-profit called the Partnership for Public Warning (PPW). Once established, it will provide the following roles for public notification and follow-up communications in the state:

1. Overall guidance of notification operations.

2. A middle-ground independent entity between management of the entire system and the operations of individual agencies and response partners.
3. On-going evaluation, coordination and development of public communication procedures.
4. Forum for continuing collaboration between all parties involved in public communications, including fixed and mobile communication systems, local and state agencies, disability groups, and non-English speakers.
5. Creating procedures and protocols for coordination across jurisdictional boundaries. Jurisdictional concerns to be addressed by the partnership include how to prevent conflicting messages and coordinate warnings in split media markets when multiple jurisdictions are affected by an event.

The public-private partnership direction for a governance structure for emergency communication was laid out in state legislation, after which a comprehensive plan and roadmap were developed. A key element in California’s strategy is to coordinate and align technological development of a comprehensive “plug-and-play” system that is flexible enough to adapt to future changes in communication strategies, and also integrate existing, local warning investments. The partnership emphasizes accessibility for people with disabilities and speakers of languages other than English. Part of their long-term funding strategy is to participate in national level research of new and emerging communications tools such as CAP and IPAWS. This public-private partnership provides an example of the execution of several best practices in public communications that could be emulated through the governance strategies that are developed in western Massachusetts.

## Key Findings

### Emergency Responder Interagency Communications Findings

The following are key findings aggregated from the outreach conducted across the region regarding interagency communications. They are presented in no particular order of importance.

1. Radio capabilities in the region have been improved greatly in recent years, though there are still areas of the region with limited radio access (and cell phone coverage) due to hilly terrain. Identified issues with radio include the lack of trained COMLs in the state, lack of procedures for using radios during larger events, and unfamiliarity with the use of radios by agencies that do not use them on a day to day basis. The MIFOG document recently released by MEMA will hopefully help with coordination during larger events.
2. Significant investment will be needed over the next ten years to upgrade the radio equipment and infrastructure in the region. At the same time, funding from the Department of Homeland

Security, which has been used to support infrastructure and equipment improvements in the region, is decreasing. An effort is underway to create a non-profit Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Council (WMRIC) to continue the work of the WRHSAC Interoperability Sub-Committee into the future.

3. Currently the use of amateur radio for emergency communications in the region is largely informal, and could be built upon to provide a reliable back-up radio system in the event that the primary system fails.
4. Data sharing capabilities do not exist throughout the region. Within each county, police departments are capable of data sharing, but cannot interface with surrounding counties or other disciplines.
5. The lack of a high-speed, secure internet connection is a problem in the more rural areas of the region. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute's MassBroadband 123 fiber-optic network will be completed in 2013, and will provide the region with an opportunity to develop increased wireless communications capabilities. Efforts will still be needed to extend coverage to all areas of the region (what is known as the "last mile").
6. Monitoring of social media for situational awareness information does not currently take place. The lack of staffing resources at MEMA and on the local level was identified as one issue. The Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team is adding a member to the team for this purpose, and could be drawn upon as a resource during an event. Trainings and online information on the use of social media are now available for emergency personnel.
7. A reliable web-based tool or network is needed for securely sharing information among agencies. There are mixed opinions in the region about the use of MEMA's WebEOC, which failed to function properly in recent events, but has since been upgraded.
8. Procedures are needed for coordinating communication and information sharing among multiple agencies and jurisdictions during large events. Private sector stakeholders and non-governmental organizations should be included in the development of procedures and subsequent exercises. These procedures could contribute to the development of a Joint Information System – the written plans, procedures, and agreements that help facilitate a coordinated effort to share information – for the region.
9. The lack of a legally recognized regional authority was identified as an obstacle in coordinating communication during larger events. Despite this, emergency responders and managers have coordinated information-sharing in past events through a Joint Information System or other means of collaboration.

10. The regional PSAPs are used as a contact point for emergency information, and are a good resource for sharing information among local jurisdictions during an event, but may not have sufficient staff and resources to perform this function effectively. Varying response procedures in Berkshire County pose challenges for dispatch across the region.

## Emergency Communications with the Public Findings

The following are key findings aggregated from the input of regional stakeholders and literature regarding best practices in public communications. They are presented in no particular order of importance.

1. Current strategies for communicating with the public are generally effective. However, redundancy and accessibility for specific population groups, such as functional and access needs populations, could be improved, and as “new” modes of communication, such as Twitter and Facebook, become increasingly used by the public to get their information, emergency personnel will need to be able to provide information to residents via these communication modes.<sup>42</sup>

Power outages severely compromise communication, especially in the hill towns and rural locations, emphasizing the need for individuals, families, and communities to be prepared to communicate without the electrical grid for at least 72 hours. In some geographical areas, smart phones work and some may provide internet access even where there is no broadband capability, so residents may be able to avail themselves of information provided over the internet (social media) during power outages (as long as they have gasoline to run their vehicles while charging their smart phone battery or if they have a solar or hand crank charger).

2. There are limited resources currently available for training existing personnel and investing in the various new technologies and the additional personnel necessary to improve emergency communication.
3. Automated control of television and radio, and oftentimes distant management contacts, interferes with local authority to interrupt programming in order to broadcast timely and accessible information to local populations, but local radio and cell phones were widely used in Haiti after the earthquake when there was no power for days.<sup>43</sup>
4. Members of the general public are interested in spontaneously volunteering while emergencies are occurring. These volunteers can be at risk if not properly trained or incorporated into other

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<sup>42</sup> One need only look at the current Presidential campaign or the 2012 Olympics to grasp the massive and exponentially increasing use of social media as a primary means of communication about current events as well as targeted communication to stakeholders.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/blogs/alertnet-news-blog/cell-phones-and-radios-help-save-lives-after-haiti-earthquake/>

response efforts. Methods need to be established for effectively channeling these desires into public communication about how they can assist in response efforts in an integrated manner.

5. Social media is generally not currently utilized by emergency management officials and many emergency management officials, especially in areas with limited cell service and limited broadband internet, have significant concern about the effectiveness and reliability of social media in alerting the public about emergencies. The major reason for this concern is a perceived risk of misinformation and the potential spreading of incorrect information. However, it costs nothing for emergency personnel to create Twitter accounts and start “following” a few key resources, such as: AACO Emergency Management @AACO\_OEM, Francisco Sanchez @DisasterPIO, and Kim Stephens (who prepared WRHSAC’s AAR for the Tornado) @Kim26stephens. Once emergency management officials become comfortable with Twitter and other social media modes of communication, they will be able to use it to get to their residents who rely on this form of communication in the event of a disaster. Therefore the concern about inaccurate information will be eliminated as local emergency personnel will be the ones providing the accurate information. And as noted, with a power outage, smart phones may be residents’ only way of obtaining information.

In sum, there are immediate low or no cost actions emergency response and preparedness personnel can take to improve communication with the public, but developing effective region-wide capacity for communicating with all of western Massachusetts’ diverse residents necessitates significant long-term investment of time and resources.

## Recommendations and Strategies

### Short Term Recommendations and Strategies (to be implemented in the next 5 years)

#### Emergency Responder Interagency Communications Short-Term Recommendations

1. Provide education and outreach on Joint Information Systems (JIS) to local officials and emergency responders and advocate for the establishment of JIS as part of Standard Operating Procedures to coordinate Public Information and Risk Communications. Education should include what a JIS is; how to establish a JIS; who can establish a JIS; examples of when a JIS could be activated; and agreements and procedures that should be in place prior to any incident/disaster.<sup>44</sup>
2. Develop a Joint Information System (JIS) Functional Annex for the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) in order to facilitate the coordination of public information between

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<sup>44</sup> More information on a JIS can be found on pages 12-13, and in Appendix C. *IS-702.a National Incident Management System (NIMS) Public Information Systems* is an online training available from FEMA (<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is702a.asp>) that provides an overview of the concept and who should be involved in planning a Joint Information System.

multiple jurisdictions during an event. The annex should pull together all of the information needed to effectively coordinate public information on a regional scale, such as tools and methods for communicating with other jurisdictions and the public, pre-scripted messages for the media, and contact information for response agencies, NGOs, utility companies, interpreters, the media, etc. Accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Annex should be developed that would provide a checklist of actions to take when the JIS is utilized.

3. Hold trainings and exercises for initiating and utilizing the Joint Information System for events that impact multiple jurisdictions. The H1N1 response After Action Report could be used as guidance for how a JIS can operate during a real response. Involve multiple stakeholders in exercises, such as utility companies, owners of high hazard dams, media, and other private sector stakeholders.
4. Train more first responders, emergency professionals, and members of MRC, CERT, faith-based organizations, and other response partners in the region for communication roles such as Public Information Officer (PIO), Liaison Officer, and Communications Unit Leader (COML).
5. Agencies should periodically review statewide mobilization plans to remain current on procedures outlined in the plans.
6. Increase awareness of amateur radio emergency communications capabilities in the western Massachusetts region among emergency managers. Develop formal agreements between ARES and EMDs that outline the roles of amateur radio operators during a response, and integrate amateur radio operators into EOCs, Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST) or Virtual Information Operations Support (VIOS)<sup>45</sup>, regional sheltering, the Incident Management Teams (IMTs), and other response teams and functions in the region. Operators should receive relevant ICS training, and be included in exercises.
7. Build the capacity in the region to monitor social media for situational awareness and rumor control through trainings and exercises for emergency personnel, CERT and MRC members, and other volunteers. Develop a Virtual Operations Support Team (VOST) to assist with monitoring social media and disseminating approved messages during large incidents.
8. Support the implementation of regional data sharing efforts in the region. Attention should be paid to developing the capability to share data across counties and across disciplines.
9. Support the creation of the Western Massachusetts Regional Interoperability Council to continue the work of the WRHSAC Interoperability Sub-Committee into the future.

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<sup>45</sup> See the Public Emergency Communications section and the Appendix D for more information on VIOS/VOST.

10. Work with MEMA to educate end-users on the current and planned capabilities of WebEOC, and incorporate the use of WebEOC into exercises in order to practice using the tool prior to a real event.
11. Explore developing a secure web-based information sharing network among emergency response stakeholders that is internet based. In the short term, an assessment could be conducted to determine the opportunities for developing such a network, including how a network could operate, what equipment would be needed to use the network, what type of applications and user interface is desired by different disciplines, etc. In addition, the assessment could examine how the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's *AXIA MassBroadband 123*, a next generation fiber optic infrastructure currently being deployed in western Massachusetts, could be utilized to support this network. A longer term project (see below) could be to implement a region-wide network that incorporates multiple disciplines and jurisdictions.

### **Emergency Communications with the Public Short-Term Recommendations**

1. Establish relationships with the following organizations to assist in more effective communications with the public:
  - a. Partnership for Public Warning, a national public-private partnership currently assisting California with creating a governance system for their public emergency communications system.
  - b. Massachusetts Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the deaf and individual, nationally-certified sign language interpreters in order to provide emergency management interpreting at local television stations, shelters, evacuation sites, and disaster scenes.<sup>46</sup> Interpreters and Emergency Management Directors should develop a close relationship so that interpreting services can be utilized efficiently during an emergency.
  - c. UMass Collaborative Adaptive Sensing of the Atmosphere, in order to initiate relationships that can lead to the development of an Integrated Warning Team for the region and perhaps create an alliance that can secure a mix of grant and private funding to deploy their technology and improve forecasting for the region.
  - d. Regional broadcast meteorologists and National Weather Service forecasters assigned to this area, to become members and participants in an Integrated Warning Team that will work collaboratively to improve public messaging about weather prediction and contribute to preparedness education and response and recovery from emergency weather events.

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<sup>46</sup> For more information on the Massachusetts Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, contact [president@marid.org](mailto:president@marid.org).

2. Continue research into the perceptions and attitudes of the region's residents regarding emergency alerts, in order to customize templates for common warning messages and establish localized foundations for public education campaigns. Feedback should also be solicited from the public for all recommendations in this report, as they are implemented.
3. Incorporate a public information component into drills, tabletops and exercises, in order to assist in better execution of both initial notifications of the public and follow-up explanations and information that is disseminated.
4. Review and update public communications strategies in all local and regional emergency plans. Plans should include processes, protocols, and procedures that require the development of draft news releases; media lists; and contact information for elected/appointed officials, community leaders, private-sector organizations, and public service organizations to facilitate the dissemination of accurate, consistent, accessible, and timely public information.
5. Work with municipalities and regional responders to develop written protocols for use of social media and the internet during emergencies, in order to identify and formally decide what information is appropriate for dissemination through this communication mode.
6. Emergency personnel in the region should consider creating Twitter accounts and start "following" a few key resources, such as: AACO Emergency Management @AACO\_OEM , Francisco Sanchez @DisasterPIO, and Kim Stephens @Kim26stephens. This would enable them to become more familiar with using social media and potentially to address concerns about inaccurate information.
7. Develop procedures for monitoring media outlets during emergencies and ensure they convey accurate information. To facilitate accuracy, emergency management officials and/or the public information officer should be in constant contact with reporters, television stations, and radio stations.
8. Develop system for monitoring social media during emergencies in order to collect intelligence on real-time emergency situations and understand public opinion and sentiments about the emergency. Monitoring of social media will also allow for awareness about spontaneous volunteer efforts that are occurring and provide a method for integrating these efforts into the overall regional response.
9. Conduct a statewide exercise similar to the Joint Information Virtual Exercise (JIVE) conducted in New Hampshire last year during National Emergency Preparedness Month in September, when pre-scripted preparedness messages were provided to agencies to send out to the public via various social media. By providing assistance on using different social media platforms, the goal

would be to reach as much of the public as possible, as well as help agencies get used to using social media before an emergency happens.

10. Continue to work to fill in the gaps in alert systems available so interested municipalities can provide distribution of emergency alerts to residents on preferred devices and formats.
11. Continue to explore the role of IPAWS and its ability to address gaps. Note: The MEMA smart phone alert system is scheduled to be up and running in fall 2012.
12. Educate the public, prior to emergencies, about the public communications modes of which they should be aware. If new systems or communication strategies are established, the community should be informed about how to interact with responders, and vice versa, before an emergency occurs.
13. Conduct an intensive survey and outreach campaign for people with functional and access needs and those who, for any reason, require assistance for self-care and survival. Multiple goals can be achieved through this effort, including identifying the spectrum of communication needs (language and modality) and educating the public about personal preparedness.
14. Facilitate necessary outreach and education to lay the groundwork for a possible separate governing structure, similar to what exists in California, or for an expanded scope of the current proposed interoperability governance structure to incorporate all of the requisite elements for establishing, implementing and continuously improving the infrastructure for alerts and warnings in western Massachusetts.
15. Hold a meeting of local radio and television stations to determine how best to interrupt programming during an emergency. Local stations can be used as anchor institutions and integrated with the region's public communications infrastructure more effectively, since they already have much of the relay equipment necessary for conveying messages to emergency officials and the public during an emergency. Radio and television stations could be trained in the use of ham radio, so that they can quickly receive messages from emergency officials and broadcast these to the public.
16. Develop a list of foreign language and American Sign Language interpreters in western Massachusetts so that it is available for reference in an emergency.
17. Promote relationships between local television stations and ASL interpreters, in order to facilitate the negotiation and establishment of interpreting services on television during emergencies.
18. Provide a video relay service (VRS) training to emergency dispatches to replace now-outdated Teletype Printer (TTP) services, for more effective communication with the deaf.

## Long Term Recommendations and Strategies (to be implemented in the next 5 to 10 years)

### Emergency Responder Interagency Communications Long-Term Recommendations

1. Implement a region-wide secure web-based information sharing network that incorporates multiple disciplines and jurisdictions (see the short term recommendation above for more information). A governance structure would need to be worked out to ensure continued maintenance and evolution of the network. The WMRIC is a potential entity that could serve as a steering committee for such an effort, or develop a sub-committee to act in such a capacity.
2. Establish one or more Regional EOCs or Multi-Agency Coordination Centers in the region to better facilitate interagency communications during large-scale events.
3. Conduct a study of the various response procedures for the towns in Berkshire County, and work with police, fire, and EMS departments to develop a strategy for revising procedures to improve dispatch in the region.

### Emergency Communications with the Public Long-Term Recommendations

1. Establish a permanent Joint Information Center (JIC) to serve as a regional, state, and national resource for training and back-up emergency communications support. The facility would serve to train EMDs, first responders, and volunteers in effective communications with the public, including how to effectively reach out to specific population groups. The Holyoke Fusion Center is one potential location identified as a site for the JIC.
2. Highlight the value and importance of the role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) to interface with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The PIO will gather, verify, coordinate, and disseminate accurate, accessible, and timely information on the incident's cause, size, status, and the resources committed. Only one PIO should be designated per incident. In large-scale incidents or where multiple command posts are established, the PIO should participate in or lead the Joint Information Center (JIC) in order to ensure consistency in the provision of information to the public.
3. Establish a combined response and preparedness website, possibly with funding for a permanent supervisory position to train and monitor all emergency managers, communication coordinators, and potential or prospective PIOs in the region in the applied uses of online tools for public emergency communication. This site could be built up and promoted as the authoritative "go to" site for any emergency in western Massachusetts. In the event of a natural or human-caused disaster, the currently assigned staff person and permanent supervisor will actively update the website and monitor media and public input about the emergency. In the course of day-to-day events, the currently-assigned staff person will receive training in

researching and posting links to relevant blog entries and educational videos, contributing to town and emergency management Facebook pages, staying current on Twitter feeds of interest, and disseminating information of general interest to first responders.

4. Institutionalize drills and trainings involving members of non-English speaking populations in order to expose first responders to the special communication challenges they must be prepared to handle. Involve professional simultaneous interpreters to enable substantive learning conversations with people fluent in other languages and allow first responders to experience and assess the use of interpreters in the field.
5. Consider developing a separate governance structure, similar to California, or expand the scope of the existing or proposed interoperability governance structure to incorporate all of the requisite elements for establishing, implementing and continuously-improving the infrastructure for alerts and warnings in western Massachusetts.



## Appendices



## Appendix A: Sources

### Documents:

- American Red Cross, *The Case for Integrating Crisis Response with Social Media*, July 2010, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35737608/White-Paper-The-Case-for-Integrating-Crisis-Response-With-Social-Media>. Accessed February 2012.
- American Red Cross, *The Path Forward: A Follow Up to The Case for Integrating Crisis Response with Social Media and Call to Action for the Disaster Response Community*, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/40080608/The-Path-Forward-ARC-Crisis-Data-Summit-Wrap-Up>. Accessed February 2012.
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- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, *Berkshire County Public Emergencies Communications Strategies Initial Report*, May 2012.
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- Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, *Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan*, December 3, 2007.
- Massachusetts State Interoperability Executive Committee, *Massachusetts Interoperability Conference* presentations, May 3, 2012.
- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, *Massachusetts Fire and EMS Mobilization Plan*, February 2009.
- Massachusetts Western Homeland Security Planning Region, *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*, Draft V2-4, June 2012.
- New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and New Hampshire Department of Safety, *NH Emergency Preparedness Conference* presentations, June 26, 2012.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Incident Management System*, December 2008. <http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>.
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- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *County Capabilities Report* for Hampden, Hampshire, Berkshire, and Franklin Counties, as of October 31, 2011.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Crisis Communications Planning: Establishing Joint Information Centers*, [www.LLIS.gov](http://www.LLIS.gov). Accessed June 2012.
- WRHSAC Public Safety Radio Communications Project: *Deliverable 1: Interoperability Project Updates, Assessments, and Drawings*. April 2011.
- WRHSAC and CRHSAC *June 1 2011 Tornado Response: After Action Report and Improvement Plan*
- WRHSAC *Tropical Storm Irene After Action Report and Improvement Plan*, March 2012.
- St. Denis et al., *Trial by Fire: The Deployment of Trusted Digital Volunteers in the 2011 Shadow Lake Fire*, Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> International ISCRAM Conference – Vancouver, Canada, April 2012. <http://vosg.us/blog/2012/02/23/trial-by-fire-vost-and-the-shadow-lake-fire/>.
- WRHSAC, *Tropical Storm Irene: Western Massachusetts After Action Report and Improvement Plan*, April 30, 2012.
- *Interoperability Project Updates, Assessments, and Drawings*, April 19, 2011, submitted to the WRHSAC from Science Applications International Corporation
- *GeoComm Final Feasibility Report*, September 2011, submitted to FRCOG

#### **Meetings, workshops, and conferences:**

- Franklin County REPC and Planning Sub-Committee meetings
- Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition meetings
- Southern Berkshire REPC meetings
- Central Berkshire REPC meetings
- Northern Berkshire REPC meetings
- *Tropical Storm Irene After Action Report and Improvement Plan* conference, Buckland MA, January 31, 2012
- Tabletop Exercise, Turners Falls MA, February 15, 2012
- *Tropical Storm Irene After Action Report and Improvement Plan* Final Presentation, Greenfield MA, April 4, 2012
- Research Team Meeting, Northampton, 9 April 2012
- Massachusetts Interoperability Conference, Worcester MA, May 3, 2012
- Statewide Hurricane Preparedness Conference, Devens MA, May 9, 2012
- Massachusetts Western Homeland Security Planning Region, *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan* Workshop, MEMA Region 3 & 4, Agawam MA, May 17, 2012
- Research Team Meeting, Northampton, 11 June 2102
- Tabletop, Westfield, 13 June 2012
- Hybrid Tabletop, Holyoke, 15 June 2012
- New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness Conference, Manchester NH, June 26, 2012

- Hampshire Regional EPC Meeting, 21 June 2012
- Research Team Meeting, FRCOG, 25 June 2012
- Quaboag Regional EPC Meeting, 26 June 2012

**Interviews and email correspondence:**

The following emergency management officials provided input for the interagency communications portion of this report:

- Chief Daniel Clifford, Chief of the Lenox Fire Department
- Major Thomas Grady, Berkshire County Sheriff's Office and Chair of the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC)
- Corydon Thurston, Executive Director Pittsfield Economic Development Authority, Williamstown Fire Department responder, owner and President of North Adams Tower Company, Inc., and former President of Berkshire Broadcasting Company, Inc.
- Chief Dennis Annear, Town of Orange Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director, and member of the Northwest Massachusetts Incident Management Team.
- Nina Martin-Anzuoni, Regional Preparedness Community-Based Organization Coordinator, and Franklin County MRC, CERT, and DART Coordinator, Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)
- Chris Myers, Emergency Management Director, Shelburne, and ARES Emergency Coordinator for west Franklin County
- Peter Judge, MEMA Public Information Officer
- Bob Barry, MEMA Local Coordinator
- Amy Reilly, Homeland Security Program Assistant Manager, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Brenda Jones, City of Boston Office of Emergency Management

The following emergency management officials provided input for the public communications portion of this report:

- Bruce Augusti, Region 3-4, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Mark Babineau, Ludlow
- Sue Brown, Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- John Dyjach, Holyoke
- Bob Hassett, Springfield
- David Lafond, Holyoke
- Ted Locke, Tolland
- Eric Madison, Longmeadow
- Chad McQuarrie, Agawam
- Melissa Nazarro, Springfield
- Michael Spanknebel, Hadley
- Jim Wiggs, Westfield

**Internet blogs:**

- Social Media 4 Emergency Management: <http://www.sm4em.org/>
- idisaster 2.0 Social Media and Emergency Management: <http://idisaster.wordpress.com>
- <http://westernmasssmem.wordpress.com/2012/09/18/module-21-text-message-alerts-and-warnings/>
- <http://www.campussafetymagazine.com/Blog/Campus-Command-Post/story/2011/04/Is-There-a-Gap-in-Your-Mass-Notification-System-Plan.aspx>

## Appendix B. Sample MOUs, SOPs, and Policies

### U.S. Department of Homeland Security SAFECOM Program:

Formal Agreement and Standard Operating Procedure Template Suite:

<http://www.safecomprogram.gov/oecguidancedocuments/webpages/ts.aspx>.

Includes guidance documents for developing the following:

- Charter
- Executive Order
- Local-to-Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- State-to-Local MOU
- System-to-System Console Patch SOP
- Mobile Gateway Patch SOP
- Shared Channel SOP
- Shared System SOP
- Radio Cache SOP

Formal Agreement and Standard Operating Procedure Reference Library:

<http://www.niix.org/niix/index.jsp>.

- Contains over 200 formal agreement and SOP examples.

### PSnet:

Website: [www.ps-net.org](http://www.ps-net.org)

According to the website:

“PSnet was initially established by four municipalities, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, and Chelsea, with additional support from Harvard University, with start-up funding provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security administered by the Boston Mayor's Office of Emergency Preparedness in its capacity as fiduciary agent for the Metropolitan Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR).

After proving out the core concepts of a regional information network for public safety, PSnet is now deployed to all nine municipalities that comprise the MBHSR. This adds Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop to the original four participants.

Since other organizations also play a role in providing for the public's safety, PSnet participants include Federal and State agencies, transportation authorities, academic institutions, hospitals, and certain non-government organizations.

Without coordination, the natural course of events is for each jurisdiction, each agency, and each function to develop its own networks: one for fire radio, one for fingerprints and crime analysis data, one for video cameras, etc. As jurisdictions and agencies begin to share data, they lease circuits and create special-purpose links: one circuit to support mutual aid via computer-aided dispatch, another to allow one municipality's Emergency Operations Center to serve as a backup for another. Each link, and each network must be managed and administered; each contains its own single points of failure and vulnerabilities.

With coordination, on the other hand, for considerably less overall expense than the individual networks and circuits, the participating agencies can create a shared network that provides a higher level of performance, resiliency, and security. Capabilities that would be prohibitively expensive for single agencies, such as multiple redundant links with automatic failover and 24x7 active monitoring, become affordable when the costs and benefits are shared across multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Additionally, a shared multipurpose network serves to facilitate the type of "organic" growth that has characterized the public Internet but that has to date, in large measure, eluded government networks.

The benefits of the PSnet approach fall roughly into four categories:

1. Lower costs: replace dedicated circuits and special-purpose networks with shared network infrastructure built by assembling piece parts that already exist and or are already planned. In some cases existing networks can be interconnected at nearly zero incremental cost.
2. Improve resiliency: provide a level of redundancy, security, and active management that would otherwise be unaffordable.
3. Enable new capabilities: Provide an agile technology on which to deploy new applications (for example, remote operation of radio equipment, mutual aid / CAD integration, videoconferencing)
4. Shared services: By pooling resources and sharing services, the region can create and operate technologies and services such as authentication and system and network monitoring and management at a level that could not be achieved by the participants acting independently."

A phone interview was conducted with Brenda Jones, Fiduciary for the MBHSR at the Boston Office of Emergency Preparedness, for this project. According to Brenda, the long-term governance of PSnet is currently being worked out. The basic structure will include an Executive Committee made up of key stakeholders from various disciplines who have IT and interoperability expertise, and who will oversee the build-out and maintenance of the network. The Committee will need to execute new agreements with the vendor, the communities and organizations using the network, and develop protocols for users. Currently these documents are still under development and samples were not yet available for reference. The network is currently in use, and communities have seen cost savings by utilizing the network as T1 lines can be eliminated, according to Brenda. Users pay an annual fee and an assessment based on the number of connections into the network. Future goals are to expand the network to a larger geographic area, and add new systems.

## NERAC Web-EOC and Collaborative Information Sharing Project

The Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC) hosts a regional WebEOC system through their website. According to Amy Reilly, fiduciary for NERAC at the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, the system is mostly used for localized events or for small regional events, however, communities have used it in the past for larger incidents such as Tropical Storm Irene, when MEMA's WebEOC failed. NERAC's regional WebEOC and MEMA's WebEOC can be connected using WebFusion, which MEMA owns. However as of April 2012, this had not yet happened, but was scheduled to be completed within a few months.

NERAC WebEOC Terms of Use:



## NORTHEAST HOMELAND SECURITY REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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The Northeast Homeland Security Region provides Web-EOC access to all NERAC communities to assist each municipality in managing local or large scale emergency and other events through the sharing of information across multiple agencies and jurisdictions supporting an incident response.

To enter the NERAC WebEOC, sign on at [webeoc.nerac.us](http://webeoc.nerac.us). In the event that this site is down, a backup site is available at [webeoc2.nerac.us](http://webeoc2.nerac.us).

**HOW TO ACCESS**  
Any first responder can access Web-EOC from any system with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) utilizing cable, telephone, cell phone or wireless access. This includes, but is not limited to, PCs, notebooks, PDAs and cell phones.

**TERMS OF USE**  
All NERAC documents and tools are designated "For Official Use Only". Municipalities may allow any employee or designee to use the system to advance the mission of the municipal government or for any official purpose related to municipal business.

**Please contact NERAC's Program Manager, Amy Reilly, with any questions. She can be reached at 617-451-2770 x2059 or [areilly@mapc.org](mailto:areilly@mapc.org).**

The NERAC Collaborative Information Sharing Project, or NERAC Connect, is primarily used by NERAC Committee and Council members for meeting and grant related information, however NERAC stakeholders also access the secure site because it is a repository for NERAC funded reports, tools, and cache site inventories, according to Amy Reilly. The public side of the site serves as NERAC's website ([www.nerac.us](http://www.nerac.us)). The NERAC Connect Policy and Procedures can be accessed here: [http://www.nerac.us/nerac\\_connect/SharePoint%20Policy%202.pdf](http://www.nerac.us/nerac_connect/SharePoint%20Policy%202.pdf).

# Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) Sample Local MOU from New Hampshire ARES<sup>1</sup>

## VII. SAMPLE LOCAL MOU (FROM ARRL)

### Local Memorandum of Understanding Between the Amateur Radio Emergency Service\*

a voluntary emergency and public service communications organization sponsored by the  
American Radio Relay League, Inc.  
and  
(other organization's name)

#### Introduction

The \_\_\_\_\_  
(other organization's name)  
and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®) group, responsible for  
\_\_\_\_\_ and representing public-service oriented radio  
(area of jurisdiction)  
amateurs with this area, have agreed to enter into these local agreements which have formed the basis for  
this memorandum.

#### Purpose

This agreement between the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service group and  
\_\_\_\_\_ establishes a framework of cooperation and a close working  
relationship with volunteer radio amateurs organized under the authority of the ARRL Emergency  
Coordinator and officials of the \_\_\_\_\_  
(organization)

It is intended through joint cooperation of the local resources available to both signees, the public will best  
be served under disaster, emergency or public-service related situations. This document is not meant to be  
considered legally binding; it is a statement of cooperation between the two parties.

#### Organization

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service consists of federally licensed radio amateurs who have  
voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment for communication duty in the public service when  
disaster strikes pursuant to Federal Communications Commission Rule 97.1 (a) which states that a  
“fundamental purpose” of the Amateur Radio Service is: “Recognition and enhancement of the value of the  
amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with  
respect to providing emergency communications.”

The American Radio Relay League, Inc. comprising more than 156,000 radio amateurs in the U.S.  
sponsors the ARRL Field Organization. More than 8,900 amateurs are registered as members of this  
national field organization which is divided into 71 geographical sections. The Amateur Radio Emergency  
Service (ARES) is one segment of the ARRL's commitment to service the public in time of need. Local  
ARES groups are established components within ARES. “ARES” and “Amateur Radio Emergency  
Service” are registered servicemarks of the American Radio Relay League, Incorporated, and are used by  
permission.

The ARRL New Hampshire Section leadership within the Amateur Radio Emergency Service is  
exercised by the Section Emergency Coordinator (appointed by the elected ARRL Section Manager) with  
the Section Emergency Coordinator appointing District Emergency Coordinators and Emergency  
Coordinators within the section.

The local Emergency Coordinator is the key person within the ARRL Field Organization to  
provide an ARES response in a given locale.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is organized in the following manner:  
(Organization's name)

#### Recognition

The \_\_\_\_\_ recognizes that the Amateur Radio  
(Organization's name)

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from Wayne W. Santos, ASEC – Liaison to Served Agencies, NH ARES, *Understanding Memoranda of Understanding*, <http://www.nh-ares.org/MOUGuidance.pdf>.

Emergency Service is the ARRL sponsored emergency/public service oriented communications organization. ARES serves more than 35,000 licensed U.S. radio amateurs nationwide and can be of valuable assistance in providing critical communications during emergencies and disasters when normal lines of communication are disrupted.

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service recognizes \_\_\_\_\_ (background and purpose of other organization).

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### Principles of Cooperation

So that communications resources of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service may be coordinated and utilized to the fullest advantage during disasters, emergencies and public-service related situations, and to the extent permitted or required by law and regulation, the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service group and the \_\_\_\_\_ have agreed that each organization will:  
(Organization's name)

1. Encourage on-going liaison with the other, urging members of both organizations to develop increasingly effective communications and cooperation.
2. Work with each other for developing emergency plans, training exercises, and a heightened state of preparedness.
3. Work with each other in times of disaster or emergency to meet the needs of the public.
4. Each party will, at the same time, work within its own lines of authority and respect the lines of authority of the other.
5. Distribute copies of and publicize this agreement through channels to its own members, and to other organizations, both public and private, which may have an active interest in disaster relief.
6. Establish a mutually acceptable means of identification for volunteers under this agreement which is honored by local law enforcement agencies during disasters and emergencies.
7. Understand that either signee to this document may have similar local agreements with other disaster assistance-related agencies/organizations.

### Implementation

This memorandum shall take effect upon its signing by authorized representatives of the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service group (and their ARRL Section Manager) and representatives of the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Organization's name)

This memorandum may be amended by mutual agreement of both parties, and it is understood by both parties that at any time this Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by written notification from either party to the other.

Six months prior to termination, the parties shall meet to review the progress and success of the MOU and determine whether it shall be extended for an additional five years. In no event shall any single extension of this MOU be for a term exceeding five years.

### Miscellaneous

This Statement of Understanding does not create a partnership or a joint venture, and neither party has the authority to bind the other.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Title

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Title

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ARRL Emergency Coordinator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ARRL District Emergency Coordinator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ARRL Section Manager (Required for  
Recognition by ARRL Field Organization)



## Appendix C. Joint Information System/ Joint Information Center Documents

### MEMA Joint Information Center Procedures

Depending upon the nature or scope of the event, the Joint Information System (JIS) may be utilized at the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC):

- The JIS is a cooperative network of Public Information Officers working to deliver accurate, timely information from multiple sources.
- The JIS can be as simple as two Public Information Officers from different agencies discussing an issue that impacts both agencies, or as complex as 150 Public Information Officers working on a major disaster from different locations, to ensure clear and accurate information is being delivered.
- The JIS mirrors the Incident Command System (ICS), so the primary responding agency will most likely take the lead in releasing information.

The Public Information Officer must learn to function in a Joint Information Center (JIC), which is a central location (many times occurring at the SEOC) to facilitate the Joint Information System during and following an event:

- The JIC enhances information coordination, reduces misinformation and maximizes resources.
- The JIC can provide 'one-stop shopping' for the Media to get the 'official' information.
- The JIC is potentially in place whenever the SEOC is activated, and multiple liaisons of the various federal, state, local, public, private and volunteer agencies and organizations (Emergency Support Functions – ESFs), which comprise the Massachusetts Emergency Management Team (MEMT) are present.
- The JIC must include representatives of each jurisdiction, agency, private sector, and nongovernmental organization involved in incident management activities.
- If the event becomes very large in scope, an enhanced JIC Organization would be put in place (see chart).

Responsibilities of the Public Information Officer at Joint Information Center:

- The Agency Public Information Officer is responsible for of the State Agency and related Massachusetts Emergency Management Team information the MEMT members wish to have disseminated to the public, particularly when their agency or organization has no PIO in the JIC.

- The Public Information Officer will focus on specific event-related information of an instructional nature regarding such areas, which are **state** emergency activities, such as warnings, evacuations, sheltering-in-place, statewide emergency telephone numbers, and related information utilizing a variety of traditional and social media.
- With the activation of the JIC, Public Information Officer will coordinate and direct the activities of the Massachusetts Emergency Support Function 14 (MAESF 14 – Public Information), as MAESF 14 serves as the Commonwealth’s source of disaster related information 24/7 throughout the event.
- The Public Information Officer coordinates information with the Executive Office of Public Safety and the Governor’s Communications Office.
- Attend all of the Director’s Senior Staff Briefings, pertinent conference calls, and general JIC briefings to acquire and disperse pertinent information, coordinate information with other member agencies/organizations and to assist in the development of an appropriate Media strategy.
- The Public Information Officer will be responsible for the preparation and dissemination of internal Situation Reports (every 6 or 12 hours, to be determined) to pertinent personnel and organizations (inside and outside of the JIC), not the general Media.
- In coordination with personnel from the Office of the Massachusetts Secretary of State, activate the ‘Citizen’s Information Telephone Center’ at Mass211, for the JIC, at the SEOC to disseminate information, respond to rumors and assist citizens in seeking solutions to their problems.
- Prepare the Media Room for arrival of Media (local, statewide, national, depending upon the scope of the event).
  1. The MEMA Training Room is reconfigured for News Briefings, News Conferences and general accommodation of the Media for the course of the event.
  2. Ready Media Kits with pertinent event, JIC, and SEOC information.
  3. Credential and brief individual Media members as they arrive. This briefing includes the most recent information about the event and the purpose and function of the JIC, but also of the responsibilities of the Media within the SEOC (restricted areas, proposed timing of briefings, availability of designated spokespersons).
  4. A designated Public Information Officer Assistant will continually monitor the Media Room to assist Media representatives with telephone, live television cable hook-ups, and familiarizing them with the limited access areas of the SEOC (rest rooms, cafeteria, etc.).

5. Media presence will be limited to the Media Room, except for scheduled, escorted visits to the Operations Room for taping of 'B roll' or, at the discretion of the Public Information Officer, (depending upon the reasons for activation of the JIC at the SEOC) brief stand-up interviews with the Public Information Officer, other PIOs, or designated Lead Officials as the Operations Room serves as a backdrop.
- The JIC will continue to provide appropriate updates to the Media regarding disaster conditions and indicate what actions have been taken in response to those conditions.
  - The Public Information Officer will dispense appropriate public information at the request of the liaisons of the various federal, state, local, public, private and volunteer agencies and organizations who comprise the Massachusetts Emergency Management Team (MEMT) working in the JIC at the SEOC, in coordination with other PIOs.
  - MEMT member agencies, without PIO representation in the JIC, wishing to release information to the public will coordinate through the Public Information Officer.
  - The Public Information Officer will assist the Media in seeking answers to inquiries of the MEMT members and other JIC participants in the SEOC.
  - Public Information staff will continually monitor Media coverage to ensure the accuracy of reporting and identify any need for additional vital information to be emphasized.
  - Some events require the use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Understand EAS's potential uses, as the Public Information Officers may be required to prescript emergency information for particular disasters or emergencies.
  - If the SEOC is not activated and/or the Public Information Officer is dispatched to the scene of an event to help coordinate an off-site JIC:
    1. If not already set up by the local on-scene Commander, assist with a Media staging area for vehicles and personnel that will not infringe upon the scene, interfere with the work, or place anyone in danger.
    2. Anticipate the Media's needs, including access to information and images.
    3. Work with Media members to coordinate a 'Media Pool' of a camera or reporter, if access is limited.
    4. Work closely with the on-scene Command Staff to provide periodic Media briefings/conferences in an appropriate locale.

Responsibilities of the Public Information Officer at a JIC after the crisis:

- Coordinate with pertinent local, state and federal recovery agencies and organizations to help disseminate public recovery information through the Media and other appropriate means.
- Work with agencies like the Department of Public Health to assist in disseminating potential Health Hazard Information presented by the event.
- Working with appropriate organizations, disseminate information regarding potential donations and volunteer opportunities to avert a secondary disaster.
- Through the Media, help disseminate information to potential donors about legitimate unmet needs.
- Have materials and equipment in place in case the Public Information Officer is deployed to an off-site JIC at a specific disaster area. (Go-kit: laptop, cell phone/charger, pager, Media contact information, camera, stationary supplies).

###

### Staffing Necessary for Full-Blown JICs

#### JIC ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

##### PIO – Lead

\*Information Gathering  
(Social Media)

\* Information Products  
Writing News Releases  
Social Media

\*Media Relations

##### PIO – Lead

\*Information Gathering  
Fact Gathering  
Status Board  
Media Monitoring  
(Social Media)

\* Information Products  
Writing  
Photography  
Administrative Tasks  
Web Support  
Social Media

\*Media Relations  
Media Relations  
Speaker Support

##### PIO – Lead

##### JIC Manager

\*Information Gathering  
Fact Gathering  
Status Board  
Media Monitoring  
(Social Media)  
Rumor Control

\* Information Products  
Writer  
Photographer  
Administrative Tasks  
Web Support  
Social Media

\*Media Relations  
Media Relations  
Speaker Support  
Field Specialist  
Comm. Relat.

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PIO – Lead

JIC Manager

\*Information Gathering

Fact Gathering

Status Board

Media Monitoring

(Social Media)

Rumor Control

\* Information Products

Writing

Photographer

Administrative Asst.

Web Specialist

Social Media

\*Media Relations

Media Relations

Speaker Support

Field Specialist

\*Com. Relations

Com. Rel. Specialist

Com. Support



## Sample Documents from Joint Information System / Joint Information Center Plans

The following sample documents are compiled from these plans:

- *New Hanover County (NC) Joint Information System / Joint Information Center Plan*, June 2011.  
[http://www.nhcgov.com/News/Documents/New%20Hanover%20County%20JIS%20JIC%20Plan%20v.2.pdf?Mobile=1&Source=%2FNews%2F\\_layouts%2Fmobile%2Fview.aspx%3FList%3Ddaad62e3-a985-490b-acbc-4b8706d3ed0a%26View%3Db63ed819-b857-4df7-8e9b-4b0a7e6a0136%26ViewMode%3DDetail%26CurrentPage%3D1](http://www.nhcgov.com/News/Documents/New%20Hanover%20County%20JIS%20JIC%20Plan%20v.2.pdf?Mobile=1&Source=%2FNews%2F_layouts%2Fmobile%2Fview.aspx%3FList%3Ddaad62e3-a985-490b-acbc-4b8706d3ed0a%26View%3Db63ed819-b857-4df7-8e9b-4b0a7e6a0136%26ViewMode%3DDetail%26CurrentPage%3D1).
- *Mariposa County (CA) Joint Information System / Center Plan*, September 30, 2011.  
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/carpa/toolkit/message/jis-jic-plan.pdf>.
- *Mesa County (CO) Joint Information System Plan*, March 2011.  
[http://mesacountypio.org/JIS\\_Plan\\_March\\_2011.pdf](http://mesacountypio.org/JIS_Plan_March_2011.pdf).

## Sample Memorandum of Understanding

### New Hanover County Joint Information System Committee Memorandum of Understanding

#### **A. Mission**

It is the mission of the New Hanover County Joint Information System Committee to provide incident information, designed to support any agency having jurisdiction during a large scale event. The NHCJISC consists of representatives from a large number of public, private and non-profit entities in New Hanover County.

#### **B. Scope**

The scope of this document shall apply to all of New Hanover County, except federal lands and shall include lands within the incorporated limits of municipalities of New Hanover County.

#### **C. Purpose**

Incidents within New Hanover County require a standardized management system. All agencies and political subdivision that participate in the NHCJISC, agree to utilize the National Incident Management System (NIMS) for all multi-agency and/or multi-jurisdictional incidents to the degree possible.

As emergency incidents often require that information be disseminated to the public, the members of the NHCJISC have agreed to help staff a Joint Information Center when necessary, and to use the Joint Information System in their cooperative efforts. Members of the NHCJISC compiled the New Hanover County JIC/JIS plan to provide a framework for collaborative operations during these multi-agency incidents.

The New Hanover County Joint Information Center (JIC) is a physical location where public affairs professionals from organizations in incident management activities work together in conjunction with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and or the Incident Commander to provide critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs support.

The New Hanover County JIC services as a focal point for the gathering, verifying, coordinating, and disseminating of information to the public and media concerning incident response, recovery, and mitigation. The New Hanover County Joint Information System (JIS) uses pieces of the JIC structure, but does not always have a designated location (or may have PIOs coordinating efforts at several locations). The JIS is designed to work equally well for small and large situations and can expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident. The NHCJISC will be available for staffing and managing the JIC. The goal of the JIC is to "Get the right information to the right people at the right time, so they can make the right decisions."

#### **D. Staffing**

Personnel from the signatory agencies agree to help staff the Joint Information Center (during incidents when an Emergency Operations Center is activated), when it is determined necessary

by the Emergency Operations Center or Incident Commander. On smaller incidents, staff from this agency will work as part of the Joint Information System, when it is determined feasible by their agency.

**E. Costs**

During the initial hours/days of activation of a Joint Information Center (or use of the Joint Information System); staff salaries will continue to be paid by the agency that employs them. If the incident becomes longer term, and reimbursement (by the federal government or other entities) becomes possible, that avenue will be pursued by the Emergency Operations Center.

**F. Terms**

1. This agreement does not supersede, supplant nor is it intended to supersede or supplant any statutory responsibility on any party's part. A party may not and shall not claim or assert that it is relieved of any legal obligation by virtue of the existence of this agreement.
2. This agreement shall remain in effect for a period of three years from the date of execution of signatory party. The agreement shall renew thereafter. Upon written notification from the New Hanover County Emergency Manager to all participating parties prior to the expiration date of the agreement any party may decline to renew.
3. The obligations and procedures established under this agreement shall be reviewed every three years by the NHCJISC prior to the anniversary of the effective date of the agreement. After said review, the NHCJISC shall prepare a written report detailing the change(s) or modification. The report, in total or parts thereof, will be proposed for adoption amendments to this agreement and will be adopted only upon unanimous agreement by all signatories.
4. Each party shall be responsible for its own costs incurrent in the performance of this Memorandum of Understanding (unless a separate agreement is made specific to a particular incident).
5. Any party may terminate its involvement in this agreement upon thirty (30) days written noticed to the Emergency Management Director of New Hanover County.
6. An grievance, protest or complaint by any party to this agreement with respect to this agreement shall be made in writing to the Emergency Management Director of New Hanover County. The Emergency Management Director will then present the issue for discussion and resolution to the NHCJISC at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
7. Any cancellation, grievance, protest or complaint registered with the Emergency Management Director of New Hanover County by a party to this agreement shall require a written acknowledgement from the Emergency Manager of New Hanover County to that party within ten (10) working days of receipt of that cancellation, grievance, protest or complaint.

**New Hanover County Joint Information System Committee  
Memorandum of Understanding  
Signature Page**

Your signature on this document indicates your agency's willingness to participate in the New Hanover County Joint Information System / Joint Information Center, when appropriate, or necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Name  
Title of official signing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DRAFT

**Notification Contact Information**

**NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**

Primary Contacts

Agency	Name	Contact Information
		Office Cell Home Other

## JIC/JIS INFORMATION RELEASE APPROVAL FORM

Please keep with draft and original release at all times

News Release       Media Advisory       Flyer  
 PSA                       Fact Sheet                       Backgrounder  
 Alert                       Talking Points                       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Document Title:	
Document Prepared By:	
Name:	Title: Agency:
Date:	Time:

Version (circle one):

1<sup>st</sup> Draft      2<sup>nd</sup> Draft      3<sup>rd</sup> Draft      4<sup>th</sup> Draft      5<sup>th</sup> Draft

### Approval Parties (obtain approval from all applicable agencies):

	CIRCLE ONE			SIGNATURE	DATE
<b>Lead PIO(s)</b>	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
<b>Media Operations Team</b>	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		
<b>Research Team</b>	OK to release as is	Make changes and release	Make changes and reroute		

## PUBLIC CALL SHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call Taker: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Calling: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (desk) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Information Requested:

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Action Taken:

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- Refer to (check as appropriate)
  - Agency PIO (name and agency) \_\_\_\_\_
  - JIC Information Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_
- Complete

March 2011

## JIC/JIS MEDIA CALL SHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call Taker: \_\_\_\_\_

Media Outlet: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (desk) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Information Requested:

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Action Taken:

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- Refer to (check as appropriate)
  - Agency PIO (name and agency) \_\_\_\_\_
  - JIC Information Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_
- Complete

March 2011

## JIC MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Date of news: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

Media outlet name: \_\_\_\_\_ Broadcast times: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Coverage synopses:

Issues:

Inaccuracies:

View points:

Corrections:

Who notified of discrepancies:

## MESSAGE PREPARATION TEMPLATE

Prepare a statement of commitment, empathy or concern to use as an introduction. Put yourself into the shoes of your audience and address what they are most concerned about.

*Example: "Before I give you an update of the incident, I'd like to say our number one concern is the safety of the community." or "The most important objective in our operation is ensuring a resolution to this situation as soon as possible."*

NOTE: From this point on, sentences should be short – seven to 12 words in length.

Prepare one to three key messages you want to address and incorporate them into a bridge between the sentence above and the body of your statement.

*Example: "Precautionary vaccination is the best course of events and we're starting clinics later today."*

Clarify facts and give a call for action.

Who \_\_\_\_\_

What \_\_\_\_\_

Where \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

Why \_\_\_\_\_

How \_\_\_\_\_

What we don't know: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain process to get answers: \_\_\_\_\_

Repeat statement of commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

Give referrals: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information \_\_\_\_\_

Next scheduled update \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, check your message for the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Positive action steps</li><li>▪ Honest/open tone</li><li>▪ Applied risk communication principles</li><li>▪ Clarity</li><li>▪ Simple words, short sentences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ No jargon</li><li>▪ No judgmental phrases</li><li>▪ No humor</li><li>▪ No extreme speculation</li></ul>
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## Worksheet: Template Press Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [name of contact]

PHONE: [number of contact]

Date of release: [date]

Two-three sentences describing what happened and expressing empathy on the situation.

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Two-three sentences describing what is currently happening in response to the event.

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Two-three sentences listing protective actions for community and actions that will be taken in the future.

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Contact information, ways to get more information and other resources.

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## Worksheet: Special Populations

When developing crisis and emergency risk messages, be sure to consider the following items that will help prepare communication to special populations:

### Limited Literacy

- Have you contacted TV news stations and encouraged them to announce phone numbers in addition to posting them on screen?
- Have you scheduled a public forum where you can pass on important information by word-of-mouth?
- Have you identified and begun working with local organizations that work with limited literacy individuals?
- List of limited literacy resources in my area:

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### Homeless

- Have you identified strategic locations where information can be posted in an emergency?
- List of homeless resources in my area:

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### Immigrants and Non-English Speakers (Limited English Proficiency)

Do you have a list of languages widely spoken in your area? Please list:

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- Have you identified a language service you can use in an emergency? If so, please list:

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- Do you have in-language spokespersons identified in your list of potential
- List of other resources needed for reaching immigrants or non-English speakers (limited English proficiency):

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### Visually Impaired

Have you identified a Braille language service to help prepare emergency materials? If so, please list:

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**Hearing Impaired**

- Have you contacted TV news stations and encouraged them to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format?
- Have you identified a sign-language interpreter for news conferences, public forums or other events where emergency information is being communicated? If so, please list contact information.

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- List of other resources needed when communicating with the hearing impaired:

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**Disabled**

- Have you included local organizations and government offices that assist people with physical and mental disabilities?
- List of other resources needed when communicating with the disabled:

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**Elderly**

- Have you included local organizations and government offices that assist elderly persons?
- Have you identified resources in your area that are available to help the elderly in terms of shelter access, transportation and support services during the emergency or event?
- List of other resources needed when communicating with the elderly:

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**Children**

- Have you identified schools, child care organizations and others to disseminate information that can be easily understood and absorbed by children?

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# SITUATION WORKSHEET

Received From: \_\_\_\_\_ Incident Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept./Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Radio: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Area Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Injured or Dead: \_\_\_\_\_

Number and type of special facilities (shelters, donation centers, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Road Status (closure, evacuation routes, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Status of Dept./Agency, mutual aid availability: \_\_\_\_\_

Shortages of critical resources and unfilled orders for critical resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Homes, infrastructure, watersheds, etc. threatened by incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept./Agency problems and/or concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness  
(Page 1 of 4)**

**Evaluation Process To Conduct:** After an incident, evaluate the effectiveness of your public information preparedness so you can learn from that incident and improve for the next one.

You will want to determine:

- **Step 1:** What did we do this time?
- **Step 2:** What do we want to do next time?
- **Step 3:** What do we need to do **now** to be ready?

---

**People To Consult:** People who can provide valuable information about public information performance after an incident include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ The Incident Commander</li><li>✓ Field/On-scene PIOs</li><li>✓ Joint Information Center (JIC) PIOs</li><li>✓ Other agency/department PIOs</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Public Inquiry Center personnel</li><li>✓ News media (reporters, editors, producers)</li><li>✓ Partner organizations</li><li>✓ The general public</li></ul> |
|---|---|

<p><b>Step 1: What did we do this time?</b> Assess the effectiveness of the public information operation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Evaluate JIC Activation:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Was the JIC activated as soon as possible?</li><li>▪ How smoothly did JIC activation go?</li><li>▪ What could be done to improve JIC activation?</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Evaluate Message Transmission:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Did the right people get the right information?</li><li>▪ Was information transmitted in a timely manner?</li><li>▪ Were there issues of miscommunication or confusion? If so, how were they caused, and resolved?</li><li>▪ What could be done to improve message transmission?</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Evaluate Quality of Information:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Was the information that was disseminated accurate?</li><li>▪ Was the information easy to understand?</li><li>▪ What can be done to improve the quality of the information?</li></ul></li></ul>

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness  
(Page 2 of 4)**

<p><b>Step 1: What did we do this time? (Continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Evaluate Accessibility of Information to Special Populations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was the information made accessible to people with special needs (e.g., people with visual and hearing impairments, language translation needs, and mobility impairments)?</li> <li>▪ What can be done to improve the accessibility of the information?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Evaluate Incident Documentation and Products:</b> <p><b>Review:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Media contact logs</li> <li>✓ Newsclippings</li> <li>✓ Audiotapes/videotapes of interviews and news coverage</li> <li>✓ Copies of products: news releases, talking points, briefing booklets, news conference agendas, flyers</li> </ul> <p><b>Ask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did the written products present information clearly, succinctly, and professionally?</li> <li>▪ Did PIOs speak articulately and present information well during news conferences and in interviews?</li> <li>▪ What can be done to improve the quality of incident documentation and products?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Evaluate PIO Relationships With Media, Partners, Responders, and the Public:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe any problems during the incident regarding PIO relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Media:</li> <li>✓ Public information partners:</li> <li>✓ Other response personnel:</li> <li>✓ The public:</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ What can be done to improve PIO relationships?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Evaluate JIC Internal Operations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did PIOs have the equipment needed? If not, what was lacking?</li> <li>▪ Did PIOs get the information they needed? If not, why not?</li> <li>▪ Did the message approval process work? If not, why not?</li> <li>▪ What can be done to improve JIC internal operations relating to public information?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness**  
(Page 3 of 4)

<b>Step 2: What do we want to do next time?</b>
Look at successes to replicate and problems to avoid repeating. Set goals for next time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set Goals for Output and Products:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What products will you produce?</li><li>▪ What quality will you accept—in products, documentation, and PIO performance?</li><li>▪ How will message transmission meet the needs of the various people who need information?</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set Goals for Systems Issues:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How can approval processes be designed to work efficiently?</li><li>▪ How can necessary public information resources be secured in a timely manner?</li><li>▪ How can public information production and dissemination processes be designed to work effectively?</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set Goals for Logistical Factors:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What equipment is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?</li><li>▪ What technology is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?</li><li>▪ What personnel are necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure they will be available when needed?</li><li>▪ What environment is necessary for the JIC, and how can you assure it will be available when needed?</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Set Goals for Human Factors:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What skills and technical proficiencies are necessary for public information staff?</li><li>▪ What special skills do public information personnel possess that can be utilized to enhance JIC operation?</li><li>▪ What personnel are necessary for successful JIC operation?</li><li>▪ What relationships can be improved to facilitate informing the public?</li><li>▪ What comfort, security, and safety issues must be under control for successful JIC operation?</li></ul></li></ul>

**Job Aid: Post-Incident Evaluation of Public Information Preparedness  
(Page 4 of 4)**

<b>Step 3: What do we need to do now to be ready?</b>	
Focusing on the goals for next time, consider the following strategies for improving in key areas.	
<b>To Improve Output</b>	<p><b>Consider . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide training to enhance PIO skills (e.g., writing, on-camera interview techniques, photography).</li> <li>✓ Rewrite pre-scripted news releases and factsheets so they are current.</li> <li>✓ Update and expand your Smart Book.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<b>To Improve Systems:</b>	<p><b>Consider . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Streamline processes that slowed down the public information operation (e.g., approval, production, dissemination).</li> <li>✓ Institutionalize into the standard operating procedures those processes that contributed to incident success (e.g., alternative dissemination process).</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<b>To Improve Logistics</b>	<p><b>Consider . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify equipment that could improve efficiency, and determine how to secure it.</li> <li>✓ Research new technology that would improve operations.</li> <li>✓ Research costs and other factors or consideration during the appropriate budget cycle.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<b>To Improve Human Factors</b>	<p><b>Consider . . .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify gaps in skills in public information personnel and recruit to fill those gaps.</li> <li>✓ Update records to ensure that PIOs' skills are being tapped.</li> <li>✓ Revise standard operating procedures to address personal comfort, security, and safety issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>

## Appendix A

### Local Media List

#### MESA COUNTY AREA NEWS MEDIA OUTLETS

MEDIA TYPE	AGENCY	LOCATION	FAX	CELL	PHONE	EMAIL	CONTACTS
Print	Grand Junction Daily Sentinel	Grand Junction	244-8578		242-5050	<a href="http://www.gjsentinel.com">www.gjsentinel.com</a>	
					970-250-4162	<a href="mailto:gdaugherty@gjsentinel.com">gdaugherty@gjsentinel.com</a>	Grete Dauqherty
					970-216-9377	<a href="mailto:mwigqins@gjsentinel.com">mwigqins@gjsentinel.com</a>	Mike Wiggins
					970-216-1922	<a href="mailto:gharmon@gjsentinel.com">gharmon@gjsentinel.com</a>	Gary Harmon
					361-8699	<a href="mailto:ahamilton@gjsentinel.com">ahamilton@gjsentinel.com</a>	Amy Hamilton
					970-623-0861	<a href="mailto:pshockley@gjsentinel.com">pshockley@gjsentinel.com</a>	Paul Shockley
						<a href="mailto:cthominson@gjsentinel.com">cthominson@gjsentinel.com</a>	Chris Thomlinson
Print	Grand Junction Free Press	Grand Junction	243-4224		256-4354	<a href="mailto:tharty@gjsentinel.com">tharty@gjsentinel.com</a>	Tim Harty
					256-4204	<a href="mailto:communitynews@qjfreepress.com">communitynews@qjfreepress.com</a>	
					243-2200	<a href="mailto:tdvorak@qjfreepress.com">tdvorak@qjfreepress.com</a>	Tracy Dvorak/ Managing Editor
					243-2200 ext. 18601	<a href="mailto:whaupt@qjfreepress.com">whaupt@qjfreepress.com</a>	Wyatt Haupt
Print	Denver Post	Grand Junction	256-1959	261-4123	256-1957	<a href="mailto:nloholm@denverpost.com">nloholm@denverpost.com</a>	Nancy Lofholm
Print	Fruita Times	Fruita	858-7658		858-3924	<a href="mailto:info@fruitatimes.com">info@fruitatimes.com</a>	Debbie Roberts/ Editor
Print	Mesa State Criterion	Grand Junction			248-1255	<a href="mailto:criterion@mesastate.edu">criterion@mesastate.edu</a>	
Print	Palisade Tribune	Palisade	464-5244		464-5614		
Radio	Cumulus Broadcasting	Grand Junction	243-0567		242-7788		General Manager: Kevin Wadlinger
Radio					623-8500		Kevin Wadlinger/ General Manager
Radio					683-5665		Ed Chandler/ Operations Manager
Radio	Drive 105	Grand Junction	241-6452		241-6460	<a href="mailto:winddancer@drive105.net">winddancer@drive105.net</a>	
Radio	KNZZ	Grand Junction	245-7551		254-2100 ext. 220	<a href="mailto:ken@kjradio.com">ken@kjradio.com</a>	Ken Pilling/ Program Director
Radio	KSPN	Aspen	970-925-1142		970-925-5776	<a href="mailto:dbach@nbcbroadcasting.com">dbach@nbcbroadcasting.com</a>	David Bach/ News Director
Radio	Metro Networks	Denver	303-477-0131		303-458-0874 or 303-477-1221	<a href="mailto:metro_dennews@metronetworks.com">metro_dennews@metronetworks.com</a>	
Service	Associated Press	Denver	303-892-5927		303-825-0123 or 1-800-3	<a href="mailto:apdenver@ap.org">apdenver@ap.org</a>	supervisor
Television	KJCT-Channel 8	Grand Junction	245-0889		245-8888	<a href="mailto:newroom@kict8.com">newroom@kict8.com</a>	
					245-8880	<a href="mailto:carogan@kict8.com">carogan@kict8.com</a>	Chris Grogan/ News Director
Television	KKCO-Channel 11	Grand Junction	245-3793		234-1111	<a href="mailto:tips@nbc11news.com">tips@nbc11news.com</a>	
					270-5661	243-1111	<a href="mailto:amanda.wagner@nbc11news.com">amanda.wagner@nbc11news.com</a>
Television	KREX-Channel 5	Grand Junction	243-6397		242-5000	<a href="mailto:news@krextv.com">news@krextv.com</a>	
				250-9052		<a href="mailto:kbresnahan@krextv.com">kbresnahan@krextv.com</a>	Keira Bresnahan/ News Director
Television	Fox 31	Denver	303-566-7631		303-566-7600 Toll Free 1-888-595-3131	<a href="mailto:tips@myfoxcolorado.com">tips@myfoxcolorado.com</a>	
Television	KCNC (4)	Denver	303-830-6380		303-830-6464	<a href="mailto:kcncnews@cbs.com">kcncnews@cbs.com</a>	
Television	KMGH (7)	Denver	303-832-0119		303-832-7777 Assignment Desk 303-832-0200	<a href="mailto:7newsdesk@kmgh.com">7newsdesk@kmgh.com</a>	
Television	KUSA (9)	Denver	303-698-4700		303-871-1491 Toll Free 800-336-5872	<a href="mailto:desk@9news.com">desk@9news.com</a>	
Television	News 2	Denver	303-740-2803		303-740-2855	<a href="mailto:news2@cw2.com">news2@cw2.com</a>	

## Appendix B -4

### WiFi Hotspots in Grand Junction, CO

Aspen Street Coffee	Fruita, CO	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Barnes and Noble		NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Best Western/Sandman Inn	708 Horizon Drive	Paying customers receive access code.
Borders	Hwy 6 & 50	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Coffee Muggers	644 Main Street	Paying customers receive access code.
Coffee Studio	2913 F Road #103	Paying customers receive access code.
Cold Stone Creamery	2474 Hwy 6&50	No fees but access code is needed.
Coolbeans Bookstore (Inside Fellowship church)	765 24 Road	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Enstrom's Candy and Coffee Shop	701 Colorado	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Fuoco Motors	741 N. 1st Street	Public WiFi-No fees, access codes or restrictions.
Java Junction	2401 North Avenue	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Kannah Creek Brewery	1960 N. 12th Avenue	Password needed.
Main Street Bagel	559 Main Street	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
McAlister's Deli	480 W. Park Drive	Password needed.
Mesa County Libraries	Central - 530 Grand Ave. Clifton - 590 32 Rd, 6F Palisade - 711 Iowa St. Orchard Mesa - 230 Lynwood St. Fruita - 523 Aspen Ave.	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Mesa Mall	Hwy 6 & 50	No fees or access codes needed. Restricted to food court.
Mesa State College Library	1100 North Avenue	Log in as guest.
Naggie McGee's Irish Pub	359 Colorado Avenue	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Quality Inn/Days Inn	733 Horizon Drive	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
St. Mary's Hospital	2323 N. 7th Street	NO fees, restrictions or access codes needed.
Trader's Coffee and Tea	666 Patterson Road	Paying customers receive access code.

	Recommended for PIO's Personal "Go Kit"	Dedicated JIS/JIC Resource.	Item is Shared Resource (indicate from which agency)	Has Item Been Secured and/or task completed?	Comments
<b>Equipment List for Mesa County JIS/JIC</b>					
Laptop computer, charger, loaded with Word, PP, Acrobat Reader	X			N/A	
USB, loaded with media and JIC contact lists, electronic copy of your agency letterhead, news release template	X			N/A	
Cell phone (smart phone) with charger	X			N/A	
Clipboard, writing pads, and pens	X			N/A	
Copy of MCJIS Plan and your agency's Public Information Plan	X			N/A	
Battery powered radio and/or NOAA weather/emergency radio	X			N/A	
Free wireless access point locations	X			N/A	
JIC Staff (PIO), Media, and Visitor badges with clips -					Suggested that local media be educated on getting media credentials
Portable, wireless-network printer, fax, scanner with AC adapter			X		
Four 6-outlet power strips with 10-foot grounded (3-prong) extension cords		X		No	
Portable audio recorder/player with microphone		X	Jeff Kirtland- SD 51	Yes	
Digital still camera, six mega-pixel (or higher) resolution <b>MANY OF US HAVE ONE</b>		X			Moved to individual resource
Digital video camera, 640x480 (or higher) resolution in MPEG-2 or MPEG-4 format			Jeff Kirtland- SD 51, Sam Rainquet-GJ City		
AM-FM-TV band recorder/player to record broadcast media coverage of the incident		X	Kate Porris, GJ Police	Yes	
Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, mask)		X	Community Hospital can provide	Yes	
White Boards		X		No	
Laptop projectors/ screens			PD, Community Hospital		
Flip Charts & Markers		X			
TV/Computer Monitors for Media Monitoring			X		
Office Supplies (Notepads, printing paper, pens/pencils / makers, staplers, clips, post-its)		X		No	
Power Extension Cords, Ethernet Cables, Masking Tape, etc.		X		No	
PIO Vests and generic ID badges		X	Jeff (1 vest), Heather (2-3 vests), Becky (1 vest)	No	
Material Packets for each unit lead (Forms)		X		No	
Preloaded Flash Drives/ Memory Sticks for each unit lead (Forms)		X		No	
Established Twitter account				Yes	Done, @moemergency
Established Teleconference Number					Do we need this?
Virtual meeting and document sharing web portal capabilities, including login and password instructions and web-cam equipment					Does someone want to establish for us a Google Docs
Portable Podium			X		
Microphone & Amplifier			Jeff Kirtland, SD 51, microphone		
Large Maps of County and Surrounding Area		X		No	
List of Translation Services				Yes	List in JIS/JIC plan
Telephone Company Contacts for hard-line telephones		X		Yes	Karen noted, PR for reverse 911 calls??
Other Important Business Contacts, Commercial Printers, etc.		X		No	
Conference call phone			X		
Large plastic tubs for storage with handles (for storage)		X		No	
Mult box			Jessica Peterson, Mesa County	Yes	
Back drop			Kate Porris, GJ Police, Jeff Kirtland, SD 51	Yes	
Mult box audio cord - 30 feet long		X		No	
NOAA weather/emergency radio		X		No	

## THE JIC FACILITY

The JIC facility should be located close to the best sources of information, such as an Incident Command Post or Emergency Operations Center, without compromising safety or security. Also, the facility should:

- Provide special parking for media vehicles (including satellite trucks), with signs directing the media to the JIC;
- Be designed so functional areas that must communicate frequently can do so; and
- Contain the necessary resources and equipment.

## BE READY

Start preparing now. Agreements should reflect the commitment of each partner organization to coordinate with counterparts and keep them informed. Emergency public information plans and procedures should be in place addressing a coordinated emergency public information effort centered on support for the Joint Information System/Center. Remember, it is all about getting the right information to the right people at the right time — so they can make the right decisions.

Created by



Decision and Information Sciences Division  
Risk Communication Program  
[www.anl.gov/riskcomm](http://www.anl.gov/riskcomm)

## JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM / CENTER GUIDE

## A KEY TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION DURING A CRISIS



In any type of crisis, information can be as important as food, water and shelter. Whether the information involves saving lives, protecting property or just calming fears, the public must have accurate, timely, easy-to-understand information. An effective emergency public information program can help people make educated decisions about their safety. During a crisis response, the Joint Information System (JIS) and the Joint Information Center (JIC) are keys to providing concise and coordinated information to the public and the news media.

This guide contains material that can help you establish and operate a Joint Information Center as part of a Joint Information System. Development of an effective JIS and JIC requires extensive teamwork, coordination and partnership, often spanning organizations and jurisdictions. A JIS and JIC cannot be formed in a day when something happens — they must be built *before* disaster strikes. This guide is a quick reference to help Public Information Officers (PIO) and Public Affairs Officers (PAO) remember the key points for a successful JIS and JIC.

A ready reference to help you establish and operate an effective Joint Information System/Center



U.S. Army



CSEPP



Homeland Security

## WHAT IS A JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM?

Many different organizations and jurisdictions may respond to a large-scale crisis. The response may include: local police and fire; hospitals; county and state offices; the military; federal agencies; tribal governments; health departments; volunteer organizations; the private sector; and many others. All these groups participate in the JIS, which provides a mechanism for coordinating their public information activities. And even for smaller, local incidents, the JIS remains an important, ever-present feature of any effective crisis response.

## WHAT IS A JOINT INFORMATION CENTER?

The JIC is a central location that facilitates operation of the JIS. It is where PIOs and PAOs come to coordinate public information during a crisis. By working together in a JIC, PIOs and PAOs can reduce misinformation, maximize resource and help build public confidence in response efforts. A JIC is usually established for large-scale incidents and staffed by representatives from the affected jurisdictions. Depending upon the size and nature of the crisis, staffing can range from less than a dozen people to more than 100. For some catastrophic events covering large geographic areas, more than one JIC may be necessary. In some cases, a JIC may be set up ahead of time and activated when needed. But more often, a JIC will not be established until after a crisis has occurred. The decision to use a JIC is typically made by the Incident Commander.

**THE JOINT INFORMATION CENTER IS A POWERFUL TOOL TO SUPPORT THE JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

**NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was developed to create a standard, nationwide approach for managing incidents at all levels of government. The JIS/JIC structure is a critical component of NIMS, which relies upon the JIS and the JIC to integrate the emergency public information activities of federal, state and local responders.

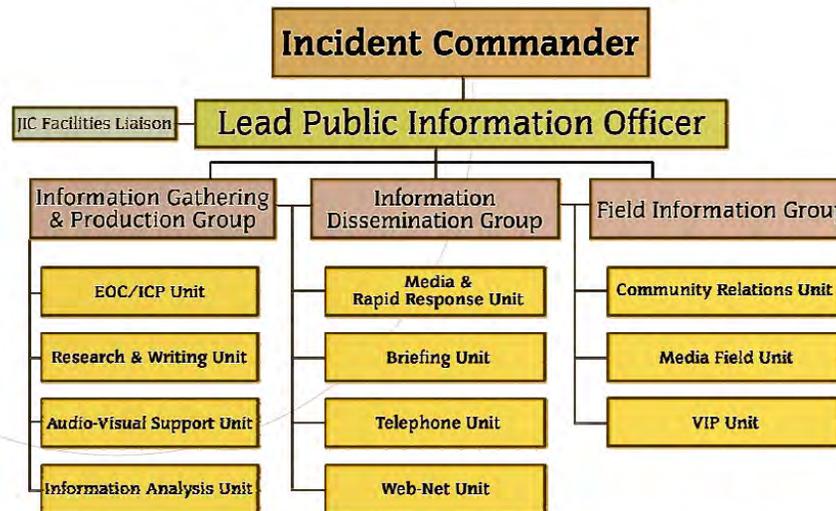
**WHO'S WHO IN THE JIC**

Like NIMS, the model JIC structure at right uses Incident Command System (ICS) principles. The model is designed to be scaleable and function-based to work in a variety of crises. Each box on the organization chart represents a function to be performed. One person may do many functions or one function may be staffed by many people, depending upon the size and scope of the incident. The model also provides a clear "chain of command" within the JIC to minimize confusion and enhance information flow.

**Lead Public Information Officer** — comes from the agency in charge of handling the crisis and reports to the Incident Commander. This is a management position; the Lead PIO should provide overall direction and should not be involved in operational details. The Lead PIO can have assistant PIOs. PIOs representing other agencies do not report to the Lead PIO but they do coordinate and provide support.

**JIC Facilities Liaison** — responsible for the JIC facility and its operation. The JIC Facilities Liaison keeps the JIC running from a logistical standpoint and provides support to the Lead PIO, agency public information staff, group leaders, and all functional areas of the JIC.

**JIC Organization and Functions**



**Information Gathering & Production Group** — gathers, analyzes and sorts information. This group also develops all written, print, photographic, audio, video, and web-based material for use in the JIC.

**EOC/ICP Unit** — gathers relevant, approved incident information for the JIC from the Emergency Operations Center and the Incident Command Post.

**Research & Writing Unit** — develops written material on assigned topics. Work may include research or gathering information from multiple sources.

**WHAT MAKES A JIS/JIC GO?**

The JIC is designed to support the JIS, and the primary function of the JIS is to keep information flowing. JIC staff should think of information as a tangible commodity. Information is the "fuel" that runs the engine of the JIC: no fuel, the JIC will not start, too much fuel and the JIC will choke. For a JIC to operate efficiently, information must flow from all directions.

**Information Dissemination Group** — disseminates written and oral information to internal audiences, such as JIC staff and other agency representatives, and to external audiences, such as the public and the media.

**Media & Rapid Response Unit** — responds to media needs, including requests for information, tours, interviews, and visual material, and corrects misinformation. Information requests are forwarded to other agencies as appropriate. JIC staff working with reporters are an invaluable source of information about trends in media coverage. Rapid Response may take many forms, such as a news release, a call to a reporter or a live interview with media at the JIC.

**Briefing Unit** — responsible for preparing and conducting regular news briefings and news conferences.

**Telephone Unit** — answers calls from the public and the media. Besides the Field Information Group, this is the only unit with a direct link to the public.

**Web-Net Unit** — responsibilities include: creating web pages; posting data, images and video to web sites; handling e-mail; and monitoring web server traffic. It is important the JIC server can withstand the expected surge in traffic.

**Field Information Group** — provides face-to-face contact with the public, special interest groups, political leaders, and other VIPs, and provides interviews and other assistance to the media at field locations. This group also sends information back to the JIC and identifies issues that need to be addressed.

**Community Relations Unit** — coordinates outreach to groups of people united by a common interest, such as business owners, chambers of commerce, church groups, and shelter residents.

**Media Field Unit** — supports the Incident Commander by handling media requests at high-profile field locations where reporters gather.

**VIP Unit** — works closely with VIPs, such as elected officials. Provides regular updates to VIPs and sends information back to the JIC about VIP issues, activities and concerns.



## Appendix D. Social Media Resources

Excerpts from FEMA's Social Media in Emergency Management Training

### The Typical Stages of Development in the Use of Social Media

Level 1 Monitor	Level 2 Command	Level 3 Coordinate	Level 4 Cooperate	Level 5 Collaborate
(Listening in order to get your battle rhythm) One way communication <i>from the public</i> , intended to inform and instruct (the EM).	(Broadcasting) One way communication <i>to the public</i> , intended to convince, compel, instruct.	(Conversation) 1 or 2 way communication intended to avoid or minimize conflict.	(Discussion & Analysis) Two way communication intended to facilitate shared expectations.	(Synthesis and Value Creation) Two way communication that produces shared meaning and objectives.
Means focused	Means focused	Ends focused	Shared means and ends	Shared means and ends
<b>Prevention</b>				
<b>Preparation</b>				
<b>Mitigation</b>				
<b>Response</b>				
<b>Recovery</b>				

## **Common Steps to Adopting the Use of Social Media in Emergency Management**

### **Focus first on the outcome you wish to achieve**

Establish the outcome that you wish to achieve: With whom are you communicating and why? What is the communication about? What is the intent of the message or what are you looking to know?

### **Be prepared to adapt how you engage your audience**

Be prepared to adapt how you engage your audience through social media as you and your audience explore applications and their limitations. Create an emphasis on making your tools and communication accessible through mobile means.

### **Choose a few tools and develop them well\***

Many new users to social media start with one platform, become comfortable with the communication and its relationship to existing operations, and then slowly start to use other social media platforms, naturally picking them up, learning, and then expanding. This includes integration between social media platforms and organizational websites and the use of multimedia sites which are a natural progression with links to multi-media.

### **Create a trial account before creating an official one**

While still operating out in the open, creating a trial account allows you to gain familiarity first before broadly rolling out your official presence. This will give you the opportunity to make some mistakes, operating under the radar, without having them publicized broadly at the start.

### **Establish a support structure**

Develop a support structure, including human resources who will manage the accounts with guidelines (policies and procedures when necessary), and training in their use at all levels. Be creative in using current staff to enhance what you want to do and cross train staff on the different platforms used.

Use subject matter experts to help with data collection\*

Social media management and measurement can be complicated and using subject matter experts who understand the field can help make use out of the wealth of data available.

### **Develop a mentorship and demonstrations from experienced users**

Wading into the language of social media may be like reading to a foreign language. It can help to have those who are familiar with those platforms explain the terms and ways they are used so that all staff can communicate effectively. Pairing staff who understand the platforms with those less familiar is a good way of bridging the knowledge gap.

### **Establish news feeds (RSS)**

Establishing a news feed or using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) allows an organization to publish new content on a website, blog, or other news and syndicate this to subscribers. The feed is a summarized text of the original web page along with metadata, such as date, ownership, title, and description. News feeds make it easier for people to subscribe to your web pages without having to go and visit.

### **Leverage partners and volunteers**

Partner agencies and volunteers, whether under the umbrella of an organization or independent, should be taken into consideration. Establishing connections formal and informal where you can coordinate your messages or activities before, during, and after an emergency helps to communicate with one voice.

Using trained volunteers, be they collocated or remote, can help increase your capacity to manage social media communication, in particular during a crisis when social networks are lit up with posts.

### **Make people available to answer questions**

Remember that social media is a conversation and not just a broadcasting channel. Make sure that you have staff who can monitor your social media sites on a steady basis using an aggregating tool or other regular update, and reply to questions or correct misinformation when it appears.

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**Trust the public, the community's most wired citizens**

Encourage participation and public feedback to encourage ongoing investments in social media use. Social media communities are surprisingly self-correcting when users are out of line or feed incorrect information, although they do require some level of involvement by an organization. However, engaging with the public and allowing them to actively communicate with your organization can bring about a greater relationship of mutual trust.

**Develop a strategy**

- Form a social media committee to support its use.
- Set goals: identify the audience explain what benefits will be derived from social media use and how risks will be mitigated.
- Develop simple metrics of evaluating the benefits, some qualitative and some quantitative.
- Define an "online persona" or "character" for your online presence, this may or may not be the same as your offline presence.
- Establish practical and transparent reporting and analysis processes, and track progress to measure program success.
- Set expectations, including some room for mistakes.
- Ensure legal language is included where needed. Make sure that promises are kept.
- Integrate social media into organization's business: website, operations, exercises, and plans; continuously improve on its use in after action reviews and improvement plans.

\* Tinker, T. & Vaughan, E. (2010) Risk and Crisis Communications: Best Practices for Government Agencies and Non-Profit Organizations. Washington, DC: Booz Allen Hamilton. Available online at <http://www.boozallen.com/media/file/Risk-and-Crisis-Communications-Guide.pdf>, accessed October 8, 2011.

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**Key Organizational Challenges to Social Media in Emergency Management:  
Better Practices to Address Them**

Key Organizational Challenges	Better Practices to Address Challenges
<p><b>Leadership Buy-in and Organizational Culture</b> Fear and distrust of what is new or not familiar, questions about the reliability of information, and ability to verify what is provided by social media; May be fear of its misuse or abuse making them look bad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the significant benefits and the small risks of its use.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that those unfamiliar with social media may find its use uncomfortable or intimidating. These anxieties are similar to those that accompanied the introduction of the Internet, email and web use. Review how central the use of the Internet, email and web tools have become in business.</li> <li>• Emphasize the downside of not being included in the public conversation already occurring;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you want the public discussing your emergency or disaster without you?</li> <li>○ Don't you want to know what they are saying (about you)?</li> <li>○ Do you know how to participate and respond?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Show examples of other government users and their experiences</li> <li>• Suggest starting slowly, experimenting with a few tools, and adapting to ever-changing situations and technologies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organizational Capability</b> IT staff may not be familiar with enterprise deployment of social media or lack the infrastructure capacity to accommodate its use, especially high-definition or high-bandwidth applications such as images and streaming audio or video. Emergency management workforce may be unfamiliar with it or might lack the skills required to use it effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a support structure, including human resources who will manage the accounts with guidelines (policies and procedures when necessary), and training in their use at all levels.</li> <li>• Have those who are familiar with those platforms explain the terms and ways they are used so that all staff can communicate effectively.</li> <li>• Pair staff who understand the platforms with those less familiar to bridge the knowledge gap.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability (competition for resources, skills, time)</b> With emergency service organizations working with lean resources and expected to do more with less, there is more competition for shrinking staff and their time. Emergency response staff are already overloaded with their daily responsibilities and training in emergency protocols and other IT systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be creative in using current staff to enhance what you want to do and cross train staff on the different platforms used.</li> <li>• Identify reliable volunteer pools within the community with the requisite skills and commitment for cooperation in areas of social media use such as monitoring and coordinating communication.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security Policies and Restrictions Related to IT Systems</b> IT staff may perceive social media platforms as potential security risks and guidelines for allowing their use and management may not have kept pace with the current state of web technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use social media on computer systems that are off the organization's main computer network and do not link it with any internal systems.</li> <li>• Work with the IT staff to identify areas of concern and work together to problem solve.</li> <li>• Develop guidelines on social media use with IT staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Privacy of Personal Information</b> Legal staff and public citizens advocates may have concerns about citizens' privacy and personal information, how it will be handled, tracked, stored, and used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure legal language is included where needed. Make sure that promises are kept.</li> <li>• Establish practical and transparent reporting and analysis processes, and track progress to measure program success.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Records Retention Requirements</b> Legal records retention requirements for archiving communications at State and Federal level can damper use of these tools. Many locales are not staffed to do this or the staff they have are not familiar with the technologies. Changes in legal requirements have been outpaced by adaptation of social media.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that you have staff who can monitor your social media sites on a steady basis using an aggregating tool or other regular update.</li> <li>• As above under organizational capacity, ensure that staff are cross trained on platforms and guidelines for use.</li> </ul>

\* Quote from Tom Olshanski, Director of External Affairs at the U.S. Fire Administration.

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### List of Commonly Used Social Media Sites, Platforms, and Tools by Emergency Managers

**Note:** while other sites and platforms may be used for the purposes given below. The list below represents those most commonly used by emergency managers in the USA. The list is not meant as a comprehensive representation of all social media sites, or an endorsement of any of these sites or platforms.

**Blog Sites:** allow for a single author or a group of authors using one account to post content and links as a series of articles or posts arranged in a chronological sequence like a diary or journal.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes	
Blogger	<a href="http://blogger.com">http://blogger.com</a>	Free	All sites offer similar features including posting text, pictures, video, and links to other sites, and integrated with other social media sites. Posts are typically archived and can be searched, saved, edited, and deleted.	Software may be used with a custom domain but is not free and open source software (FOSS)	
	<a href="http://blogspot.com">http://blogspot.com</a>	Free			
Wordpress	<a href="http://wordpress.org/">http://wordpress.org/</a>	Free			Wordpress is FOSS but must be hosted. Has more features available than Blogger.
	<a href="http://wordpress.com">http://wordpress.com</a>	Blog can be hosted by Wordpress for free or paid.			Must pay to use a custom URL and to remove ads from your site (ads will be permitted if used for free)

**Microblogging:** a micro-blogging site provides users with a platform for short, text messages, that may include web links, attached pictures and links to video.

Twitter	<a href="http://www.twitter.com">www.twitter.com</a>	Free	Message are limited to 140 characters, similar to text messaging (SMS or Short Message Service) except that it is typically shared with a group of people and most often are public. Users can subscribe to another user's Tweets, send direct Tweets or connect to them, and share a common thread through the use of what are called hashtags.	Unless the user decides to restrict their Tweets from being searched. They are all public and can be searched, aggregated, and analyzed.  Tweets or Twitter posts, when the location feature is enabled by the account holder, contain geo data that, when linked to pictures or video, can help provide a more accurate common operating picture.
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**Peer to Peer Sharing- Common Social Networking Sites:** these sites allow individuals, companies, organizations, and associations to post text, video, pictures, links to other web content and combinations of all of these electronic media. This posted media, some sections permanent, other sections constantly changing, comprise the profile for an individual or organization. Increasingly more information about the individual can be shared such as location based information, media preferences: music, pictures, video, etc. that they allow users to connect with one another directly, through groups or networks or even by location when this feature is enabled. They also allow other users to comment directly or obtain a direct feed of content to their own page or to a mobile device for easy viewing and response.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a>	Free- Facebook allows advertisements on right sidebar	Allows short blog posts, text chat, inbox, pictures, video, and integration with other social media sites. Live-streaming video and video chat.	Currently the largest global social network.
Google+	<a href="http://plus.google.com">plus.google.com</a>	Free- Need to sign up with a Google account		New social network, started by Google and looking to grow a larger network.
LinkedIn	<a href="http://www.linkedin.com">www.linkedin.com</a>	Free- Premium account available with more features.	Similar features to those given above, except that the primary use is for professional and business networking, by companies, organizations, association and individuals. Used by many communities of practices (COPs) for sharing better practices.	Some groups are open while others are restricted and require invitations to join. Messages can only be sent to other users if they are within your network (by opt-in) unless a premium account is paid for.

**Wikis:** These sites are repositories for information or documents and typically offer subject specific areas where information can be shared and obtained. **Note:** just as there are many blogs hosted, there are many wiki sites available. Below is a listing of those that are known that are just a couple related to emergency management.

Wikipedia	<a href="http://www.wikipedia.org">www.wikipedia.org</a>	Free	Offers a wide range of user generated listings in multiple languages and subjects.	The most famous the wikis, Wikipedia or the online encyclopedia, is where the name wiki was first used
FEMA Idea Scale	<a href="http://fema.ideascale.com/">http://fema.ideascale.com/</a>	Free- account required.	This community is for FEMA stakeholders to have a dialogue about emergency preparedness, disaster response and recovery, and other emergency management topics. While this is not strictly a wiki, it functions as a means of sharing information in the emergency management community of practice (COP).	Ideas can be voted and commented on by other users in the community.
Emergency 2.0 Wikis	<a href="http://emergency20wiki.org/">http://emergency20wiki.org/</a>	Free	Focused on creating a community for best practice advice on how to use social media and Web 2.0 in all phases of emergency management.	Based in Australia

**Monitoring and Aggregating Sites:** These sites and platforms provide functions to monitor and filter the stream of social media into feeds tailored to individual user preferences. These sites, depending on their features, allow for sorting feeds from social media sites by keywords, hashtags, and geographic coverage.

**Note:** Most of these sites require an account on the aggregation platform and access to an account through which social media sites will be searched.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
Feedburner	<a href="http://www.feedburner.com">www.feedburner.com</a>	Free	Google Feedburner aggregates and disseminates content from websites, blogs, audio, video, and photos according to user-defined criteria. This site also provides a feature to monitor the number and identity of users that subscribe to your feeds.	This site does not allow for monitoring social media sites on a stream.
Hootsuite	<a href="http://www.hootsuite.com">www.hootsuite.com</a>	Free	Hootsuite allows monitoring and managing social media sites by keywords and hashtags. It also allows for disseminating information to multiple social media accounts.	A popular aggregating site for emergency managers due to its multiple column format.
Monitter	<a href="http://www.monitter.com">www.monitter.com</a>	Free	Monitter provides tracking for Twitter feeds and allow users to search and monitor message streams by the location of the person generating content. It only allows disseminating posts through Twitter.	
Trendsmap	<a href="http://www.trendsmap.com">www.trendsmap.com</a>	Free	Trendsmap provides tracking for Twitter feeds and allow users to search and monitor message streams by the location of the person generating content. It allows disseminating posts through Twitter and Facebook.	Good mapping feature, using Google maps.
Tweetdeck	<a href="http://www.tweetdeck.com">www.tweetdeck.com</a>	Free	Tweetdeck allows monitoring and managing social media sites by keywords and hashtags. It also allows for disseminating information to multiple social media accounts.	A popular aggregating site for emergency managers due to its multiple column format.
Twitterfall	<a href="http://www.twitterfall.com">www.twitterfall.com</a>	Free	Twitterfall allows monitoring and managing social media sites by keywords, hashtags, and geolocation. It only allows disseminating posts through Twitter.	

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**Social Media Influence Ranking:** sites that provide analyses of a specific social media user. Most of these sites provide a score for measuring social influence, using an algorithm for calculating the score based on an analysis of the number of followers, number of messages, and number of times those messages are then rebroadcast out to other recipients. They can all be used to identify individuals in a social network who have a greater level of influence through their followers.

**Note:** most of these sites require an account with one of the social media sites at which you are looking to seek a ranking for a user account.

Site Name	URL	Free/Cost	Main Features	Important Notes
Klout	<a href="http://www.klout.com">www.klout.com</a>	Free	Measures trust and influence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Foursquare, and Google+.	Can also compare level of influence on certain topics using keywords. Easiest to understand and use. Covers a wide range of social media sites.
Tweetlevel	<a href="http://tweetlevel.edelman.com/About.aspx">http://tweetlevel.edelman.com/About.aspx</a>	Free	Measures influence according a wide range of criteria: Following, Followers, Updates, Lists, Updates over time period, Name Pointing, Retweets (quoted and edited), Replies, Broadcast to engagement ratio Idea Starter Score, Topsy Influence Score, Involvement Index, Velocity Index, Weighting	Offers complex analytics. There is a premium offering that is only available to a select group.
Twitalyzer	<a href="http://twitalyzer.com/index.asp">http://twitalyzer.com/index.asp</a>	Free trial. Then charge per month depending on individual,	Measures a wide range of criteria: impact, engagement, influence, velocity, generosity, signal, clout, followers, followed, and	Offers complex analytics, at a cost.

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## American Red Cross 2011 Social Media Survey Results

### Executive Summary

#### Background

People and emergencies both come in all shapes and sizes – and increasingly so do the technology tools used in the face of emergencies. People are turning to social media, mobile technology and online news outlets to learn about ongoing disasters, seek help and share information about their well-being after emergencies. Over the past year, the American Red Cross began studying how people use social media and technology during emergencies. This interest in this subject has grown out of the organization’s own experience of engaging social web users during emergencies. Over that time, it’s become apparent that more people are using the social web during emergencies to ask for help and organize ways to help those in need. In August 2010, the Red Cross commissioned its first social media survey to start benchmarking the use of the social web and other technologies during emergencies. The Red Cross polled 1,000 online users to gauge their habits and followed the survey with a Social Data Summit in 2010. This summit helped launch a discussion across the response community looking at how to answer requests for help made in the social space and how to use crowd sourced information in response efforts.

#### Survey 2011

In its second year, the Red Cross expanded the survey to look at wider population of web users. The 2011 survey polled individuals both online and through telephone interviews (referred to as general respondents). The results show there’s a high expectation that response organizations are or should be monitoring social media during disasters and quickly acting to help. If unable to reach local EMS, one in five general respondents would try an online channel. Almost a third of the online population would definitely use social tools to let their family and friends know they’re safe after an emergency, and nearly 20% has experienced an emergency or witnessed a newsworthy event and then posted information about that event to a social media site. Facebook is the most popular site for posting emergency or newsworthy information.

#### Snapshot of Key Findings

- 18 percent of both the general and the online population use Facebook to gather information about emergencies;
- Nearly a fourth (24 percent) of the general population and a third (31 percent) of the online population would use social media to let loved ones know they are safe;
- 80 percent of the general and 69 percent of the online populations surveyed believe that national emergency response organizations should regularly monitor social media sites so they can respond promptly;
- For those who would post a request for help through social media, 38 percent of those polled online and 35 percent of those polled via telephone said they would expect help to arrive in less than one hour. The survey results show those in the general population who reside in

metropolitan areas are more likely to participate in online communities or social networks, and compared to last year's survey results, more online Americans participate in at least one online community or social network. People with children, college graduates, and younger (18-34) people are more likely to use social tools, and more than half of those who do visit their networks nearly every day. While TV news is the preferred source of emergency information, more than six in ten of the general public and nearly half of the online population rely on online news during emergencies, marking an 11% increase over last year's results. Nearly half of the population would sign up for emails, text alerts, or applications that provided safety information – with women and those who reside in metropolitan areas indicating they're more likely to sign up.

### Summary

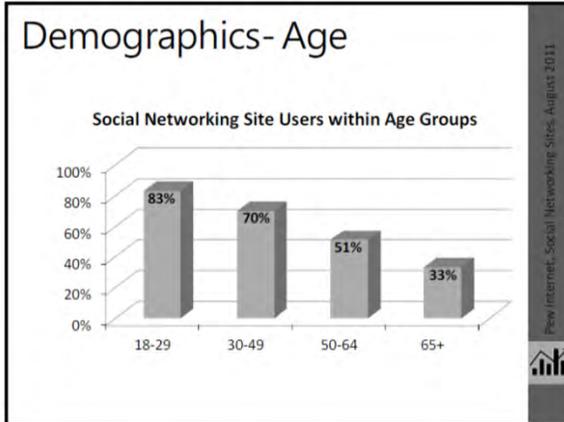
In summary, the survey confirms that the public is using social media as mainstream communication vehicles to get help, distribute information and find ways to help their neighbors. This year's survey results show an increase in the opportunity for disaster managers to see and empower the public as a resource in preparedness and emergency response. For all people who use social media, more than half indicate that they are participating every day. The mainstream and ubiquitous nature of the social web means that response agencies have a responsibility to use these tools to educate people prior to emergencies, providing them with useful information about evacuation routes, shelters and safety tips before disasters strike. Responders-including the Red Cross-should share information during an emergency through a variety of media, including social networks, online news outlets, and through texting and other mobile applications to reach those individuals who are more likely to utilize social data and mobile devices than listen to the television or radio.

### Our Research Methods:

Two similar polls were fielded during the period June 23-27 by CARAVAN® ORC International using two methodologies –Online Survey of 1,046 respondents representative of the US population aged 18 and older on June 23-26, 2011. Respondents for the online survey were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in online surveys and polls. The data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the 18+ population. Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. –Telephone survey of 1,011 U.S. Adults 18 years and older on June 24-27, 2011 conducted by CARAVAN® ORC International. Margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. A telephone methodology is industry standard and data from this sample offer insight into perceptions, behaviors, and expectations of the overall U.S. population. In the following poll summary, telephone survey respondents are referred to as the general population. Data from the online sample give a detailed view of perceptions, behaviors, and expectations of people who spend time online. Where appropriate, comparisons values have been included from the previous online survey of 1,058 respondents aged 18 and older conducted on July 22-23, 2010 by CARAVAN® ORC International.

## Excerpts from the New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness Conference 2012 Presentations

*From Crisis Communications 3.0: Social Media in Emergency Preparedness and Response, presented by Alyson Cobb and Arielle Slam of the Community Health Institute/JSI*



### Demographics

- No significant difference in usage based on:
  - Race and ethnicity
  - Household income
  - Education level
  - Urban/Suburban/Rural

Pew Internet, Social Networking Sites, August 2011

### Twitter

- 15% of Americans use Twitter
  - 8% on typical day
- Adoption slow, but steady
- Daily usage growing

Pew Internet, Twitter Use 2012, May 2012

### What is Twitter?

- Microblogging site
  - 140 characters
  - Reverse chronological order
  - Public

### Benefits of Twitter

- Rapid message dissemination
- Location-based
- Flexible

### Twitter: Location-Based & Flexible

- Tweets often tied to a location to add context
- Don't need internet or a computer to tweet or receive tweets
  - Text to Tweet
  - Speak to Tweet

## Popular Multimedia Tools

- Youtube
- Flickr
- Instagram
- Pinterest



## Benefits of Multimedia Tools

- Easily use and share existing media
- Adds variety
- Easy way to interact with the public

## Tool Integration w/Facebook



## Facebook Statistics

- 62% of US residents over the age of 13 have a Facebook account
- 54% of US residents 13+ visit Facebook at least once a month
- 77% of NH residents over the age of 13 have a Facebook account
- 23% of Facebook users check their page 5 or more times per day

THE SOCIAL SIMPLY IS NEW SURVEY MATH: SURVIVOR 10/2012, MAY 2012, WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/US-CENSUS-DATA. SOURCE: FACEBOOK SURVEY DATA, 10/2012



## Facebook

### profiles

- For individuals
- Attached to an email address and mobile phone
- Most content only shared with Friends
- Friends must be approved by profile owner

### pages

- For businesses, organizations, and celebrities
- No one owner- managed by (hidden) administrators
- Public
- Usage data collected
- Searchable

### groups

- Mostly closed networks
  - Group owner can invite or accept requests
- Visible owner
- All members visible
- File sharing



## Benefits of Facebook

- Easily integrate all social media activities in one place
- Interact with the public where they spend their time



## Enhanced Word of Mouth

- Sharing
- Retweeting
- Repinning

Leslie Henderson @LCHenderson  
 Hey @JimCantore @firstalstxw @CraigFEMA  
 ReTweet for us? StormStruck App is here and fre  
 Retweeted by Craig Fugate  
 View app



## Implications

- Peer recommendations increase trust in message
- Transmission across networks
  - Reach hard-to-read audiences
  - Message champions from within networks



## VERMONT SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE TO HURRICANE IRENE

- Public/private partnership
- Linking across channels
- Hyper local
- Rapid uptake



Icon: "Hurricane", The Noun Project.

## Government Facebook Pages

- Governor Shumlin
- VT Emergency Management
- VTrans Irene Response



## Community Facebook Pages

- 2,050 Likes in 24 hours (12% of town population)
- Totalled 3,258 likes
- Events
- Notes
- Videos
- Links



## VTResponse Blogs



Excerpt from *Using Social Media for Situational Awareness*, presented by Fallon Reed, NH Department of Safety, and Arielle Slam and Alyson Cobb, Community Health Institute/JSI

### Traditional Methods of Situational Awareness

- Identify what info is required for the mission, search through:
  - Data repositories
  - Printed material
  - Web links
  - News media
  - Voice communication



### Situational Awareness Through Social Media

- Used to inform and corroborate traditional sources of info to provide an enhanced situational awareness for emergency managers
  - Real-time, on the ground information instantaneously shared with your EOC
- Not considered an authoritative source, but does provide additional sources of perception cues, and assists to establish situational awareness

### Greenland Shooting

7:54pm - WMUR Alert: at least 1 officer hurt in Greenland shooting



### Greenland Shooting

• 9:54pm - WMUR Alert: 5 officers shot, 1 killed in Greenland



### Third Party Tools

Hootsuite  
Google  
Geotagging



### Third Party Tools Can:

- Aggregate search results into a “dashboard”
- Combine data from different social media channels
- Collect data even when you aren’t logged in
- Alert you when there is a significant finding
- Compile data into pre-designed reports

## Examples of How Social Media is Being Used by Emergency Management

<http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2012/01/04/top-7-lessons-on-sm-from-la-arson-fire-event/>

### Top 7 Social Media Lessons from LA Arson Fire Event

Posted on [January 4, 2012](#) | [5 Comments](#)

Post by: Kim Stephens

The Los Angeles area arson fires were an unwelcome addition to the 2011 holiday season. Although I'm sure each of the agencies involved in the Joint Task Force including the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Fire Department, Los Angeles County Fire Department, and members of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives will be examining their response effort in detail, today I am gleaming some lessons learned with regard to the established Joint Information System, and in particular, how they handled social media during the event. Captain Mike Parker, PIO with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, was gracious enough to share his insights so that other agencies across the country may learn from their experience.



The absolutely most interesting aspect of this Joint Information Center public information campaign is how they not only repeated the same message through each agency's own outreach platforms—websites, nixle accounts, facebook pages and twitter feeds— but how they combined into one voice via the name "Arson Watch LA". A [Facebook page](#) with that name was established and a twitter account [@ArsonwatchLA](#) was created with the blessing and contribution from each of the Joint Task Force member agencies.

The public did respond very favorably to this outreach strategy. Within the first 36 hours of establishing the new name they had over 1000 fans of their Facebook page with over 3000 page views. The twitter account had similar success with 1500 followers in the first 36 hours and, according to [tweetreach](#), they reached over 29,000 people via 50 tweets. Not only did they receive lots of press coverage for the

effort (see below) but there was a citizen outpouring of gratitude once the danger seemed to have passed.

What did it take to pull this off? Captain Parker stated in my interview with him that the effort to set up a Facebook page and a twitter account took only a matter of minutes, but the system and approval processes that made that happen is where the story lies. Based on his experience, he has shared these lessons:



**1. Put systems in place for a Joint Command/multi-agency social media presence before an event.**

Although this seems like an obvious statement, it isn't necessarily an easy task to get many different agencies to agree to be lumped together under a joint account. Why? Agencies work hard to establish trust with their constituents and audiences, particularly on social media platforms, so there could be fear that joining under one name would diminish not only their presence but their ability to highlight their contribution to the response effort. These concerns can be ameliorated beforehand if they are understood and addressed. It is also important for all the agencies involved to understand the potential rewards and benefits of working under one name.

**2. Establish joint accounts before an event occurs.** Deciding the Task Force would work under one name was done fairly quickly, choosing the name took a little bit of time. This is the kind of decision that could be done in advance. Furthermore, if you use these accounts each time for similar events, then public familiarity with them will rise.

**3. When working with multiple agencies, timeliness of information dissemination could be slow.** After the event had worn on for several days the number of people in the message approval process began to grow. How can large organizations involved in a joint command make nimble decisions regarding what should be put in public messages? Short and sweet seemed to be the best answer. Since twitter only allows for 140 characters, this helped those involved tailor short, simple, factual statements that could be readily approved by all those involved. Forget word-smithing: stick to the facts and get the info out-the-door. Another great point made by Captain Parker was that trust in the PIOs is essential. If the PIO is also a command officer or someone who is fairly high-ranking, this reduces the length of the chain of command these messages have to wind their way through.

**4. Listen. Listen. Listen.** One of the more interesting lessons I heard the Captain describe was how they used their social media presence to gauge public sentiment and information needs. Despite a little media hype about the Task Force getting tips about the arsonist via these platforms, the most important lesson was that by using these open forums the public was able to ask very important questions, such as "What can I do or should I be doing to protect myself?" The PIOs then tailored their public information campaign to address these concerns and even posted precautionary protective measures prominently on their Facebook "info" tab.

I asked the Captain how the PIOs monitoring the social media platforms handled comments and he stated something I have also found to be the case: the public will answer each other's questions, often before you even have a chance to respond. Regarding their interagency cooperation, there was never an issue regarding the ability of whomever was monitoring the page to answer comments nor was there a need for pre-approval from the other Task Force member agencies for these answers.

We are asking the public to assist. If you see a crime in progress, immediately dial 9-1-1. Anyone that may have information that may assist in these active investigations is asked to call (800) 222- TIPS (8477).

Your Firefighters and Law Enforcement Officers are urging the community to remain vigilant.

Precautionary measures can be taken by:

Leaving on porch lights and the lights around your carports.

Insure your vehicles are locked.

Insure your smoke alarms work.

Have a family emergency plan and discuss it with your family.

Get to know your neighbors.

Report any suspicious activity and finally,

"If you see something, say something".

1-800-222-8477

5. **Ignore Stupid comments:** The crowd will not only answer questions but will also shout down people who make really stupid or insulting comments and, as Captain Parker stated, this allows for the government agency to simply ignore this kind of behavior. However, it is still prudent to have a take-down policy stated on your "info" tab that describes how comments will be handled if they do cross the line.

6. **Be prepared to staff 24/7.** When planning for a Joint Command Multi-Agency social media presence, include staffing measures for 24/7. Parker said, " at 3am there was nothing on the news, but Facebook and Twitter were a beehive of activity by the public and reporters. It never stopped 24/7." Especially during this event where the arsonist struck at night, people were nervous and

turned to social media to discuss what was happening, ask questions, and look for first-hand accounts of new fires. The Task Force knew they had to be on those platforms in order to not only provide information, but also to monitor the conversation. I'm sure seeing their presence provided a fair amount of comfort to those sitting at their computer worried about their family's safety.

7. **Learn the language of Social Media before an event.** This seems like another obvious statement, but if your agency is not familiar with social media—learn it now. The last thing you want to be doing during an event is trying to figure out what a Retweet is or how to read a tweet.

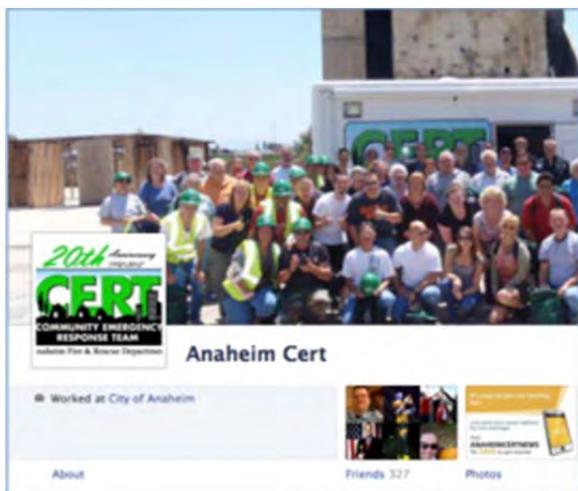
I'd like to thank Captain Parker again for his contribution to this post. Captain Parker wanted me to make clear his thanks "...to the great partners of the L.A. Arson Watch Task Force and the public we all serve."

<http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/anaheim-cert-to-monitor-social-media-during-a-disaster/>

## Anaheim CERT to Monitor Social Media During a Disaster

Posted on [April 24, 2012](#) | [2 Comments](#)

Post by: Kim Stephens



It has been documented that government agencies often experience a 500% increase in the number of followers and “fans” to their social media sites during a disaster. Monitoring those sites and responding to requests for information can become overwhelming: at a minimum it is most certainly labor intensive. Emergency management organizations, both government and non-governmental alike, are starting to understand how enormous this task could be and are looking for innovative solutions to solve the problem. Anaheim, California has turned to their CERT members.



This tweet by Craig Fugate is over a year old, suggesting that the concept of CERT members playing a role in monitoring social networks or even in reporting observations through those platforms, is not necessarily a new idea. The concept is built on the notion that these folks are “trusted agents,” already

trained in basic emergency skills, and known quantities by the response organization. However, I have yet to really see many CERTs move in this direction, making the Anaheim CERT a really interesting test case. I interviewed the CERT coordinator in order to determine what was necessary in order to accomplish this goal. (I appreciate their candidness!) Below are the results from that interview.

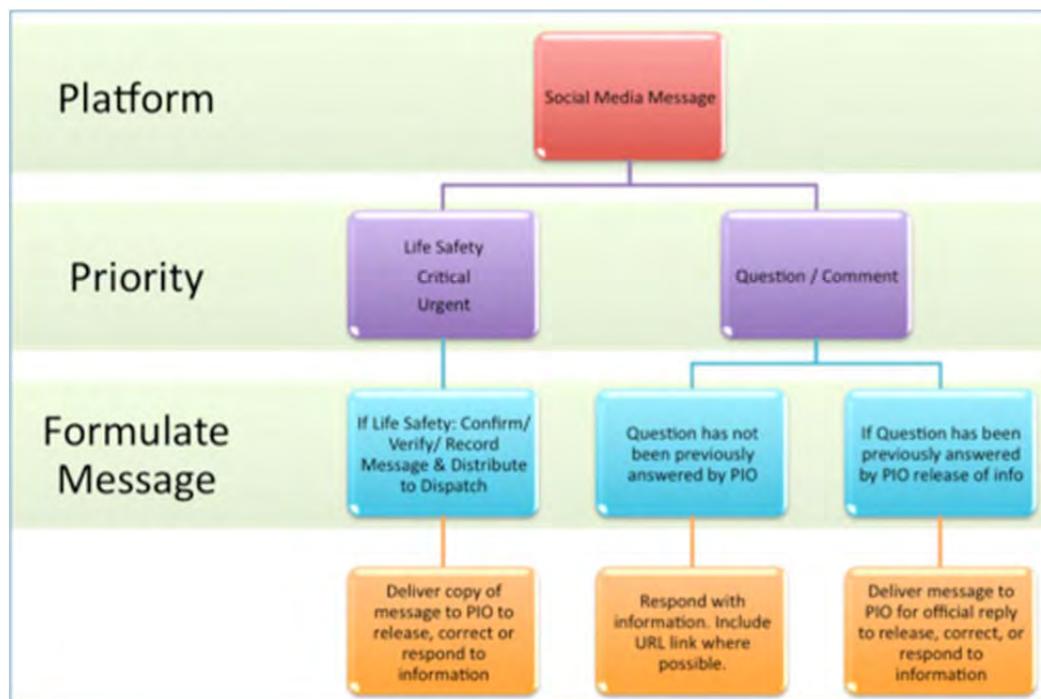
### **Anaheim**

**Roles and Responsibilities:** CERT volunteers already serve in a community outreach capacity by supplementing staff in the “hotline room” by answer questions on the phone. The concept is to extend these responsibilities to social networks. The social media monitoring volunteers will be used primarily to keep track of comments and social data posted to the communities’ social platforms. They will also be allowed to retweet (repeat a message on twitter) anything that has already been put out by the Public Information Officer (PIO). They currently have 3 laptops dedicated for volunteers, loaded with an enhanced excel capability called “Pivot Table”. Pivot table will allow the digital volunteers to record the

event and do real-time data-mining, including listing frequently asked questions, etc. CERT members will be required to monitor the social stream in the EOC hotline room.

**Training:** The CERT coordinator is planning to do training for social media monitoring and use of the “pivot table” tool (she is planning to share this training with regional partners). The training will include: hot-line room standard operating procedures; reporting protocols; rules regarding what they can and cannot say; and, potentially, will require participation in a monthly twitter chat. Volunteers will also be taught “how” to monitor including which search terms to use etc., as well as which platforms to monitor. However, volunteers will be given some latitude to keep track of all the platforms they see fit. The training currently does not include a module on how to verify information, however, that is a consideration for future efforts.

**Linking to Operations:** Specifically, regarding reporting protocols and procedures, pertinent information the monitoring team discovers will loop back into the EOC planning and operations section via the PIO. Any life threatening information will be sent directly to the dispatcher and non-life threatening info will get written down on paper or in an email and is sent to the PIO to review then decide which section it should go to. Currently, CERT “digital volunteers” do not have access to WebEOC, but they have discussed granting limited access so that they can input the information directly. (The CERT coordinator supplied the graphic below.) She states: “Depending upon the platform, some steps may require modification. For example individual [citizens] may post to YouTube which may require a response post or a comment directing individuals to a website or blog with more information. “ She indicated that a determination would also be made whether or not the YouTube video provided helpful content that should be disseminated using other platforms.



***What concerns people?*** The biggest concern of emergency management professionals in Anaheim regarding this new monitoring program is liability: “What if messages are not addressed and then the agency gets sued?”

Thank you @AnaheimCERT for the interview and great responses.

Are you looking to do anything similar with your CERT? Please let me know.

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[1] Stephens, Kim, “SMEM chat: Monitoring Social Networks—How do we Listen?” March, 2011, <http://idisaster.wordpress.com/2011/03/27/smem-chat-monitoring-social-networks-how-do-we-listen/>.

**Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOSTs):** Information including the history of the concept, and existing or forming teams in the United States: <http://vosg.us/>

<http://www.sm4em.org/2012/04/lessons-from-virtual-teams/>

## Lessons from Virtual Teams

Apr.23, 2012 in community, VOST



Creative Commons via [blog.volunteerspot.com](http://blog.volunteerspot.com)

Not only has National Volunteer Week just ended, but today is also Earth Day. Why are these two concepts important? Because volunteers no longer provide face-to-face service, but the realization is growing that digital volunteers can provide an incredible service to emergency managers across the globe.

The Earth Day theme of “Mobilize the Earth” should be something that every emergency manager considers when they evaluate how to manage the burgeoning flow of information during crisis.

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to participate, as a digital volunteer, to support Oklahoma during their threatening tornado weather. After receiving a tweet from the leader of the OKVOST team for additional assistance, I assembled a team of other other volunteers who focused on the following missions:

- Retweet/Share official information from a set of “official sources.” In this situation, we were provided with a specific Twitter account to use to retweet and share information.
- Look for inaccurate information within Twitter and seek to correct info in a timely manner.
- Collect damage assessment pictures or links.
- Provide an archive of two hashtags.

It was a lot of fun to work on this incident. We watched the localized National Weather Service Chat, compared that to livestreamed media reporting and watched the messages make their way to Twitter. The situation was very dynamic and information that was merely 5 minutes old was being outdated by newer and fresher information.

Our team of 7 folks worked from about 5p on Saturday until 2a on Sunday morning PST. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to team members Bill Smith (@emrgncytraffic), Joanna Lane (@joannalane), Marlita Reddy-Hjelmfelt (@theredelm), Scott Reuter (@sct\_r), Chris Hall (@thefiretracker2), and Pascal Schuback (@schuback). Thanks to John Butler (@okcalvin) and Lloyd Colston (@kc5fm) for asking us to help. And thanks to Christine Thompson (@redcrossmom) for some Sunday morning assistance to locate additional damage pictures.

Through this experience, I learned some key lessons that might be helpful to others:

If you are a Virtual Team Leader:

- Clarify the mission needs in advance of activating the team. Because people are interested in the activation, you could find more than one person communicating with the person activating the team. Retain clear lines of communication between the person requesting the team and the leader of the virtual team.
- Institute a data collection process early in each incident even if you are only tasked with monitoring social media. You don't want to tread the same ground repeatedly when team members come & go during a mission.
- Ensure that your data collection process has a "parking lot" for capturing lessons learned. It's much harder to recall them after the incident if you haven't made many notes during the incident.
- Begin thinking about the shift schedule right away. Even if you are trained to work 12-hour in-person shifts, working on a computer offers a different level of eye strain and dynamic situations can wear someone down easily in 4-6 hours. Ensure that your team is taking breaks and begin recruiting for replacements, even if they are not needed, so that folks can stay fresh and alert during an emergency.
- Be attentive to time-zone differences. In this situation, information was moving so quickly that we found ourselves encouraging the public to put timestamps on tweets. And, because few of our team members were from the actual crisis time-zone, we found it difficult at times to keep our own times straight on tweets.
- Pre-Affiliate with an Emergency Operations Center or Incident Management Team before a crisis occurs. If the efforts of your team are not integrated into the emergency response or recovery, it could be arguable as to whether your activities are truly being helpful. You may still be citizens-helping-citizens, but you may not actually amplifying the messages that could be helpful to your local emergency responders.

If you are an Emergency Manager or Incident Commander, preparing to use a digital team:

- Know where you want your information to go inside of the emergency response. Are you aiming for integration into the response or recovery phase of your incident? If you are aiming for response-level integration, be sure that your Planning and PIO protocols include & assume a virtual support team.

- Think, in advance, about the types of tasks & missions that you would like the digital team to complete. The more information that you can provide the team leader, the better results you will achieve in its activation.
- Identify an in-house liaison to your virtual team. Having an on-site person who is seeing what is occurring inside the Emergency Operations Center or incident will help guide and clarify what your virtual team is seeing from their vantage point.
- Ensure that your EOC is pre-affiliated with a virtual team. Whether you grow a team yourself or you have a regional team in place, know who and how you can reach out and activate your local team.
- Consider what pre-staged resources you might want to have in place that might be useful to a virtual off-site team. Are there key resources you use regularly for protective action messaging or official accounts that you may want a virtual team to manage during the incident?
- Follow up with your virtual team after the incident to identify and incorporate the lessons learned from each response. With social media evolving and changing as quickly as it does, virtual team support changes as well with each incident that occurs.

There are a number of groups that are actively developing digital support teams. They include:

- [Virtual Operation Support Teams](#) (#VOST on Twitter)
- [Crisis Commons](#)
- [Red Cross Digital Operations](#)
- [Standby Task Force](#)
- [Humanity Road](#)

The challenge for each of these groups will be to develop, nurture and deploy virtual assistance that is known, able to activate in a timely manner upon request, provide predictable outcomes, possesses relevant skills and can be easily incorporated into any disaster response.

Having been a participant observer of a VOST team [during the SMEM Camp in 2011](#), an activator of a virtual team to support my [#140ConfNW](#) and team leader this past weekend, it is exciting to see the growth and skill sets that can be made available to an emergency manager if they have key relationships in place.

If you are an emergency manager who is still “on the fence” about social media, I will suggest that trying to figure out how to obtain social media support during your crisis is the last thing you will want to do and yet, it could be your lifeline to your public’s perception of your response and a community that could more easily take care of itself if only you engage with it.

[http://www.sm4em.org/2012/07/virtual-lessons-learned/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+SocialMedia4EmergencyManagement+%28Social+Media+4+Emergency+Management%29](http://www.sm4em.org/2012/07/virtual-lessons-learned/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SocialMedia4EmergencyManagement+%28Social+Media+4+Emergency+Management%29).

## Virtual Lessons Learned

Jul.30, 2012 in community, VOST



Creative Commons via flutterbypridge.com

The leadership of Virtual Operations Support Teams (VOST) and other Digital Communities have been meeting monthly to discuss some of the key aspects of this evolving resource. Part of the valuable discussions that occur each month include brief summaries of activations and lessons learned that might be applicable for other teams.

This past Friday, I was struck by some of the lessons and thought that they could be valuable to all agencies who are using social media in their emergency management missions. Without going into huge detail about all of the VOST missions, here is what we're beginning to see:

- You don't necessarily need a pre-built audience for your social media messaging. If you build it, people will find you when they need the information. The speed at which audiences are built, during crisis situations, is astonishingly fast. For example, in Colorado pre-shooting, @AuroraPD went from having 300 Twitter followers to over 11,000 in about one day. Of course, having your accounts set up prior to your next emergency will put you steps ahead of creating your social footprint from scratch during the incident.
- When you are managing information across a regional incident (involving more than one jurisdiction), remember that the Facebook audiences are really interested in hyperlocal information. While a website may be able to provide separate pages for local incidents, combining the messaging across Facebook may be a bit difficult.
- Defining mission scope and requirements are very important for using a virtual team. For emergency managers and incident commanders, consider what you want from a virtual

team. When it comes to the internet, there are likely some specific things you would like to know. The more specific you can be in what you're looking for, the easier it is to determine if you have access to the skill sets necessary to accomplish that mission.

- While you might be using free tools like WordPress.com to blog, there may be additional functionality that will cost you some money. For example, using a self-hosted WordPress.org site allows different functionality for what your website can do.
- Monitoring social media for law enforcement intelligence is a little bit different than monitoring for natural disasters. While you can find just about anything online, unfortunately, when it comes to crime-based issues, the "bad guys" may also be watching you back. Ensuring operational security is important in situations like these.
- Use of a virtual team can illustrate the power of social media for agencies that are still not quite sure about whether there is value in its use both for pulling data from the social media streams and amplifying the messages that you are seeking to push to your audience.

These are just a couple of the lessons that have popped out over the last month or two. If you are using social media, being aware of these lessons should help you work through some of these issues in advance of your next emergency.

<http://thinkdisaster.com/2012/03/14/how-to-plan-build-a-vost-for-your-community-or-organization/>.

## **How to Plan & Build a VOST for your Community or Organization**

Today's the one year anniversary of the VOST Initiative, and in honor of all of the good work that's been done by the VOST Initiative group and our "Osbourne" VOST Team, and the other VOST groups that are beginning to spring up, I thought I'd share some thoughts on VOST advocacy and setup. \*

### **Why a VOST? (Social Media Preparedness.)**

Many people in the SMEM (Social Media in Emergency Management) community are expressing interest in starting a VOST, or Virtual Operation Support Team. While it's possible to set up a social media operation from scratch with new volunteers during a disaster, it can be very difficult and distracting. It's not possible to plan for every eventuality, but having some core volunteers in place, having a plan, and being proficient with some basic social media tools will make activating your team for a social media disaster effort much easier.

**(If you're an Emergency Manager working in social media, and you are reading this to see how to set up for Virtual Ops, you can skip this part!)**

**Community Members: Set Up Now – Hopefully with support from your local Emergency Management Agency, but if necessary, set it up yourself.**

In an ideal world, you would be setting up your social media in disaster/VOST effort with official sanction from your local emergency management agency. Realistically, however, not all EMs are ready or able to accept your VOST in an official way at this point.

Yet social media efforts are happening more and more, almost every time there's a disaster, so if you have your team and tools in place, you can be ready to operate, inviting all stakeholders to take part, including emergency management. [In several recent cases](#), social media efforts that were started or operated by volunteers were ultimately accepted, used, and praised by local EMs.

If you're not involved with Emergency Management in your community, make every attempt to include and encourage your local EM agencies to participate in your social media efforts. It is ALWAYS preferable to work with emergency management from the start – but realistically, many EMs are not ready or able to take this step yet.

Be positive, and if your EM says no, stay positive. You will want to ask again in the future when they're ready to reconsider. Send your local emergency managers, CERT teams, ARES ECs and first responders invitations and info every time you participate in social media; give them gentle but persistent reminders that your group is organizing to assist in disasters. Try to get your foot in the door. Participating in existing disaster-related groups such as CERT and ARES is a great way to gain trust and demonstrate competence.

If you don't have the time to put together an entire VOST team yourself, that's okay! Do what you can for now; participate on an existing #VOST team in your spare time, build your skills, be ready to help others on their VOST efforts if needed.

### **For Emergency Managers:**

If you are an Emergency Manager working on social media and VOST development, please consider the following points:

- What social media platforms are being used in my community? (Learn and use.)
- Who are the heavy social media users in your community? (Recruit or join forces.)
- What other organizations are doing interesting social media projects in your community?

### **Building your VOST in Six (or so) Steps**

Building a new VOST does not happen overnight. Here are some suggestions to assist you in creating a VOST for your community or organization, with or without official buy-in from your local emergency management agency.

**Step 1:** Learn how a VOST works by volunteering with one of the existing groups or teams. \*\* This experience will help you to see what a VOST can and can't do, and the networking will help you as you set up your own VOST and for future activations where more than your own team is needed. Begin outreach early to your local emergency management, preparedness, first responders and disaster recovery groups.

**Step 2:** Get active in social media and in your local community. Learn which social media platforms are used in your community. (You will want to have both local and nonlocal VOST members.) Put out the word that you're working on this and post updates as you progress.

- **2a-** Locally, organize by presenting on the advantages of being prepared to use social media in disasters to those in your community that are interested in all phases of disaster: CERT, ARES, Red Cross, ham clubs, Fire & Rescue, VOADs or COADs, youth groups, community service clubs and faith-based groups.

- **2b-** Non-locally, participate on a VOST that is located outside of your area. Take part in the operation, chat with others in the backchannel chat, learn how VOST works and ask if anyone might want to also help you set up your own VOST. Consider signing an MOU with another VOST group outside of your local area so that you can each support each other remotely in a large scale or catastrophic disaster.

**Step 3:** As your team forms up, get some VOST practice by live-tweeting a live event such as a conference, a sporting event (our VOST had a great time trying this for Super Bowl this year!) or a festival. Ask CERT and ARES groups if you can practice operating on social media before, during, and after their next preparedness event!

**Step 4:** As your VOST continues to build its skills, offer to assist others on real disaster activations. Be sure and have members practice a variety of tools and platforms so that they aren't too specialized. Document your efforts so that you can present the results of your efforts to local emergency management agencies, disaster – related groups, and the VOST Initiative Community.

**Step 5:** Link up with other VOST groups so that we can all support each other in disasters. Participate in **#SMEMchat** and the **#VOSTchat**, share what you're doing on your VOST blog or facebook page. Help to build the community so that there are more people trained to assist in this effort.

**Step 6:** Keep building the local community connections that will help you to make your social media effort work well with other local efforts, including emergency management and all disaster-related organizations. Be ready to offer your VOST when needed. We are a volunteer technical community that has to demonstrate our ability to help, just as ham radio operators did – now they are in every EOC during disasters. We can be too some day.

**Well done! You have a VOST now.**

By the time you work your way through these steps, you should have a good VOST group that can help your community as well as others.

## Local Examples of Using Social Media for Emergency Communications

### Tweet in a crisis?

#### Western Massachusetts emergency planners look at social media as tool for communication

By CHRIS CURTIS

##### Recorder Staff

Soon, social networking sites and services might have a more practical use beyond finding out what friends, actual and nominal, think about the latest celebrity death or kitty photo.

In the wake of last year's bumper crop of calamity, some area towns and emergency planners are looking to take advantage of the popularity of social networking sites and services like Facebook and Twitter as a means of public broadcast and information-gathering during disasters.

"It is something that keeps coming up and something that we're looking into, but we're in the very early stages," said Tracy Rogers, manager of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments' regional preparedness program.

"We particularly noticed during Hurricane Irene how much activity was happening on Facebook and Twitter," Rogers said.

The American Red Cross in August reported that Americans are increasingly relying on social media during and in the aftermath of disasters.

Based on the results of two surveys, one by telephone and one online garnering a total of 2,057 respondents, the aid organization concluded the response agencies should include social media in their outreach and information-gathering efforts during disasters.

Susan Brown, program manager for the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, said her office is looking into using social media to promote emergency preparedness.

The advisory council is responsible for administering the federal homeland security grant for the four counties of western Massachusetts, and while many of the members are first responders, it is not a response agency, Brown said, so the council program plans to focus on education.

Still in the planning stages, Brown said the idea is to use Facebook, Twitter and possibly video-sharing site YouTube to disseminate educational material.

Brown hopes this will have a double benefit, educating the public and first responders about how to react in an emergency and, by using the technology, give first responders the familiarity necessary to use it in an emergency.

At the town level, Gill officials already have responded to the apparent trend toward social media for emergency communication with a plan to increase their own online presence.

The Gill Board of Selectmen recently gave town Administrative Assistant Ray Purington the nod to establish a town presence on Facebook.

Purington plans to set up a Facebook account for the town, to be used for routine town announcements and to communicate with residents in the event of emergencies.

"If people are turning to those sites in a disaster, ideally we want to have a presence before that," Purington said. "We ought to have a Facebook presence before rather than wishing that we had one after."

In addition to her work for the Council of Governments, Rogers volunteers as an administrator for the Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team, a mutual aid organization that responds to local disasters with regional help.

The team has also discussed adding social media to the communications arsenal, according to Rogers, although she said she wasn't sure if that possibility was formally on the table yet.

The discussion developed in part because a member of the team, Rick Labrecque, also runs [fireground360.com](http://fireground360.com), a social network site for first responders.

Site administrators post current emergency dispatch information, including fires and accidents, as well as weather advisories and road conditions via Facebook.

Brown said she feels social media are a growing tool that cannot be ignored, but the technology is an addition rather than a replacement.

The advent of Internet-connected cellphones has facilitated access to social media, but Brown pointed out that, even for those who have a computer or smartphone, there are areas of western Massachusetts with poor or nonexistent Internet and cellular service.

About 30 to 40 percent of Franklin County towns have, or have access to, reverse 911 systems, allowing them to send out pre-recorded emergency messages to residents by phone, Rogers estimated, and the towns each have their own approach to emergency notification.

Greenfield, for instance, has adopted CodeRED, an emergency notification system that can send alerts via landline telephone, cellphone, text message or email.

The town also uses its AM 1240 radio station, Greenfield Cable Access and the town website at: [www.townofgreenfield.org](http://www.townofgreenfield.org) for important announcements, according to the website.

You can reach Chris Curtis at: [ccurtis@recorder.com](mailto:ccurtis@recorder.com) or 413-772-0261, ext. 257

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# Homeland Security News Wire

## **Emergency comm. Local towns signing up for Twitter and Facebook for emergency comm.**

Published 7 December 2011

**Following the lead of several other cities and federal agencies, the town of Wilton, Connecticut recently launched a Facebook page and Twitter account to help communicate with residents and share information during a disaster**

Following the lead of several other cities and federal agencies, the town of Wilton, Connecticut recently [launched](#) a Facebook page and Twitter account to help communicate with residents and share information during a disaster. Two major storms, including Hurricane Irene, left many Wilton residents without water or electricity for up to a week and sent a strong signal to emergency officials that they needed to improve disaster communications.

To that end, the town created an official Emergency Facebook Page as well as a Twitter account. Speaking before the Wilton Board of Selectman, Fire Chief Paul Milositz, who is also the town's emergency response director, said, "We have to get better at [communication with residents]." "We developed that Facebook page to just start to get our name out there, looking at the ins-and-outs of using that page ....It was started after Hurricane Irene, but was not used during the October storm," he said.

"We have to go slowly because we're a municipality, and not an individual person," explained Milositz. "We've posted notifications around town...but if people want to get their information [through social media] then we need to do that too."

Emergency officials are still new to the communications platform and are working to get up to speed on how to effectively use Twitter and Facebook to communicate. Milositz, who runs both the Facebook and Twitter account, admitted in his first tweet that he is still trying to figure out how to use the program, posting, "I really dont get this tweet thing."

For now Milositz emphasized that wiltonct.org, the town's website, would still be the best place to get information. In particular at the top of the page there is a ticker that contains emergency notifications. The town plans to only use social media platforms during major town-wide emergencies like massive blackouts or in situations where the town requires assistance.



## Social Media Sites Information by County

### Hampshire County Social Media Information

Hampshire Sheriff	Website	<a href="http://www.hampshiresheriffs.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&amp;Itemid=1">http://www.hampshiresheriffs.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&amp;Itemid=1</a>
Amherst	Town	<a href="http://www.amherstma.gov/">http://www.amherstma.gov/</a>
	Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-Amherst-MA/111214868950623">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-Amherst-MA/111214868950623</a>
	Town Manager Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/AmherstMusante">https://twitter.com/AmherstMusante</a>
	GIS Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/AmherstGIS">https://twitter.com/AmherstGIS</a>
	Fire Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/amherstfire">https://twitter.com/amherstfire</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.amherstpd.blogspot.com/">http://www.amherstpd.blogspot.com/</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amherst-Police-Department-Official/274847919197427">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amherst-Police-Department-Official/274847919197427</a>
Belchertown	Town	<a href="http://www.belchertown.org/">http://www.belchertown.org/</a>
	Police	<a href="http://police.belchertown.org/wordpress/?page_id=4471">http://police.belchertown.org/wordpress/?page_id=4471</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Belchertown-Police-Department/253638731331434">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Belchertown-Police-Department/253638731331434</a>
Chesterfield	Town	<a href="http://www.townofchesterfieldma.com/">http://www.townofchesterfieldma.com/</a>
Cummington	Town	<a href="http://www.cummington-ma.gov/">http://www.cummington-ma.gov/</a>
Easthampton	Town	<a href="http://www.easthampton.org/">http://www.easthampton.org/</a>
Goshen	Town	<a href="http://www.egoshen.net/">http://www.egoshen.net/</a>
	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/GoshenMass">https://twitter.com/GoshenMass</a>
	Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Goshen-MA/154620283075">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Goshen-MA/154620283075</a>
	Fire Twitter	<a href="http://goshenmafire.com/">http://goshenmafire.com/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Goshen-Fire-Department/340567583661">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Goshen-Fire-Department/340567583661</a>
Granby	Town	<a href="http://www.granbyma.net/">http://www.granbyma.net/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.granbyfire.org/">http://www.granbyfire.org/</a>
Hadley	Town	<a href="http://www.hadleyma.org/Pages/index">http://www.hadleyma.org/Pages/index</a>
Hatfield	Town	<a href="http://www.townofhatfield.org/Pages/index">http://www.townofhatfield.org/Pages/index</a>
Huntington	Town	<a href="http://www.huntingtonma.us/">http://www.huntingtonma.us/</a>
Middlefield	Town	<a href="http://middlefieldma.net/">http://middlefieldma.net/</a>
Northampton	Town	<a href="http://www.northamptonma.gov/">http://www.northamptonma.gov/</a>
Northampton	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/NorthamptonMA">https://twitter.com/NorthamptonMA</a>
	Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/City-of-Northampton/265530486814873">https://www.facebook.com/pages/City-of-Northampton/265530486814873</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.northamptonfire.org/">http://www.northamptonfire.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northampton-Fire-Department/145920502169354">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northampton-Fire-Department/145920502169354</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.northamptonpd.com/">http://www.northamptonpd.com/</a>
	Health	<a href="http://northamptonma.gov/healthdept/">http://northamptonma.gov/healthdept/</a>
	Health Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northampton-Health-Department/116667354624">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northampton-Health-Department/116667354624</a>
	Health Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/O1060Health">https://twitter.com/O1060Health</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

Cooley Dickinson Hospital	Blog	<a href="http://www.cooley-dickinson.org/blogs">http://www.cooley-dickinson.org/blogs</a>
	Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/cooleydickinson">https://www.facebook.com/cooleydickinson</a>
	Twitter	<a href="http://twitter.com/cooleydickinson">http://twitter.com/cooleydickinson</a>
	YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/CooleyDickinson">http://www.youtube.com/CooleyDickinson</a>
	Foursquare	<a href="http://foursquare.com/venue/674303">http://foursquare.com/venue/674303</a>
	Linked In	<a href="http://www.linkedin.com/companies/cooley-dickinson-hospital">http://www.linkedin.com/companies/cooley-dickinson-hospital</a>
Pelham	Town	<a href="http://www.townofpelham.org/">http://www.townofpelham.org/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.pelhamfd.com/">http://www.pelhamfd.com/</a>
South Hadley	Town	<a href="http://www.southhadley.org/pages/index">http://www.southhadley.org/pages/index</a>
	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/TownGovernment">https://twitter.com/TownGovernment</a>
	Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/SouthHadleySelectboard">http://www.facebook.com/SouthHadleySelectboard</a>
Southampton	Town	<a href="http://www.town.southampton.ma.us/">http://www.town.southampton.ma.us/</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.southamptonpolice.com/">http://www.southamptonpolice.com/</a>
	Police Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/southamptonpd">https://twitter.com/southamptonpd</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/groups/75290817636/">http://www.facebook.com/groups/75290817636/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southampton-Fire-Department/298099088268">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southampton-Fire-Department/298099088268</a>
Ware	Town	<a href="http://www.townofware.com/pages/index">http://www.townofware.com/pages/index</a>
Westhampton	Town	<a href="http://www.westhampton-ma.com/">http://www.westhampton-ma.com/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.westhamptonfire.org">http://www.westhamptonfire.org</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westhampton-Fire-Department/181808021910541">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westhampton-Fire-Department/181808021910541</a>
Williamsburg	Town	<a href="http://www.burgy.org/pages/index">http://www.burgy.org/pages/index</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.williamsburgfire.com/">http://www.williamsburgfire.com/</a>
	Fire and Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Williamsburg-Police-and-Fire-Department/167969083227843">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Williamsburg-Police-and-Fire-Department/167969083227843</a>
Worthington	Town	<a href="http://www.worthington-ma.us/">http://www.worthington-ma.us/</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

### Berkshire County Social Media Information

Berkshire County Sheriff	Website	<a href="http://bcsoma.org/page.php?PageID=523&amp;PageName=Berkshire+County+Sheriff%27s+Office">http://bcsoma.org/page.php?PageID=523&amp;PageName=Berkshire+County+Sheriff%27s+Office</a>
Berkshire County BOH	Website	<a href="http://www.bcboha.org">http://www.bcboha.org</a>
Berkshire MRC	Twitter	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/BerkshireMRC">http://www.facebook.com/BerkshireMRC</a>
	Facebook	<a href="https://twitter.com/BerkshireMRC">https://twitter.com/BerkshireMRC</a>
Adams	Town	<a href="http://town.adams.ma.us/Public_Documents/indexold">http://town.adams.ma.us/Public_Documents/indexold</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.adamspolice.com/">http://www.adamspolice.com/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.adamsalerts.com/">http://www.adamsalerts.com/</a>
	Ambulance	<a href="http://www.adamsambulance.org/">http://www.adamsambulance.org/</a>
Alford	Town	<a href="http://townofalford.org/">http://townofalford.org/</a>
Becket	Town	<a href="http://www.townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/index">http://www.townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/index</a>
Cheshire	Town	<a href="http://www.cheshirefire.org/Pages/index">http://www.cheshirefire.org/Pages/index</a>
Dalton	Town	<a href="http://www.dalton-ma.gov/">http://www.dalton-ma.gov/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.daltonfire.com/">http://www.daltonfire.com/</a>
	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/DALTONFIRE">https://twitter.com/DALTONFIRE</a>
Egremont	Town	<a href="http://www.egremont-ma.gov/">http://www.egremont-ma.gov/</a>
Great Barrington	Town	<a href="http://www.townofgb.org/Pages/index">http://www.townofgb.org/Pages/index</a>
Hinsdale	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hinsdale-Volunteer-Fire-Department/192050357505149">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hinsdale-Volunteer-Fire-Department/192050357505149</a>
Lanesborough	Town	<a href="http://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/">http://www.lanesborough-ma.gov/</a>
Lanesborough	Emergency Management	<a href="http://www.lanesboroughfire.com/emergency-management/">http://www.lanesboroughfire.com/emergency-management/</a>
Lanesborough	Fire	<a href="http://www.lanesboroughfire.com/">http://www.lanesboroughfire.com/</a>
Lee	Town	<a href="http://www.lee.ma.us/">http://www.lee.ma.us/</a>
Lenox	Town	<a href="http://www.townoflenox.com/Public_Documents/index">http://www.townoflenox.com/Public_Documents/index</a>
Monterey	Town	<a href="http://www.montereyma.gov/Public_Documents/index">http://www.montereyma.gov/Public_Documents/index</a>
Mount Washington	Town	<a href="http://townofmtwashington.com/index.php">http://townofmtwashington.com/index.php</a>
New Marlborough	Town	<a href="http://www.new-marlborough.info/">http://www.new-marlborough.info/</a>
North Adams	Town	<a href="http://www.northadams-ma.gov/index.php">http://www.northadams-ma.gov/index.php</a>
North Adams	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Adams-Police-Department-Massachusetts/201279173262612">http://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Adams-Police-Department-Massachusetts/201279173262612</a>
Otis	Town	<a href="http://www.townofotisma.com/Pages/index">http://www.townofotisma.com/Pages/index</a>
Otis	Police	<a href="https://sites.google.com/site/otismapolicedepartment/home">https://sites.google.com/site/otismapolicedepartment/home</a>
Pittsfield	Town	<a href="http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/">http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/</a>
Pittsfield	Fire	<a href="http://pittsfieldfiredept.blogspot.com/">http://pittsfieldfiredept.blogspot.com/</a>
Pittsfield	Fire Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/PittsfieldFire">https://twitter.com/PittsfieldFire</a>
Pittsfield	Fire Flickr	<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/pittsfieldfire/4390331988/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/pittsfieldfire/4390331988/</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

Pittsfield	Fire YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL-zXl1Rgbs&amp;feature=player_embedded">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL-zXl1Rgbs&amp;feature=player_embedded</a>
Pittsfield	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/PittsfieldPolice">http://www.facebook.com/PittsfieldPolice</a>
Pittsfield	Police YouTube	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/Pittsfieldmapolice">http://www.youtube.com/user/Pittsfieldmapolice</a>
Richmond	Town	<a href="http://www.richmondma.org/">http://www.richmondma.org/</a>
Sandisfield	Town	<a href="http://www.sandisfield.info/">http://www.sandisfield.info/</a>
Savoy	Town	<a href="http://www.townofsavoy.org/">http://www.townofsavoy.org/</a>
Sheffield	Town	<a href="http://townofsheffield.com/">http://townofsheffield.com/</a>
Stockbridge	Town	<a href="http://www.townofstockbridge.com/">http://www.townofstockbridge.com/</a>
Tyringham	Town	<a href="http://www.tyringham-ma.gov/Pages/index">http://www.tyringham-ma.gov/Pages/index</a>
Washington	Town	<a href="http://www.washington-ma.com/">http://www.washington-ma.com/</a>
West Stockbridge	Town	<a href="http://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/Pages/index">http://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/Pages/index</a>
Williamstown	Town	<a href="http://williamstown.ws/">http://williamstown.ws/</a>
Williamstown	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/WilliamstownMA">https://twitter.com/WilliamstownMA</a>
Williamstown	Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Williamstown-Fire-Department/177207204367">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Williamstown-Fire-Department/177207204367</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

### Franklin County Social Media Information

Franklin County Sheriff	Website	<a href="http://www.fcso-ma.com/">http://www.fcso-ma.com/</a>
Franklin Region Council of G	Website	<a href="http://www.frcog.org/services/emergency/index.php">http://www.frcog.org/services/emergency/index.php</a>
Ashfield	Town	<a href="http://ashfield.org/">http://ashfield.org/</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashfield-Police-Department/290556570972971">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashfield-Police-Department/290556570972971</a>
Bernardston	Town	<a href="http://townofbernardston.org/">http://townofbernardston.org/</a>
Buckland	Town	<a href="http://town.buckland.ma.us/">http://town.buckland.ma.us/</a>
Charlemont	Town	<a href="http://www.charlemont-ma.us/">http://www.charlemont-ma.us/</a>
Conway	Town	<a href="http://townofconway.com/">http://townofconway.com/</a>
Deerfield	Town	<a href="http://www.deerfieldma.us/Pages/index">http://www.deerfieldma.us/Pages/index</a>
Erving	Town	<a href="http://www.erving-ma.org/">http://www.erving-ma.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/ervingfire">http://www.facebook.com/ervingfire</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.ervingpolice.us/">http://www.ervingpolice.us/</a>
Gill	Town	<a href="http://www.gillmass.org/">http://www.gillmass.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gill-Fire-Rescue/112336742132329">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gill-Fire-Rescue/112336742132329</a>
Greenfield	Town	<a href="http://www.townofgreenfield.org/pages/index">http://www.townofgreenfield.org/pages/index</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.greenfieldpd.org/">http://www.greenfieldpd.org/</a>
Heath	Town	<a href="http://www.townofheath.org/">http://www.townofheath.org/</a>
Leverett	Town	<a href="http://www.leverett.ma.us/">http://www.leverett.ma.us/</a>
Leyden	Town	<a href="http://www.townofleyden.com/">http://www.townofleyden.com/</a>
Montague	Town	<a href="http://www.montague.net/Pages/index">http://www.montague.net/Pages/index</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.montaguecenterfire.org/">http://www.montaguecenterfire.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Montague-Center-Fire-Department/192047914164655">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Montague-Center-Fire-Department/192047914164655</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://turnersfallsfire.org/">http://turnersfallsfire.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Turners-Falls-Fire-Department/277154182340698">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Turners-Falls-Fire-Department/277154182340698</a>
New Salem	Town	<a href="http://www.newsalem-massachusetts.org/">http://www.newsalem-massachusetts.org/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.newsalemfire.org/">http://www.newsalemfire.org/</a>
Northfield	Town	<a href="http://www.northfield.ma.us/">http://www.northfield.ma.us/</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.northfieldpd.com/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.northfieldpd.com/Pages/default.aspx</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northfield-Fire-Department/251380048261575?ref=pb">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northfield-Fire-Department/251380048261575?ref=pb</a>
Orange	Town	<a href="http://townoforange.org/Pages/index">http://townoforange.org/Pages/index</a>
	Webcam	<a href="http://www.masstraveler.com/camera/camera12/slideshow.php">http://www.masstraveler.com/camera/camera12/slideshow.php</a>
	Emergency Management Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/OrangeEmd">https://twitter.com/OrangeEmd</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://orangefire.org/">http://orangefire.org/</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Orange-Ma-Police-Department/255428434483880">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Orange-Ma-Police-Department/255428434483880</a>
	Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/Orange_PD">https://twitter.com/Orange_PD</a>
Rowe	Town	<a href="http://www.rowe-ma.gov/pages/index">http://www.rowe-ma.gov/pages/index</a>
Shelburne	Town	<a href="http://www.townofshelburne.com/">http://www.townofshelburne.com/</a>
Shutesbury	Town	<a href="http://www.shutesbury.org/">http://www.shutesbury.org/</a>
Sunderland	Town	<a href="http://www.townofsunderland.us/">http://www.townofsunderland.us/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.sunderlandfire.com/">http://www.sunderlandfire.com/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/SunderlandFire">http://www.facebook.com/SunderlandFire</a>
Warwick	Town	<a href="http://www.warwickma.org/">http://www.warwickma.org/</a>
Wendell	Town	<a href="http://www.wendellmass.us/">http://www.wendellmass.us/</a>
Whately	Town	<a href="http://www.whately.org/">http://www.whately.org/</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/WhatelyFireDepartment">http://www.facebook.com/WhatelyFireDepartment</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

### Hampden County Social Media Information

Hampden County Sheriff	Website	<a href="http://www.hcsdmass.org/">http://www.hcsdmass.org/</a>
Agawam	Town	<a href="http://www.agawam.ma.us/">http://www.agawam.ma.us/</a>
	Emergency Management Website	<a href="http://www.agawamem.org/">http://www.agawamem.org/</a>
	Emergency Management Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/AgawamEM">https://twitter.com/AgawamEM</a>
	Emergency Management Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Agawam-Emergency-Management/370944319614095">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Agawam-Emergency-Management/370944319614095</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Agawam-Call-Firefighters-Association/314692590352">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Agawam-Call-Firefighters-Association/314692590352</a>
Blandford	Town	<a href="http://www.townofblandford.com/">http://www.townofblandford.com/</a>
Brimfield	Town	<a href="http://www.brimfieldma.org/Pages/BrimfieldMA_WebDocs/departments">http://www.brimfieldma.org/Pages/BrimfieldMA_WebDocs/departments</a>
Chester	Town	<a href="http://www.townofchester.net/chestermass/">http://www.townofchester.net/chestermass/</a>
Chicopee	Town	<a href="https://www.chicopeema.gov/page.php?id=1">https://www.chicopeema.gov/page.php?id=1</a>
East Longmeadow	Town	<a href="http://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/">http://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/</a>
	Town Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-East-Longmeadow/276933487773">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-East-Longmeadow/276933487773</a>
	Fire Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/East-Longmeadow-Fire-Department/138978007323">http://www.facebook.com/pages/East-Longmeadow-Fire-Department/138978007323</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/eastlongmeadowpolice">http://www.facebook.com/eastlongmeadowpolice</a>
Granville	Town	<a href="http://www.townofgranville.net/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.townofgranville.net/Pages/default.aspx</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.granvillemapolice.org/">http://www.granvillemapolice.org/</a>
Hampden	Town	<a href="http://www.hampden.org/">http://www.hampden.org/</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.hampdenpolice.com/">http://www.hampdenpolice.com/</a>
	Police Mobile Website	<a href="http://m.hampdenpolice.com/">http://m.hampdenpolice.com/</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hampden-Police-Department/108969935799878">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hampden-Police-Department/108969935799878</a>
Holland	Town	<a href="http://town.holland.ma.us/Pages/index">http://town.holland.ma.us/Pages/index</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.hollandfirerescue.com/">http://www.hollandfirerescue.com/</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Holland-Police-Department/203364756372096">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Holland-Police-Department/203364756372096</a>
Holyoke	Town	<a href="http://www.holyoke.org/">http://www.holyoke.org/</a>
Longmeadow	Town	<a href="http://www.longmeadow.org/">http://www.longmeadow.org/</a>
	EMS	<a href="http://www.longmeadow.org/public-safety/ems/">http://www.longmeadow.org/public-safety/ems/</a>
Ludlow	Town	<a href="http://www.ludlow.ma.us/home.htm">http://www.ludlow.ma.us/home.htm</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.ludlowpolice.com/pages/HOME.htm">http://www.ludlowpolice.com/pages/HOME.htm</a>
Monson	Town	<a href="http://www.monson-ma.gov/Public_Documents/index">http://www.monson-ma.gov/Public_Documents/index</a>
	Emergency Management	<a href="http://www.monson-ma.gov/Public_Documents/MonsonMA_Emergency/index">http://www.monson-ma.gov/Public_Documents/MonsonMA_Emergency/index</a>
Palmer	Town	<a href="http://townofpalmer.com/Pages/index">http://townofpalmer.com/Pages/index</a>
Russell	Town	<a href="http://www.townofrussell.us/">http://www.townofrussell.us/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://russellfire-ma.com/">http://russellfire-ma.com/</a>

## Social Media Sites Information by County

Southwick	Town	<a href="http://www.southwickma.org/Public_Documents/index">http://www.southwickma.org/Public_Documents/index</a>
	Emergency Management	<a href="http://www.southwick-ema.org/">http://www.southwick-ema.org/</a>
	Fire	<a href="http://www.southwickfire.com/">http://www.southwickfire.com/</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.southwickpolice.com/">http://www.southwickpolice.com/</a>
Springfield	Town	<a href="http://www3.springfield-ma.gov/cos/">http://www3.springfield-ma.gov/cos/</a>
	Baystate Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/baystatemc">http://www.facebook.com/baystatemc</a>
	Baystate Foursquare	<a href="http://foursquare.com/venue/1327044">http://foursquare.com/venue/1327044</a>
	Baystate LinkedIn	<a href="http://www.linkedin.com/companies/baystate-medical-center">http://www.linkedin.com/companies/baystate-medical-center</a>
Tolland	Town	<a href="http://www.tolland-ma.gov/public_documents/index">http://www.tolland-ma.gov/public_documents/index</a>
Wales	Town	<a href="http://www.townofwales.net/">http://www.townofwales.net/</a>
Westfield	Town	<a href="http://www.cityofwestfield.org/">http://www.cityofwestfield.org/</a>
	Emergency Management	<a href="http://wema.cityofwestfield.org/">http://wema.cityofwestfield.org/</a>
	Emergency Management Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westfield-Emergency-Management/125571944219310">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Westfield-Emergency-Management/125571944219310</a>
	Police	<a href="http://www.westfieldpolice.org/">http://www.westfieldpolice.org/</a>
West Springfield	Town	<a href="http://www.west-springfield.ma.us/Public_Documents/WSpringfieldMA_Depts/index">http://www.west-springfield.ma.us/Public_Documents/WSpringfieldMA_Depts/index</a>
	Police Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/WestSpringfieldPoliceDepartment">http://www.facebook.com/WestSpringfieldPoliceDepartment</a>
Wilbraham	Town	<a href="http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/pages/index">http://www.wilbraham-ma.gov/pages/index</a>
	Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-Wilbraham-Massachusetts-USA/242010670421?sk=wall">http://www.facebook.com/pages/Town-of-Wilbraham-Massachusetts-USA/242010670421?sk=wall</a>

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### 1. Introduction

There are no legal prohibitions against state agencies using social media sites or having social media identities. “Social media sites” refers to websites that facilitate user participation, networking and collaboration through the submission of user generated content. A “social media identity” is a specific user identity or account that has been registered on a third party social media site (such as the Whitehouse account on Twitter). Social media includes: blogs, wikis, microblogging sites, such as Twitter™; social networking sites, such as Facebook™ and LinkedIn™; video sharing sites, such as YouTube™; and bookmarking sites such as Del.icio.us™.

In their capacity as social media users, agencies are in some circumstances protected against state and Federal statutory and common law legal claims arising out of their use of a social media by Federal statutes such as:

- The Communications Decency Act, which protects against claims based on content provided by a third party to an agency-hosted social media site; and
- The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) which provides a safe harbor against copyright infringement.

Most social media sites are hosted by third party providers<sup>1</sup>. Therefore agencies have limited control over the functionality offered by such sites and the legal terms to which they are subject. Moreover, use of social media by state employees, both on the job and at home, raises new legal questions. In order to avoid legal pitfalls, agencies should, at a minimum, take the steps outlined in this guidance as part of their social media program.

<sup>1</sup> This means that the physical hardware and the software, that make the social media site possible are located at and under the control of an entity other than the Commonwealth.

## **2. Reviewing Third Party Provider's Terms of Services (TOS)**

Most social media applications providers require users to agree to specific Terms of Service (TOS)<sup>2</sup> Agreements prior to allowing the user access to the services. The TOS typically includes terms found in many software license or subscription agreements, for example: privacy (usually the TOS cites to a separate stand alone website privacy policy); limits on user conduct (e.g. users must not post infringing content); license rights to user posted content; indemnity; disclaimer of warranties; limitation of liability; when modifications can be made to the service or to the TOS; jurisdiction and governing law; and procedures under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Many state entities cannot readily accept some TOS terms that are in conflict with state entity legal requirements. Ideally, the TOS for each social media provider should be amended to be consistent with state law before agencies register for an account at a social media site.

ITD is currently working with National Association of State CIOs (NASCIO) to develop a standard amendment to the TOS to be offered to each social media provider on behalf of the Commonwealth. These amendments should satisfy most, if not all, needs for state agencies. This approach of negotiating one standard amendment that can be used across states will save time and money for both the states and the providers. Understandably, in the absence of monetary incentives, the social media providers are unlikely to negotiate different TOS with hundreds of different state agencies within the Commonwealth (let alone among different states) given that such negotiation would be a costly effort.

As of November 2009, NASCIO had not finalized agreements with any social media provider. However, NASCIO expects to negotiate terms on a priority basis with widely used social media providers including YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter. The list will continue to grow.

Until social media providers agree to TOS for states, the agency, in consultation with its counsel, should carefully weigh the benefits of using social media tools for mission-related purposes such as public outreach, citizen engagement, personnel recruitment, and training against the inherent risks in accepting the social media provider's TOS. Where the agency assumes the risks of moving forward with those sites and agreeing to their standard TOS, the agency should seek to mitigate the impact of these terms of service wherever possible by following the guidance in this document, in particular Sections 3, 5 and 6.

<sup>2</sup> Terms of Service and Terms of Use are often used interchangeably to refer the terms that govern the use of a given website. For purposes of consistency in this guidance, we use Terms of Use when discussing Commonwealth agency website policies and Terms of Service when referencing third party social media application provider's terms (e.g. Twitter's Terms of Service).

### 3. Updating Agency Website Policies

Review (if you already have them; create if you don't<sup>3</sup>) and revise four types of site related legal documents prior to using the social media site, in light of the content of this guidance. This guidance document refers to the following:

a. **Agency Website Policies at Issue:**

- (1) **Website Privacy Policies:** Privacy policies discuss the collection, dissemination and protection of personally identifiable information at websites. All agencies are required to have website privacy policies at least as protective as that used for the Mass.gov site under the [policy issued](#) by ANF on April 21, 2001.
- (2) **Website Terms of Use:** Terms of Use are general legal terms pertaining to the use of the agency's websites. If your agency has not already adopted Terms of Use for your agency's websites, you should adopt such terms now. Your terms should be the same as or similar to the Terms of Use for the ITD website included as Exhibit 1 hereto.
- (3) **Website Accessibility Policy:** The Web Accessibility Policy discusses agency's goals in providing a website that adopts and incorporates accessibility features so that users with disabilities can effectively use the website. It provides a position on how the agency achieves accessibility, any known issues with accessibility and how they are being addressed, and contact information so that users can obtain more information.
- (4) **Social Media Policy:** The Agency's Social Media Policy describes how the agency uses social media sites. It provides a brief description of the social media sites used by the agency, identifies whether the sites are controlled by a third party provider, and also provides the user with notice as to the limitations to the agency's control on the content on such sites.
- (5) **Terms of Comment:** The agency's terms of comment describe how the agency manages user contributions to the agency's controlled and managed social media site (such as an agency's wiki or a blog). The terms of comment also describe to the user the review process prior to posting comments and the selection criteria for comment posting (e.g. on-topic, non-duplicative, not obscene or offensive etc.). The terms of comment should be tailored and posted at the agency's relevant social media page (e.g. the blog page or the wiki page) so that user can easily and directly review the rules of the road for commenting.

<sup>3</sup> ITD has adopted Terms of Use on which all Executive Department agencies should base their own Terms of Use. ITD's standard Terms of Use, for use by all agencies whether they use social medial or not, are available online at [www.mass.gov/itd](http://www.mass.gov/itd).

Agencies launching social media sites should at least have a Website Privacy Policy, a Website Terms of Use, a Website Accessibility Policy, and a Website Social Media Policy. For those agencies using blogs and wikis, the agency should also have terms of comment that are specifically associated with the wiki or blog and posted at or near those pages.

b. **Amendments to Website Policies:**

(1) **Indicate the Use of Third Party Providers:**

1. **Differing Policies:** Amend your agency’s website Social Media Policy, Privacy Policy, and Terms of Use to indicate that although social media used by your agency may appear to be part of your agency’s internet presence, the social media is actually hosted by a third party which has its own privacy policy and terms of service. Provide the Uniform Resource Locator or “URL” users need in order to access the privacy policy and terms of service for the third party host of your social media site. See Exhibits 1, 2, and 3 hereto for some suggestions on how to amend your Terms of Use, Privacy Policy, and Social Media Policy to address this issue.
2. **Personal Information Collected by Third Parties:** Amend your agency website Privacy Policy and indicate in the Social Media Policy that some social media providers used by your agency could collect personal information through the user’s use of the social media site; that this personal information will be disseminated online via the social media site; and that its dissemination will not be subject to the restrictions described in the agency’s Website Privacy Policy for personal information collected by the agency online through other means such as applications or email. See Exhibit 2 hereto for some suggestions on how to amend your Privacy Policy to address the special issues raised by social media sites or identities. Agencies must submit their amended Privacy Policies to ITD’s General Counsel for review prior to posting them. Agencies should, whenever possible, observe the terms of their Privacy Policy that require the agency to make an advance announcement regarding future changes to the policy a certain number of days before the amended privacy policy goes into effect.

- (2) **Intellectual Property for Contributions to Website.** If your agency allows content to be contributed to the website, such as through a blog or wiki, amend your agency’s Terms of Use to subject the content on the site that is created by your agency or contributed by blog or wiki users to the Creative Commons Attribution License, Version 3.0. This language should also be incorporated into the

Terms of Comment that are referenced at or near the wiki or blog. Use the following text to refer to the license:

*Except where otherwise noted, content on this site is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. Content includes all materials posted by the Executive Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, visitors to this website agree to grant a non-exclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license to the rest of the world for their submissions to this site under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. A copy of this license is available online at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses>.*

- (3) **Safe Harbor Provisions under the DMCA.** Take steps to benefit from the safe harbor provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (the DMCA) for on-line service providers (OSPs). Any entity which provides digital communications for users such as users who post comments on blogs or wikis falls within the definition of an OSP under the DMCA. The DMCA establishes a safe harbor provision to prevent infringement liability to OSPs due to a user's posting. To fall within the safe harbor, the agency must:

1. **DMCA Takedown Notice.** Adopt, implement, and inform users of a policy for terminating users who repeatedly infringe copyright. Thus, post a DMCA takedown notice, based on the following sample below. If you have Terms of Use for your site, the following language, added to your Terms of Use, constitutes an adequate DMCA takedown notice:

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Department respects the intellectual property of others, and we ask users of our Web sites to do the same. In accordance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and other applicable law, we have adopted a policy of terminating, in appropriate circumstances and at our sole discretion, users, subscribers, or account holders who are deemed to be repeat infringers. We may also at our sole discretion limit access to our Web site and/or terminate the accounts of any users who infringe any*

*intellectual property rights of others, whether or not there is any repeat infringement.*

*Notice and Procedure for Notifying Designated Agent of Claims of Copyright Infringement*

*If you believe that any material on this Web site infringes upon any copyright which you own or control, or that any link on this Web site directs users to another Web site that contains material that infringes upon any copyright which you own or control, you may file a notification of such infringement with our Designated Agent as set forth below. Notifications of claimed copyright infringement must be sent to [Name Agency's] Designated Agent for notice of claims of copyright infringement. Our Designated Agent may be reached as follows:*

Designated Agent:

Address of Designated Agent:

Telephone Number of Designated Agent:

E-mail Address of Designated Agent:

2. **Secure Rights under DMCA.** To make sure these amendments to the Terms of Use are effective and secure your rights under the DMCA:
  - i. Do not interfere with technical measures to identify and protect copyrighted works; and
  - ii. File a designation of agency with the Copyright Office . To take advantage of the safe harbor protections offered by the DMCA, an agency must register as a designated agent with the Copyright Office. The Copyright Office uses the requested information to identify the designated agent for notification of claims of infringement. Agencies should name their web manager as the designated agent for such claims. Use the sample identification form attached as Exhibit 4.

(4) Sample Policy Changes.

1. Attached as Exhibits 1 and 2 respectively are standard Executive Department Terms of Use and Privacy Policies

redlined to show changes that agencies should make when they launch the use of social media.

2. Attached as Exhibit 3 is the Executive Department’s standard Social Media Policy template, which agencies should modify and post prior to using agency hosted or third party hosted social media sites.
3. Attached as Exhibit 5 is the Executive Department’s standard Terms of Comment for agency blogs or wikis. Agencies must review, modify if necessary, and post these blog or wiki terms of comment at are near the site of an agency’s blog or wiki for ease of use. In the sample Terms of Comment provided, the policy notifies the user that user comments may be reviewed before posting. For each Agency blog or wiki, the Agency needs to assess whether it will moderate the posts and modify the Terms of Comment accordingly.

- c. **At the social media site or landing page<sup>4</sup>, indicate to users that the site is not an official Massachusetts government site and that a third party’s website policies apply.**

Indicate when possible on any third party hosted social media landing pages (e.g. an agency’s Twitter landing page) or via a communication mechanism available on the social media site (e.g. the first direct message sent on Twitter to a new follower of the agency’s Twitter identity) that the social media page is actually hosted by a third party and therefore use of the site is governed by the social media provider’s own website policies, such as its privacy policy and terms of service. Provide the Uniform Resource Locator or “URL” users need to access the agency’s Social Media Policy at the agency’s website. For example, the Agency could post on the social media site or on its first direct message to the user: “Thank you for following us on [INSERT SOCIAL MEDIA TOOL]. Please take a moment to review our social media policies on [provide URL to policy].”

#### **4. Adopt a Social Media Participation Policy**

Once the agency has decided to engage in the use of social media, the agency will entrust specific individuals with the responsibility of posting and updating the agency’s social media identity or page (e.g. writing the blog, drafting and sending out the micro-blogs, updating the social networking page). Depending on the content posted on the social media site, individual postings could result in employee misconduct warranting discipline or termination. However, to discipline or terminate employees for misconduct related to the postings and use of social media, agencies

<sup>4</sup> A landing page is the first page clearly associated with your agency within a social media site. For instance, if your agency uses Facebook, the landing page would be your agency’s Facebook page.

must articulate clear expectations for its use prior to securing the social media identity or page. Each agency employing social media should adopt at a minimum a Social Media Participation Policy, an example of which is attached hereto as Exhibit 6, which governs employees' use of agency social media sites and identities and provides employees with clear direction about expectations of their conduct while contributing to these forms of communications. In addition, this policy should address employees' personal use of social media outside of work.

This Social Media Participation in Exhibit 6 has been presented to the unions representing Executive Department employees and was rejected only by the union representing the Department of Correction (DOC) guards. Thus, the policy cannot yet apply to DOC union member guards. Agencies must adopt this policy as well as a correlating policy for their management employees prior to securing an identity on social media site.

At a minimum, an agency's Social Media Participation Policy should refer to or address:

- a. the Commonwealth's Acceptable Use Policy, and the Codes of Conduct for managers and union members;
- b. external users' First Amendment rights;
- c. defamation;
- d. the purpose for the agency's social media sites or identities;
- e. identification of users;
- f. use of disclaimers;
- g. copyright law;
- h. privacy;
- i. respect for others;
- j. handling conflicts;
- k. correcting mistakes;
- l. appropriate allocation of work time to social media sites or identity management;
- m. use of social media sites or identities for threats, harassment, or discriminatory speech;
- n. distinction between required work-related use, personal use at work, and personal use outside of work.

The Agency's Social Media Participation Policy should distinguish the different uses of social media. The three distinct uses:

- a. Required Work-Related Use: Use of social media that is sanctioned as part of employee's job function (e.g. when an employee, as part of their job responsibilities, tweets on behalf of the Agency head on the Agency head's Twitter account);
- b. Personal use at work: An employee's personal use of social media while at work (e.g. logging onto Facebook and providing personal updates to a Facebook page or twitter account during work hours using either their own or their agency's information technology resources, when such activity is outside of the employee's official job function);
- c. Personal use outside of work: An employee's use of social media in his or her personal capacity outside of work.

## 5. Training Agency Social Media Participants

- a. **Copyright:** Alert social media users to copyright limitations. Employees posting or reviewing social media content must respect the rights of copyright owners. Do not allow employees to reprint whole articles or publications on their social media posts without first receiving written permission from the publication owner.
- b. **First Amendment:** Respect external users' (i.e. non-state employee users') First Amendment rights. Although agencies can moderate some social media sites where the agency controls the content (e.g. on blogs and wikis) to impose content-neutral restrictions to speech i.e. restricting speech that is obscene, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or off topic, agencies cannot use the moderation function to restrict speech uttered by a member of the public with which the agency or administration simply disagrees. External users have some First Amendment rights in posting content to public social media sites such as wikis and blogs and agency moderators must respect those rights by posting all comments other than those excluded for specific legitimate reasons identified in terms of comment, such as the reasons listed above.
- c. **Confidentiality and Privacy Considerations.** Train agency social media posters to refrain from posting information that is not public record under the Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66, sec. 10, as well as information which, although it may be public record, is considered sensitive by the agency.
- d. **Defamation:** Caution agency social media users regarding defamation claims. Although the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is immune from defamation claims, employees acting in their individual capacity (not on behalf of the agency) are not. Under Massachusetts law, defamation is established by showing that the defendant published a false, non-privileged statement about

the plaintiff to a third party that either caused the plaintiff economic loss or was of the type that is actionable without proof of economic loss. Some statements, like the imputation of a crime, are defamatory per se. As noted above, agency employees using social media sites should be cautioned to avoid statements that may be interpreted as defamatory.

**e. Attorney, Doctor, or other Licensed Professional Considerations.**

Consider special issues that arise when an attorney, doctor, or other licensed professional uses social media site on behalf of the agency. Such posters must be mindful of the rules of professional conduct governing his or her communications. For example, if the agency intends to have an attorney acting in her capacity as an attorney provide posts to social media sites, the attorney must be cognizant of the relevant rules of professional conduct governing public communications (e.g. avoid false or misleading statements, rules governing solicitations, advertisements, the unauthorized practice of law, and the creation of an inadvertent attorney-client relationship). In addition, agency counsel should not violate attorney client privilege by providing legal advice to their clients on a social media site that is accessible to the public, other agencies, or any person who is not considered the attorney's client.

## **6. Meeting Relevant Legal Obligations**

- a. Records Retention.** Social media sites will contain communications sent to or received by state employees and are therefore public records subject to the Records Retention law. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (digital text, photos, audio, or video, for example). See the Records in Common Schedule, section F7 section 6 (a copy of which is attached to this document as Exhibit 7). Ensure that your agency retains a copy of the social media content in accordance with the Records in Common Schedule. Review your third party social media service provider's terms of service for its records retention practices. Note that while third party social media providers will most likely save your content for some period of time, they generally will not save it indefinitely. To the extent that their policies are inconsistent with the Records in Common schedule, your agency should retain copies of social media posts such as by taking a periodic "snapshot" of the social media sites in order to meet your agency's records retention obligations.
- b. Open Meetings Law:** Caution social media posters and moderators regarding the potential implications of the Open Meetings Law. The Open Meetings Law applies to meetings of governmental bodies in which a quorum of the body convenes to deliberate on any public business or policy within its jurisdiction. The terms meeting, governmental body, deliberation, and quorum are specifically defined in the Open Meetings Law. M.G.L. c. 39, §23A.<sup>5</sup> As

<sup>5</sup> Note: The Open Meetings Law was re-written as part of the Ethics Reform Bill that was passed in 2009, with the changes going into effect in 2010. The changes to the Open Meetings Law do not affect the current analysis. However, as of the fall of 2009, ITD is currently analyzing options for compliance with

a guiding principle, deliberations will have ensued when a “quorum knows what a quorum thinks”, regardless of the forum of communications. Thus, a series of individual postings on a social media site which cumulatively convey the position of a quorum of the governmental body regarding a subject within its jurisdiction could constitute deliberations and in turn violate the requirements of the Open Meetings Law. Until the Attorney General’s position on the appropriate use of social media within the confines of the Open Meetings requirements has been clarified, members of governmental bodies must take care to avoid invoking the Open Meetings Law through posts to social media sites.

- c. **Accessibility.** Agencies using social media sites must provide a link on the landing page to the accessibility policies, if any, of their third party social media host. Prior to securing a social media identity, agencies must assess and either correct, or provide an accommodation for, any significant accessibility issues associated with the social media site. Regardless of the accessibility of the third party host’s social media tools, agencies remain responsible for ensuring that the content that they post online, either from their own employees or external social media users, is accessible.

**d. Consider Third Party Rights**

(1) Intellectual Property Rights. When the agency posts media in any form to a social media website, the agency must ensure that it has the right to post the content. In the case of copyrighted works (e.g. literary expression, photos, videos etc.), the agency needs to ensure that either (1) it has the copyright in the work; (2) it has permission to use to work; or (3) the use of the agency’s work is permissible under statute. For example, in the case of third party works, such as photos, before posting to a social media site, the agency should receive written authorization from the third party copyright holder. Alternatively, the agency may incorporate another copyright owner’s work if such use falls within the fair use exception under the Copyright Right Act. See e.g. 17 U.S.C. § 107. The four factors that a court will use to determine whether an entity’s use falls within the fair use exception are:

- i. the purpose and character of the use (e.g. commercial versus non-commercial, and/or whether the work was used for activities such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, research, and other related activities);
- ii. nature of the copyrighted work;
- iii. amount and substantiality of the portion of work used; and
- iv. effect of use on the potential market for the copyrighted work.

the Opens Meeting Law through the use of social media tools. ITD plans to submit its analysis to the Attorney General’s Office for its review.

A determination as to whether use falls within the fair use exception is fact specific. Thus, the agency needs to analyze on a case by case basis whether its use could legitimately be considered fair use. For example, for song sampling in videos to constitute fair use, the sample must be short, such as less than 30 seconds, and must not distract from the commercial market form the work.

(2) Privacy. Under some circumstances, videos and images of individual(s), may only be used when a written release has been obtained by the individual or by the parent or guardian when the individual is a minor. Copies of these rereleases should be kept on file by the posting agency. Agencies may alternatively alter the videos or images to effectively hide the identity of individuals where no permission has been granted. Please review our media release attached as Exhibit 8.

e. **Advertising and Endorsement Limitations.** Agencies making use of social media sites should investigate whether the social media provider incorporates advertisements into its site. State procurement and ethics laws prohibit Commonwealth employees or agencies from endorsing products or vendors. In addition, the .GOV registration program guidelines (applicable for those websites that are hosted within the Mass.gov<sup>SM</sup> domain) generally prohibit ad campaigns and endorsements. Thus, the agency should try to limit its association with advertising, such as by (1) amending the TOS of the social media provider if possible; and (2) whenever possible use non-branded landing pages within the social media website (i.e. request a government branded channel on YouTube).

## 7. Questions

**Questions.** For social media related legal questions, contact ITD's General Counsel Linda Hamel at 617 626 4404 or its Deputy General Counsel Stephanie Zierten at 617 626 4698.

**Please note: The information contained in this guidance does not constitute legal advice for entities or individuals outside of the Executive Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If you wish to obtain legal advice, you should consult an attorney in your agency or organization concerning your particular situation and facts. Nothing presented on this site or in this toolkit establishes or should be construed as establishing an attorney-client or confidential relationship between you and the Information Technology Division or the Executive Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This guidance is provided only as general information, which may or may not reflect the most current legal developments or be complete.**

## EXHIBIT 1

### STANDARD EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT TERMS OF USE AMENDED FOR AGENCIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

# Standard Executive Department [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM] Terms of Use

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Thank you for using the website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [insert name of agency]([insert agency acronym]) We hope that [insert agency acronym] has made your dealings with your state government easier and more efficient.

1. **Users Agree to These Terms.** This document contains terms of use for [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM]. By using the [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM] portal you agree to these terms and conditions. Please note that individual state agencies or other Commonwealth entities may adopt additional terms of use that apply to specific web based transactions with those agencies or data posted on their web sites. In addition, you should also review the [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM] privacy policy at [INSERT HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY] to learn about information collected by [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM], what that information is used for, and how it may be shared.
2. **Other Sites Have Other Policies.** For your convenience, [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM]'s website contains hypertext or other links to external Internet sites that are not provided or maintained by the Commonwealth. Please note that the Commonwealth cannot guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of these external sites. In addition, the inclusion of links to non-governmental sites is not intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered, on these sites, or the organizations sponsoring the sites. In particular, please note that the agency uses various social media tools. Although some of the social media sites or identities might appear to be part of this site, many are hosted by third party providers. Please review our Social Media Policy [INSERT LINK TO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY] for more information on the terms that apply for those sites.

**3. Public Record and Copyright.** All of the material posted on the Commonwealth's websites and accessible to the public without use of an authenticating and authorizing mechanism (such as a "PIN" or password) is public record. Most of the public records posted on Commonwealth Websites can be copied and used for any purpose. For example, all judicial opinions and all laws and regulations are public record. However, some of the public records posted on the Commonwealth's websites are also copyrighted material (for example, regulations based on technical codes developed and copyrighted by private organizations). With respect to material copyrighted by the Commonwealth, including the design, layout, and other features of [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM]'s website, the Commonwealth forbids any copying or use other than "fair use" under the Copyright Act. "Fair use" includes activities such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, research, and other related activities. In addition, please be advised that [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM] makes use of materials (including, but not limited to, photographs) copyrighted by third parties, which also cannot be copied or used for use other than "fair use" without permission of the copyright owner. If you want to make use other than "fair use" of any copyrighted information on this Web site, you must seek permission directly from the copyright owner. The only part of this website to which the copyright rules stated above do not apply is on social media pages that receive comment. Content on these pages is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. Content includes all materials posted by the Executive Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, visitors to these pages agree to grant a non-exclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license to the rest of the world for their submissions to this site under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. A copy of this license is available online at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses>.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Department respects the intellectual property of others, and we ask users of our website to do the same. In accordance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and other applicable law, we have adopted a policy of terminating, in appropriate circumstances and at our sole discretion, users, subscribers, or account holders on our website who are deemed to be repeat infringers. We may also, at our sole discretion, limit access to our website and/or terminate the accounts of any users who infringe any intellectual property rights of others, whether or not there is any repeat infringement.

### **Notice and Procedure for Notifying Designated Agent of Claims of Copyright Infringement**

If you believe that any material on this website infringes upon any copyright which you own or control, or that any link on this website directs users to another

website that contains material that infringes upon any copyright which you own or control, you may file a notification of such infringement with our Designated Agent as set forth below. Notifications of claimed copyright infringement must be sent to [Name Agency's] Designated Agent for notice of claims of copyright infringement. Our Designated Agent may be reached as follows:

Designated Agent:  
Address of Designated Agent:

Telephone Number of Designated Agent:  
E-mail Address of Designated Agent:

- 4. No warranty, endorsement or liability.** The Commonwealth makes no warranty that the materials contained within [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM]'s website are free from copyright claims, or other restrictions or limitations on free use or display. The Commonwealth disclaims any liability for the improper or incorrect use of information obtained from [INSERT AGENCY ACRONYM].

With respect to the Agency's social media pages or identities, which are identified on the Agency's Social Media Policy [INSERT HOTLINK TO POLICY], any references to commercial entities, products, services, or other nongovernmental organizations or individuals that remain on the site are provided solely for the information of individuals using the social media pages. These references are not intended to reflect the opinion of the Governor, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or its officers and employees concerning the significance, priority, or importance to be given the referenced entity, product, service, or organization. Such references are not an official or personal endorsement of any product, person, or service, and may not be quoted or reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying Governor Deval Patrick's or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service.

The [insert name of Agency] does not guarantee or warrant that any information posted by individuals on the website is correct, and disclaims any liability for any loss or damage resulting from reliance on any such information. The [insert name of Agency] may not be able to verify, does not warrant or guarantee, and assumes no liability for anything posted by any other person. The views expressed on the website by non-state commentators do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Massachusetts [insert name of Agency].

- 5. No waiver; Laws, Regulations and Policies Take Precedence.** The content published on this website is subordinate to, and is not to be interpreted as an amendment to or waiver of, the Federal and State laws, regulations and policies applicable to the matters addressed in the site's content.

## EXHIIBIT 2

# Standard Executive Department Privacy Policy Edited for Agencies with Social Media Site or Identity

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Thank you for visiting the [INSERT NAME OF AGENCY] (“[INSERT ACRONYM OF AGENCY]”) web site. Your privacy is one of our top priorities. The following policy applies only to the use of [Agency Name]'s Web site. Other websites operated by other state agencies or other entities have different policies. We strongly suggest that you read the privacy policies for each Commonwealth Website that you visit, and any external website that you visit through a link appearing at this site. In particular, please note that although some of the social media pages used by the Agency, might appear to be part of this website or at a webpage under the Agency’s control, some of these sites are actually hosted by a third party provider. Thus when visiting these third party social media sites, you are subject to different privacy policies and terms of service. Please review our Agency’s Social Media Policy to review more detailed information on the Agency’s use for specific social media sites and for links to the relevant terms of service and privacy policies for those sites.

## ***A Privacy Partnership.***

Your privacy with respect to the use of this website results from a partnership between the Commonwealth and you, the user. At this website, we attempt to protect your privacy to the maximum extent possible. However, because some of the information that we receive through this website is subject to Public Records Law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66, Section 10, we cannot ensure absolute privacy. Information that you provide to us through this website may be made available to members of the public under that law. This policy informs you of the information that we collect from you at this site, what we do with it, to whom it may be disseminated, and how you can access it. Based on this information, you can make an informed choice about your use of this site. You can maximize the benefits of your privacy partnership with the Commonwealth by making informed choices about whether to share personally identifiable information with us through this site.

## ***Personally Identifiable Information.***

We use the term “personally identifiable information” to mean any information that could reasonably be used to identify you, including your name, address, e-mail address, Social

Security number, birth date, bank account information, credit card information, or any combination of information that could be used to identify you.

### ***Information Voluntarily Provided by You.***

This website collects voluntary information from you through the e-mails that you send through this site and any comments posted on social media pages hosted by this website (such as blogs or wikis hosted by the Agency). All such comments and e-mails sent by you to this website will contain personally identifiable information.

### ***Information Automatically Collected and Stored by this Website.***

This website does not use permanent "cookies". However, the website uses temporary "session cookies" to allow visitors to interact with the Mass.gov Portal and to use online applications. "Session cookies" do not allow us to personally identify a visitor. These cookies are stored only in memory and are deleted when the user's browser is shut down.

This website does collect and store indefinitely your Internet Protocol ("IP") address (which does not identify you as an individual) as well as information about the date and time of your visit, whether a file you have requested exists, and how many "bytes" of information were transmitted to you over the Web from this website. We use your IP address to assess the frequency of visits to this website and the popularity of its various pages and functions. We will not attempt to match any personally identifiable information that you provide to us with your IP address, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that doing so would provide information that is relevant and material to a criminal investigation.

### ***Dissemination of Your Personally Identifiable Information.***

We do not sell any personally identifiable information collected through this website. However, once you voluntarily submit personally identifiable information to us its dissemination is governed by the Public Records Law, the Fair Information Practices Act (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66A), Executive Order 504, and other applicable laws and regulations. The Records Retention Law requires the [INSERT NAME OF AGENCY] to preserve records created or received by a state employee. Pursuant to this retention requirement, emails or messages sent to a state email account and information submitted via the agency's Mass.gov website and comments posted or messages received via an official state agency page on a third-party web-site (such as an official agency profile on a social network) could be treated as state governmental records and may be permanently archived. Information that you submit voluntarily through third party social media sites where such sites are associated with [INSERT NAME OF AGENCY] and when such information is publically available, including your name, city or town, and the substance of anything that you post may be disseminated further by being posted online at this website or be publicly discussed by a member of the administration. In addition to social media postings, any emails or other communications you send us may be provided to a member of the public in response to a public records request. The

information that you voluntarily submit through emails will be disclosed only to Commonwealth employees or officials with a “need to know” for purposes of fulfilling their job responsibilities. They will only use information to answer your questions, respond to any requests for assistance, and fulfill any legal obligations. Where appropriate, we may provide the information submitted by you via social media sites or email to the person or company that is the subject of your inquiry, or to a government agency responsible for the matters in your communication.

### ***Your Access and Opportunity to Correct.***

The Public Records Law and the Fair Information Practices Act provide you certain rights to get information about you that is in our records. To learn more about the circumstances under which you can get and correct this information, please click on the above references to these laws.

### ***Security.***

Because this website does not encrypt incoming e-mail or comments, you should not send information that you consider highly sensitive through this website. We use standard security measures to ensure that personally identifiable information sent via the social media pages or email is not lost, misused, altered, or unintentionally destroyed. We also use software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise cause damage. Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, the Agency makes no attempts to identify individual users of the Agency’s website email submission features or the Agency’s social media pages, such as [name Agency wiki or blogs] or their usage habits.

### ***Special Protections Against Misuse Of Personally Identifiable Information Within Commonwealth Offices.***

In 2008, Governor Deval Patrick issued Executive Order 504, which enhanced the privacy protection given to any information about you as a named individual held by the Executive Department of state government. Executive Order 504 limits the collection and dissemination of personally identifiable information within the Executive Department and requires Executive Department agencies to greatly enhance the security and integrity of such data. This website complies with Executive Order 504, so all of the personally identifiable information that you submit to this website is given the privacy protections set forth in Executive Order 504.

### ***Policy changes.***

We will post changes to this policy at least 30 days before they take effect. Any information we collect under the current privacy policy will remain subject to the terms of this policy. After any changes take effect, all new information we collect, if any, will be subject to the new policy.

## **Contact Information.**

For questions about your privacy while using this website, please contact [INSERT NAME AT AGENCY] at [\[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS\]](#).

## **DEFINITIONS:**

“Cookies” are files that a website can place on your computer. A cookie file contains unique information that a website can use to track such things as your password, lists of Web pages you have visited, and the date when you last looked at a specific web page, or to identify your session at a particular website. A file allows the website to recognize you as you click through pages on the website and when you later revisit the site. A website can use cookies to "remember" your preferences, and to record your browsing behavior on the Web. Although you can prevent websites from placing cookies on your computer by using your browser's preference menu, disabling cookies may affect your ability to view or interact with some websites.

An “Internet Protocol Address” or “IP Address” is a series of numbers that identifies each computer and machine connected to the Internet. An IP address enables a server on a computer network to send you the file that you have requested on the Internet. The IP address disclosed to us may identify the computer from which you are accessing the Internet, or a server owned by your Internet Service Provider. Because it is machine-specific, rather than person-specific, an IP address is not, in and of itself, personally identifiable information.

“Social Media”. A social media website is a website on a social media application that is usually maintained by an individual and has regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. A social media identity is a specific user identity that has been registered on a third party social media site and is associated with the Agency. Government social media sites or identities typically provide forums for commentary or news on topics related to the government agency that hosts the social media site or has secured the social media identity. A typical social media site (whether hosted by the Agency or a third party) combines text, images, and links to other websites including blogs, wikis, and other media related to the topic and enables readers to leave comments in an interactive format.

“Weblog” or “Blog”. A weblog or blog is a Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Government blogs typically provide commentary and news on topics related to the government agency hosting the blog. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to the topic, and enables readers to leave comments in an interactive format.

“Wiki”. A wiki is a website that uses collaboration software to enable the creation of a number of interlinked web pages. Many authors can contribute to the website and upload content to the site. Government wikis typically provide a venue for commentary

and discussion regarding topics related to the government agency hosting the wiki. A typical wiki combines text, images, and links to other web pages outside the wiki also related to the topic, and enables readers to leave comments in an interactive format.

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## EXHIBIT 3

### STANDARD EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

To highlight our commitment to transparency in government, the [INSERT AGENCY NAME] has launched several new web based tools for outreach, education and information. These tools are not intended to replace the channels currently in place for press and constituent communication. Press inquiries should be directed to [INSERT OFFICE AND NUMBER], and questions or complaints regarding agency services should be directed to [INSERT CONTACT AND NUMBER]. Rather, these tools are meant to augment our ability to educate, empower, and inform the residents of Massachusetts.

[INSERT NAME OF BLOG]: [INSERT AGENCY NAME] Blog  
[INSERT NAME OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITE IN USE e.g. Twitter™]  
[INSERT NAME OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITE IN USE e.g. email newsletter]  
[INSERT NAME OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITE IN USE e.g. YouTube™]

Please note, that Records Retention Law of the Commonwealth requires the [INSERT NAME OF AGENCY] to preserve records created or received by a state employee. Pursuant to this retention requirement comments posted or messages received via an official state agency page on a third-party web-site (such as an official agency profile on a social network) will be treated as state governmental records and may be permanently archived. Information that you submit voluntarily through social media sites associated with this agency where such information is publically available, including your name, city or town, and the substance of anything that you post may be disseminated further by being posted online at this website or be publicly discussed by a member of the administration

#### ***[NAME OF AGENCY BLOG]:***

Launched in [INSERT DATE], [NAME OF AGENCY BLOG, with hotlink] is the official blog of the [INSERT AGENCY NAME OR TOPIC]. The blog [describe purpose of blog]. We encourage you to visit this blog often and participate by subscribing to and commenting on our posts. Please review the [HOTLINK TO BLOG and ITS DESCRIPTION] and [HOTLINK TO BLOG COMMENT POLICY] pages to learn more about how this blog is and is not used by the [INSERT AGENCY NAME].

Also note that this blog is hosted by [INSERT NAME OF HOSTING ENTITY], and is governed by a separate Privacy Policy [HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY] and Terms of Service [HOTLINK TO TOS]. These policies apply to your use of [INSERT NAME OF BLOG]. For questions, please contact [email contact at agency where user can request information].

## ***COMMONWIKI [OR INSERT NAME OF WIKI]***

Launched in [INSERT DATE], [NAME OF AGENCY WIKI, with hotlink] is the official wiki of the [INSERT AGENCY NAME OR TOPIC]. The wiki [describe purpose of wiki]. We encourage you to visit this wiki often and participate by reviewing and commenting on the content. Please review the [HOTLINK TO WIKI and ITS DESCRIPTION] and [HOTLINK TO WIKI PARTICIPATION POLICY] pages to learn more about how this wiki is and is not used by the [INSERT AGENCY NAME].

## ***Twitter™ [NOTE: CAN BE USED FOR OTHER MICROBLOGGING SITES WITH SIMILAR FUNCTIONALITY]:***

To view the [INSERT AGENCY NAME OR AGENCY TOPIC] Twitter page, visit [INSERT HOTLINK]. Twitter is a free social networking site that allows users to send and read other users' short updates (up to 140 characters in length). While people use Twitter in many different ways for both personal and professional reasons, as a matter of policy:

- The [INSERT NAME OF AGENCY] use of Twitter is intended as a means to provide announcements and updates on current events or notices to any other users who elect to watch or follow our Twitter feed.
- The account is maintained and monitored by a combination of [INSERT NAME OF OFFICE] (usually appends his tweets with "[INSERT SELECTED SYMBOL]"), and members of his [INSERT NAMES OF TEAMS THAT ALSO RESPOND ON THAT IDENTITY] teams.
- We [select either: do or do not] follow people back who follow us, but we generally do not comment on user posts to the Twitter site. If you would prefer that we do not follow you back, please send us a direct message and we will comply with the request as soon as reasonably possible.
- Twitter is one of the many means we're using to connect residents with their government. We'll review and update Twitter as much as possible as we monitor and maintain many other channels of feedback, outreach and engagement including feedback from public meetings, email, letters, phone calls, and in-person visits.
- Unless you protect your updates, messages you post on Twitter are received by the Agency may be public records and may also be publicly available. Because not everyone knows that we are on Twitter, we occasionally search for 'tweets' that talk about [INSERT SEARCH TERMS] but don't reference our account, "[INSERT REFERENCE TO ACCOUNT]", and let that user know about our account. We periodically perform these searches to enable us to more effectively listen to and engage with constituents.
- The [INSERT AGENCY NAME] will not respond via Twitter to press inquiries, resident questions or complaints, or other constituent matters. For instructions on

appropriate methods for contacting the [AGENCY NAME], please visit the [Contact Us](#) [INSERT HYPER LINK] page of the [AGENCY NAME], website.

Also note that this micro-blog is hosted by Twitter and is governed by Twitter's separate website policies, including its Privacy Policy [HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY] and Terms of Service [HOTLINK TO TOS]. These policies apply to your use of Twitter. For questions, please contact [email contact at agency where user can request information].

### ***YouTube™ [OR INSERT NAME OF OTHER AGENCY VIDEOSHARING HAVING SIMILAR FUNCTIONALITY]***

To both increase transparency and save money on video hosting and streaming, [INSERT AGENCY NAME] publishes all of our video content, including press releases and to our YouTube channel at [INSERT URL TO YOUTUBE CHANNEL] and embed the videos back on our site.

The [INSERT AGENCY NAME] is responsible solely for the content uploaded to the official YouTube channel, and not for any related videos or linked videos linked from other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the YouTube website.

Also note that this video share is hosted by YouTube and is governed by YouTube's separate website policies, including its Privacy Policy [HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY] and Terms of Service [HOTLINK TO TOS]. These policies apply to your use of YouTube. For questions, please contact [email contact at agency where user can request information].

### ***[INSERT NAME OF NEWSLETTER] E-newsletter***

The [INSERT AGENCY NAME] publishes a [INSERT FREQUENCY] e-newsletter entitled [INSERT TITLE]. The e-newsletter is a resource for [INSERT LIST OF INTERESTED PARTIES]; however all interested parties are welcome to subscribe by registering here. [INSERT HOTLINK]. In addition, archived copies of previous editions are available on our website [MAKE HOTLINK].

Comments and suggestions on the content and design are welcome and should be emailed to [INSERT CONTACT NAME]. If you are currently receiving the e-newsletter and wish to unsubscribe, you may do so at any time by emailing [INSERT CONTACT NAME].

The e-newsletter is developed and distributed through [INSERT NAME OF PROVIDER] and is governed by [INSERT NAME OF PROVIDER]'s separate website policies, including its Privacy Policy [HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY], Terms of Service [HOTLINK TO TOS] and Anti-Spam Policy [HOTLINK TO ANTI-SPAM POLICY]. These policies apply to your use receipt of the [INSERT TITLE OF NEWSLETTER].

For questions, please contact [email contact at agency where user can request information].

### ***Flickr™ [OR INSERT NAME OF PHOTO SHARING CONTENT]***

To both increase transparency and save money on photo hosting and streaming, [INSERT AGENCY NAME] publishes all of our photo content, including press releases and to our Flickr site at [INSERT URL TO FLICKR SITE].

The [INSERT AGENCY NAME] is responsible solely for the content uploaded to the official Flickr site, and not for any related videos or linked photos linked from other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the Flickr website.

If you use any of our photos for another work, such as a story, blog post, printing, etc., we require that you provide credit by stating at or near the photo, "Photo Courtesy of [INSERT DESCRIPTION OF CREDIT]."

Also note that this photo share is hosted by Flickr and is governed by Flickr's separate website policies, including its Privacy Policy [HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY] and Terms of Service [HOTLINK TO TOS]. These policies apply to your use of Flickr. For questions, please contact [email contact at agency where user can request information].

### **RSS Feeds**

While you can always check [AGENCY NAME]'s website for regular updates, it's often easier to have information come to you. RSS lets you do just that. When you subscribe to an RSS feed, updates come to you as we post them.

We offer RSS feeds of both our [INSERT NAME OF RSS FEEDS and brief description].

If you're unfamiliar with RSS Feeds and how to use them, please visit [INSERT LINK TO RSS FEED DESCRIPTION, such as: [What is RSS?](#) on mass.gov].

### **MyMassTV**



The [AGENCY NAME] provides video content to people via local cable access centers.

The [INSERT AGENCY NAME] is responsible solely for the content uploaded to the official MyMassTV site, and not for any related videos or linked photos linked from

other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the MyMassTV website.

Also note that this video content is hosted by MyMassTV and is governed by MyMassTV separate website policies, including its Privacy Policy [[HOTLINK TO PRIVACY POLICY](#)] and Terms of Service [[HOTLINK TO TOS](#)]. These policies apply to your use of MyMassTV. For questions, please contact [[email contact at agency where user can request information](#)].

EXHIBIT 4

DMCA DESIGNATION OF AGENT FORM

**Interim Designation of Agent to Receive Notification  
of Claimed Infringement**

**Full Legal Name of Service Provider:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Alternative Name(s) of Service Provider (including all names under which the service  
provider is doing business):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Service Provider:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Agent Designated to Receive  
Notification of Claimed Infringement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Address of Designated Agent to which Notification Should be Sent** (a P.O. Box  
or similar designation is not acceptable except where it is the only address that can be used in the  
geographic location):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number of Designated Agent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Facsimile Number of Designated Agent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address of Designated Agent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Officer or Representative of the Designating Service Provider:**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Typed or Printed Name and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: This Interim Designation Must be Accompanied by a \$80 Filing Fee.  
Made Payable to the Register of Copyrights.

Mail the Form to:  
**Copyright GC/I&R**  
**P.O. Box 70400**  
Washington, DC 20024

## EXHIBIT 5

### STANDARD EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT TERMS OF COMMENT

#### **Purpose of this [SELECT ONE blog or wiki]:**

The purpose of this [blog or wiki] is to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the public and employees of [insert name of Agency]. We encourage your comments, ideas and concerns and hope that you will find the information here helpful in understanding what your government is doing and what you can do to help. This may be a moderated site, thus comments may be reviewed for compliance with our policies before posting. We recognize that the web is a 24/7 medium, and your comments are welcome at any time. However, given the need to manage state resources, in those cases where the site is moderated, the moderating and posting of comments will occur during regular business hours Monday through Friday. Comments submitted after hours or on weekends will be read and posted as early as possible; in most cases, this means the next business day.

- This is a place for collecting suggestions and new ideas and to encourage conversations between and among citizens and their government, not a substitute channel for services or general questions. Visit our contact page at [insert Contact Us link for Agency web page], to get help from [insert name of Agency].
- Do not submit unsolicited proposals, or other business ideas or inquiries to this [blog or wiki]. This site is not to be used for contracting or commercial business.
- This [blog or wiki] may not be used for the submission of any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or any other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process, or for the exhaustion of any legal and/or administrative remedy.
- This [blog or wiki] is not to be used to report criminal activity. If you have information for law enforcement, please contact your local police agency.

#### **Comment Policy**

We expect conversations to follow the rules of polite discourse and we ask that participants treat each other, as well as our employees, with respect. The following comments will not be posted:

- Profanity and vulgar or abusive language
- Threats of physical or bodily harm
- Sensitive information (for example, information that could compromise public safety)
- Offensive terms that target protected classes, such as ethnic, racial sexual orientation, transgendered, or religious groups.

For the benefit of robust discussion, we ask that comments remain "on-topic." This means that comments must relate to the topic that is being discussed within the [blog or wiki]. Comments will not be posted that include:

- Off-topic comments (If you have off-topic comments that are relevant to the agency, please email them to [provide email address].)
- Questions from the media
- Identical posts by the same user (please don't submit over and over expecting the post to show up faster) or multiple users (a group of people sending identical messages or one person submitting under different aliases). In the case of identical posts, the agency may only post the first submission.

### **Privacy and Security Policies**

With respect to content collected through this [blog or wiki] site, [agency] follows its Privacy Policy which can be accessed [here](#). However, the technology supporting this [blog or wiki] site is provided by [name third party provider], and this site is also subject to website policies of that provider including its Privacy Policy [insert link to third party provider privacy policy].

To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include personally identifiable information, such as social security number, phone numbers or email addresses in the body of your comment. If you do voluntarily include personally identifiable information in your comment, your comment may or may not be posted on the [blog or wiki]. If your comment is posted or remains posted, your name will not be redacted or removed. In no circumstances will comments be posted that contain social security numbers, addresses, email address or phone numbers. You have the option of posting comments anonymously, but if you opt not to, any information, including your login name, may be displayed on our site.

### **Intellectual Property**

Comments provided on pages is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. Content includes all materials posted by the Executive Department of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition, visitors to these pages agree to grant a non-exclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license to the rest of the world for their submissions to this site under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License. A copy of this license is available online at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses>.

## EXHIBIT 6

### SAMPLE MANAGER SOCIAL MEDIA PARTICIPATION POLICY

#### **Social Media Participation Policy**

##### **1. Introduction**

This document formalizes the policy for employees that are managers, non-union employees and contractors (“users”) within the [INSERT AGENCY NAME] on the use of social media sites. ***This policy shall also extend to bargaining unit members, except that Section 3 (Required Work-Related Use of Social Media) shall apply to such members only if they have voluntarily agreed in writing with their employer to the use of social media as a job responsibility.***

“Social media sites” refers to websites that facilitate user participation, networking, and collaboration through the submission of user generated content. A “social media identity” is a specific user identity or account that has been registered on a third party social media site (such as the Whitehouse account on Twitter™ or an employee’s personal account on Facebook™). Social media in general includes tools such as: blogs, wikis, microblogging sites, such as Twitter™; social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn™; video sharing sites, such as YouTube™; and bookmarking sites such as Del.icio.us™.

This document addresses three distinct uses of social media, including:

- a. **Required Work Related Use of Social Media:** Use of social media that is sanctioned as part of employee’s job function (e.g. when an employee tweets on behalf of the Executive Director of the Agency on the Executive Director’s Twitter account). This use is addressed in Section 3 of this policy.
- b. **Personal Use of Social Media at Work:** An employee’s personal use of social media while at work (e.g. logging onto Facebook and providing personal updates to a Facebook page, which is outside of the employee’s official job function, while at work, during work hours). This use is addressed in Section 4 of this policy.
- c. **Personal Use of Social Media Outside of Work:** An employee’s use of social media in his or her personal capacity outside of work time. This use is addressed in Section 5 of this policy.

##### **2. User Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of any person subject to this policy that uses a social media to read, understand, and follow this policy. In addition, users are expected to exercise reasonable judgment in interpreting this policy and in making decisions about the use of social media identities. Any person with questions regarding the application or meaning of this policy

should seek clarification from appropriate management. Failure to observe this policy may subject individuals to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

### **3. Required Work-Related Use of Social Media**

The [Agency name] is pleased to announce the launch of a new social media channels to communicate with customers. A social media identity is a specific user identity that has been registered on a third party social media site and is associated with the Agency, an official at the Agency, or a designated employee. Government social media sites or identities typically provide forums for commentary or news on topics related to the government agency that hosts the social media site or has secured the social media identity. A typical social media site (whether hosted by the Agency or a third party) combines text, images, and links to other websites including blogs, wikis, and other media related to the topic and enables readers to leave comments in an interactive format.

The purposes of [Agency name]’s social media identities and sites include [sample goals ...

- Engaging in conversation with the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Furthering the goal of transparency within government
- Providing the agency with meaningful feedback from our customers
- Goal 4...]

This document outlines the policy for [Agency name] employees’ conduct while contributing to or moderating this Agency’s social media sites or providing comments or updates to the Agency’s social media identities.

In addition to the topics addressed here, social media content must be in compliance with the [Agency name]’s relevant policies, including its harassment and discrimination policies, confidentiality policies, ethics rules, code of conduct, and other policies.

#### **Social media Guidelines**

- a. Follow the Acceptable Use Policy.** Know and follow [Agency’s Name]’s Acceptable Use Policy (the “AUP”) and any additional acceptable use policies for use of Commonwealth information technology resources adopted by your agency. Your agency’s social media site or identity is an “information technology resource” under the AUP.
- b. You are Personally Responsible for What you Publish.** You are personally responsible for the content you publish on your agency social media site. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

- c. Considerations When Speaking on Behalf of your Agency.** Identify yourself—name and, when relevant, role at your agency—when you discuss agency or agency-related matters on your agency social media website or in connection with the Agency’s social media identity. Write in the first person. It is important to make clear when you are speaking for yourself, and when you are speaking on behalf of the agency. Only speak on behalf of the agency when your commentary is based on the law governing your agency, or on your agency’s explicit written standards, policies, and practices, or you have received prior permission from your supervisor to address a particular topic in a particular way. However, there are occasions when agency employees will be asked on a social media site (such as a blog or wiki), as they are by the public in other situations, to explain how the laws to which the agency is subject, or the regulations and policies that it has issued, or its historic practices, will apply to a particular situation. There is often no black letter law, regulation, or policy, or historic practice, that addresses with 100% certainty an issue raised by the public. In their daily work with the public, state employees appropriately, on occasion, answer such questions by interpreting known precedents. When they do so, state employees often say something like “I don’t know what the official agency position would be in that situation, but in my opinion, ...”. When faced with a similar question on a social media site, make clear, as you would if speaking in person or over the phone, that you are offering your opinion on a matter, not the agency’s official position.
- d. Understand Users’ First Amendment Rights.** Although the [Agency name] can moderate the social media sites that accept comments from the public (such as blogs and wikis) to restrict speech that is obscene, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or off topic, we cannot use the moderation function to restrict speech with which the [Agency name] merely disagrees (i.e. subject matter restrictions). Users have some First Amendment rights in posting content to public social media sites hosted by state agencies. Moderators must respect those rights by posting all comments other than those excluded for specific legitimate reasons, such as those identified in the [Agency name] Terms of Comment [link].
- e. Do Not Comment on Social Media Sites about Agency Business Outside the Agency’s Social Media Sites or Identities.** Do not publish content to any website outside of your agency’s website that has to do with that agency or agency-related matters.
- f. Respect Copyright Law.** [Agency name] social media participants must abide by laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. Never reprint whole articles or publications without first receiving written permission from the publication owner. Never quote more than a short excerpt of someone else’s work and, if possible, provide a link to the original.
- g. Protect Confidential Information.** Don’t provide your agency’s confidential information. Never post legally protected personal information that you have obtained from your agency (e.g., information that is not public record under the

Public Records Law, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66, sec. 10 or whose dissemination is restricted under the Commonwealth's Privacy Act, Mass. Gen. L. ch. 66A, Executive Order 504, or under other Federal or State privacy laws or regulations). Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that occur within your agency. Never post information about policies or plans that have not been finalized by your agency, unless you have received explicit permission from your supervisor to post draft policies or plans on the agency social media for public comment.

- h. Consider Your Content.** As informal as social media sites are meant to be, if they're on a government domain or a government identity, they're official government communications. Social media sites will be sought out by mainstream media – so a great deal of thought needs to go into how you will use the social media in a way that benefits both the [Agency name] and the public.
- i. Don't Feed the Rumor Mill.** You should merely say, "no comment" to rumors. Do not deny or affirm them—or suggest either denial or affirmation in subtle ways.
- j. Handling Negative Comments.** Because the purpose of many social media sites particularly agency blogs and wikis, is to get feedback from the public you should expect that some of the feedback you receive will be negative (and you may need to develop a thick skin!). Some effective ways to respond to negative comments include:
  - i. Providing accurate information in the spirit of being helpful
  - ii. Respectfully disagreeing
  - iii. Acknowledging that it is possible to hold different points of view
- k. Provide Links.** When you make a reference to a law, regulation, policy, or other website, where possible provide a link or at a minimum, the cite.
- l. Respect Your Audience and Your Coworkers.** Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in your agency's workplace. Remember that the Commonwealth's residents reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, threats of violence, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as party politics and religion. Do not use your agency's social media presence to communicate among fellow Commonwealth employees. Do not air your differences with your fellow Commonwealth employees on your agency's social media's presence. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as race, ethnic origin, and religion.

- m. Be Transparent, Admit to your Mistakes, and Differ Respectfully.** Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so. When you see misrepresentations made about your agency by media or by other users, you may use the agency's social media site or identity to point that out. However, you must do so with respect, and stick to the facts.
- n. Use the Social Media Site or Identity Only to Contribute to your Agency's Mission.** When you contribute to your agency's social media site or identity provide worthwhile information and perspective that contributes to your agency's mission of serving the public. What you publish will reflect on your agency and the Administration. Social media sites and identities should be used in a way that contributes to the agency's mission by:
- i. Helping you and your co-workers perform their jobs better;
  - ii. Informing citizens about government services and how to access them;
  - iii. Making the operations of your agency transparent and accessible to the public;
  - iv. Creating a forum for the receipt of candid comments from residents about how government can be improved; and
  - v. Encouraging civic engagement.
- o. Respond to Your Own Mistakes.** If you make an error, own up to it and correct it quickly.

The [Agency name] policy is that once something is posted, it should stay posted. Only spelling errors or grammar fixes should be made without making the change evident to users. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so—do not remove or delete the incorrect content; provide the correct information and apologize for the error. Ways to accomplish this include:

- i. Strike through the error and correct
- ii. Create a new post with the correct information, and link to it from the post you need to correct or clarify.

Either method is acceptable. The goal is that for the social media identity or site to achieve transparency, we cannot change content that has already been published without making the changes clearly evident to users.

- p. **Use Your Best Judgment.** If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you're still unsure, discuss it with your manager.
- q. **Don't Forget Your Day Job.** Make sure that your online activities, even if they are sanctioned or required by your agency, do not interfere with other parts of your job. Employee social media users are responsible for keeping their managers informed about any impediments that arise which could disrupt the agreed on publishing schedule.
- r. **Handling Media Inquiries.** The [Agency name] social media identity or site may lead to increased inquiries from the media. If you are contacted directly by a reporter, you should refer media questions to the [Agency name] [INSERT NAME OF REFERRAL].

#### 4. Personal Use of Social Media at Work

- a. **Follow the Acceptable Use Policy.** Know and follow [Agency's Name]'s Acceptable Use Policy (the "AUP") and any additional acceptable use policies for use of Commonwealth information technology resources adopted by your agency. Access to third party websites using Commonwealth technology is an "information technology resource" under the AUP.
- b. **Employees' personal use should not be attributable to the agency or to the employee's job function at agency.** An employee's use and comments made at a social media site are subject to First Amendment protections. However, any personal use made of social media sites while at work (for example during break periods), must be conducted in such a manner that a reader would not think that the employee is speaking for or on behalf of his or her agency employer.
- c. **Must be in conformance with relevant portions of workplace policies and all relevant laws and regulations.** Employees' use of such sites must be in compliance with the [Agency name]'s relevant policies, including its harassment and discrimination policies, confidentiality policies, ethics rules, code of conduct, and other policies, as well as with state Ethics Law, Federal Copyright law, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- d. **Must not be excessive.** Excessive use of social media during work hours may result in discipline or termination.

#### 5. Personal Use of Social Media outside of Work

- a. **Employees' personal use should not be attributable to the agency or employee's job function at agency.** An employee's use and comments made at social media sites are subject to First Amendment protections. However, any personal use made of social media sites outside of work assignments or responsibilities, where such personal use is related to subject matter pertinent to

the employee's agency, must be conducted in such a manner that a reader would not think that the employee is speaking for or on behalf of his or her agency employer.

**b. Must be in conformance with relevant portions of workplace policies.**

Employees use of such sites must be in compliance with the applicable portions of the [Agency name]'s relevant policies, including its harassment and discrimination policies, confidentiality policies, ethics rules, code of conduct, workplace violence, and other policies. Some of these policies, for example the Agency's sexual harassment policy and the ethics rules, could apply to employee actions performed outside of normal working hours at third party sites.

## EXHIBIT 7

### PORTION OF RECORDS IN COMMON SCHEDULE 07-07 REFERRING TO WEB SITE PAGES

#### **6 Website Content Records**

Documents the posting of program business on websites. Includes public announcements, publications, policy, and other items.

Retention Period:

- (a) Official public announcements and notifications: Retain 3 years.
- (b) Contract related matters: Retain 6 years from contract close.
- (c) Publications: Permanent. Make arrangements with the State Librarian to transfer a copy to the State Library.
- (d) All other web content: Retain based on the appropriate record series retention period as determined by the content and function of the data.

Notes:

- 1. Records on the website with long retention periods do not have to remain on the website for the duration of the retention period. Provide documentation of the location of any records removed from the web.
- 2. See also record series "Website Documentation Records (F5-3)".
- 3. See also record series "Systems Documentation Records (F5-4)".

## EXHIBIT 8

### **Agreement Regarding Image or Voice Recording**

In consideration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the “Commonwealth’s”) agreement to restrict its use of any image of me or recording of my voice made by the Commonwealth to its lawful activities, I hereby:

1. Grant the Commonwealth, its employees, contractors, legal representatives, assigns, and agents, including any firm that may broadcast, publish or distribute such image or voice recording, in any manner whatsoever, (including without limitation, through print publications, television, the Internet, or the World Wide Web), the right and permission to use, reuse and/or broadcast, publish, and distribute in any form whatsoever, including print, photograph, video, audio, or other electronic media, or combination of media, my name, image, voice, and/or any personal data or records recorded in the media that is the subject of this release.
2. Transfer to the Commonwealth all right, title and ownership in and to any image of me or recording of my voice made by the Commonwealth, its employees, contractors, legal representatives, assigns, and agents.
3. Waive any right to inspect or approve of the original or any copies of images of me or recording of my voice created by the Commonwealth.
4. Release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless the Commonwealth, its employees, contractors, legal representatives, assigns and agents, including any firm that may broadcast, publish or distribute my image or a recording of my voice, in any form or through any medium referred to in section one above, from and against any liability as a result of any distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composition form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking, processing or reproduction of my image or voice, its broadcast, publication, or distribution.

I hereby certify that I am over eighteen years of age, and competent to contract in my own name.

I understand that I will not be compensated in any way for the Commonwealth’s use of my image, likeness and/or voice recording, except as indicated in this Agreement, unless otherwise notified in writing.

My appearance (whether by image, voice, implication or otherwise) and any representations or implications contained in this media do not constitute an unreasonable,

substantial, or serious interference with my privacy. To the extent that I hold rights in any creative works captured in the recorded media that is the subject of this release, I hereby grant the Commonwealth nonexclusive worldwide license to reproduce, distribute, perform, and display the recorded versions of those works.

I have read and understood the foregoing.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Minor Release:**

I hereby certify that I am the parent and/or guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ who is under the age of eighteen years. I hereby consent to the terms of the foregoing Agreement in connection with the Commonwealth's use of his/her name, image and/or voice recording.

## Appendix E. List of Available Radio Frequencies and Equipment<sup>2</sup>

### Regional Interoperable Systems

Shared System Name	Service Area	Radio System
Berkshire County VHF	Berkshire County	VHF Conventional, Simplex
Berkshire County UHF	Berkshire County	UHF Conventional, Repeated
CMED UHF	Statewide	Statewide UHF Repeated
DCR VHF	Statewide	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
EMS VHF	Regional	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
EMS UHF	Regional	UHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
Fire District 7 VHF-Low	Fire District 7 Southern Worcester Co	VHF-Low Conventional, Simplex
Fire District 7 VHF	Fire District 7 Southern Worcester Co	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
Fire District 8 VHF-Low	Fire District 8 Mid-State Northern Worcester Co	VHF-Low Conventional, Simplex
Fire District 8 UHF	Fire District 8 Mid-State Northern Worcester Co	UHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
Fire District 9 UHF	Franklin County, Fire District 9	UHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
Fire District 10 VHF	Fire District 10, Hampshire County	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
Fire District 11 VHF	Fire District 11, Western Mass	VHF Conventional, Simplex
Fire District 11 UHF	Fire District 11, Western Mass	UHF Conventional, Repeated
Fire District 11 800	Fire District 11, Western Mass	800 MHz Conventional, Repeated
MEMA VHF	Statewide	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
MEMA TRS	Statewide	Statewide 700/800 MHz TRS
MSP 7/800	Statewide	700/800 MHz Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
MSP TRS	Statewide	Statewide 700/800 MHz TRS
New Braintree VHF	New Braintree Service Area	VHF Conventional, Repeated and Simplex
New Braintree TRS	New Braintree Service Area	Statewide 700/800 MHz TRS

<sup>2</sup> The tables in this section are from the Massachusetts Western Homeland Security Planning Region, *Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*, Draft V2-4, June 2012.

### Radio Caches

Cache Name	Make / Model	Operated By		Freq Band	Qty
		Agency	Phone		
Berkshire County Sheriff's Office 1	Harris XG100 Full Spectrum	Berkshire County Sheriff's Office	413-445-4559	V/U/7/800	7
Berkshire County Sheriff's Office 2	Motorola HT1250	Berkshire County Sheriff's Office	413-445-4559	UHF	60
Greenfield Fire Dept	Harris XG100 Full Spectrum	Greenfield Fire Department	413-774-4323	V/U/7/800	7
MEMA Statewide Radio Cache	Motorola MTS2000	MEMA	508-820-2000	800 MHz	350
MEMA Statewide Radio Cache	Motorola XTS2500	MEMA	508-820-2000	800 MHz	100
Monson Police Dept	Harris XG100 Full Spectrum	Monson Police Dept	413-267-5136	V/U/7/800	7
Northampton Police Dept	Harris XG100 Full Spectrum	Northampton Police Dept	413-587-1100	V/U/7/800	7
Pittsfield Fire Comm Vehicle #50	Motorola MTS2000	Pittsfield Fire Department	413-448-9764	800 MHz	6
WMLEC Fire - District 10 East / Ware	Motorola HT1250	Ware Fire Department	413-967-5901	UHF	8
WMLEC Fire - District 10 West / Williamsburg	Motorola HT1250	Williamsburg Fire Department	413-586-1508	UHF	8
WMLEC Fire - District 11 East / Palmer	Motorola HT1250	Palmer Fire Department	413-238-3861	UHF	8
WMLEC Fire - District 11 West / Russell	Motorola HT1250	Russell Fire Department	413-586-1508	UHF	8

**List of Local Mobile Communications Units**

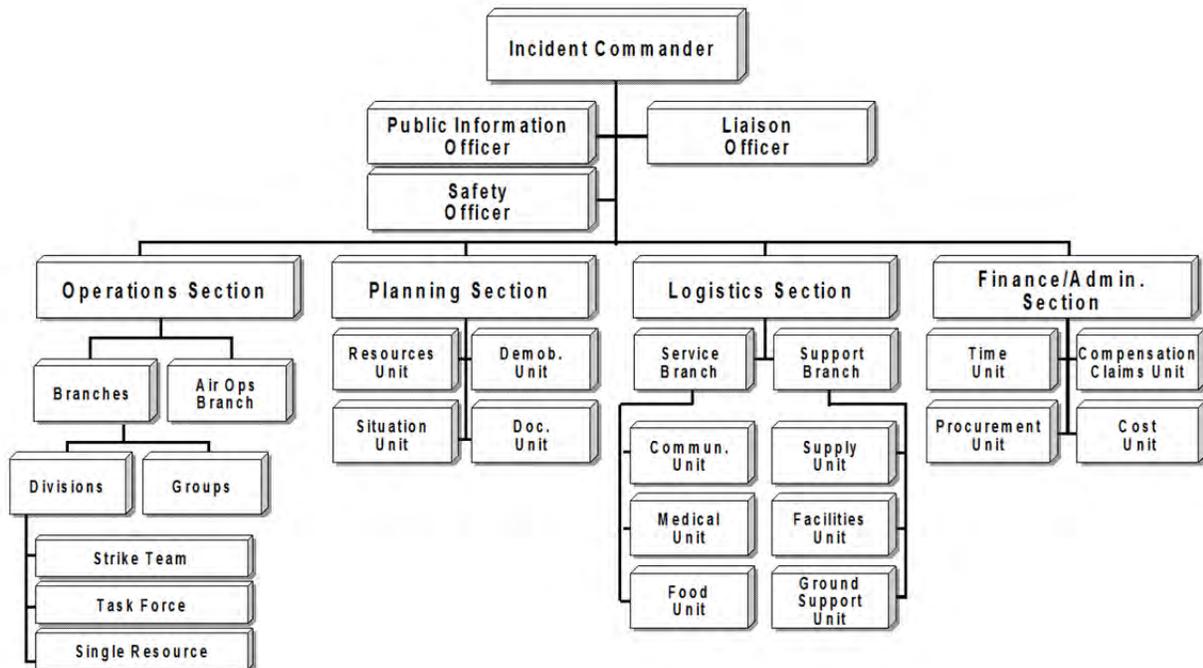
Unit ID/ Designator	Discipline	Operated By		Gateway
		Agency	24/7 Phone	
DFS Incident Support Unit 1 (ISU1-East)	Fire Services	MA Department of Fire Services (DFS)	508-820-2000	Zetron 4000 console
DFS Incident Support Unit 2 (ISU2-West)	Fire Services	MA Department of Fire Services (DFS)	508-820-2000	Zetron 4000 console
DFS Incident Support Unit 3 (ISU3-South)	Fire Services	MA Department of Fire Services (DFS)	508-820-2000	Zetron 4000 console
E911 Mobile PSAP	Public Safety Comms.	State 9-1-1 Department	800-391-1435	Motorola MIP5000 Console
Field Comm Unit 40	Fire Services	West Region (Greenfield)	413-774-4321	Raytheon ACU-1000
Field Comm Unit 50	Fire Services	West Region (Pittsfield)	413-448-9764	Raytheon ACU-1000
MA Army National Guard CST	Military	MA National Guard Joint Operations Center	508-233-7213	Raytheon ACU-1000
MEMA Mobile Communications Support Trailer (MCST)	Public Safety	MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)	508-820-2000	Raytheon ACU-1000
MEMA Mobile Emergency Operations Trailer (MEOT)	Public Safety	MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)	508-820-2000	
MEP Command Post	LE	MA Environmental Police (MEP)	617-626-1650	Raytheon ACU-1000
MSP Command Post #1 (CP1)	Public Safety Comms.	MA State Police (MSP)	508-820-2121	Motorola MCC5500 Console
MSP Command Post #2 (CP2)	LE	MA State Police (MSP)	508-820-2121	
MSP Command Post #3 (CP3)	LE	MA State Police (MSP)	508-820-2121	
MSP Emergency Communications Restoration Vehicle (ERV)	Public Safety Comms.	MA State Police (MSP)	508-820-2121	Motobridge G1



## Appendix F. National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS): Key Concepts and Terms

**Incident Command System:** The Incident Command System (ICS) is part of the Command and Management component of NIMS, and was used by emergency responders prior to the development of NIMS. ICS is used to organize on-scene operations for a broad spectrum of emergencies from small to complex incidents. Below is a sample ICS structure for a large-scale incident.

**Sample Incident Command Structure for a Large Scale Incident**



Communication-related functions within the ICS include:

- The **Public Information Officer** reports directly to the Incident Commander, and is responsible for interfacing with the public and media and/or with other agencies with incident-related information requirements. The Public Information Officer gathers, verifies, coordinates, and disseminates accurate, accessible, and timely information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and other matters of general interest for both internal and external audiences. The Public Information Officer may also perform a key public information-monitoring role.
- The **Liaison Officer** is Incident Command's point of contact for representatives of other governmental agencies, NGOs, and the private sector (with no jurisdiction or legal authority) to provide input on their agency's policies, resource availability, and other incident-related matters.

- The **Planning Section** collects, evaluates, and disseminates incident situation information and intelligence to the Incident Commander and incident management personnel.
- The **Communications Unit**, operating under the Logistics Section, is responsible for effective communications planning as well as acquiring, setting up, maintaining, and accounting for communications equipment. Specific positions within this unit include the **Communications Unit Leader (COML)** who manages the technical and operational aspects of the Communications Function during an incident or event and develops Incident Command System (ICS) Form 205 Incident Communications Plan and supervises the Communication Unit; the **Technical Specialist (THSP)** which allows for the incorporation of personnel who may not be formally certified in any specific NIMS/ICS position, and may include Local Agency Radio Technicians (as opposed to the COMT), Telephone Specialists, Gateway Specialists, Data/IT Specialists, and/or Cache Radio Specialists; the **Incident Communications Technician (COMT)** deploys advanced equipment and keeps it operational throughout the incident/event; the **Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)** supervises the operational aspects of the Incident Communications Center (ICC) (Mobile Unit and/or Fixed Facility). During an incident, the ICC is designed to absorb incident traffic in order to separate that traffic from the day-to-day activities of the dispatch center. The ICC is typically located at the Incident Command Post (ICP) in a fixed site, tent, trailer, or mobile communications unit; and the **Radio Operator (RADO)** staffs a radio at the Incident Command Center and is responsible for documenting incoming radio and telephone messages. Incident Dispatchers or Tactical Dispatchers are used as RADOs.
- The **Communications Coordinator (COMC)** coordinates communications between and among dispatch centers and incident communication units within one or more affected areas. The COMC reviews incident communication plans to assure that communications channels/talkgroups are allocated and used effectively. Locally, the jurisdictional dispatch center supervisor or dispatcher will act as the COMC when necessary. COMCs may be located at the county, area, State, and Federal level.

**Emergency Operations Center:** An EOC is activated to support the on-scene response during an escalating incident by relieving the burden of external coordination and securing additional resources. Upon activation of a local EOC, communications and coordination must be established between Incident Command and the EOC. ICS field organizations must also establish communications with the activated local EOC, either directly or through their parent organizations. Additionally, EOCs at all levels of government and across functional agencies must be capable of communicating appropriately with other EOCs, including those maintained by private organizations. Communications between EOCs must be reliable and contain built-in redundancies. The efficient functioning of EOCs most frequently depends on the existence of mutual aid agreements and joint communications protocols among participating agencies.

**Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC Group):** A MAC Group is an off-scene coordination and support organization with no direct incident authority or responsibility, made up of Agency Administrators/Executives who are heavily committed to the incident. Primary functions include allocation and reallocation of resources by setting incident priorities, and making coordinated decisions on the Agency Administrative/Executive level on issues that affect multiple agencies. A MAC Group may

be established at any level (e.g., national, State, or local) or within any discipline (e.g., emergency management, public health, critical infrastructure, or private sector).



## **Appendix G. 2012 Public Safety Survey: Revealing Americans' Awareness and Preparedness Surrounding Emergency Situations**



Revealing  
**AMERICANS'  
AWARENESS AND  
PREPAREDNESS**

Surrounding Emergency Situations

2012 Third Annual Public Safety Survey



**FEDERAL SIGNAL**  
Safety and Security Systems

*Advancing security and well-being.*

## About the survey

For the third consecutive year, Federal Signal Corporation's annual Public Safety Survey takes an in-depth look at American's attitudes and concerns with regard to emergency preparedness and response. Federal Signal once again called upon the expertise of the heralded research firm, Zogby International, to provide valuable insight with regard to Americans' communication preferences and likely behaviors in the event of an emergency. In addition to assessing citizens' overall state of emergency preparedness, the survey tabulates citizens' opinions on the current state of public safety with emphasis on perceived utilization of existing resources and increasing levels of community investment.

While last year's study looked at specific concerns, the 2012 Public Safety Survey hones in on the emotional reactions of citizens to disaster and emergency situations, and evaluates the level of apathy towards public safety, notifications and alerts. The online nationwide survey of 2,059 adults was conducted from June 3rd to June 5th, 2012. A sampling of Zogby International's online panel, which is representative of the adult population of the U.S., was invited to participate.

## Foreward

Last year the U.S. experienced an unprecedented number of federally declared disasters which ranged from tornadoes and floods to wildfires, mudslides and more. Subsequently, many communities re-examined their public safety strategies for times of crisis. In fact, in 2011 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued 99 major disaster declarations that were officially recognized by state governors, and declared official by the President of the United States, this is a shocking figure compared to the annual average of just 37 over the past 50 years. Yet despite this record-breaking year, the public still remains largely unaware of critical communication processes, and in some cases are surprisingly apathetic to emergency notification warnings and potential disaster scenarios.

Federal Signal believes their 2012 Public Safety Survey is the most comprehensive national study gauging the public's emotional reactions to emergencies and disasters – from their response to notification alerts and sirens, to the level of trust they place in their community's emergency preparedness. It takes more than community officials to ensure that the public is prepared for a disaster. Whether warnings emanate from a siren or from a neighbor, effective response to an emergency alert or notification demands the engagement of each and every citizen. Beyond illustrating the complexity of the task that faces the nation's emergency managers, this survey brings to light just how critical it is for members of the general public to be actively engaged during an emergency crisis. More importantly, the survey stresses how important it is for Americans to have an emergency plan in place that enables them to act quickly when their safety is threatened.

This year's survey found that, despite an increase in the number of disasters, too many Americans remain disturbingly complacent. Consequently, many people fail to act with a sense of urgency in times of crisis, which not only compounds the efforts of emergency managers, but will inevitably lead to tragic results.

Federal Signal recognizes this apathy as a major concern, and is dedicated to spearheading initiatives that promote public safety as a nationwide priority, and that correspond directly with the goals of the nation's emergency management professionals. The company's goals remain the same – to effectively address the host of human factors that impair or deter Americans from reacting in a responsible fashion to warning alerts and notifications, and to educate the public on the importance of maintaining an at-home safety plan for times of emergency. Recognizing that much work needs to be done in these areas, Federal Signal intends to use the results of this latest survey to build a sense of urgency with regard to improving public safety across the board. At the same time, the company will continue to move forward with emergency communications strategies that leverage both the latest technology and the company's traditional warning devices.

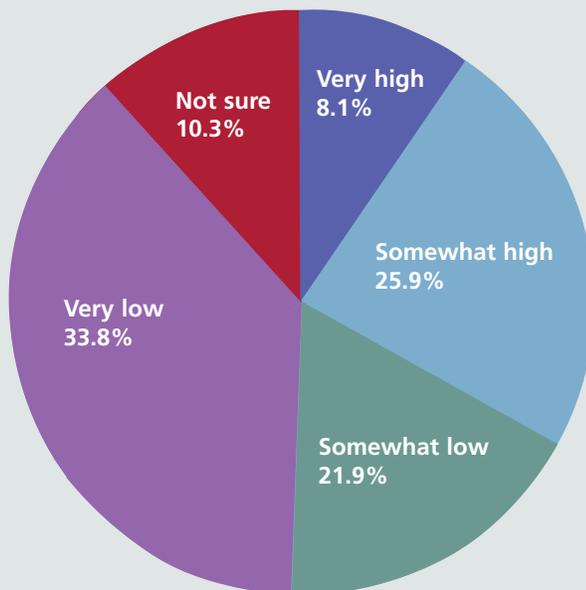
# Revealing **Americans' Awareness and Preparedness** Surrounding Emergency Situations

## ▶ AMERICANS LACK CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR LOCAL EMERGENCY ALERT AND NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

**While the survey found that more than 56% of Americans believe they are aware of the steps they need to take should disaster strike, the results uncover a shocking lack of knowledge — and even indifference — surrounding emergency alerts and notification systems.**

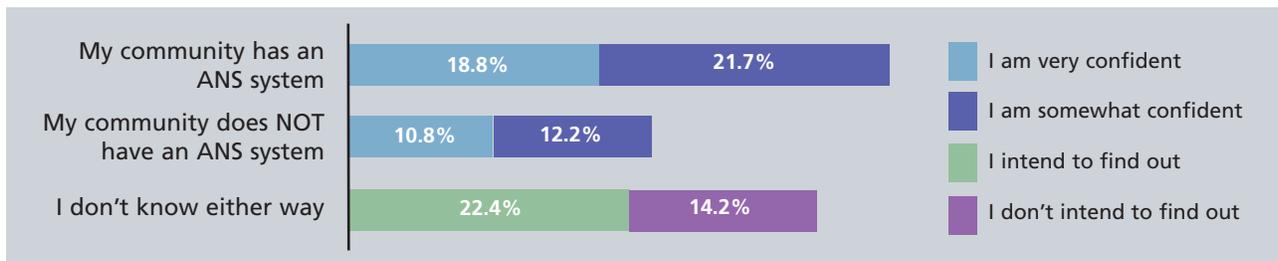
- Among age groups, respondents ages 65+ show the highest level of public safety awareness and preparedness (67% rate their level as somewhat to very high).
- More males than females rate their preparedness as very high, with 20% saying they are fully prepared and think about the issue all of the time vs. only 8% of women.
- Married respondents also rate highly for preparedness, with 64% claiming somewhat to very high awareness, compared with 46% of single respondents.
- Conservatives also rate themselves highly with 65% feeling fully prepared, vs. only 49% of liberal respondents and 46% of moderate respondents.

Americans rate their current level of public safety awareness and preparedness:



**A startling 71% of Americans are unsure if they have a personal alerting and notification system (ANS) in their area, which includes a combination of options for call, text and email message notifications.**

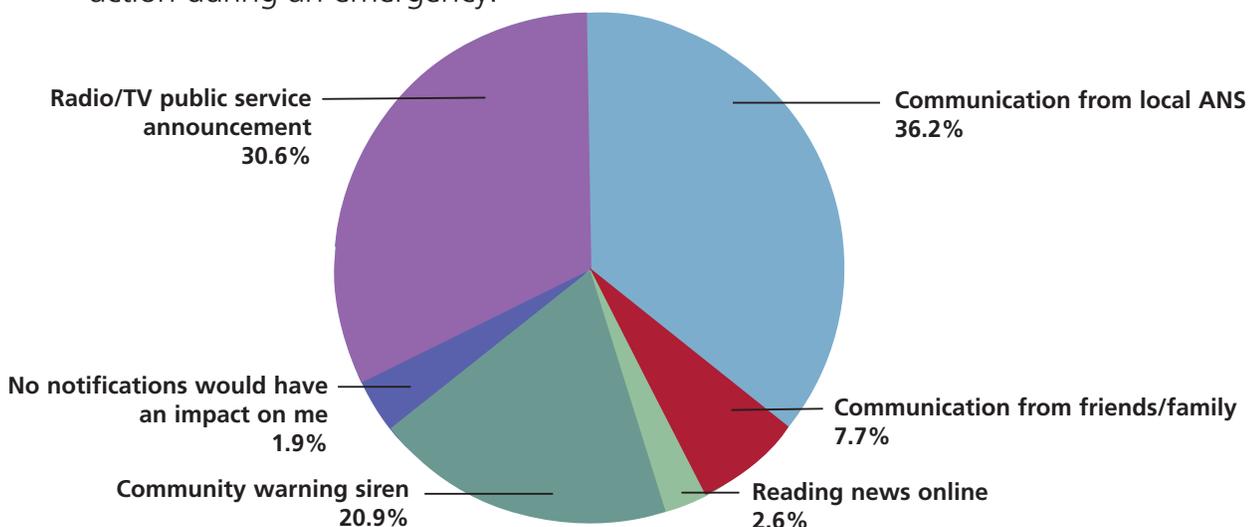
- 14% of respondents do not know whether their community has an ANS system in place – and do not intend to find out.
- More than one in four (29%) females who do not know either way intends to find out, compared with 20% of males in the same category.



**36% of respondents said they would be motivated to take action in an emergency based on ANS alerts than any other communication – ahead of traditional warning sirens, radio and TV public service announcements and even word-of-mouth communication from friends and family.**

- Respondents in the 18-29 age group would be significantly less motivated by a radio and/or TV announcement than any other age group (13%) vs. 34% for the next closest age group, 50-64, who rated the same choice at 34%.
- However, the 18-29 age group would be more motivated by a communication from a family member (14%) than any other age group.

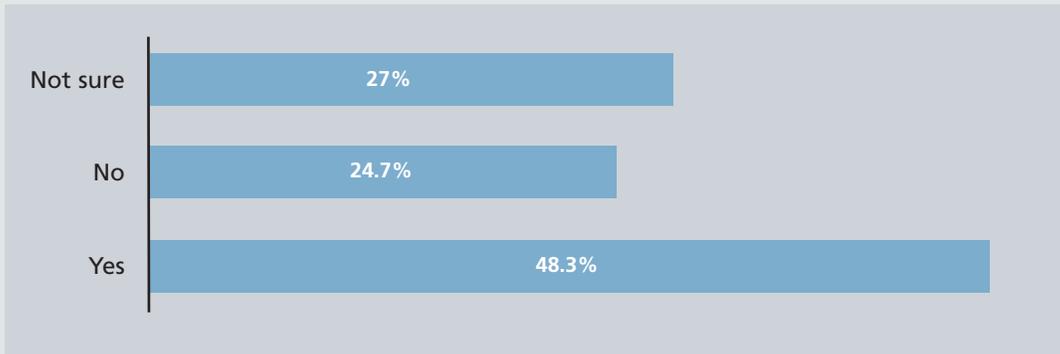
Announcement or notification type that would most motivate Americans to take action during an emergency:



**More than one in four respondents (27%) does not know whether their community has a warning siren system at all.**

- The youngest age group, ages 18-24, shows the lowest awareness of warning siren systems in their community with nearly half (47%) claiming they are unsure.
- The Great Lakes Region shows the strongest awareness by far – with 84% claiming to have a warning siren system in their community and only 3% responding that they are unsure.
- Americans who currently reside in a large city have the highest percentage of respondents (37%) who are unaware whether their community has a warning siren system, compared to only 17% who are unsure in rural areas.

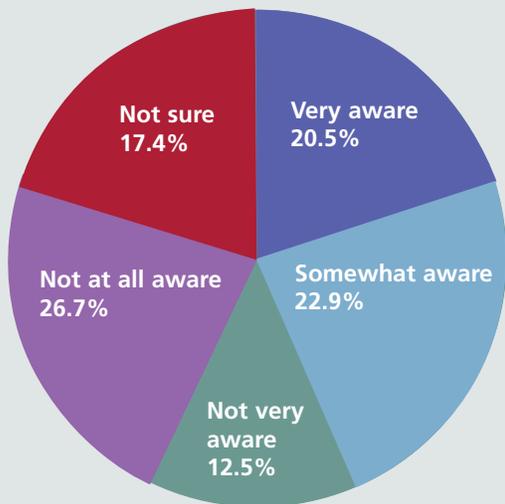
Americans who are aware of a warning siren system in their community:



**More than half (56.6%) do not know when sirens in their area are tested.**

- Younger respondents are the least knowledgeable, with just 8% ranking themselves as very aware, and 10% as somewhat aware of siren testing.
- Married people rank highly for siren testing awareness, with 48% considering themselves to be somewhat to very aware, vs. 34% of single respondents.

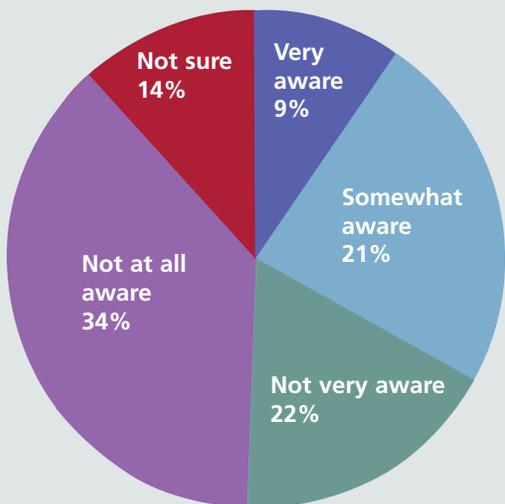
Americans largely unaware of when their local warning siren system is tested:



**70% are unaware of the sounds and sirens associated with various warnings.**

- The Central Great Lakes Region has the highest number of respondents who consider themselves very aware of the sounds and sirens warnings, totaling 13%.
- The 18-29 age group is the least aware, with just 16% claiming to be somewhat to very aware, vs. 39% of the 65+ age group.
- Examining results based on where Americans live, 34% of small city dwellers are somewhat to very aware of the warning signal sounds and sirens, while just 26% of large city residents feel knowledgeable.

Awareness of the different sounds/sirens associated with various warnings:

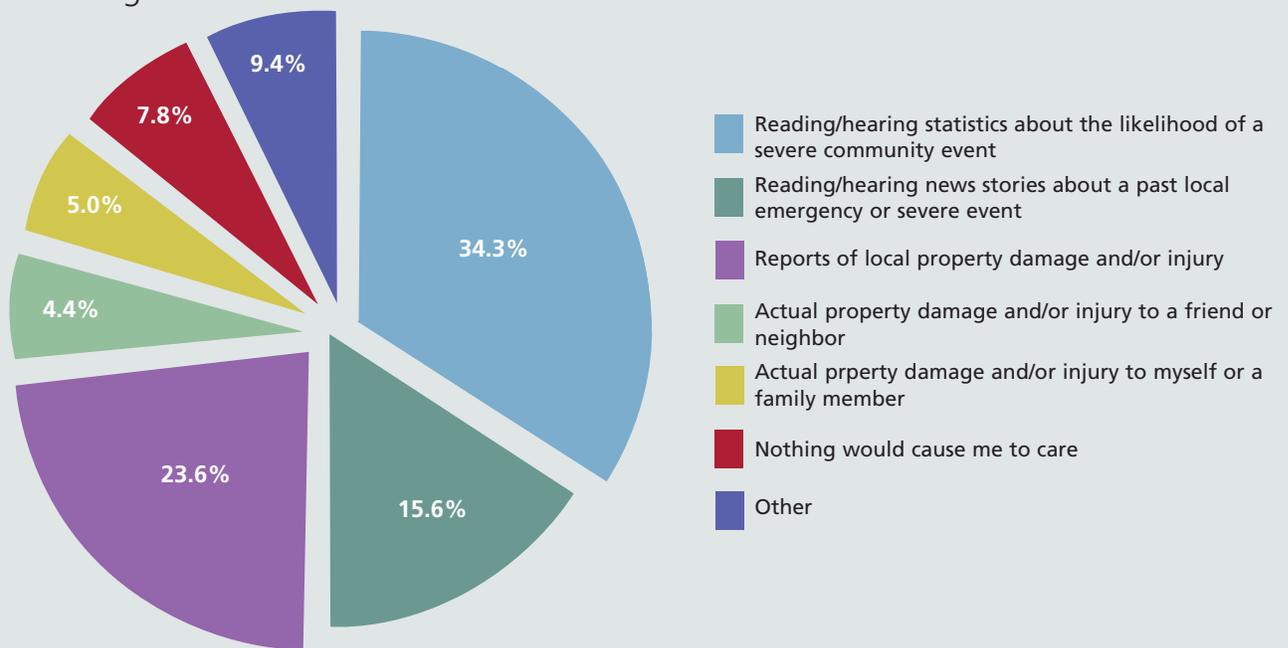


▶ EVEN SEVERE WEATHER DOES NOT MOTIVATE AMERICANS TO TAKE ACTION

**When it comes to taking action, despite receiving a notification, just under one half (47%) of Americans would be motivated to take action during a warning of potential severe weather.**

- One-third (33%) of respondents would require actual property damage or injury in order to care strongly about public safety awareness.
- 1 in 12 people say nothing would cause them to care.

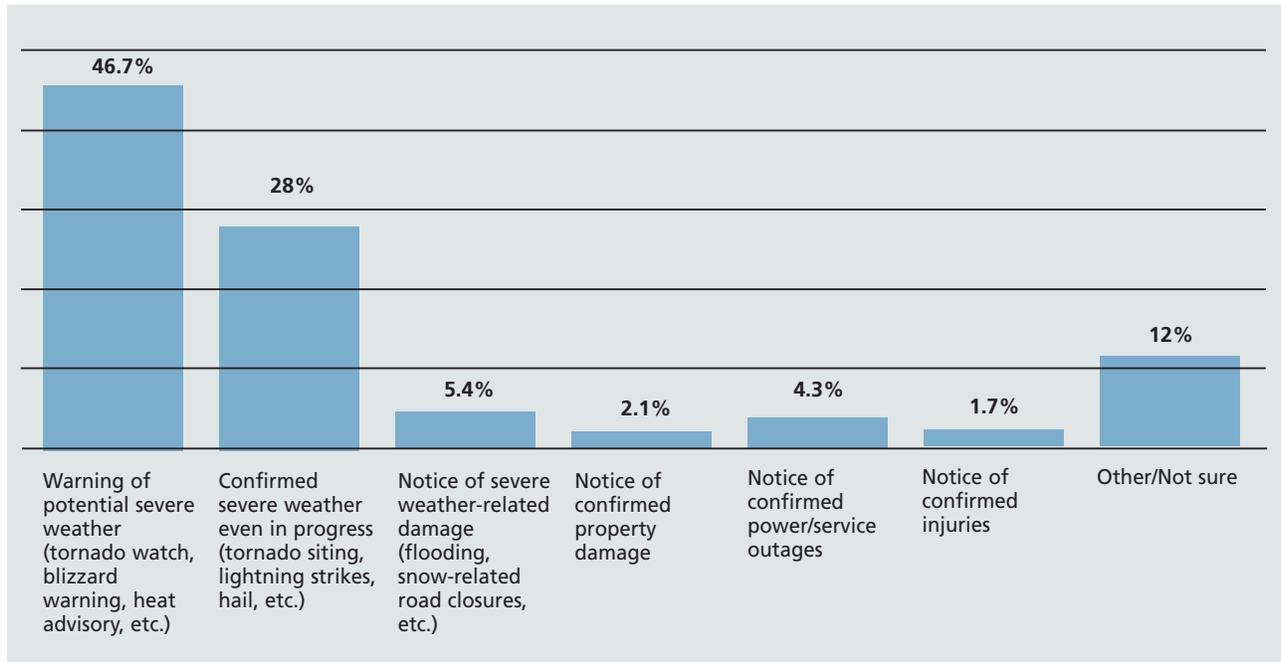
What it would take for Americans to care strongly about public safety awareness in general:



**More than one in four respondents (28%) would require confirmation of severe weather, such as an actual tornado sighting, flood waters, or a visible fire in order to take immediate action.**

- By a sizable margin, more Americans in the Great Lakes Region (38%) would require a confirmed severe weather event such as a tornado sighting to take immediate action.
- Men are less likely than women to take immediate action based on a warning of severe weather (42% vs. 51%, respectively) and almost twice as likely to be unsure about which scenario would first prompt them to take action (15% vs. 8% of women).
- Almost one in four (24%) of Americans in civil unions are unsure which scenario would first prompt them to take immediate action, almost 10 percentage points higher than the next relationship status category, single Americans.

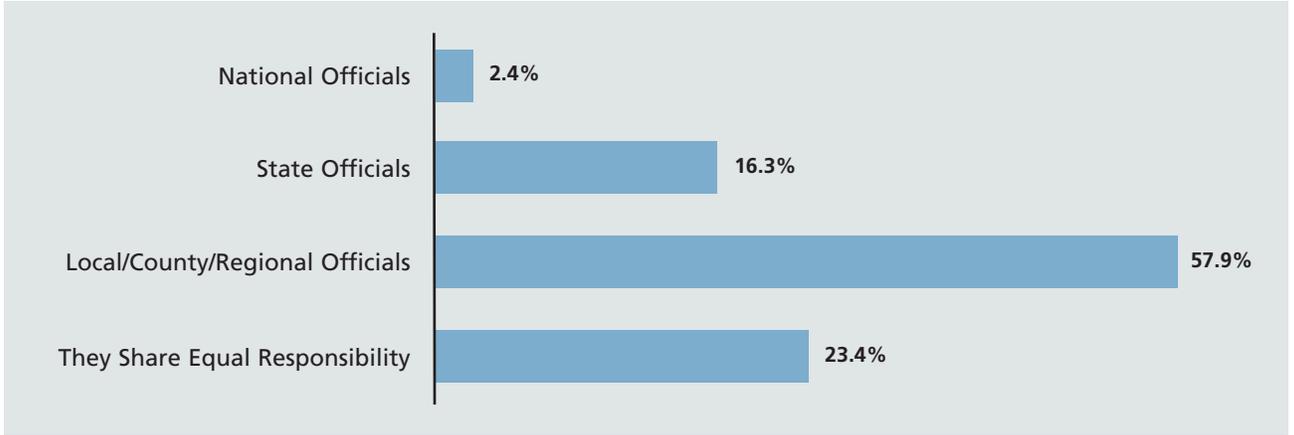
What it would take for Americans to take immediate action if notified of an emergency:



▶ AMERICANS RELY ON LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO ENSURE SAFETY

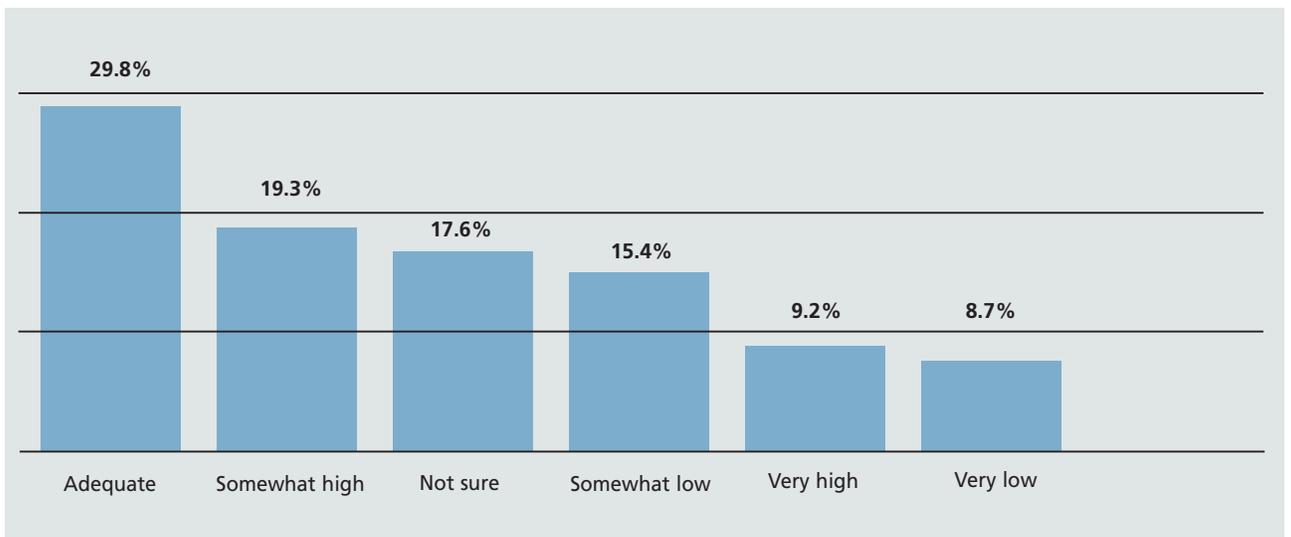
**Almost six in ten (58%) of Americans trust local and regional government to ensure sufficient public safety standards, communication, and planning in their area.**

Appointed officials Americans consider responsible for ensuring public safety:



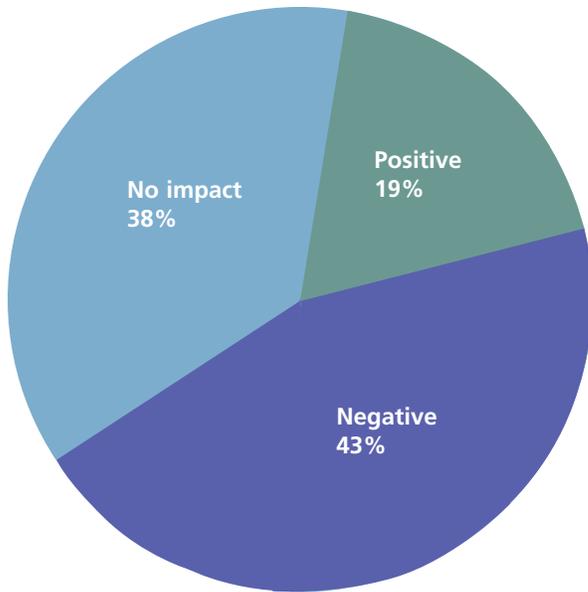
**Only 29% feel that their community officials are currently investing in or giving government attention to their public safety.**

Americans feel the current level of public safety or government attention in their community is:



**More than one-third (43%) of Americans feel that the economy has had a negative impact on the level of investment in their community.**

Impact Americans believe the economy has had on the level of local public safety investment and/or government involvement in the past five years:





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**EMComm**

Emergency Management Communications Center

A dedicated forum to the  
discussion of emergency  
communications.



## Appendix H. Acronym Guide

ARC – American Red Cross  
ARES – Amateur Radio Emergency Service  
BCSCC – Berkshire County Sheriff Communication Center  
BRPC – Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
CERT – Citizen Emergency Response Team  
CMED – Coordinated Medical Emergency Direction  
COML – Communications Unit Leader  
EMS – Emergency Medical Services  
EOC – Emergency Operations Center  
FCECS – Franklin County Emergency Communications System  
FRCOG – Franklin Regional Council of Governments  
IC – Incident Command/ Incident Commander  
ICS – Incident Command System  
IMAT – Incident Management Team  
JIC – Joint Information Center  
JIS – Joint Information System  
LEPC – Local Emergency Planning Committee  
MACC – Multi-Agency Coordination Center  
MAC Group – Multi-Agency Coordination Group  
MEMA – Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency  
MRC – Medical Reserve Corps  
MSP – Massachusetts State Police  
NIMS – National Incident Management System  
PIO – Public Information Officer  
PSAP – Public Safety Answering Point  
PVPC – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
RACES – Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service  
REPC – Regional Emergency Planning Committee  
RPA – Regional Planning Agency  
SMEM – Social Media in Emergency Management  
VOST – Virtual Operations Support Team  
VIOS – Virtual Information Operations Support  
WMLEC – Western Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council  
WRHSAC – Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council