

## Notification and Warning Functional Annex

Updated: August 14, 2024

### I. PURPOSE

These procedures describe the process for staffing, operating, and maintaining a warning system in the event of an emergency. It also provides instructions for dissemination of warning information to response agencies and the general public throughout the County.

### II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

#### A. Situation

1. The County Warning Point will normally initiate notification and warning.
2. Broadcast media will be relied upon to assist in the dissemination of warnings to the general public.
3. Alexander County's Emergency Communications Network will be utilized to notify the general public via phone, cell phones, text messaging, and social media.
4. Operational telephone and/or radio communications may be utilized to notify public officials, Emergency Operations Center staff, emergency personnel, and others as required.
5. Emergency service vehicles are available to warn the general public.
6. Special Needs groups or persons in group quarters may have to be provided special warning and notification.

#### B. Assumptions

1. Current forms of warning may necessitate augmentation to provide sufficient warning to the general public and special needs populations.
2. Use of mobile public address systems and/or house-to-house alert warnings may be necessary when the urgency of the particular hazard requires immediate evacuation actions or when there is a failure of other fixed warning systems.

### III. DEFINITIONS:

#### A. Emergency Alert System/Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (EAS/IPAWS)

1. The EAS/IPAWS is composed of AM, FM, and TV broadcast stations and non-governmental industry entities operating on a voluntary, organized basis during emergencies at Federal, State, or operational (local) area levels.

#### B. Primary Station

1. Broadcasts or rebroadcasts are a common emergency program for the duration of the activity of the EAS at the National, State, or Operational (local) area level. The EAS transmission of such stations is intended for direct public reception as well as inter-station programming.

#### C. Common Program Control Station (CPCS)

1. This is a Primary Station in an Operational (local) Area which is responsible for originating and coordinating the broadcast of an emergency action notification for its area.

### IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- A. The emergency warning may originate at the National, State, or Local level of government. Timely warning requires dissemination to the public by all available means:

## Notification and Warning Functional Annex

1. National Weather Service (NWS) National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio Service (NOAA)
  2. Emergency Alert System (EAS)
  3. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
  4. State-Operated Two-Way Radio Systems
  5. N.C. Division of Criminal Information (DCI)
  6. Local Government Radios
  7. Sirens, horns, or mobile public address systems
  8. Telephone, cell phone, text messaging, social media (Emergency Communications Network)
- B. Receipt and Dissemination of Warning:
1. The N.C. Highway Patrol serves as the State Warning Point at the Raleigh Communications Center.
  2. NWS alerts are received there from Federal agencies and on occasion from the public.
  3. A warning received from the site of an emergency is normally reported to the County Warning Point.
  4. Notification of governmental officials and emergency response personnel from the County Warning Point will follow established procedures.
  5. Jurisdictions adjoining Alexander County will be notified through the communications center or by the quickest possible method, in the event an incident occurs within Alexander County that may cause adverse effects across jurisdictional lines.
- C. Dissemination of Warning to the General Public of major emergencies will be by:
1. Alexander County's Emergency Communications Network
  2. Emergency Alert System (EAS)
  3. Weather alert radios
  4. Mobile public address systems as appropriate
  5. Siren system
  6. House-to-house alert by emergency personnel
- D. Dissemination of Warning to Special Populations
1. Hearing impaired, special needs groups, persons in group quarters, and non-English speaking groups are notified by the most expedient means possible. Usually, the message will ask citizens to assist in the evacuation of these special groups.
  2. Public schools and other special warning locations are notified by emergency personnel at the County Warning Point.

## V. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Organization:
1. The County Warning Point, located in the Alexander County Courthouse, operates on a continuous 24-hour basis from which key officials and the public can be alerted. The County Warning Point can simultaneously activate warning devices for the public.
  2. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) provides an operational public warning capability to National, State, and Local governments.
- B. Responsibilities:
1. Emergency Management Coordinator
    - a. Coordinate warning resources with neighboring counties.

## Notification and Warning Functional Annex

- b. Develop procedures to warn areas not covered by existing warning systems.
  - c. Develop procedures that define agency responsibilities, describe activation procedures, and detail the warning systems for notifying the general public.
  - d. Develop a listing of warning equipment, locations, and areas of coverage.
  - e. Develop procedures to alert key officials.
  - f. Develop procedures to activate the EBS system.
  - g. Provide for testing and exercising of the warning and alerting systems monthly.
  - h. Provide warning procedures for special locations such as schools, nursing homes, major industries, and institutions.
  - i. Develop a flood warning system for areas in the County subject to frequent flooding.
  - j. Provide for maintaining current internal notification/recall rosters.
  - k. Arrange with public service agencies to augment warning capabilities.
  - l. Report to EOC upon activation to direct and control warning operations.
  - m. Coordinate with the PIO to distribute necessary information to the media and public.
2. Communications Director:
- a. Receive warning information from the National Warning System (NAWAS) or the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and other official sources.
  - b. Transmit or deliver warning information to key officials following the notification list and alerting procedures.
  - c. Coordinate with the Emergency Management Coordinator for testing and exercising of the warning and alerting systems.
  - d. Provide for maintaining current internal notification/recall rosters for the communications system.

### **VI. DIRECTION AND CONTROL**

- A. The Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners or their designee has the authority to direct and control the County Warning System. The Communications Director is vested with the authority of the Chairman to activate the County Warning System as necessary when emergency circumstances warrant and in the interest of time. This authority stands day-to-day unless revoked by the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners.
- B. The Communications Director is designated as the County Warning Coordinator and will follow established County warning procedures.

### **VII. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT**

- A. The line of succession is:
  1. Alexander County Sheriff
  2. Alexander County Communications Director
  3. Alexander County Communications Shift Supervisor

### **VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

- A. The County has the following warning systems for use in an emergency:
  1. Pagers for Emergency Responders
  2. Mobile Public Address Systems
  3. Fire Station Sirens

## Notification and Warning Functional Annex

### 4. Emergency Communications Network

- B. Special needs populations in the County (e.g., handicapped, hearing impaired, non-English speaking) will be identified to ensure that they are contacted during alert conditions.
- C. Oral agreements have been made with CPCS-1 station managers to disseminate information per these procedures.

## **IX. PLAN REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE**

The Emergency Management Coordinator and Communications Director will review and update the following annex on an annual basis or as needed after an event or exercise.

## **X. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES**

- A. Alexander County Emergency Management Ordinance
- B. Alexander County Emergency Operations Plan