



Pennsylvania

AUXILIARY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

PEMA

**Auxiliary Communication Service
(ACS)**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

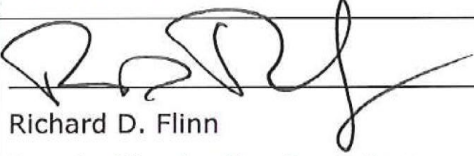
Dated: 7-14-10



pennsylvania
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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SIGNATURE PAGE**CONCURRENCE**

Date:	_____ VACANT Name Commonwealth ACS Officer/PEMA RCC ACS Officer
Date:	 _____ Christopher E. Snyder Acting Commonwealth ACS Coordinator
	APPROVAL
Date:	 _____ Richard D. Flinn Deputy Director For Operations

APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

This SOP becomes an operational document upon approval by the Deputy Director for Operations.

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RECORD OF CHANGES

Description of Change	Date
Throughout – Reserve Communications Corps (RCC) changed to Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)	October 18, 2010

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RECORD OF DISTRIBUTION

Location	Date
PEMA Executive Office	
PEMA Bureaus/Offices	
SEOC	

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I. Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) contains the operational and activation procedures for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and/or affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel to support communications for PEMA during times of natural or human-caused disasters and scheduled drills or exercises.

II. Purpose

- A. This SOP is intended to supplement the State Emergency Operations Plan, the ACS Strategic Plan, the Statewide ACS Operations Plan (OPLAN), the PEMA Communications Plan; and the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) of the Governor's Office of Administration, Office of Public Safety Radio; and provide coordinated and efficient auxiliary communications assistance between government officials and other organizations when there are extraordinary threats to the safety of life or property loss within the Commonwealth and for training and familiarization.
- B. PEMA is the agency responsible for emergency communications, throughout the Commonwealth, as specified in Title 35, and has developed and installed state of the art communication systems to be used in times of disasters. When failures happen or when there is a need to augment existing communication systems, ACS Unit resources assist when and where needed, to provide auxiliary communications pathways to and from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and PEMA Area Offices, federal agencies, other state agencies, regional task forces, and county emergency management agencies.
- C. This SOP formalizes the development, training, and exercising of operational procedures and partnerships between PEMA and auxiliary communications volunteers, as either members of the PEMA ACS Unit or members of affiliated and/or assisting organizations.
- D. These volunteers are providing a valuable service to supplement the communications networks in existence with the assurance that messages are delivered in a timely and accurate manner.

III. Goals and Objectives

When ACS Unit resources are requested to assist or augment communications between PEMA and county or municipal emergency management offices and other governmental and non-governmental organizations, a clear and concise plan will be in place to ensure that the communications are effective and reliable.

IV. Situation and Assumptions

- A. Situation
 - 1. The Commonwealth is subject to numerous natural and human-caused disasters that may seriously affect the safety, health, or welfare of a substantial number of citizens and visitors to the Commonwealth or preclude the operation or use of essential public facilities.

2. Disasters may be of such magnitude or severity as to render essential state supplementation of county and local efforts or resources exerted or utilized in alleviating the danger, damage, suffering, or hardships faced.
 3. Disasters may be caused by forces beyond the control of humans, due to civil disorder, riot, or disturbance, or by factors not foreseen and not known to exist when appropriation bills were enacted.
 4. Other circumstances may occur, which affect the ability to maintain reliable communications between Commonwealth agencies and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- B. Assumptions
1. Disasters may cause a partial or total disruption of emergency communications systems within the Commonwealth.
 2. Supplemental communications will need to be established with the counties and municipalities by the SEOC.
 3. ACS Unit resources are a critical component in the overall supplementation of the PEMA Communications Plan and will be activated and exercised as required.
 4. The auxiliary communications volunteers provide or supplement communications where normal communications systems have sustained damage or are overwhelmed. They may be used in a wide variety of situations including, but not limited to, natural or human-caused disasters and for training and familiarization.

V. Concept of Operations

A. Implementation

1. The Director of PEMA is empowered to request the services and use of available auxiliary communications resources. Acceptance of and participation in this SOP shall not be deemed a relinquishment of license control and shall not be deemed to prohibit volunteers from exercising independent discretion and responsibility in any given situation under the terms of his/her license.
2. Coordination of communications shall be provided by and through the Commonwealth ACS Officer, PEMA ACS Officer, Commonwealth ACS Coordinator, or other PEMA Liaison.
3. Volunteers shall maintain proper documentation of message traffic, tests, and maintenance logs per protocol.

B. Authentication and Identification

1. Authentication
 - a. The form of authentication that will be used between the activating official and the volunteers responding to the activation shall be by the identification methods indicated below.
2. Identification
 - a. PEMA ACS Unit Members (registered PEMA volunteers) - PEMA Issued Identification Card

- b. Affiliated and/or assisting Organization Members
 - (1) Affiliated and/or assisting organization identification card
 - (2) Valid photo identification (e.g. PA driver's license or other government issued photo ID)
 - (3) Volunteers name appears on the affiliated and/or assisting organization provided roster or personal verification of an affiliated and/or assisting organization member
- C. Eligibility for Volunteers to support PEMA Operations
 - 1. ACS Unit members shall meet all membership requirements as detailed in the Pennsylvania ACS Program Directive, ACS Strategic Plan, and this SOP.
 - 2. It is the responsibility of each affiliated or assisting organization to recruit and train operators that will be eligible to participate in PEMA activations and training exercises.
 - 3. Affiliated and/or assisting organizations will provide to the Commonwealth ACS Officer a roster of volunteers who are trained and eligible to participate in activations, drills, and exercises.
 - a. Eligibility requirements:
 - (1) A United States citizen or legal resident who possesses a valid FCC-license or other authorization to operate on the frequencies for which their license or authorization permits.
 - (2) Members of and in good standing with the affiliated and/or assisting organization
 - (3) Successfully completed all training requirements as detailed in the Pennsylvania ACS Program Directive, ACS Strategic Plan, and this SOP.
- D. Roles and Duties of Volunteers
 - 1. Be available to respond when ACS unit resources are requested and activated by the Director of PEMA or the Commonwealth ACS Coordinator, Commonwealth ACS Officer or PEMA Headquarters ACS Officer.
 - 2. Participate in training sessions and exercises.
 - 3. Develop a strong background in emergency procedures, applicable FCC and other rules and regulations, network procedures and PEMA Headquarters' policies and procedures.
 - 4. Brief the PEMA ACS Officer of any changes in equipment or license status that may affect their ability to continue to support SEOC, Area Office or other operations.
 - 5. Help strengthen the organization by offering suggestions and positive feedback to correct deficiencies.
- E. Notification and Activation
 - 1. Activation of ACS Unit support is requested through the SEOC. Authorization for use of ACS Unit resources is either by the Director of PEMA or by the direction of the Deputy Director for Operations or Incident Manager of the SEOC.

2. Prior to authorizing activation of ACS Unit personnel, it is recommended that the Commonwealth ACS Coordinator and/or Commonwealth ACS Officer be brought into the planning process to provide recommendation(s) on the appropriate ACS resources/missions to be requested and activation level to be implemented.
 3. Once ACS Unit personnel activation is authorized, the SEOC will make the following simultaneous notifications:
 - a. PEMA Technical Services Office
 - b. Commonwealth ACS Coordinator
 - c. PEMA ACS Officer or the Deputy ACS Officer who will then contact PEMA ACS Unit members and/or affiliated and/or assisting organizations with PEMA's request for services. This notification shall be conducted directly or through the SEOC, by telephone, email or other notification system identified by PEMA.
 4. The affiliated and/or assisting organization will have the responsibility for contacting its members in support of a request from PEMA.
 5. When activated, personnel report to the SEOC at PEMA Headquarters located at 2605 Interstate Drive, Harrisburg, PA, or other location as directed.
- F. Activation Levels
1. PEMA ACS Unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organizations will often be notified before specific communications needs have been determined. This is to enable ACS Unit and affiliated and/or assisting organization leadership an opportunity to assess the resources available, their location and to prepare for possible deployment. There are four (4) levels of activation:
 - a. **ACS LEVEL 4 (STAND-BY):** A potential exists for the need for ACS Unit resources. PEMA ACS unit members and/or affiliated and/or assisting organizations may be put on stand-by status and requested to monitor their assigned ACS net frequencies, email, and notification system(s) for information on the anticipated condition and possible activation notices. PEMA ACS unit members and/or affiliated and/or assisting organizations may be requested to provide their location and availability for deployment.
 - b. **ACS LEVEL 3 (ALERT):** An unusual condition, event, or non-declared emergency exists that has caused state or local officials to declare a warning. All PEMA ACS unit members and/or affiliated and/or assisting organizations are put on Alert status and should monitor their assigned ACS net frequencies, email, and notification system(s) for additional information on possible deployment notices.
 - (1) A PEMA Headquarters and/or Area Office ACS Officer may be requested to deploy to their respective locations to maintain awareness of the situation and provide recommendations, as requested, on the availability of manpower, resources, as well as ACS operational requirements.
 - (2) PEMA ACS unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel may be instructed to check into their Pennsylvania Auxiliary Communications Services Nets (PA ACS Nets) and be prepared for deployment to affected areas/assigned locations. A level 3 situation has the potential to develop into Level 2 or Level 1 activation, where assignments will be made.

c. **ACS LEVEL 2**

(1) **(PARTIAL MOBILIZATION):** At this level of activation, at least one operator, in addition to a PEMA ACS Officer, is deployed to the SEOC and/or PEMA Area Office to initiate ACS operations.

(a) Other PEMA ACS unit members and/or affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel should monitor their assigned PA ACS Net frequencies and be ready to respond to calls for service at the SEOC or other location.

(2) **(MUTUAL AID MOBILIZATION):** This modified Level 2 Activation will be utilized when selected state level ACS unit or affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel are activated in response to a request for mutual aid.

d. **ACS LEVEL 1 (FULL MOBILIZATION):** At this level of activation, PEMA ACS unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel shall be deployed to staff all needed positions at the SEOC.

G. Activation Trigger Points

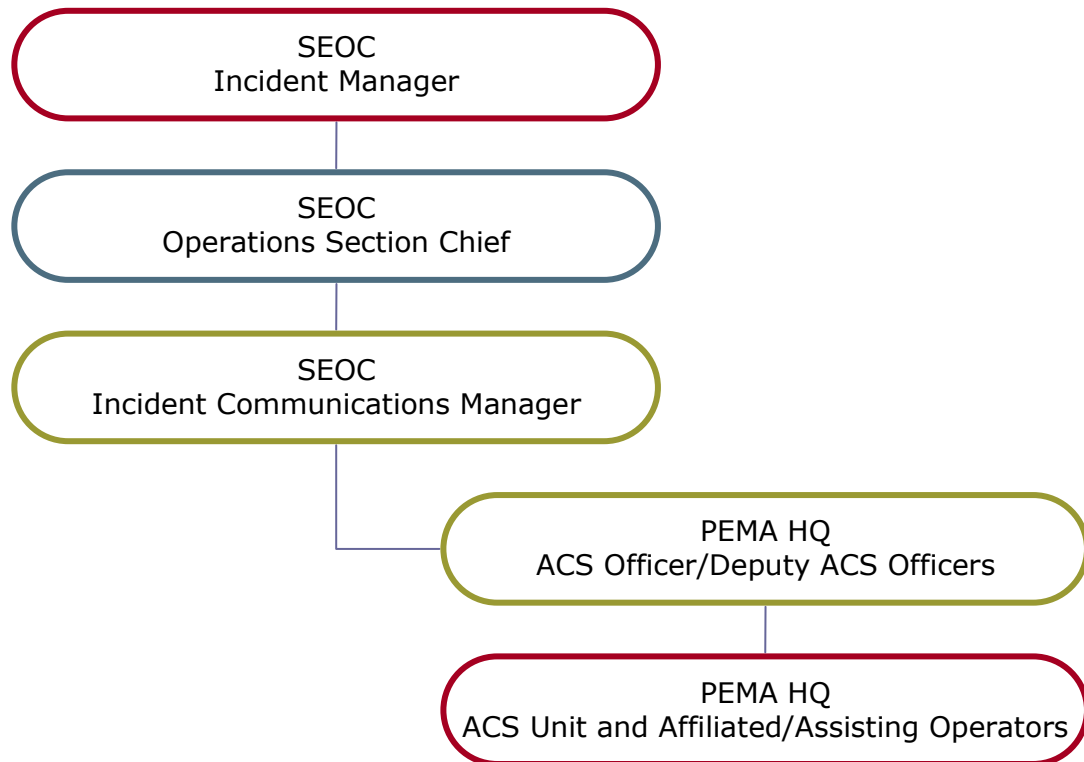
1. Table 1 below provides situations/scenarios to assist the SEOC command structure make a determination of when and what PA ACS resources will be activated. These situations/scenarios are examples only and are not fixed or absolute.

SEOC Activation Level	ACS Activation Level	Event	Scope	Examples
LEVEL IV	Normal Conditions	Routine events, relatively small localized events and minor damage.	There is no current or anticipated need for ACS activation.	Normal day-to-day incidents; DHS Levels Green, Blue and Yellow.
LEVEL III	LEVEL 4 (Stand-By)	Threats that require situational awareness.	PEMA ACS unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organizations may be put on Stand-By status.	County and/or RTF ACS units are placed on stand-by in advance of a possible event such as severe winter storm, flood watch, hurricane watch.
	LEVEL 3 (Alert)	Significant effects to one community or across one or more jurisdictions.	PEMA HEADQUARTERS ACS Officer may be requested to respond to their respective locations. PEMA ACS unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organizations are put on Alert status.	County and/or RTF ACS units are placed on stand-by or activated in advance of a possible event such as severe winter storm, flood warning, hurricane warning.
LEVEL II	LEVEL 2 (Partial Mobilization or Mutual Aid Mobilization)	Threats as described that require implementation of an Incident Action Plan for 2-3 days. and/or	At least one operator is be deployed at the SEOC to initiate ACS operations.	County and/or RTF ACS units are activated in response to severe flash flooding in several counties; server winter weather, declaration of Alert of Site Area Emergency at a Commonwealth nuclear power plant DHS level Orange.
		Significant effects across many jurisdictions that may exceed local resources.	Selected state level ACS unit or affiliated organization personnel are activated in response to a request for mutual aid.	
LEVEL I	LEVEL 1 (Full Mobilization)	Catastrophic damage in a region or across the State requiring heavy commitment of State resources.	PEMA ACS unit members and affiliated and/or assisting organization personnel shall be deployed to staff all needed positions at the SEOC.	Severe winter storm across the entire Commonwealth, hurricane stalling over the state for days; declaration of General Emergency at a Commonwealth nuclear power plant; DHS level Red; September 11 th like event.

Table 1 – Activation Trigger Points

H. SEOC Operations

1. SEOC Command Structure for ACS



2. General

- a. Once ACS Unit support is activated and deployed, they will receive a briefing from an ACS Officer on their duties and roles during the activation.
- b. The ACS Unit focus will be to establish communications networks and channels to meet the communications needs established by the PEMA Director, SEOC Operations Manager/Operations Section Chief, SEOC Incident Communications Manager, or the Commonwealth ACS Officer/PEMA Headquarters ACS Officer.
- c. The ACS Officer will establish an operator schedule, and insure availability of 24/7 coverage, if needed. The affiliated and/or assisting organization's representative is responsible to provide sufficient staffing to cover such needs, as requested.
- d. The ACS Unit will establish communications with federal agency, other state agency, and county or local auxiliary communication units, as necessary, using the PA State Auxiliary Communications Services SOG and/or the other appropriate frequency plan(s).
- e. ACS Unit communications may be by any communication modes or frequencies permitted by the licenses held by the ACS volunteers or authorized by PEMA.
- f. All operations shall be conducted in accordance with established National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) policies and procedures.
- g. The PEMA ACS operating positions will be located in or near the SEOC.

3. Logging Procedures

- a. WebEOC – WebEOC is the primary system utilized for all logging functions within the SEOC. Designated ACS Unit personnel will be trained on the use of and have access to WebEOC for performing all required functions.
- b. Optional Logging Procedure – Form ICS-214 – PA ACS will be used to log ACS Unit activities when ACS Unit personnel do not have access to WebEOC. ACS Unit personnel will use an electronic version on the computer in the SEOC ACS Radio Room, unless the computer is unavailable, then ACS Unit personnel will use a paper version of the same form.
 - (1) Items that will be logged include the following:
 - (a) Personnel assigned to ACS Unit operations.
 - (b) All notable activities that occur within the ACS Unit.
 - (c) All incoming and outgoing messages. Outgoing message numbers will be sequential and continued across all operational periods for the entire event.
 - (d) Any other information the ACS Officer/operators deem appropriate.
 - (2) One ICS-214 – adapted for the PA SEOC will be used for each operational period.
 - (3) At the end of an operational period, the ACS Officer will make a copy of the ICS-214 – adapted for the PA SEOC for ACS Unit records and deliver the original to the Documentation Unit in the Planning Section.

4. Message Handling Procedures

- a. WebEOC – WebEOC is the primary system utilized for all messaging functions within the SEOC. Designated ACS Unit personnel will be trained on the use of and have access to WebEOC for performing all required functions.
- b. Hardcopy Messages – these procedures will be used when ACS personnel do not have access to WebEOC.
 - (1) The only authorized form for hardcopy messages within the SEOC will be the ICS-213 General Message Form – adapted for the PA SEOC.
 - (2) Incoming Messages – Incoming messages addressed to the SEOC or Central Area Office through the SEOC ACS Radio Room will be entered into the ICS-213 General Message Form – adapted for the PA SEOC on the computer in the ACS Radio Room, logged, saved, and printed. The ACS Officer will then deliver the message to the Incident Communications Manager.
 - (3) Handwritten messages are not acceptable unless a computer is not available or operational; then information MUST be printed legibly.
 - (4) Outgoing Messages – The Incident Communications Manager will deliver all outgoing messages, and an ICS-213 General Message Form adapted for the PA SEOC, to the ACS Officer. Messages will be logged and then transmitted via the appropriate mode and service to the addressee.

5. Others TBD

VI. PEMA Specific Training Requirements

- A. All training requirements established in PEMA Directive 2010-1 and the ACS Strategic Plan
- B. WebEOC Training – Selected personnel only
- C. Other training required or necessary.

VII. Administration and Logistics

- A. PEMA will provide equipment for the operating locations at the SEOC and PEMA Area Offices.
- B. PEMA will also provide equipment for the alternate SEOC location at Fitzpatrick Hall, Fort Indiantown Gap.
- C. PEMA will ensure that all PEMA ACS unit members and eligible affiliated and/or assisting organization members are registered as Duly Enrolled Emergency Management Volunteers in accordance with PEMA Directive D2000-1 or D2006-1, as applicable.
- D. PEMA will sustain all volunteers during authorized activations, drills, and exercises.
- E. In extenuating circumstances, the ACS Unit and/or affiliated and/or assisting organizations may be requested to provide personnel, along with their personally owned equipment, to locations other than the SEOC or alternate SEOC.

VIII. PEMA ACS Communications, Notification And Warning Systems Testing

- A. PEMA Headquarters and Area Office ACS units will test their communications, notification and warning equipment and procedures, under operational conditions, on a monthly basis, at a minimum.
 - 1. Communication Equipment and Software
 - a. Equipment will be tested to ensure it is functioning within manufacturer, as well as any regulatory, specifications.
 - b. Communications software will be tested to ensure that it is configured properly and that any updates and/or revisions have been applied.
 - 2. Notification and Warning Systems and Procedures
 - a. Systems will be tested to ensure they are functioning as intended and that any updates to contact or notification information is current and valid.
 - b. Procedures will be tested to ensure that they accurately describe the steps necessary to activate and conduct notification and warning actions.
- B. All tests, deficiencies noted, and corrective actions taken will be documented on PEMA ACS Form 1 - PEMA Headquarters and Area Office ACS Communications, Notification and Warning Systems Testing Log. (See attached)
- C. Logs will be kept in the PEMA Headquarters and Area Office ACS equipment locations and will be archived, as necessary, in accordance with PEMA document retention policies.

- D. Any deficiencies noted requiring notification of the PEMA Technical Services Office (TSO) will be communicated to the Commonwealth ACS Coordinator who will coordinate with the TSO to have the deficiencies corrected in a timely manner.

IX. SOP Maintenance and Development

This SOP shall be reviewed at least every two years.

X. Authorities and References

- A. Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, Title 35 Pa. C.S.A. § 7101-7707, as amended (Title 35)
- B. Title 47 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 97, Subpart F.
- C. PEMA Directive D2010-1: Pennsylvania Auxiliary Communications Services Program
- D. PEMA Directive D2000-1: Official Enrollment of Emergency Management Volunteers
- E. PEMA Directive D2006-1: Official Enrollment of State Emergency Management Volunteers

XI. Attachments

ACS Communications, Notification and Warning Systems Testing Log
ICS-213 General Message Form – adapted for the PA SEOC (DRAFT)
ICS-214 Unit Log – adapted for the PA SEOC (DRAFT)

ACS COMMUNICATIONS, NOTIFICATION AND WARNING SYSTEMS TESTING LOG

Date	Notes/Deficiencies	Name/Title	Corrective Actions	Date	Name
12/1/09	Communications System Test - no deficiencies noted	Joe Ham, PEMA ACS Officer	None required		

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ICS 215 GENERAL MESSAGE FORM – ADAPTED FOR THE PA SEOC

GENERAL MESSAGE				
Auxiliary Communications Services (ACS) Use Only				
Msg. Number	Precedence	Station of Origin		Check
TO:		POSITION:		
FROM:		POSITION:		
SUBJECT:		DATE:	TIME:	
MESSAGE: CRITICAL MESSAGE ☐ UNMET NEED/ACTION ITEM ☐				
INFORMATION ONLY ☐				
SIGNATURE:		POSITION:		
REPLY:				
DATE:	TIME:	SIGNATURE/POSITION:		

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ICS 214 UNIT LOG – ADAPTED FOR THE PA SEOC

UNIT LOG	1. Incident Name	2. Date Prepared	3. Time Prepared
4. Unit Name/Designators PEMA ACS	5. Unit Leader (Name and Position)		6. Operational Period
7. Personnel Roster Assigned			
Name and Callsign	Position	Home Organization	
8. Activity Log			
Time	Major Events		
9. Prepared by (Name and Position)			