

Illinois Emergency Operations Plan

ESF-2 Communications

Illinois Emergency Management Agency and
Office of Homeland Security

September 23, 2026



Illinois Emergency Management Agency
and Office of Homeland Security



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State of Illinois Managed Plan Emergency Support Function (ESF) # 2 Communications

Title	ESF-2 Communications	
Managing Division/Branch	Division of Operations	Strategic Planning – Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell (ISPC)
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State ESF-2 Coordinator	Support Agencies & Organizations
Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)	Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) Illinois Department of Information Technology (DoIT) Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm Systems (ILEAS) Illinois National Guard (ILNG) Illinois State Police (ISP) Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)
Primary State Agencies & Organizations	
Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)	
Federal ESF-2 Coordinator	
National Communications System Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	



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State of Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP)
Emergency Support Function (ESF) # 2 Communications
Version: September 23, 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. Guide strategies and operational use to support communications for state agencies and external organizations involved in response, short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.

1.2. Scope

- 1.2.1. This plan applies to all state agencies and organizations involved in response, short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery under the coordination and management of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- 1.2.2. This plan supports the Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP) and incorporates provisions of the National Response Framework (NRF), National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- 1.2.3. This plan incorporates and supports policy, procedures, and guidance established in the State of Illinois Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP).
- 1.2.4. For this plan, telecommunications will be defined as the transmission of information (voice and data) electronically by cable, telephone, or wireless with integrated encoding and decoding equipment.

1.3. Policy

- 1.3.1. Procedures for utilization, control, and use will incorporate operational priorities that include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.3.1.1. Protection of life.
 - 1.3.1.2. Public health and safety.
 - 1.3.1.3. Property protection.
 - 1.3.1.4. Environmental protection:
 - 1.3.1.5. Restoration of essential utilities.
 - 1.3.1.6. Restoration of essential program functions.
 - 1.3.1.7. Coordination as appropriate.



- 1.3.2. All state agencies and external organizations activated by the SEOC will adhere to TICP policies, procedures, and protocols for interoperable and integrated communications.
- 1.3.3. Laws, rules, regulations, and policies of the United States government and agencies involved in communications technology are considered valid and applicable within the state.
- 1.3.4. It is the policy of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security to operate communication equipment consistent with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other authorized regulatory agencies.

1.4. Situation

- 1.4.1. STARCOM21 (SC21) is the statewide strategic interoperable communications platform with operational talk groups for response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.
- 1.4.2. Legacy radio systems serve as a critical additional component in the state's interoperability plan.
- 1.4.3. STARCOM21, legacy, and designated state & national interoperable channels may serve as a tactical communications asset.
- 1.4.4. Statewide interoperable communications may be reliant on private-sector partnerships and connectivity.

1.5. Assumptions

- 1.5.1. An incident(s) will occur resulting in the notification, activation, deployment, coordination, implementation, and sustainment (NADCIS) of communications equipment and personnel.
- 1.5.2. Impacts on critical infrastructure will directly affect overall communication capabilities.
- 1.5.3. Dissemination of notifications and warnings, and additional public information will require ad hoc or non-traditional means of communications to reach responders, the public, and diverse populations. All communications with the public should be timely, clear, and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.



- 1.5.4. Local governments will request state assistance to establish and maintain communications, warnings, and notifications.
- 1.5.5. The SEOC, supportive state resources, and local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) will be operational.
- 1.5.6. State resources will be activated in advance of county and municipal requests for life safety missions and staging.
- 1.5.7. Mutual aid agreements and compacts will be activated to carry out response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.

2. Concept of Operations

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. Communications technology support for a disaster is provided by resources of state agencies and those provided by other public, private, and non-governmental organizations.
- 2.1.2. The SEOC will coordinate communications technology assets and protocols for state agencies and external organizations during response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery.

2.2. Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW)

- 2.2.1. SEOC NAW of SEOC Agency Representatives will be handled in accordance with ESF-2, Appendix X-1: Notification, Alert, and Warning.
- 2.2.2. Primary and support agencies are responsible for internal and support partner Notification, Alert, and Warning.

2.3. Activation

- 2.3.1. The SEOC will provide state support through the activation of identified Agency Representatives in accordance with SEOC Standard Operating Procedure Management and Coordination.

2.4. Communications

- 2.4.1. Communications will be compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), utilizing clear text and frequencies coordinated with the SEOC.



2.5. Resource Management

- 2.5.1. Resource management and logistics will be carried out in accordance with ESF-7 Resource Management & Logistics.
- 2.5.2. Resource management includes mutual aid and assistance agreements, the use of federal and state teams, and resource mobilization protocols.
- 2.5.3. The SEOC may implement one or more Lines of Effort (LOE) for specific strategic action planning for communications technology.
 - 2.5.3.1. LOEs are responsible for short-term, intermediate, and long-term operational planning, coordination, and resource allocation.
 - 2.5.3.2. As directed by the SEOC Manager, LOEs will be coordinated and administratively supported by an SEOC Agency Representative.
 - 2.5.3.3. LOEs operate as strategic planning and coordinating elements of the SEOC and do not play an operational role.
 - 2.5.3.4. Additional agency staff will be assigned to LOEs based on the level of activation established by the SEOC.

2.6. Reporting Requirements

- 2.6.1. The Emergency Support Function 2 Lead (ESF-2 Lead) or designee will serve as the coordinating point for interoperable and integrated communications technology management, develop required briefings, maintain situational updates, and provide critical and priority information to stakeholders, key decision makers, executive officers, and the SEOC.
- 2.6.2. As appropriate for the type, scope, and magnitude of communications technology requirements, the ESF-2 Lead, or designee, will report disruptions, including overall minor disruptions that may cause a disproportionately significant impact on specific users, to potentially affected stakeholders, key decision makers, and executive officers.
- 2.6.3. The ESF-2 Lead, or designee, will coordinate directly with state agency communications representatives and private sector organizations to ensure coordination of communications technology information, situational awareness, and intelligence.



- 2.6.4. SEOC Agency Representatives and state agency staff in forward operational areas will coordinate the use of communications resources to maintain interoperable and integrated systems and networks, establish a single NIMS-compliant communications tactical plan, establish situational updates, develop required intelligence briefings, and provide critical and priority information obtained to key decision-makers, executive officers, and the SEOC.

2.7. Implementation Requirements

- 2.7.1. The Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC), ESF-2 LEAD, or designee will assign resources needed to deploy with the State Unified Area Command (SUAC) and, where needed within the state, to support emergency communications.
 - 2.7.1.1. System Personnel
 - 2.7.1.1.1. Personnel may be utilized from state agencies or external organizations providing communications equipment and system capabilities. The utilization needs approval by the SWIC and is activated through the SEOC. Authorization will be through existing Mobile Support Team (MST) agreements. Specific roles and responsibilities for operable and interoperable communications are defined in the state of Illinois TICP, as amended.

2.8. Organization

2.8.1. Direction and Control

- 2.8.1.1. State agencies and external organizations retain operational control of communications equipment and systems.
- 2.8.1.2. The IEMA-OHS Director, or designee, has the authority to exercise overall coordination of communications systems belonging to the state during declared disasters and/or SEOC activations.
- 2.8.1.3. The ESF-2 Lead, or designee, may coordinate the use of state communications systems as designated by the IEMA-OHS Director.
- 2.8.1.4. The ESF-2 Lead, or designee, may coordinate the use of county or local jurisdiction communication systems when authorized or requested.



- 2.8.1.5. The ESF-2 Lead, or designee, will coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies in developing communications plans and systems required for response and short-, intermediate-, and long-term recovery efforts.
- 2.8.1.6. The ESF-2 Lead is the single point of coordination for multi-jurisdictional interoperable and integrated communications.

2.8.2. Coordinating Elements

- 2.8.2.1. The ESF-2 Lead, or designee, will identify Information, Communication, and Technology system needs through the Information, Communications, and Technology Center (ICTC) by:
 - 2.8.2.2. Prioritizing Information, Communications, and Technology systems and processes.
 - 2.8.2.3. Integrating individual technical response Incident Command System (ICS) Forms 205, 205(a), and supporting documentation.
 - 2.8.2.4. De-conflicting resources (personnel, equipment, and channels) to maximize utilization and avoid overlap/overuse.
 - 2.8.2.5. Disseminating interoperable information, communications and technology requirements to forward operations areas and whole community partners.
 - 2.8.2.6. Recommending and implementing courses of action required to facilitate, restore, or complement information, communications and technology capabilities.
 - 2.8.2.7. Assist in coordinating private sector information, communication and technology assets.

2.8.3. Federal Coordination

- 2.8.3.1. Under a Presidential Disaster Declaration of a major disaster or emergency, IEMA-OHS will coordinate the inclusion of federal assets into the state information, communications, and technology response.



- 2.8.3.2. Direct coordination with federal agencies will occur through appropriate and designated agencies.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1.1.1. SEOC information, intelligence, and situation reporting will be conducted in accordance with the SEOC Coordination and Administration Standard Operating Guideline (SOG).

3.2. State ESF Coordinator

3.2.1. Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)

- 3.2.1.1. Coordinates the utilization of required ESF-2 support to execute missions presented by the SEOC Manager.
- 3.2.1.2. Coordinates, integrates, and manages overall State efforts for ESF 2 – Communications.
- 3.2.1.3. Manages and updates resource availability for ESF 2 – Communications.
- 3.2.1.4. Assists in planning during activations and updates to the overall ESF plan.

3.3. Primary State Agency/Organization

3.3.1. Illinois Emergency Management Agency & Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS)

- 3.3.1.1. Assign an ESF-2 Liaison for coordination and management of operable and interoperable communications upon activation of the SEOC.
- 3.3.1.2. Identify communications resources required to support emergency communications and ensure availability; and
- 3.3.1.3. Ensure resources are deployed and activated to support emergency communications.
- 3.3.1.4. Coordinate the use of communication resources to promote operability and interoperability.



- 3.3.1.5. Maintain operable and interoperable capabilities along with primary, redundant, and supportive communications.
- 3.3.1.6. Utilize mutual aid agreements, service contracts, and other non-state resources to support operable and interoperable communications. These support resources are locally hosted but state-deployable and under the direction of the ICTC through the Strategic Technology Reserve (STR).
- 3.3.1.7. Maintain radio cache.
- 3.3.1.8. Maintain one STARCOM21 site-on-wheels (SOWs).
- 3.3.1.9. Serve as the lead agency for Notification, Alert, and Warning (NAW) for the entire state.
- 3.3.1.10. Maintain Radio Gateways for agency deployment.
- 3.3.1.11. Maintain satellite communication devices for agency deployment.

3.4. Support State Agencies/Organizations

3.4.1. Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS)

- 3.4.1.1. Serve as initial point of contact for state-owned and operated facilities.

3.4.2. Illinois Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

- 3.4.2.1. Serve as initial point of contact for state-owned and operated telecommunications (voice and data) resources.
- 3.4.2.2. Assign a telecommunications coordinator, as appropriate.
- 3.4.2.3. Assist with the establishment of hotlines and phone banks, ensuring that all communication with the public is timely, clear, and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.4.2.4. Coordinate with the private sector for purchasing or contracting telecommunications equipment and services.
- 3.4.2.5. Coordinate with the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) for the restoration of telecommunications infrastructure.



3.4.3. Illinois National Guard (ILNG)

- 3.4.3.1. Provide mobile communications teams equipped with SATCOM, HF/VHF/UHF radios, and network equipment, deployable to establish communications in impacted areas.
- 3.4.3.2. Deploy the Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) to provide incident site communication support for locations with no network, telephone, or radio interoperability to battalion-sized elements or first responders, to maintain command and control during emergency operations.
- 3.4.3.3. Provide Joint Cyber Response Management Teams that focus on protecting the operational integrity of communications systems. The team would address threats that could disrupt, degrade, or compromise the ability to communicate.
- 3.4.3.4. Deploy the Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) to provide a forward-based, interoperable communications and command hub that extends SEOC capabilities, ensures continuity of operations, and facilitates on-scene coordination.
- 3.4.3.5. Provide direct support to state agencies with subject matter experts and planning personnel to augment operations.
- 3.4.3.6. Rapidly deploy support from the Civil Support Team (CST) that can provide deployable, interoperable communications capabilities during incidents involving hazardous materials, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, or when requested to augment communications infrastructure. The CST shall support secure voice and data links between on-scene command, SEOC, and partner agencies, and assist in bridging interoperability gaps among civilian and military communication systems.
- 3.4.3.7. Deploy the Disaster Incident Response Emergency Communications Terminal (DIRECT) package to establish interoperable, commercial-grade voice and data communications in support of National Guard Reaction Force (NGRF), first responders, and partner agencies. DIRECT enables ILNG to provide internet, phone service, and Wi-Fi during domestic disasters and civil support operations, with end users supplying their own devices.



3.4.4. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)

- 3.4.4.1. Maintain Health Alert Network (HAN) to disseminate accessible and actionable health alerts, advisories, and guidance to public health and medical partners, ensuring messages are available in formats that accommodate individuals with communication-related access and functional needs (e.g., plain language, translated materials, American Sign Language [ASL] when appropriate).
- 3.4.4.2. Coordinate NAW and request aid through the Illinois Public Health Mutual Aid System (IPHMAS), ensuring that response assets deployed under mutual aid include resources to support Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Support and Safety, and Transportation (CMIST) needs, including medical equipment, mobility aids, and language interpretation. Ensure that all communication with the public is timely, clear, and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.4.4.3. Coordinate public health and medical communications from the Health Departments, Regional Health Care Coalitions, Illinois Poison Control Center, and all other health care partners to the Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC), incorporating CMIST principles to ensure inclusive information sharing and situational awareness related to individuals with access and functional needs (AFN). Ensure that all communication with the public is timely, clear, and accessible, regardless of physical, mobility, visual, hearing, cognitive, or financial needs, abilities, or impairments.
- 3.4.4.4. Maintain the Hospital Bypass reporting system EMResource and integrate facility-level capacity data that includes the ability to accommodate individuals with access and functional needs, such as those requiring interpreters, accessible equipment, or behavioral health supports.
- 3.4.4.5. Maintain the patient tracking system EMTrack and ensure that tracking protocols account for individuals with access and functional needs, including documenting mobility devices, caregivers, service animals, and communication supports required during evacuation or transport.
- 3.4.4.6. Coordinate the Medical Emergency Radio Communications of Illinois (MERCI) Program, ensuring that communication protocols include guidance for relaying information relevant to individuals with access and



functional needs, especially during facility evacuation or EMS coordination.

- 3.4.4.7. Maintain STARCOM21 and satellite communications for the Strategic National Stockpile RSS Site, including capabilities for communication with facilities and field teams supporting individuals with access and functional needs to ensure equitable access to medical countermeasures.

3.4.5. Illinois State Police (ISP)

- 3.4.5.1. Maintain operable and interoperable capabilities along with primary, redundant, and supportive communications.
- 3.4.5.2. Maintain ISP communication centers throughout the state.
- 3.4.5.3. Maintain a high-band base station network known as the Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network (ISPERN).
- 3.4.5.4. Maintain three STARCOM21 Sites on Wheels (SOWs).

3.4.6. Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

- 3.4.6.1. Maintain operable and interoperable capabilities along with primary, redundant, and supportive communications.
- 3.4.6.2. Maintain communication centers throughout the state.
- 3.4.6.3. Maintain the UHF radio system in the Chicago area.
- 3.4.6.4. Maintain an emergency command center located in Carbondale equipped with satellite communications.
- 3.4.6.5. Maintain Mobile Emergency Operations Centers (MEOC) located in Ottawa, Dixon, Peoria, Paris, and Effingham, and a Mobile Communications Center in Springfield.

3.4.7. Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)

- 3.4.7.1. Coordinate with DoIT for the restoration of the landline telecommunications infrastructure.

3.4.8. Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)



- 3.4.8.1. Maintain operable and interoperable capabilities along with primary, redundant, and supportive communications.
- 3.4.8.2. Low Band Radio
- 3.4.8.3. High Band, UHF, and STARCOM21
- 3.4.8.4. Maintain a 24/7 DOC Command Center in Springfield, IL, and the ability to activate command centers at each DOC facility.
- 3.4.8.5. Utilize service contracts and other non-state resources to support operable and interoperable communications via DoIT with Verizon and AT&T Portable Cellular Services.
- 3.4.8.6. Maintain STARCOM21 trunking systems of mobiles at each IDOC facility.
- 3.4.8.7. Maintain radio cache.

3.4.9. Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm Systems (ILEAS)

- 3.4.9.1. Assist IEMA-OHS and the SWIC with emergency communications resources.
- 3.4.9.2. Provide personnel to the Communications unit as needed.
- 3.4.9.3. Support state and local agency communications requests.
- 3.4.9.4. Maintain statewide radio caches.
- 3.4.9.5. Assist SWIC in the deployment of COMMS personnel, COML, COMT, and AUXCOMM
- 3.4.9.6. Maintain 23 strategic technology reserve vehicles consisting of 10 ITECS and 13 UCPs
- 3.4.9.7. Maintain statewide IT equipment cache (Command Cases)
- 3.4.9.8. Maintain a statewide cache of portable phone systems.
- 3.4.9.9. Maintain statewide satellite systems caches.
- 3.4.9.10. Maintain a statewide cache of 6 portable AM transmitters used for localized (2 mi. radius) public alerts & warnings.



- 3.4.9.11. Maintain a statewide cache of portable & mobile repeaters.
- 3.4.9.12. Maintain a statewide cache of portable and mobile gateway devices.
- 3.4.9.13. Maintain High Frequency (HF) capability in the STR.
- 3.4.9.14. Maintain 3 inflatable towers with solar power.

3.4.10. Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

- 3.4.10.1. Assist IEMA-OHS and the SWIC with emergency communication resources.
- 3.4.10.2. Provide qualified Communications Specialists as defined by the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) program and coordinate their deployment.
- 3.4.10.3. Provide position-qualified personnel to the Communications Unit as requested and coordinate their deployment.
- 3.4.10.4. Support requests as issued by the SEOC and SWIC.
- 3.4.10.5. Provide qualified and experienced COMCs to the SEOC and SWIC as requested.
- 3.4.10.6. Provide access and support to radio caches held by MABAS as requested by the SEOC and SWIC.
- 3.4.10.7. Provide access to and support for 4 Mission Support Vehicles (MSUs).
- 3.4.10.8. Provide access to and support the use of 11 MSAT Satellite units with Land Mobile Radio (LMR) cross-link capabilities.
- 3.4.10.9. Provide access to and support the use of 25 Iridium satellite subscriber devices. 10 (PTT) and 15 (combination Dial and PTT).
- 3.4.10.10. Provide access to and support the use of satellite (MSAT and Iridium) LMR coupling devices.
- 3.4.10.11. Provide access to and support the use of US&R HF capabilities.



- 3.4.10.12. Provide access to and support the use of the MABAS cellular router (dual carrier) cache with VOIP capability (12 sets), 5 vehicle-mounted and 7 Portable.
- 3.4.10.13. Provide access to and support the use of VHF, UHF, 700, and 800 encryption-capable portable repeaters. 3-VHF, 2 -UHF R1, 2 -UHF R2, 2-700, and 3-800.
- 3.4.10.14. Provide access to and support the use of multiple ICRI (standard and IP) 4 interoperability gateways, as well as 2500 total feet of cable for in-building / below-grade operations.
- 3.4.10.15. Provide access to light tower generator units to provide supplemental energy capabilities.
- 3.4.10.16. Provide subscriber device, base station, and other device programming and automated test and alignment support in the shop or in the field for multiple manufacturers' equipment.
- 3.4.10.17. Provide access to and support the use of 2 BGAN Satellite devices.
- 3.4.10.18. Provide access to and support the use of 1.6 M VSAT with Isotropic Networks service. (Adjustable on-demand bandwidth)
- 3.4.10.19. Provide and support COMU coordination through the Mobility Control Center at the MRC at the request of IEMA-OHS or SWIC

4. Authorities

1. Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act (20 ILCS 3305/6[5], 14 and 19), as amended.
2. Emergency Telephone Communications (720 ILCS 660/0.01 et seq), as amended.
3. State Police Radio Act (20 ILCS 2615), as amended.
4. IAC Title 77: Public Health, Section 515.400, General Communications.
5. Central Management Services (CMS) Law, 20 ILCS 405/405-1, et seq, as amended.
6. Emergency Telephone System Act, 50 ILCS 750/0.01-16., as amended.
7. State of Illinois Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan, as amended.



8. IEMA-OHS Operations Center SOPs, as amended.

5. References

1. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Regulations
2. Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP), as amended.
3. Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP), as amended.
4. Request for Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) process, as amended.
5. Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM) Plan, as amended.
6. Emergency Alert System State Plan, as amended.
7. Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) approved documents, as amended.
8. Information and Communications Technology Functional Guidance, as amended

6. Acronyms & Definitions

1. For all definitions and acronyms addressed in this plan, please refer to the IEOP Base Plan, Appendix X-7 Glossary of Terms.