



Hamilton County Emergency Management Communications and Warning Plan

August 29, 2022



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Proclamation..... | 4 |
| Record of Changes | 5 |
| Record of Distribution..... | 6 |
| Executive Summary..... | 7 |
| Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions | 7 |
| Purpose | 7 |
| Scope..... | 7 |
| Situation Overview..... | 7 |
| Threats and Hazards | 7 |
| Assumptions..... | 8 |
| Concept of Operations | 9 |
| Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities..... | 9 |
| Stakeholders | 9 |
| Systems Used to Communicate with Stakeholders | 10 |
| Rave Alerting..... | 10 |
| Tyler Systems (New World CAD)..... | 10 |
| WebEOC | 10 |
| Microsoft Teams | 11 |
| Government Emergency Telecommunications Service | 11 |
| Radio Communications | 11 |
| Notifications for Decision-Makers and Emergency Personnel | 11 |
| Key Decision-Makers..... | 11 |
| Emergency Personnel | 11 |
| Neighboring Jurisdictions..... | 12 |
| Public Warning..... | 12 |
| Our Community..... | 12 |
| Warning..... | 12 |
| Use | 15 |
| Communication..... | 16 |
| Testing..... | 16 |
| Systems Used | 16 |



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

| | |
|--|----|
| Corrective Actions..... | 17 |
| Operational Procedures..... | 18 |
| Plan Development and Maintenance | 19 |
| Development..... | 19 |
| Maintenance..... | 19 |
| Authorities and References | 19 |



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Proclamation

The Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) serves as the strategic foundation for Hamilton County's Emergency Management Plan. The EOP is supported by the Response Plan, which serves as the operational level plan on how the EOP is implemented. All plans in the Emergency Management Program are written to address the specific hazards in the county as outlined in the Hamilton County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP). The Communications and Warning Plan is a supporting plan to both the EOP and Response Plan as well as address the hazards in the MHMP.

The Hamilton County Communications and Warning Plan was drafted in February of 2021 and shared with stakeholders for feedback on September 2, 2022. The feedback was incorporated, and the plan approved by the executive director on September 29, 2022. The approved plan was distributed to stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Booker", written over a horizontal line.

Shane Booker, Executive Director

September 29, 2022

Date



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Executive Summary

Hamilton County Emergency Management (HCEM) shall maintain the ability to send communications, notifications, alerts, and warning to stakeholders, emergency personnel, and the public. This plan outlines these groups, systems, notifications, and public warning. Furthermore, this plan supports the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), Response Plan, Recovery Plan, Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government and all other plans by providing notifications and coordination for all phases of emergency management. Response staff and EOC volunteers shall maintain their ability to use these system as outlined in SOP 3.12 Core Competencies.

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

The purpose of this this plan to provide general guidance, policies, procedures, operational framework, and roles and responsibilities to facilitate response operations to emergencies, disasters, or special events that threaten the safety and welfare of the whole community within Hamilton County, Indiana.

The overall goals and objectives of this plan are to:

1. Establish the stakeholders at various levels, including high-level, lateral level, subordinate level, and emergency personnel
2. Identify systems used to communicate with stakeholders
3. Notifications for decision-makers and emergency personnel
4. Implement the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) to facilitate management of response operations to emergencies, disasters, or special events that threaten the safety of the whole community in an upmost attempt to preserve life safety, ensure incident stabilization, property preservation, and protection of the environment.
5. Ensure Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning for Hamilton County government.
6. Ensure Continuity of Government (COG) planning within Hamilton County, Indiana.
7. Define the organization and responsibilities of the emergency management and external supporting agencies that provide support in accordance with the EOP.
8. Conduct periodic training and exercise of the plan to ensure its operational readiness and effectiveness.

Scope

This plan is applicable to HCEM as it relates to identifying stakeholders, the systems used to communicate with them, notifications, and identifying the public and how systems will be used to warn them.

It is important to note that this plan does not supplant existing plans of any external agencies.

Situation Overview

There are situations where internal personnel, stakeholders, emergency personnel, and the public must be warned. This includes any location within the county up to warning the entire geographic warning area, the various demographic groups, and may include areas of interest and special events.

Threats and Hazards

The MHMP identifies the following hazards for Hamilton County that this plan addresses:



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

1. Armed Assailant
2. Dam Failure
3. Drought
4. Earthquake
5. Extreme Heat or Cold
6. Fire
7. Flooding
8. Hazardous Materials Fixed Facility Incident
9. Hazardous Materials Transportation Incident
10. Land Subsidence or Landslide
11. Hail, Thunder, and Wind
12. Snow or Ice Storm
13. Tornado

Assumptions

The following assumptions are intended as factual statements that apply to this plan.

1. Government at all levels must continue to function under all threats, emergencies, and disaster conditions. In the event of an emergency or disaster, Hamilton County government will continue to function and provide emergency and essential services in accordance with Continuity of Operations and/or Continuity of Government Plans.
2. Periodically, emergencies, disasters, and events will occur within the County requiring mobilization and reallocation of County resources.
3. Some emergencies or disasters will occur with little or no advance warning, not allowing sufficient time for appropriate emergency notifications to be sent to residents.
4. A given disaster situation may require an evacuation of residents from the immediate area to protect them from further injury or death. A full-scale evacuation of a community is not likely. Rather, the residents living in the affected portion of that community will likely be moved. To maintain order, residents should be evacuated in accordance with this plan. Any departure from this plan will be done only at the direction of the policy group as defined in the EOP. However, in the event of a large-scale evacuation/relocation of citizens, such efforts will be under the direction of the policy group.
5. Hamilton County to varying degrees, have capabilities, plans, and procedures to provide for the safety and welfare of citizens during times of emergency and will deploy resources in a timely fashion to the extent of their capabilities.
6. Hamilton County will have fully committed resources or have a unique need prior to the initiation of all requests for state aid. This does not require actual exhaustion of all resources, but it does anticipate full mobilization and commitment to the emergency.
7. Incidents mean an occurrence or event (natural, technological, or human-caused), that requires a response to protect life, property, or the environment. Examples include terrorist attacks, civil unrest, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, pandemics, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, tornadoes, and severe thunderstorms.



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

8. Disasters may occur at any time and may cause varying degrees of damage, human suffering, injury, death, property damage, and economic hardship to individuals, private businesses, and local and state governments.

Concept of Operations

The Communications and Warning Plan identifies various levels of stakeholders, systems used to communicate with them, how they will be notified, and how public warning will be accomplished along with understanding the needs of those we are intending to warn. Additionally, the plan outlines testing, corrective actions, and plan, development, and maintenance.

Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

Emergency Management personnel who serve as the on-call duty officer will maintain the ability to send notifications in the systems listed in this plan. All HCEM personnel will help maintain personnel in the various systems used to make notifications by providing them with information on how to receive alerts. Although Hamilton County does not have the authority to require citizens and businesses to maintain the ability to receive warnings, everyone is encouraged to sign up for Smart911 and emergency notifications, and have an all-hazards NOAA weather radio to receive severe weather and emergency notifications.

Stakeholders

HCEM identifies key stakeholders into four different categories as outlined below.

1. High-Level Stakeholders
 - a. Internal
 - i. Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
 - ii. Director of Administration
 - iii. Hamilton County Council
 - b. External
 - i. Mayors
 - ii. Town Presidents
2. Lateral Level
 - a. Internal
 - i. Sheriff, Auditor, Surveyor, and other elected officials who serve the county as a department head
 - ii. Department Heads for all county departments
 - iii. Public Safety Communications (911)
 - b. External
 - i. Directors of Public Safety
 - ii. Police Chiefs
 - iii. Fire Chiefs
 - iv. Emergency Support Functions
 - v. Including lead and support organizations
3. Subordinate Level



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

- a. Internal
 - i. HCEM personnel (staff, volunteer coordinators, and volunteers)
 - b. External
 - i. Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS)
 - ii. Indiana State Police (ISP)
 - iii. National Weather Service (NWS)
 - iv. United States Department of Homeland Security
 - v. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
 - vi. Intelligence Liaison
 - vii. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
4. Emergency Personnel
- Emergency personnel includes public safety front-line workers such as police, fire, and emergency management personnel (staff and volunteers).

Systems Used to Communicate with Stakeholders

The following is a list of systems used to communicate with stakeholders. If there is an outage with a system, the next system will be used.

Rave Alerting

Rave Alerting is a robust cloud-based service offering text, email, voice, social media integration, and Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) alerting. The system is used to send various Emergency Operation Center Alerts to stakeholders. Examples include emergency notifications, weather briefs, and other internal documents.

Rave is used and administered by HCEM and is available for use by all municipalities. Rave is the primary communication system for HCEM to communicate with stakeholders.

Individual users manage their accounts to keep their information current and sign up for weather and optional notifications. Users are added to lists (groups) for messaging based upon operational needs. An example is a team member from the American Red Cross who is added to the Mass Care (Emergency Support Function – Six) list.

The system allows for prescribed messages, on-the-fly messaging, and the ability to poll users. Real-time reporting is available to ensure messages are delivered. The system can also send alerts with the ability to join users into an emergency conference call (blast call).

Tyler Systems (New World CAD)

Hamilton County Public Safety Communications uses Tyler Systems as the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System provider. CAD is used to manage calls for service and includes messaging and paging (text) capabilities.

WebEOC

WebEOC is the crisis information management system for Hamilton County. It provides real-time simultaneous information sharing. The cloud-based system includes a messaging system that is integrated with email. The system allows for real-time collaboration for significant incidents, position logs, general messaging, resource requests, and more.



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Microsoft Teams

Hamilton County uses Microsoft Teams as a platform to share information, and host video teleconference/webinars and conference calls. The web-based platform includes audio conferencing licensing to call out to users to join them to a conference call immediately.

Government Emergency Telecommunications Service

Voice communications via telephone are an essential system for communicating with stakeholders. Key decision-makers and essential staff are enrolled in the program, provided with a GETS card, asked to download the PTS Dialer app, and reminded quarterly to make a test call using the system to ensure they can make phone calls in the event of an emergency. The EOC, Mobile Command Center, and Mobile Command Trailer have bulk GETS cards to ensure the resource can be leveraged from multiple locations.

Radio Communications

Hamilton County has several one-to-many radio systems allowing for real-time communication and coordination for public safety, HCEM personnel, amateur radio, and even the public.

Notifications for Decision-Makers and Emergency Personnel

HCEM can initiate, receive, and relay notifications to alert key decision-makers and emergency personnel using Rave Alerting and other systems.

Key Decision-Makers

1. Key decision-makers are identified based upon strategic and operational needs and may include some or all of the positions listed below.
 - a. Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
 - b. Hamilton County Council
 - c. Hamilton County Elected Officials
 - i. Auditor, Clerk, Judges, Sheriff, Surveyor, etc.
 - d. Hamilton County Department Heads
 - e. Hamilton County Emergency Management Advisory Committee
 - f. Mayors, town presidents, town boards, etc.
 - g. Police and Fire Chiefs
 - h. Township Trustees
2. Key Decision-Makers are notified using the following list of systems based on priority
 - a. Rave Alerting using voice, text, and email
 - b. Video teleconference, webinar, and conference call
 - c. Email
3. These systems provide real-time notifications of incidents, briefings, and other emergency response and recovery information.

Emergency Personnel

1. Emergency personnel are identified based on operational needs and may include some of the positions listed below.
 - a. Emergency management personnel (staff and volunteers)
 - b. Police and Fire Chiefs, along with their key staff



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

- c. Emergency Support Functions
 - d. Neighboring Jurisdictions
 - e. State and federal partners (IDHS, ISP, National Guard, NWS, US DHS CISA, etc.)
 2. Emergency personnel are notified using the following list of systems based on priority
 - a. Rave Alerting using voice, text, and email
 - b. CAD paging
 - c. Video teleconference, webinar, and conference call
 - d. Email
 - e. WebEOC
 3. These systems provide real-time notifications of incidents, briefings, and other emergency response and recovery information.

Neighboring Jurisdictions

HCEM maintains communication with emergency managers in neighboring jurisdictions and District Five by offering to add emergency managers to Rave and WebEOC. Those that choose to participate are added to these systems.

Public Warning

HCEM has the authority and ability to disseminate emergency alerts and warnings to the public during an impending or actual emergency within the confines of the geopolitical boundaries of Hamilton County. In conjunction with the Hamilton County Public Safety Communications and the political subdivisions within the county, HCEM works to include the whole of the community in the public warning and preparedness communications. This includes vulnerable, multilingual, and multigenerational considerations for those who live, work, or travel through Hamilton County. Public warning messaging takes into consideration the hazards identified in the MHMP.

Our Community

Hamilton County has a diverse population in socioeconomic status, age, special needs, multiple languages, and many different religious affiliations. These aspects play an essential role in overcoming biases, credibility, and other challenges when notifying the public. Hamilton County works with public information officers, non-governmental organizations, and others in an ongoing effort to reach the public to participate in outreach programs.

In 2021, HCEM created a new position to address a program shortfall with outreach to the community. The community outreach coordinator will provide outreach to community groups, civic organizations, religious groups, the hearing and visually impaired, and others to promote individual preparedness and share important information such as [Smart911](#).

Warning

HCEM uses multiple systems to warn/notify the public, including:

1. HCEM App
 - a. HCEM has a free public Android and iOS app. The app includes preparedness information for local hazards, the ability to send damage reports directly to WebEOC, a streaming service for the local NOAA all-hazards radio, weather information, power information, along with weather and emergency notifications.



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

- b. The app is used to push public alerts, travel advisories, and emergency alerts by HCEM.
 - c. The app is linked directly to the National Weather Service to rebroadcast statements, advisories, watches, and warnings.
 - d. The system is interoperable with social media platforms.
 - e. The testing of this system is real-time through the provider.
 2. Rave Alerting
 - a. In addition to internal notifications, the system allows for public notifications, including geo-targeted alerts.
 - b. The public can sign up for severe weather alerts and emergency notifications.
 - c. All landlines and geolocated VOIP phone lines are uploaded into the system by Rave and updated bi-annually.
 - d. Facebook and Twitter can be integrated into Rave for HCEM and other municipalities.
 - e. The system is used to push public notifications, including emergency alerts, to registered users, registered land and VOIP lines, and the public by activating IPAWS for Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts alerting.
 - f. Rave is also used to notify Hamilton County employees of severe weather, emergencies, snow days, and continuity of operations/continuity of government operations.
 - g. The system is interoperable with social media and IPAWS.
 - h. Testing
 - i. The testing of this system is real-time through the provider.
 - ii. HCEM tests the system, including the IPAWS integration, weekly by the on-call duty officer each Friday.
 - iii. HCEM tests the system with internal users on the last Friday of the month at 10:00 a.m. by sending a text message, email, and phone call.
 3. Smart911
 - a. Smart911 allows users to share information with 911 to help emergency responders during an emergency.
 - b. The public can sign up to associate their mobile phone number with their home and work addresses, assisting 911 to get help to the correct location quicker.
 - c. The system includes sharing as much or as little information as the public is comfortable with, such as garage door codes, vehicles that should be at their home, pets, and other information to help in an emergency.
 - d. The information is confidential and not accessible to public safety unless users call 911.
 - e. The system also includes a special needs registry allowing the public to share any special needs they may have, such as powered medical equipment, mobility limitations, and other information.
 - f. Smart911 is part of the Rave platform allowing emergency managers to reach out to vulnerable communities before and after an emergency or disaster.
 - g. The system is interoperable with Rave Alerting.
 - h. Testing is conducted in real-time through the provider, weekly by HCEM, and monthly with all registered users.
 4. IPAWS



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

- a. Rave is the platform used by HCEM for IPAWS to send authorized messages using the Emergency Alert System.
 - b. HCEM uses the system for emergency alerts as authorized by the program, such as Civil Emergency Messages, Law Enforcement Warnings, Shelter-in-Place Warnings, etc.
 - c. The system can include the activation of NOAA's All-Hazards Weather Radios. This is a tremendous resource as it is not dependent upon the internet or cellular services. HCEM promotes that every household and business in the community should have a weather radio. The analogy is often used that a weather radio is like a smoke detector but for severe weather and emergencies. It sits quietly in your home, ready to alert you.
 - d. WebEOC is used as a backup for IPAWS integration if Rave is unavailable.
 - e. The system is interoperable with broadcast and satellite television and radio, cellular providers, and the NOAA All-Hazards Radio Network.
 - f. The HCEM on-call duty officer will test the IPAWS every Friday using the IPAWS Test Lab to ensure compliance with standard operating procedures, FEMA requirements, and familiarity with the system.
5. Social Media, including Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, and Instagram
- a. Nextdoor is a fantastic tool for HCEM by allowing them to send routine or emergency geo-targeted alerts to registered users. Over two-thirds of the estimated population is registered with the system.
 - b. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are also used for preparedness, mitigation, and other notifications.
 - c. These systems are used to push public severe weather alerts, travel advisories, and emergency alerts by HCEM. Some systems, such as Nextdoor, allow for emergency notifications and are used for sending alerts to users.
 - d. Testing is conducted in real time through the provider.
6. Traditional Media
- a. HCEM participates in the Central Indiana Public Information Officers (PIOs) and Media luncheons held quarterly. The meetings help bring public safety PIOs and traditional media together to build and maintain working relationships.
 - b. HCEM hosts quarterly PIO working group meetings with public safety, schools, governments, and non-governmental organizations in Hamilton County to coordinate, plan, and review public messaging efforts.
7. Outdoor Warning Sirens
- a. HCEM coordinates the activation of outdoor warning sirens. The sirens are primarily used for severe weather warnings; however, the siren owners may use them at their discretion.
 - b. The sirens cover approximately half of the county, with most located in urban areas.
 - c. Sirens are tested every Friday at 1100 hours, beginning the Friday before the statewide tornado drill and ending the last Friday in October. The system remains active year-round; however, the sirens are not sounded in the cold weather months to reduce stress on the mechanical components.
 - d. During the weekly test, the on-call duty officer documents siren issues in WebEOC which automatically sends notifications to the siren owners.



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

- e. Testing is also conducted in real-time through the siren system notifying siren owners of a wide range of alerts from power outages to tamper alarms.
8. AM Radio Transmitter
 - a. HCEM has a portable AM radio transmitter. The system has a range of several miles, and it is a resource that can be used if other methods are not available.
 - b. Testing is conducted through in-service training and used during special events.
9. Amateur Radio
 - a. Hamilton County uses amateur radio repeaters that independently provide complete coverage of the county. Only licensed operators are permitted to broadcast, the systems share crucial information with the public throughout the county.
 - b. In a worst-case scenario, a message board system could be used in communities to post updates transmitted via the amateur radio network through a repeater or via simplex (radio to radio transmissions).
 - c. Testing is conducted in real-time along with weekly nets.

Use

These warning systems are used to communicate with the public by county and local emergency managers. A collaborative effort between the county and municipalities ensures messages are coordinated to address the hazards outlined in the MHMP through all four phases of emergency management. The messaging effectiveness is evaluated and improved through the Hamilton County PIO Working Group.

Use of these comprehensive systems includes:

1. Preparedness information for the relevant hazards, such as severe weather preparedness when the Storm Prediction Center includes Hamilton County is severe weather outlooks, severe weather preparedness week, specific weather-related information such as extreme heat or cold, how to register for alerts, the use of Smart911, etc.
2. Retransmission of severe weather advisories, watches, and warnings issued by the Storm Prediction Center and the National Weather Service, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Tornado watches, warnings, and emergencies
 - b. Severe thunderstorm watches and warnings
 - c. Flooding (flash flood, areal flood, and riverine flood) advisories, watches, and warnings
 - d. Winter weather advisories, watches, and warnings
3. Civil emergency messages are issued at the request of incident commanders and local municipalities, such as law enforcement warnings, shelter-in-place warnings, evacuations, civil emergency messages, and other authorized alerts through the IPAWS system, social media, and other platforms.
4. Recovery information for the relevant hazards such as proper use of generators, food safety after power outages, where to go for assistance, and other related information.
5. Hamilton County Government has a continuity of operations plan (COOP) with specific components for each department. HCEM alerts elected officials and department heads when there is a need to implement the COOP plan. Each department implements a call tree to notify employees within their department with specific instructions for their operations. HCEM can



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

also send alerts to all Hamilton County employees as needed for COOP, emergencies, snow closures, etc.

The special needs registry allows emergency managers to send messages to specific groups and information based on geographical locations. For example, after significant damage to the power grid, a message in the form of a text, phone call, and email can be sent to those who are registered as using powered medical devices such as nebulizers, oxygen generators, CPAP/BIPAP machines, etc. on where to go for power needs such as a cooling/warming center or a shelter. The system can also poll users to better understand the demand for such services.

Emergency managers use the special needs registry during exercises to determine the community's needs for various hazards, such as how many will require assistance if an advanced evacuation is necessary for the inundation zone of Morse Reservoir.

Communication

HCEM provides routine communication on mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery for the hazards outlined in the MHMP. Emergency communication depends on the situation, the municipality managing the incident, and the targeted population. Outreach includes information through the HCEM App, Social Media, traditional media, community events, etc.

Most of the systems used are dependent upon internet connectivity. HCEM maintains multiple systems to remain connected to the internet via two internet providers to the wired network, wireless connectivity through public safety tiered access with two different wireless providers, a satellite provider with three geostationary satellites and two ground stations, and one provider with a mesh terrestrial satellite constellation.

If internet services are unavailable, HCEM could use other systems such as amateur radio, the HCEM AM transmitter, or even outdoor warning sirens to notify the public.

Testing

Systems shall be regularly tested to ensure they are operational and personnel remain proficient in using them. See the next section for additional information.

Systems Used

| System | Use | Operations | Backup | Testing | Reference |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|----------------------------------|
| HCEM App | Public notification, field reporting, etc. | External alert and warning | Social media | Monthly | SOP 2.12 HCEM App |
| Rave Alerting | Public Notification | Internal and external warning | Social Media and HCEM App | Monthly | SOP 2.01 EOC Alert Notifications |
| Smart911 | Information gathering and 911 | Special needs registry | Standard 911 system | Monthly | SOP 2.08 Public Warning |



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| IPAWS – via Rave | Public Notification | Emergency notifications for EAS/WAS | National Weather Service | Weekly | SOP 2.08 Public Warning |
| Social Media | Public notification and information gathering | Public notifications and data mining | Traditional media | Monthly | - |
| Traditional Media | Public notification and information gathering | Public information | Social media and HCEM App | As needed | |
| Outdoor Warning Sirens | Public notification | Testing, funnel cloud, and tornado warning | All-Hazards Weather Radios, HCEM App, social media | Weekly – March through October | SOP 2.09 Outdoor Warning Sirens |
| AM Radio Transmitter | Public notification | Emergency communications | AM transmitter | Twice a year | |
| Amateur Radio | Public and internal notifications | Daily operations and emergency communications | Amateur Radio | Weekly | |
| WebEOC | Internal notifications, documentation, and coordination | Daily operations and emergency operations | ICS forms | Daily | SOP 2.14 WebEOC |

Table 1: lists the system, primary uses, and backup systems for communication and warning

Corrective Actions

As systems are tested, any corrective actions are taken as soon as possible to ensure the systems are available for emergency operations.



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Operational Procedures

The operations of these communication systems are very dynamic and based on operational needs and the various operating environments such as EOC, office, mobile command center, etc. Consideration for the type of hazard, severity, and impact plays a crucial role in messaging, including the specific phase of the hazard (preparedness, response, recovery, or mitigation). For example, before a winter storm with cold arctic temperatures, HCEM will send out preparedness and mitigation information using the HCEM app, social media, and other systems. Messaging will change based upon the needs as we move into response and recovery.

The systems and specific types of messaging for the hazard are based on the needs identified by HCEM personnel. The on-call duty officer has the initial responsibility to notify stakeholders when an incident occurs. The HCEM SOP 2.01 EOC Alert Notification provides more information regarding the initial alerting process.

The executive director and deputy director manage further notifications and coordination to ensure the appropriate system is used during all four phases of emergency management. For example, shared resources such as infographics for different hazards are shared with the public and the PIO working group.

Operational procedures for the various communication systems take an all-hazards approach with careful consideration of the MHMP. Although there are specific hazards, the dynamic situation of the hazard requires rapid yet careful consideration of how these systems are used. Formal education, review of after-action reports for past incidents outside of Hamilton County, knowledge gained from literature (e.g., *The Human Side of Disaster*), operational knowledge, collaboration with stakeholders (when possible), and experience are key factors in how the system is identified to address the hazard, how they are operated, and the operational need given the operating environment.

| System | SOP |
|-------------------------------|---|
| HCEM App | HCEM App Operations |
| Rave Alerting | 2.01 EOC Alert Notification 2.02 EOC Activation and Notification |
| Smart911 | Special Needs Registry Use and Operations |
| IPAWS – via Rave | 2.08 Public Warning |
| Social Media | Social Media |
| Traditional Media | Public Information Officer |
| Outdoor Warning Sirens | 2.04 EOC Storm Operations 2.09 Outdoor Warning Siren Operations |
| AM Radio Transmitter | AM Radio Transmitter Operations |
| Amateur Radio | Amateur Radio Operations |
| WebEOC | WebEOC Operations |

Table 2: The various systems and related standard operating procedures that outline these systems' operational use



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Communications and Warning Plan

Plan Development and Maintenance

Development

The development of the Communications and Warning Plan commenced in 2021.

Maintenance

The Communications and Warning Plan is reviewed annually by all stakeholders to ensure the plan meets the community's needs, leverages any new technology, evaluates interoperability, and tiered levels of failures for worst-case scenarios.

When systems are used, the evaluation is documented and reviewed for possible improvements by HCEM and stakeholders. Any feedback or changes are made to standard operating procedures and submitted to the planning section chief for plan maintenance.

The planning section chief for HCEM reviews the plan during January with HCEM personnel. Any proposed changes are documented. The proposed revisions are sent to stakeholders with a deadline for revisions. The changes are incorporated into the document, and the final document is sent to HCEM personnel and stakeholders for final review and adoption.

The plan is also evaluated when the hazards for the county change. The MHMP is reviewed every five years, and the Communications and Warning are considered when the MHMP is revised to ensure it addresses the hazards listed in the plan.

Authorities and References

The Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan outlines the authorities for emergency management, including Indiana Code and Hamilton County Ordinances.