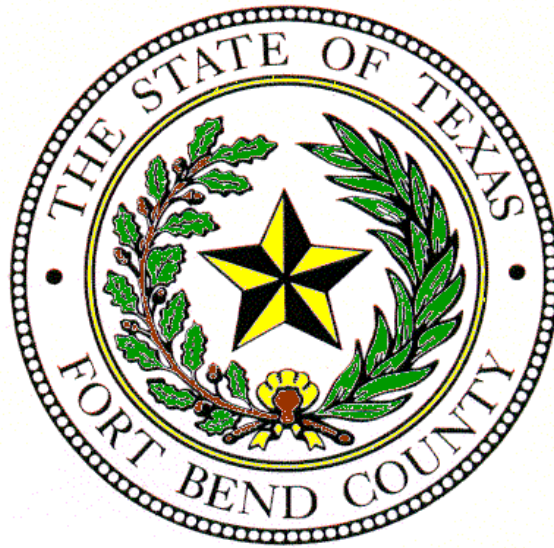


# FORT BEND COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



## ANNEX B COMMUNICATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

This annex is hereby accepted for implementation and supersedes all previous editions.

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K.P. George  
County Judge  
Fort Bend County

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Date

**Reviewed by:**

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Eric Fagan  
Sheriff  
Fort Bend County

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Date

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Greg Babst  
Emergency Management Coordinator  
Fort Bend County

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Date



## I. AUTHORITY

See Basic Plan

## II. PURPOSE

This annex provides information about Fort Bend communications equipment and capabilities available during emergency operations. The entire communications system is discussed and procedures for its use are outlined.

## III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

### ACRONYMS

CATV	Cable TV
COG	Council of Government
DDC	Disaster District Committee
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EMP	Electromagnetic Pulse
EMROG	Emergency Management Radio Operators group
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IC	Incident Commander
JIC	Joint Information Center
JRJ	Joint Resolution Jurisdiction
MACC	Multi Agency Coordination Center
MUDs	Municipal Utility Districts
NEWS	Neighborhood Early Warning System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRF	National Response Framework
SOC	State Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
TLETS	Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System
TRCIP	Texas Radio Communications Interoperability Plan
SO Radio	Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office Radio

## DEFINITIONS

**AM Alert 1670:** A station operating on AM 1670 can be considered a type of Alert station, specifically a Travelers Information Station (TIS) that provides important updates during emergencies and normal operations for Fort Bend County

**Everbridge:** is a software company that provides critical event management (CEM) and mass notification systems for organizations and public safety agencies.

**Local Computer Network:** is a software company that provides critical event management (CEM) and mass notification systems for organizations and public safety agencies.

**State Warning Point:** A state warning point is a continuously staffed communication facility, operated by state or local government, that receives and disseminates emergency information and warnings. For Texas it is the Texas State Emergency Operations Center.

**WebEOC:** is a web-based emergency management software used for crisis information management, primarily by government agencies and organizations involved in emergency response.

## IV. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

### Situation

1. As noted in the general situation statement in the basic plan, Fort Bend County is at risk from a number of hazards that could threaten public health and safety and personal and government property. A reliable and interoperable communications system is essential to obtain information on emergency situations, and to direct and control resources responding to those situations.
2. The Fort Bend County Dispatch/Communications Center is located at 1410 Richmond Parkway, Richmond, TX 77469. It is staffed on a 24-hour basis by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office communications personnel for law enforcement, fire department operations, and EMS operations. Equipment is available to provide the communications necessary for emergency operations. In addition, the cities of Katy, Missouri City, Richmond, Rosenberg, Stafford, Sugar Land and Westcom maintain 24-hour Emergency Communication Centers for Law Enforcement and Fire Department Operations.

When the EOC is activated in response to the emergency operation plan. Sheriff's Office Dispatch shall provide dispatch support to the EOC. The EMC and Ops Section Chief will discuss when resource dispatching will be overseen by the EOC, and coordination of resource support will be managed by the EOC and all dispatch units in the county.

3. As a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), the FBCSO Communications Center receives 911 call information from numerous sources outside the department. Callers provide first responders with information that is often vital to public safety and includes dangerous

driving and weather conditions, including roadway obstructions, standing and floodwaters, downed power lines, fires and explosions, gas and chemical leaks, crashes and fatalities, and many other public safety threats. While this information is directly communicated to field operations personnel, the notices are also be sent to the Sheriff's Office Public Information Office. This information is provided so the PIO may author and disseminate public safety reports to keep the public informed and to prevent further damage and destruction or to reduce the effect of dangerous conditions. The information also include safety precautions to guide mitigation and recovery efforts and to assist with concerted efforts in the aftermath of any emergency, catastrophe, or disaster. This includes criminal offenses in which the public's assistance is needed to identify and locate victims, witnesses, and perpetrators. The PIO publications include notices with respect to sheltering, warming and cooling centers, distribution points for prophylaxis or food, ice, water, and other equipment. All this will be coordinated under the Fort Bend PIO Network established by the Emergency Operation Center.

In essence, Communications includes involvement of the PIO to disseminate information, warn the public, guide response, mitigation, and recovery and other prepare and send other public safety measures and information. During activation under the EOP the PIO will support the JIC and all external communication should be managed by the JIC Manager and supported by the EOC PIO and any PIO that owns the message. Coordination of communication should be managed by the PIO and EMC.

### Assumptions

1. Adequate communications are available for effective and efficient warning, response and recovery operations.
2. Any number of natural or manmade hazards may neutralize communications currently in place for emergency operations.
3. Additional communications equipment required for emergency operations will be made available from citizens, businesses, volunteer organizations, and/or other governmental agencies.

## V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

### A. General

1. A common operating picture within Fort Bend County and across other jurisdictions provides the framework of our communications capabilities. This framework is made possible by interoperable systems. Extensive communications networks and facilities are in existence throughout Fort Bend County and the Fort Bend County Joint Resolution Jurisdictions to provide coordinated capabilities for the most effective and efficient response and recovery activities. A diagram of the communications network is located in

Appendix 1. When these capabilities are properly coordinated, response activities become more effective and efficient.

2. The existing communications network for Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions consists of data service, fiber service, satellite service, telephone, computer, teletype, and radio facilities that serve to perform the initial and basic communication efforts for emergency operations. Landline circuits, when available, will serve as the primary means of communication with other communication systems as backup.
3. All Fort Bend County offices/departments and departments within the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions will maintain their existing equipment and procedures for communicating with their field operations units. During disasters and major emergencies, they will keep the EOC always informed of their operations and status.
4. To meet the increased communications needs created by an emergency, various state and regional agencies, amateur radio operators and business/industry/volunteer group radio systems will be asked to supplement communications capabilities. These resource capabilities will be requested through local and regional mutual-aid agreements and/or the Disaster District, as required. Stakeholders and contractors will additionally support the communication need and should provide liaison support in the EOC.

## B. Activities by Phases of Emergency Management

1. Prevention
  - a. Maintain a current technology-based, reliable, interoperable, and sustainable communications system.
  - b. Ensure warning communications systems meet the needs and requirements of Fort Bend County and the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions.
  - c. Ensure intelligence and other vital information networks are operational.
  - d. Periodically review the system and formulate plans for improvement as necessary.
  - e. Ensure integrated communications procedures are in place to meet the needs and requirements of Fort Bend County.
  - f. Establishment of contracts for backup communications and communication enhancement.
2. Preparedness
  - a. Review and update communications annex.
  - b. Develop communications procedures that are documented and implemented through communications operating instructions (include connectivity with private sector and nongovernmental organizations).

- c. Thoroughly and continually review the system for improvement including the implementation and institutionalized use of information management technologies.
  - d. Ensure communications requirements for Emergency Operations Center and a potential Joint Information Center (JIC) are regularly reviewed.
  - e. Review After Action Reports of actual occurrences and exercises and other sources of information for lessons learned.
  - f. Ensure the integration of mitigation plans and actions into all phases of emergency management as applicable.
  - g. Acquire, test, and maintain communications equipment.
  - h. Ensure replacement parts for communications systems are available and make arrangement for rapid re-supply in the event of an emergency.
  - i. Train personnel on appropriate equipment and communication procedures as necessary.
  - j. Conduct periodic communications drills and make communications a major element during all exercises.
  - k. Review assignment of all personnel.
  - l. Review emergency notification list of key officials and department heads.
  - m. Provide telephone service providers with a list of circuit restoration priorities for essential governmental systems.
3. Response
- a. Supervisors will determine which communications personnel will be required when emergency operations are initiated. Staff requirements will vary according to the incident.
  - b. Incident communications will follow ICS standards and will be managed by the IC using a common communications plan and an incident-based communications center.
  - c. All incident management entities will make use of common language during emergency communications. This will reduce confusion when multiple agencies or entities are involved in an incident.
  - d. Arrangements will be made to insure emergency equipment repair on a 24-hour basis.
  - e. Warning procedures as outlined in Annex A, Warning, will be initiated, if required.

#### 4. Recovery

All activities in the emergency phase will continue until such time as emergency communications are no longer required.

## VI. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. General

1. The Fort Bend County emergency communications system is operated by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Departments operate Emergency Communications Systems. A variety of government-owned and operated communications equipment as well as equipment owned and operated by certain volunteer groups are also maintained and operated. The departments, agencies, and groups that are part of Fort Bend County's communications system are listed in Section VII.C.
2. The Fort Bend County Sheriff and Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Chiefs will ensure that warning information received is disseminated to Fort Bend County and Joint Resolution Jurisdictions officials and, where appropriate, to the public. The responsibility of ensuring the communications system is operational and incorporates all available resources rests with the Fort Bend County Sheriff and Joint Resolution Jurisdictions Police Chiefs, who may appoint a Communications Unit Leader to carry out this task.

### B. Task Assignments

1. Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office will:
  - a. Be responsible for all activities enumerated in this annex, Activities by Phases of Emergency Management.
  - b. EOC activation support the Communications Unit Leader or Logistics Section Chief.
  - c. Support ICP communication during incidents and coordinate communications when incident covers multiple jurisdictions inside the county, or with multiple disciplines or outside agencies.
  - d. Maintain dispatch/communication and support the coordination of communication to the EOC.
  - e. Responsible for resourcing support through dispatch and coordination of resources dispatched, communicating with the EOC for all resources deployed and tracked through the dispatch.
  - f. Support liaison dispatch support for the EOC, both radio and phone.
2. Emergency Operation Center Communications Unit Leader will:

- a. Coordinate common communications procedures.
  - b. Develop and maintain a communications resource inventory (See Annex M, Resource Management).
  - c. Ensure a communications capability exists between the Dispatch/Communications Center of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and Joint Resolution Jurisdictions' dispatch/communication centers, Westcom, and the Emergency Operations Center to include coordination with the telephone companies for installation of dedicated telephone lines into the Dispatch/Communications Center and/or EOC.
3. EOC Logistics Section Chief;
- a. Ensure communication restoration procedures are developed and in place.
  - b. Ensure that the local telephone companies are forwarded a list of circuit restoration priorities.
  - c. Ensure procedures are in place for dissemination of message traffic.
  - d. Coordinate the inclusion of business/industry and amateur radio operators (EMROG/RACES) into the communications network.
  - e. Develop and maintain SOPs to include message-handling procedures and recall rosters for essential personnel.
4. Telecommunication Officers / Radio Operators will be:
- Responsible for proper use and maintenance of the equipment and for correct message handling procedures, including routing of all incoming messages and logging all incoming and out-going messages.
5. Public Information Officer will be:
- Responsible for monitoring commercial local radio and telephone broadcasts for accuracy of public information.
6. Dispatchers and Phone Bank Operators will be:
- Responsible for properly screening and routing all incoming telephone calls in the EOC.

## VII. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

### A. General

The Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Mayors or City Managers or members of the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions shall establish general policies for emergency communications.

The Communications Coordinator is under the supervision of the Fort Bend County Sheriff, with Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Communications Coordinators under the supervision of

their Mayors or City Managers. Communications Coordinators are directly responsible for facilities, equipment, and operation of the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Department Dispatch Office and/or the JRJs Communications Centers.

Communications personnel from individual departments and support agencies, while under control of their own department or agency and operating their own equipment, are responsible for knowing and following the procedures outlined in this annex.

During emergency situations involving multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, the various code systems used for brevity will be discontinued and normal speech will be used to insure comprehension. In addition, local time will be used during transmissions.

During emergency situations, communications will be maintained between the Disaster District Committee and the Fort Bend County and Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Emergency Operations Centers.

**B. Continuity of Government**

Each department or agency with communications responsibilities shall establish a line of succession for communications personnel.

A Mobile repeater kept at the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office or Emergency Operation Center, known as Portable Emergency Response Center (PERC), can be quickly positioned at a predetermined location to resume radio communications in the event of damage to the repeater tower.

The Fort Bend County Regional Communications Emergency Management Radio Operations Group (EMROG) can be used as a communications platform for the 800 MHz, UHF, and VHF communications in the event of a radio communications failure.

**C. Existing Communications Systems**

**1. Local Networks**

a. Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office	b. Fort Bend County Fire Marshal's Office, and EMS
c. Fort Bend County Road and Bridge Department, and Drainage	d. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Departments
e. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Fire Departments, and ESD/Volunteer FD	f. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Parks Departments
g. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Utilities Departments/Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs).	h. Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Public Works Departments
i. Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center	j. Westcom Community Dispatch
k. Fort Bend County Communications Committee	Levee Improvement Districts LIDS

## 2. Other Networks

- a. Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) is a statewide telecommunications network connecting the State Warning Point (State EOC) with over 1,300 city, county, state, federal, and military law enforcement agencies in Texas. Emergency communications between state, district, and local governments will be transmitted through this system. The principal terminals are located at the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Dispatch Office and at the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Departments.
- b. Harris County Radio Shop - Diagnostics and repairs for radio issues, Activation and service for public safety radios, Custom programming, Encryption, Radio fleet consulting, Estimates for service and repairs, Vehicle radio installation, Radio user training, Radio maintenance
- c. Joint Information Center (JIC), Joint Operations Center (JOC), and SOC.
- d. Individual Amateur Radio Operators
- e. WebEOC is a state-mandated program tool with a collaboration tool that creates a common operating platform, enabling first responders and emergency managers to share information for situational awareness and decision-making. Other applications may be used and communicated on. (TEAMS, VEOCI, WEBEX, ZOOM, Ect)
- f. Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a state-sponsored program composed of amateur radio operators. It supplements state and local government communications systems in emergencies or disaster operations.

The Fort Bend County Emergency Management Radio Operators Group (EMROG) will conduct RACES activities and provide supplemental communications between designated governmental facilities throughout Fort Bend County.

- g. Business/Industry/Volunteer Group Radio Systems—Support communication when a stakeholder requests it or an MOU is in place.

## VIII. READINESS LEVELS

### A. Readiness Level IV - Normal Conditions

See the prevention and preparedness activities in paragraphs V.B.1 and V.B.2 above.

### B. Readiness Level III - Increased Readiness

1. Alert key personnel.
2. Check the readiness of all equipment and facilities and correct any deficiencies.

### C. Readiness Level II – High Readiness

1. Alert personnel for activation and support to an incident or emergency. Increase staffing to manage the increase in communications.
2. Monitor the situation of possible issuance of warnings or alerts.
3. Place emergency resources and equipment on standby or staging.

### D. Readiness Level I – Maximum Readiness

1. Institute 24-hour operations.
2. Conduct periodic communication checks.
3. Monitor communication awareness and maintain resourcing to meet the need.
4. Request State or MOU support for resourcing if the incident or emergency surpasses local resources.

## IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

### A. Facilities and Equipment

A complete listing of equipment is included in Appendix 1 of Annex M.

### B. Maintenance of Records

All records generated during an emergency will be collected and filed in an orderly manner so a record of events is preserved for determining response costs, settling claims, and updating emergency plans and procedures.

### C. Preservation of Records

Vital records should be protected from the effects of disaster to the maximum extent feasible. Should records be damaged during an emergency situation, professional assistance in preserving and restoring those records should be obtained as soon as possible.

### D. Communications Protection

1. Radio
  - a. Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP)

One of the effects of a nuclear detonation that is particularly damaging to radio equipment is EMP. Plans call for the disconnection of radios from antennas and power source when an Attack Warning is issued. A portable radio unit will then be a backup to maintain limited communications with field units. This procedure will be used until an all-clear is announced. Telephones will also be used while operable.
  - b. Lightning, Wind, and Blast
    - 1) Standard lightning protection, including arrestors and emergency power, is used during severe weather.

2. Telephone (Common Carrier)

Overloaded Circuits - To avoid overloaded circuits during emergencies, citizens will be advised to listen to EAS 1670 AM radio for information and to use telephones only if they have a genuine emergency. If overloaded circuits become a problem, coordinate with AT&T, Consolidated Communications, and Verizon Telephone Companies to immediately restore priority circuits.

3. Computer Equipment and Facilities

The physical protection of computer equipment and facilities will be maintained under normal and emergency operations to help ensure continuity of communications.

## E. Security

1. Measures will be taken to ensure that only authorized personnel will have access to the Dispatch/Communications Center.
2. Communications security will be maintained in accordance with national, state, and local requirements.

## F. Training

1. Each organization assigning personnel to the EOC for communications purposes is responsible for ensuring those persons are familiar with the agency's operating procedures.
2. All staff assigned under communication support to the ICP or EOC should be NIMS certified under current policy and procedures.
3. The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Departments will provide additional training on emergency communications equipment and procedures as necessary.

## G. Support

If requirements exceed the capability of local communications resources, the Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City Managers will request support from nearby jurisdictions, or the Multi Agency Coordination Center. In the event that the MACC cannot fulfill the request, the resources will be requested from the Disaster District Committee in Houston.

## X. ANNEX DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Fort Bend County HSEM, Fort Bend County EMS, and Fort Bend County FMO will be responsible for maintaining this annex. Each agency and Joint Resolution Jurisdiction member will develop SOPs that address assigned tasks.

- B. This annex will be updated per the schedule outlined in the Basic Plan, in accordance with state guidance.

## XI. REFERENCES

- A. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1996. Guide For All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning. (SLG-101)
- B. Texas Division Of Emergency Management *Local Emergency Management Planning Guide*. (DEM-10)

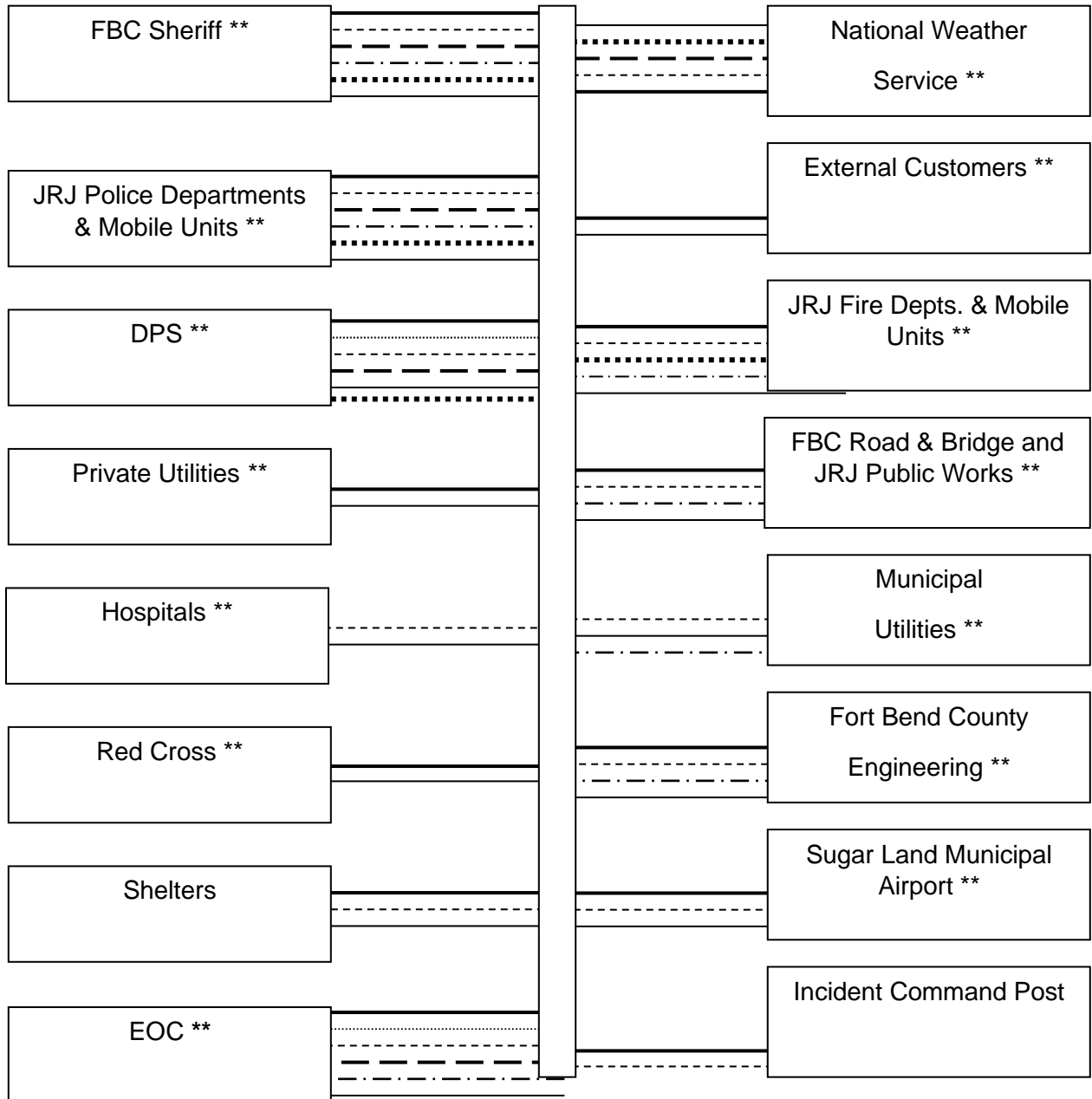
## APPENDIX

Appendix 1 ..... Communications Diagram & Table

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. EOC SOP

COMMUNICATIONS DIAGRAM



Legend

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| ----- Radio               | ..... Satellite Phones |
| ..... CATV or Satellite   | ———— Cell Phones       |
| ———— Telephone and/or Fax | ----- TLETS            |
| ..... RACES               | ----- Local Computer   |

\*\* Internet Access & Email

Appendix 1  
Communications

	COMMUNICATIONS												
	Cable TV Or Satellite	Phone/Fax	TLETS	800 MHz	VHF	UHF	HF	EHF	Citizens Band Radio	FEMA Direct	Cell Phones	Satellite Phones	Local Computer Network
Department of Public Safety	X	X	X	X							X	X	X
FBC Sheriff's Office	X	X	X	X							X	X	X
EOC	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
JRJ Police Departments & Mobile Units	X	X	X	X							X		X
JRJ Fire Departments & Mobile Units	X	X		X							X		X
FBC Hospitals	X	X		X							X		X
Municipal Utilities	X	X									X		X
Private Utilities	X	X		X							X		X
FBC Engineering	X	X		X							X		X
FBC Road & Bridge	X	X		X	X						X		X
Red Cross	X	X								X	X		X
Shelters	X	X		X							X		X

Appendix 1  
Communications

Civil Air Patrol		X			X		X			X			X
RACES		X		X	X	X	X	X					X
National Weather Service	X	X			X					X	X	X	X