

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEDICAL CENTER
(LOCATION)**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (DATE)
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE NO. ()

SUBJECT: *Communications Disruption*

1. *Description of the Threat/Event.* The disruption of telephones, mail, faxes, radios, and pagers are addressed.

2. *Impact on Mission Critical Systems.*

Some systems affected would be:

- Access to Services – Appointment scheduling, telephone triage service to outpatients, patient ordering of prescription refills.
- Ordering Supplies.
- Patient treatments/procedures delayed due to slowed communications among staff (Laboratory, X-ray, Pharmacy, Codes Red, and Blue).
- Safety and Security functions may be less efficient/effective due to reduced communications (Codes Red, Blue).

3. *Operating Units and Key Personnel with Responsibility to Manage this Threat/Event.*

- Medical
- Safety and Security
- Information Management
- Logistics

4. *Mitigation/Preparedness Activities of the Threat/Event.*

a. *Hazard Reduction Strategies and Resource Issues.*

- Invest in most reliable communications systems, ensure good maintenance and repair and have several back-ups.
- Establish redundant systems.

b. *Preparedness Strategies and Resource Issues.*

- Develop and test operating unit templates for communication systems failure.

5. Response/Recovery from the Threat/Event.

- a. *Hazard Control Strategies.* N/A
- b. *Hazard Monitoring Strategies.*
 - Develop plan for monitoring and reporting of outages, consequences and interim communication methods
- c. *Recovery Strategies.*
 - Consider use of cell phones, e-mail, couriers, satellite phones, and radios.
- d. *See Attached Charts: Key Activity Management Tool/Structure.*

6. External Notification Procedures.

- a. *Within VA.* If the VHA facility is made aware of a threat/event, whom within VA should they notify? If a threat/event occurs, whom within VA should they notify?
 - Check Network policy for need to notify.
- b. *Other Federal Agencies.* Depending on the threat/event, certain federal agencies (FEMA, Department of Health and Human Services, OSHA, Centers for Disease Control, EPA) may need to be notified. For example:
 - OSHA – Notify within eight (8) hours of one (1) employee fatality, or three (3) employee hospitalizations resulting from a single incident.
- c. *Community Entities.* Because of the VA Medical Center's relationship to the community, it is likely that there are specific entities within the community that should be notified that a threat/event has occurred. In many cases, this notification will trigger a community response to the threat/event.
 - Community entities may need to be notified, depending upon the VA Medical Center's role in the community.

7. Specialized Staff Training. This section outlines a description of necessary strategies to secure the unique resources (staff, supplies, etc.) needed to appropriately respond to this type of threat/event.**8. References and Further Assistance.**

- a. *VHA Emergency Management Guidebook.*
- b. *All Operating Units in the medical center should review their operational unit templates for response/recovery activities.*

9. Review Date.

(NAME)

Chief, (SERVICE NAME)

Attachments:

Key Activity Management Tool/Structure