

# York County Emergency Management Agency Communications Team

## Preparedness Overview

**YCEMA mission/goal** = lessen effects of a disaster on lives & property located in York county

**Communications Team goal** = contribute to YCEMA efforts/effectiveness to accomplish goal

- Function as a backup communication system for all York County towns
- Support shelters & local directors in York County
- Bottom line – help communicate important information where/when needed
  - Home base
  - Mobile base
  - Shelters
  - YCEMA headquarters

**How well we're able to accomplish our goals depends on the four phases of emergency management:**

1. **Preparedness** – ensuring ability to assist
2. Response – how/when/where
3. Recovery – after disaster
4. Mitigation – assessing process, identifying areas of opportunity, successes, gaps, etc.

### Breakdown of team preparedness: 2 parts

- **Priority = personal preparedness** (necessary to be able to be of service)
  - Having necessary supplies to allow team members to focus on communication goals
  - Lack of personal preparedness may impair our ability to effectively respond
- **Priority = team preparedness**
  - Identify each member's skills/equipment (may or may not be in radio communication)
  - ID/fill in gaps in team's communication systems and skill sets
    - Equipment/expertise to form the networks and support required to provide needed communication
      - Traditional voice communication
      - Digital communication
      - Send/receive emails/computer files over radio links
      - Non-radio support efforts (phones, runner, food, paperwork, etc.) – free up radio communicators
  - Ensure regular meetings/training to strengthen team and increase knowledge
  - Vary examples of emergencies & communication methods
    - Voice, digital, video, etc.
    - Create situations/problems for team members to problem solve/brainstorm and see what solutions they come up with
    - Identify and ensure a variety of volunteer skill sets to address all communication needs
    - Understand the support networks – within team as well as outside
- Potential Emergency Communications Team deployment locations – how prepared is each member to fulfill needs

- Command posts
  - Emergency operations posts
  - Emergency shelters
  - Evacuation sites
  - Fire stations
  - Medical facilities
  - Police stations
  - Public work sites
  - Volunteer centers
  - Provide mobile links
  - Staff observation posts (ex: water levels, damaged areas, etc.) & provide periodic reports
  - (include examples of various roles team members play – including HAM)
- **Team Preparedness Challenges**
    - Sufficient number of qualified team members to meet goals
      - ID opportunities to reach potential new members/volunteers
      - Generate interest - website with up to date info, easy to navigate, is concise and easy to read/understand – stress contribution to community – relatable to those outside of HAM
    - Maintain volunteers’ interest through training/activation/mobilization – otherwise lose interest
      - Topic examples: Evacuation routes, storm response/mitigation, preparing “go bags”, avoiding floodwater and downed power lines, etc.
      - Prioritize likely disasters
    - Establish communication plan for disasters and train for flawless execution
    - Regularly test and update plan
    - Frequent drills/exercises
    - Vary examples of emergencies & communication methods

### **Levels of Personal Preparedness:**

- Essential to enable fulfillment of team responsibilities
  - If a member is trying to ensure necessary personal supplies once a disaster hits, how are they able to help fulfill the demands required of this team?
- Personal preparedness isn’t just a cookie cutter set of steps to take or a generic checklist or a sense of doomsday fear
  - Must understand that a disaster could strike and that’s it’s necessary to prepare for your own safety and security, and that of your family
- Up to each individual to determine what that means for their own situation and their personal belief in disaster preparedness
  - Identify disasters most likely to happen in the area (individually & as a team)
    - a. Think about past disasters
      - What happened?
      - How long did it last?

- How did people react?
  - What supplies did you or others lack?
  - How long did it take for things to get back to normal?
- Examples of emergencies that have occurred or have the potential of occurring
  - Train derailments
  - Medical/health emergencies
  - Epidemics/Pandemics
  - Road closures
  - Winter storms
  - Flooding
  - Earthquakes
  - EMP attacks
- Some emergencies are more likely than others, but ignoring something entirely doesn't mean it won't happen
- Consider family/loved ones' individual needs (infant, toddlers, elderly, etc.)
  - How to ensure their wellbeing/safety
  - ID any special needs (health/meds, equipment, etc.)
  - Plan for necessary supplies in order to be prepared to assist
- The most important thing about planning ahead is staying safe and helping yourself and your community recover as quickly as possible

### Examples of ways to prepare

- Attend preparedness training classes
- Actively participate in practice sessions for various types of emergencies
  - Includes members who are extremely skilled – they're essential in helping to ID gaps in the team's ability to meet communication goals
- Prepare and maintain a "go-bag" with the items that you would need (to evacuate, deploy to another location, etc.)- ID what you need to provide the personal supplies and radio equipment to add to your effectiveness and comfort during an event
- Ensure appropriate supplies are stocked to meet the personal needs for your family