

Maintaining operability, interoperability, and continuity of communications is critical for public safety during special events and emergency response in all operating conditions. Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency (PACE) communications plans are a vital tool for organizations to establish options for redundant communications capabilities if capabilities are disrupted or degraded. A strong PACE plan ensures critical information can reach decision-makers in a timely and secure manner.

The PACE plan is expressed as a list in order of communication precedence.

Primary

Everyday Method of Communication

Preferred solution for use during incident (e.g., radio on day-to-day talk channel or talk group, telephone, data unit, email, etc.)

Alternate

Backup Methods and Work Arounds

An almost equivalent solution but not preferred (e.g., different radio system, interoperable repeaters or simplex radio stations, cellular)

Contingent

Fallback Methods

Uses different pathways than Primary and Alternate (e.g., cell phone, satellite phone)

Emergency

Last Resort Methods

Approach used when all else fails (e.g., a runner, amateur radio, SHAred RESources (SHARES) radio, etc.)

Communications Needs Assessment

Conduct a review of current communications needs to determine what communications are critical and who needs to communicate. Here are basic questions to consider during a needs assessment for a PACE plan:

- What information needs to be transferred to support mission essential functions?
- Who, including Federal, State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, and critical infrastructure partners, needs to receive critical information? When? In what format (e.g., audio, text)?
- How are information needs prioritized (e.g., critical, important, desirable)? Are there different plans for different levels of criticality?
- What are the failure points/modes of existing communications methods?
- What are the security requirements for different communications pathways? Is encryption a consideration for communications plans?

Identify Options

After assessing communications needs, consider the alternative pathways available. Here are basic considerations for identifying alternate communications pathways:

- Consider diversity of:
 - Technology e.g., satellite phone, copper telephone line, radio
 - RF bands e.g., UHF, VHF
 - Power sources e.g., relies on generator, battery, or solar
 - Infrastructure e.g., relies on different service providers, towers and repeaters, or cable loops
 - Physical location(s) e.g., uses off-site/cloud-based data, is stored in a secondary facility
- For each alternate communication pathway, consider:
 - Does this alternative meet some or all of the need?
 - What are the limitations (e.g., capacity, speed, range, security, features)? Are limitations acceptable, given the circumstances?

Prin Alte Conti

Emer

CISA offers three PTS capabilities that enable essential personnel to effectively communicate when networks are degraded or congested.

Wireless Priority Service (WPS)

WPS is a free cellular communications service provided and managed by Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in compliance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that can also be used to enhance your communications capabilities via your PACE plan.

GETS provides priority calling on landline infrastructure and is accessible by the cellular communications as well. WPS is limited to only wireless networks.

TSP is an FCC program, managed by CISA, which mandates that service providers prioritize voice and data circuit installation and restoration.



PACE Use	Equipment	PSAP Staffing	Systems	Inter-Agency Comms	Personal	
	Field Personnel	Telecommunicator	Phone Service	State - FEMA	Cooking	
Primary	Radio	Public Safety Telecommunicator	VoIP Phones	Email / Phone	Electric Range	
Alternate	Cell Phone	Supervisor	Backup Wireline Phone	Cellular Data Cellular Phones	BBQ Grill	
Contingency	Mobile Data Terminal	Alternate Comm Center - Local	Cell Phones	Satellite Data w/ VoIP Phones	Camp Stove	
Emergency	Wireline Phone	Alternate Comm Center - State	Cell Phones Alternate Provider	HF - FNARS, SHARES, Amateur Radio	Open Fire	

Priority Telecommunication Services (PTS)



Government Emergency Telecommunications Services (GETS)

Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP)

For additional information, contact your Emergency Communications Coordinator (ECC) or visit:

cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/leveraging-pace-plan-emergency-communications-ecosystem