

**Appendix III-3**

**DELAWARE COUNTY**

**PUBLIC WARNING SYSTEM**

**PUBLIC WARNING SYSTEM PLAN  
FOR  
DELAWARE COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**A. PURPOSE**

1. To meet Federal guidelines set down for a plan by each county to be established by January 1, 1997.
2. To have a plan to alert the citizens of the affected areas of Delaware County of a natural or technical (including man made) disaster.
3. To give advanced warning to potentially affected citizens on what steps should be taken to prevent injuries or deaths from occurring.

**B. AUTHORITY**

Title 47 U.S.C. 161, 154 (1) & (o), 303 (r), 524 (g) & 606; and 47 C.F.R. Part II, FCC Rules & Regulations, Emergency Alert System

**C. OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this plan is to establish guidelines to provide for a variety of ways to warn the public of impending or occurring disasters or other significant emergency situations of which life safety and property preservation are of utmost concern.

This document will utilize certain aspects of the Delaware County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and the Hazardous Materials Response Annex in order to properly activate the Public Warning System. This plan contains procedures for local officials to transmit emergency information to the public during a local emergency using the Public Warning System.

This document is intended to supplement existing procedures in the Emergency Alert System New York State Plan as promulgated by the State Emergency Communications Commission. Acceptance of or participation in this plan shall not be deemed as a relinquishment of program control and shall not be deemed to prohibit a broadcast or cable licensee from exercising her/his independent discretion and responsibility in any given situation. Stations originating emergency communications shall be deemed to have conferred rebroadcast authority. The concept of management of each broadcast station and cable system exercising discretion during the broadcast of emergency instructions to the general public is provided by FCC rules.

#### D. WHO CAN ACTIVATE THE PLAN

This plan can be activated by any Delaware County Department in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Services.

#### E. AUTHENTICATION

1. An authentication procedure will be established by the County Board of Supervisor Chairman and will be used in order to activate the Public Warning System:

Plain English will be utilized in designating messages as “tests” or “actual events”.

#### F. HAZARDS WHICH REQUIRE PLAN ACTIVATION

1. Hazardous materials incidents which require notification of residential areas, private industries, or municipalities (including schools) for evacuation or shelter-in-place.
2. Natural disaster
3. Law enforcement activities in which the public would need to be notified for provisions of life safety.
4. Any other situation deemed appropriate by the governing body for public warning.

#### G. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

1. Communications with the National Weather Service will be for the following reasons:
  - a. Continual updates during or in anticipation of severe weather.
  - b. An actual emergency where the system needs to be activated.
2. Communications will be by the following means:
  - a. High band radio - SEMO frequency
  - b. Regular telephone
  - c. NYSPIN (Delaware County Sheriff and Emergency Services)

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- d. Cellular phone
- e. Packet radio
- f. High band radio - local government

### H. DEFINITIONS

1. Emergency - A situation posing an extraordinary threat to the safety of life and property. Examples are tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, icing conditions, heavy snows, widespread fires, discharge of toxic gases, widespread power failures, industrial explosions, civil disorders and radiological emergencies, etc.
2. Designated Local Government Officials - The person or persons designated by the state and local government as specified in CEMP.

### I. WARNING OF ENDANGERED POPULATIONS

1. Emergency warnings may be received at the Public Safety Building Communication Center through NYSPIN on a 24 hour basis and the statewide EAS system from SEMO.
2. Warnings and information are disseminated to the public via a variety of different means, including EAS, reverse 911, NY Alert, and VHF radio broadcasts.
3. Notification of the public residing within an area exposed to a disaster or other emergency situation will be accomplished by the means listed above as well as public address systems of local police and fire vehicles or door-to-door notification in rural and urban areas.
4. Special institutions such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, major industries and places of public assembly will be notified individually. Arrangement will be made for warning the hearing impaired as conditions warrant.
5. Emergency warnings may be received at the EOC of the Department of Emergency Services, Delaware County Sheriff's Department Communication Center, and the Delaware County 911 Center.

**J. EMERGENCY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION – COUNTY OPERATIONS PROCEDURE**

1. In order to implement public protective actions there should be a timely, reliable, and effective method to warn and inform the public.
2. Activation and implementation of public warning is an Operations section responsibility.
3. Information and warnings to the public that a threatening condition is imminent or exists can be accomplished through the use of the following resources. Though public warning may, in many cases, be implemented solely by on-scene personnel, the use of the systems below require strict coordination with the EOC:
  - a) **The Emergency Alert System (EAS)** – The Director of Emergency Services has the ability to activate NY State’s Emergency Alert System, placing warnings throughout the local media outlets, as well as alerting surrounding areas as to the situation existing here.
  - b) **NOAA Weather Radio (NWR)** - is the “Voice of the National Weather Service” providing continuous 24-hour radio broadcasts of the latest weather information including severe weather warnings directly from the Weather Service office in Binghamton. NWR will also broadcast non-weather-related emergency warnings. NWR broadcasts on select high-band FM frequencies, not available on normal AM-FM radios. Radios with NWR frequencies, automated alarm capabilities, and Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) technology are generally available.
  - c) **Reverse 911** – The Department of Emergency Services has the capability to send real time messages over landlines to the entire county or to a specified geographical area.
  - d) **NY Alert** – The Department of Emergency Services, in conjunction with NYSEMO, can send out mass messages via landline, fax, email, SMS text messaging, and cell phone to subscribers of NY Alert, the states free all hazard public warning system.
  - e) **VHF Radio Broadcast** – Upon receipt of warnings from the National Weather Service, the Delaware County Sheriff’s Communication Center will rebroadcast these warnings over frequencies 46.06 mhz and 156.030 mhz. These warning can be heard by fire, ems, and law enforcement personnel, as well as anyone from the public with a scanner in their residence. This method can also be used for any other warnings deemed appropriate by the Director of Emergency Services.
  - f) **Emergency service vehicles** with siren and public address capabilities - Many police and fire vehicles in the County are equipped with siren and public address capabilities. These vehicles may be available, in part, during an emergency for

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“route alerting” of the public. This capability exists County-wide but should not be relied upon for public warning.

- g) **Door-to-door** public warning can be accomplished in some situations by the individual alerting of each residence/business in a particular area. This can be undertaken by any designated group such as auxiliary police, regular police, fire police, or firefighters visiting each dwelling in the affected area and relating the emergency information to the building occupants. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the individual delivering the warning message should be in official uniform.
4. The County Department of Emergency Services will advocate, as part of their normal dealing with special institutions such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes, major industries and places of public assembly, that they obtain and use tone-activated receivers/monitors with the capability to receive NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) with SAME reception.
  5. Special arrangements may be made for providing warning information to the hearing impaired and, where appropriate, non-English speaking population groups.
  6. In consultation with the Director of the Department of Emergency Services the County Executive will designate a County Public Information Officer (PIO) as the authoritative spokesperson for the county. This person may, in coordination with on-scene Incident Command and the EOC:
    - a) Establish and manage a Joint Information Center (JIC) from where to respond to inquiries from the news media and coordinate all official announcements and media briefings
    - b) Authenticate all sources of information being received and verify accuracy
    - c) Provide essential information and instructions including the appropriate protective actions to be taken by the public to the broadcast media and press
    - d) Coordinate the release of all information with the key departments and agencies involved both at the EOC and on-scene
    - e) Control the spreading of rumors
    - f) Arrange and approve interviews with the news media and press by emergency personnel involved in the response operation
    - g) Arrange any media tours of emergency sites
  7. The JIC may be established at the EOC or at any location where information flow can be

maintained, without interfering with emergency operations.

## K. IMMEDIATE PROTECTIVE ACTION

1. Protective action for emergency workers involved in containment, mitigation, assessment and recovery operations will be specific to the situation and the organization involved. The purpose of all protective actions will be to minimize the hazard to emergency response workers and the general public.
2. Depending on the type of disaster, the County Public Health Department, State Health Department, and/or other designated local or state agencies will combine their efforts for monitoring and exposure control.
3. The initial protective action recommendations will be made to the County EOC and to the incident commander. Reports and records will be communicated to and coordinated by the EOC.
4. The assessment of data will be done at the EOC as follows:
  - a. All monitoring data received at the EOC will be plotted on overlays.
  - b. Meteorological data received from the agencies and local NOAA stations will be recorded and correlated with monitoring data to construct hazard predictions.
  - c. These analyses will be compared to the more complex and definitive assessments received from state and federal sources.

An Evacuation Plan is the central tool for planning during an evacuation situation. The Evacuation Plan is prepared by the Planning Section Coordinator with input from the appropriate sections and units of the EOC. It should be written at the outset of the incident and revised continually throughout the evacuation process. Evacuations vary in their kind, complexity, size, and requirements for detailed and written plans. The level of detail required in an Evacuation Plan will vary according to the size and complexity of the situation. The following Evacuation Plan Template should be used to document the Evacuation Plan. All sections of the template may not be necessary for all evacuation situations.

The development of an Evacuation Plan follows these steps:

- Assess the Situation
- Identify Contingencies
- Determine Objectives

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- Identify Needed Resources
  - Build a Plan and Structure
  - Take Action
5. The County Executive, on recommendation of County/State Health and/or other state technical assistance agencies, will order proper protective measures.

### L. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION – STATE OPERATION PROCEDURE

EAS dissemination arrangements at these levels originate from State and local governments in accordance with State and local area plans.

1. The EAS may be activated at the state or local area levels by broadcast stations and cable systems at their discretion for day-to-day emergency situations posing a threat to life and property.
2. EAS operations must be conducted as specified in State and local area plans.
3. State Relay (SR) sources monitor the State Relay Network or follow the State EAS Plan for instructions from the State Primary (SP) source.
4. Local Primary (LP) sources monitor the Local Area SR sources to follow the State EAS Plan for instructions.
5. Participating National (PN) and Non-participating National (NN) sources monitor the Local Area LP sources for instructions.
6. Broadcast stations and cable systems participating in the State or Local Area EAS must discontinue normal programming and follow the procedures in the State and Local Area Plans.
7. Upon completion of the State and Local Area EAS transmission procedures, resume normal programming until receipt of the cue from the SR or LP sources in your Local Area. Then broadcast the common emergency message. Resume normal programming at the conclusion of the emergency message.