

worldwide to pass emergency messages when normal telecommunications communications systems are destroyed or unavailable. It is available on a 24-hour basis and requires no prior coordination or activation to get messages through. Participating SHARES HF radio stations accept and relay messages until a receiving station is able to deliver the message to the intended addressee.

SHARES HF in Action: SHARES provided critical emergency messaging support during Hurricane Katrina, where system operators facilitated the transmission of approximately 48,000 emergency messages and situation reports between Federal Government representatives. Because the Gulf Coast faced a dire situation, radio operators expanded SHARES' scope to include collecting emergency response and recovery information from non-SHARES stations.

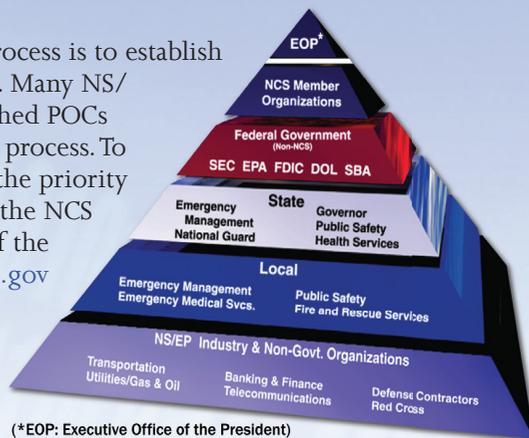
Who Should Enroll in Priority Service Programs?

The NS/EP community spans the Federal, State, and local governments as well as industry partners that are responsible for maintaining the Nation's critical infrastructures. Organizations that rely on telecommunications on a daily basis to provide public health, maintain law and order, ensure public safety, or provide utility service should enroll in these vital priority services.

How to Enroll in Priority Services

GETS and WPS

The first step in the enrollment process is to establish a primary point of contact (POC). Many NS/EP organizations have pre-established POCs who will facilitate the enrollment process. To determine the POC and enroll in the priority services programs, please contact the NCS at (866) NCS-CALL or visit one of the following websites: www.gets.ncs.gov or www.wps.ncs.gov.



(*EOP: Executive Office of the President)

TSP

To determine if the organization qualifies for TSP and to begin the enrollment process, please contact the NCS at (866) NCS-CALL or visit www.tsp.ncs.gov.

SHARES

Prior enrollment in SHARES is not required. For information on accessing SHARES, please contact the NCS at ncsweb1@dhs.gov.

For additional information about the NCS' history, programs, and current engagements, please visit www.ncs.gov.



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National Communications System



Homeland Security



History of the National Communications System (NCS)

President John F. Kennedy established the NCS when he recognized the need for unified and reliable Federal communications infrastructure and services during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. To accomplish this mission, the President charged the NCS with collaborating with its 24 member

Federal departments and agencies to ensure national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications availability for Federal, State, and local governments during routine and crisis situations. The 24 NCS member organizations are:

Department of State	Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Department of the Treasury	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Defense	The Joint Staff
Department of Justice	Central Intelligence Agency
Department of the Interior	General Services Administration
United States Department of Agriculture	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Department of Commerce	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Department of Health and Human Services	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Department of Transportation	National Security Agency
Department of Energy	Federal Reserve Board
Department of Veteran Affairs	Federal Communications Commission
Department of Homeland Security	United States Postal Service

Throughout its 47-year history, the NCS has worked with its government and industry partners to identify communications challenges, mitigate these issues, and respond to crises and disasters. Since its inception, the organization has evolved its scope and organizational model to keep pace with an ever-changing communications and threat environment. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the NCS became a part of the Department of Homeland Security where the NCS continues its mission to ensure critical communications for the Nation in the rapidly evolving communications environment. The NCS' activities and collaboration with its Federal agency partners are described in further detail in the following sections.

NS/EP Communications Framework

The NS/EP Framework includes a number of NCS-led communications responsibilities that enable the Nation to communicate during our most pressing emergencies. These responsibilities include building public-private partnerships across the communications and information technology sectors, advising the President on critical communications issues, and providing NS/EP communications services. These activities focus on preparedness, resiliency, response coordination, and partnerships areas, which are vital to the NCS' efforts to ensure the Nation has the critical communications it needs:

Resiliency	Response Coordination
Supports continuity of critical operations	Coordinates access, fuel, and security to our Federal, State, and local communications partners
Preparedness	Partnerships
Ensures our Nation's NS/EP community is prepared to respond to all hazards	Facilitates technical solutions and bridges the gaps between industry and government

NCS provides essential communications support to the Nation through the following partnerships and programs:

Communications Sector Activities

The Communications Sector is one of 18 critical infrastructure and key resource sectors as identified in Homeland Security Presidential Directive-7. The NCS, as the Communications Sector Specific Agency is responsible for coordinating risk mitigation and protection activities across the public and private sectors. The NCS collaborates with the communications government and sector coordinating councils to provide recommendations to government and private sector stakeholders. Together, these bodies work with State, local, and tribal governments, and industry to develop the Communications Sector-Specific Plan (CSSP). The CSSP outlines the infrastructure protection activities that industry and government partners will undertake to mitigate risks to national communications infrastructure assets and services. The NCS also coordinates the Sector Annual Report, which provides the current priorities of the sector as well as the progress made in following the CSSP. These documents can be found at http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/editorial_0827.shtm.

The President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC)

NSTAC is a Presidentially-designated body of up to 30 chief executive officers from the communications, information technology, and defense industries. The committee receives direction from the Executive Office of the President to examine and assesses NS/EP communications issues and provides the President with private sector recommendations to resolve critical deficiencies or gaps. Recent NSTAC examinations include private and public sector cybersecurity collaboration and communications resilience.

NCS Priority Services Programs

The NCS provides priority services programs to support the NS/EP communications needs of government officials, emergency responders, critical infrastructure, and industry members. The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), Wireless Priority Service (WPS), and Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) are priority service programs involving the telecommunications network. The SHARed RESources (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program is an emergency communications service operating on the HF radio band. All programs ensure key Federal, State, and industry organizations possess communications capabilities during an emergency response incident. Information about each priority service program, and recent examples of the programs in action, are detailed below.

GETS

During emergency events, telephone networks can become congested due to increased call volume. GETS is a nationwide program that provides authorized government and industry users with priority processing over the public landline network. GETS calls are placed in a priority calling queue that routes them to the first available phone line. GETS allows users to communicate even during the highest levels of network congestion, including when network management controls may be in place. GETS is currently provided by the Government at no charge to participants.

GETS in Action: Lauded for providing a 95 percent call completion rate in Washington, DC and New York City during 9/11, and during and after Hurricane Katrina, GETS enabled first responders, Government officials, and industry representatives to communicate during critical restoration efforts.

WPS

WPS is the nationwide wireless priority service program that provides emergency responders and authorized government and industry users with access when the cell networks are saturated from high call volumes. Authorized users enter a unique access code into their cell phones before dialing their destination number, and are then placed into a priority queue to receive the first available cellular channel. WPS subscribers are subject to cellular carrier charges for initial enrollment and monthly subscription, as well as per-minute usage fees.

WPS in Action: Following the 8.0 magnitude earthquake that struck American Samoa on September 29, 2009, the NCS assisted local wireless carriers in deploying WPS capabilities. A Federal Emergency Management Agency team used this capability to maintain cellular connectivity during their response and recovery efforts following the earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

TSP

TSP is a priority restoration and provisioning service sponsored by the Federal Communications Commission and managed by the NCS. The program provides and restores Government and key critical infrastructure communications resources damaged or destroyed during emergency incidents. An organization can only receive a TSP assignment if it maintains services or infrastructures that are considered critical NS/EP communications assets. TSP subscribers are subject to telecommunications carrier charges for initial enrollment and monthly subscription to the service.

TSP in Action: TSP was critical to restoration efforts following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. It ensured focused restoration and provisioning of critical communications resources in New York City's financial district, and helped the Nation avoid economic collapse and continue daily financial activity.

SHARES HF Radio Program

SHARES uses existing HF radio resources to coordinate communications supporting a network of Federal, State and industry organizations