



# Emergency Operations Plan

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ECHO Minnesota  
November 3, 2010

FOR ACTIVATION DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS  
CALL ECHO  
(651) 789-4342

OR

FOR ACTIVATION AFTER HOURS OR FOR PRIORITY SERVICE DURING  
BUSINESS HOURS CALL STATE DUTY OFFICER  
(800) 422-0798  
(651) 649-5451

This plan may be inserted in the Emergency Operations Plans of the local governments, State Duty Officer, State of Minnesota government jurisdictions and agencies, non-profit and other organizations.

**Board Action**  
**Promulgation Statement for Emergency Operations Plan**  
November 3, 2010

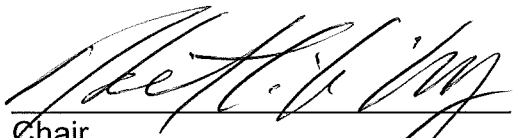
Director Donovan moved that:

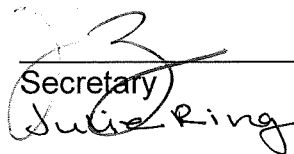
- (1) the Board of ECHO Minnesota approve and adopt the Emergency Operations Plan dated November 3, 2010;
- (2) that the plan supersede and replace all previous plans;
- (3) that the Executive Director be authorized to distribute the plan to local and state governments and non-governmental organizations as may be needed and to develop and implement appendixes, internal plans, procedures, training, testing and plan maintenance required to support the Plan; and
- (4) that use of ECHO resources, including staff and contractors to support and implement emergency operations under this Plan be authorized.

Director  seconded the motion.  
Jim DeBoer

The motion carried on a voice vote and the plan and direction to staff were approved.

Dated: **11.3.2010**

  
Chair  
Kristen Norman-Major

  
Secretary  
Julie Ring

# ECHO Minnesota

*Emergency, Community and Health Outreach*



## **Statement of Approval and Implementation**

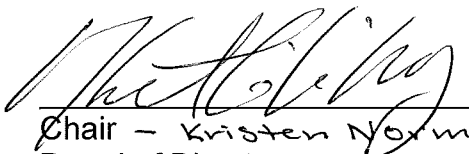
ECHO's mission is to leverage partnerships to deliver vital health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information to help the ever-changing, diverse population integrate and become successful in our communities. With the adoption of this Emergency Operations Plan, ECHO takes the next step in strengthening its position as a reliable, efficient and effective resource that state and local government, nonprofits, the private sector as well as community members can turn to for mitigation efforts, emergency preparedness and response and recovery support.

This plan outlines ECHO's emergency response services, the method of activating these services during an emergency and defines the roles and responsibilities of the jurisdiction requesting services and ECHO staff. It commits ECHO to working within and pursuant to the National Incident Management System, including the Incident Command System.


Pursuant to ECHO Board Action dated November 3, 2010, the ECHO Emergency Operations Plan has been approved and implemented. The plan itself remains a Board document. However, the Board has empowered the Executive Director to develop, approve and modify Procedural Documents such as appendixes, overviews, standard operating procedures (SOPs), field operations guides and job aids. All such documents will be authorized by the Executive Director's signature. Subject to normal

approval processes, ECHO may also enter into contracts, memoranda of understanding or other agreements intended to implement this plan.


The plan itself recognizes that it cannot be completely inflexible; changes may be needed in an emergency. The Emergency Response Coordinator in charge of any activated ECHO emergency response is hereby delegated the authority to modify the plan and related procedural documents if warranted to protect the health, safety and welfare of ECHO staff and contractors, first responders and the public. Such modifications should be made and documented in a process consistent with the Incident Command System. All other modifications to the plan must be approved by the Board and all other modifications to procedural documents by the Executive Director.

  
Chair - Kristen Norman - Major  
Board of Directors  
ECHO Minnesota


Dated: 11-16/10

  
Board Member and Co-Chair - Valerie Donovan  
Activation and Emergency Response  
Committee  
ECHO Minnesota

Dated: 16-Nov-10

  
Board Member and Co-Chair - William Belknap  
Activation and Emergency Response  
Committee  
ECHO Minnesota

Dated: 11-12-10

  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Lillian McDonald  
Board of Directors  
ECHO Minnesota

Dated: 11.3.10





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## A. Purpose

This plan documents how ECHO will communicate emergency information provided by local and state government, the private sector and/or community organizations to limited English-proficiency populations in the event of an emergency or disaster.

This includes the activation, operation and demobilization of ECHO services and the network of public health and safety agencies, ethnic advisory organizations and nonprofit groups who distribute information to persons of limited English-proficiency during a disaster or other emergency.

**For general information about ECHO, a description of the services and tools ECHO offers, the language communities ECHO serves and the distinction between emergency and non-emergency operations, see Appendix and ECHO's website:**

[www.echominnesota.org](http://www.echominnesota.org)

Emergency response often occurs outside of normal business hours and requires action that is outside of normal business procedures. This may result from:

- the timing of the response (after business hours); and/or
- the need for immediate communication with ECHO (emergency contact with staff); and/or
- the need for expedited or enhanced service levels (drawing on reserve or stand-by capabilities).

This plan outlines the circumstances and procedures under which ECHO services may be accessed under these conditions. It allows for the efficient handling or requests for services not made in the ordinary course of business.

This plan distinguishes between ECHO's day-to-day operations in the ordinary course of business and ECHO's operations in response to an incident or emergency. Clients may use ECHO services in all phases of the emergency management cycle - in support of mitigation efforts, preparedness activities, response operations and in recovery.

However, the nature of a response creates the need for clear, specific procedures to handle emergent needs. Therefore, a specific plan is needed to establish and document these procedures -- for users of ECHO services and for ECHO staff.

## **B. Scope**

This plan is intended for state or local government officials, or leaders of non-profit, community or business organizations in the response phase of an emergency or disaster where ECHO services, products or capabilities can enhance communication with persons of limited English proficiency.

The plan is intended for use in an “emergency” -- circumstances where request for ECHO services cannot be handled in the ordinary course of business due to (1) the timing of the request; (2) the need for immediate contact with ECHO staff; (3) the need for expedited or enhanced service levels; and/or (4) other emergent circumstances.

**Service requests which can be handled in the ordinary course of business need not use the procedures established by this plan. Please contact ECHO staff directly during regular business hours and they will assist you.**

This plan describes ECHO’s intended procedures and policies in response to an emergency request. This plan does not document or recommend the procedures that government agencies or jurisdictions will use to develop and approve any message released to ECHO for services.

Notwithstanding the use of the words “shall”, “will” or “must” this plan is intended to be a guide and the ECHO Emergency Response Coordinator may, in the exercise of his or her best judgment, vary from this plan.

This plan (and specifically the Field Operations Guide contained herein) is designed to be included in jurisdictional Emergency Operations or Emergency Communications Plans for purposes of reference and guidance in selecting and accessing ECHO services.

**ECHO staff are available, before a response, to assist jurisdictions with integrating this plan into their internal plans and procedures. Contact ECHO staff directly for assistance.**

## **C. Situation**

In pursuing its mission to protect the public’s health, safety and welfare, state and local government must be able to communicate with the public -- especially in response to an emergency. Other institutions including community organizations, non-profits and businesses may also have the need for emergency communications. Language and cultural barriers can impede this communication. The State of Minnesota is home to a significant number of persons for whom English is not a primary language. ECHO is one resource helping government and other responders overcome language and culture barriers and better serve this segment of the population in an emergency.

Currently, Minnesota is home to limited English-proficient populations whose first language includes Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Lao, Karen, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Oromo and Khmer. Using ECHO services can help communicate official emergency information to these populations through trusted, culturally-appropriate, recognizable networks and channels. This helps government better serve all people and to empower everyone to work together with government in emergency response.

ECHO's mission is "to leverage partnerships to deliver vital health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information to help the ever-changing, diverse population integrate and become successful in our communities."

ECHO partners with local and state health and safety agencies from cities and counties throughout the State of Minnesota as well as the business community and non-profit organizations to provide outreach and services to limited English-proficiency persons in their community to ensure that they receive life-saving health, safety and emergency information in languages they understand best.

This plan is needed to define the ECHO services which may be available to government in an emergency and to establish the procedure for accessing those services.

#### **D. Assumptions**

Incident response will be based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used at all levels of response.

The Incident Commander has activated a Public Information Officer under ICS<sup>1</sup>.

State Duty Officer is available to receive and dispatch activation requests.

Communication systems among incident command, the State Duty Officer and ECHO are functional and available.

ECHO staff is available 24x7 to receive and manage activation and service requests.

Translators for the needed languages are available and will respond to an activation.

ECHO communication tools (web, telephone, television, partner relays, etc.) and the networks upon which they depend are functional and available.

Appropriate government authorities create, approve and release the content that ECHO distributes through its network.

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<sup>1</sup> This plan will assume that the on-scene Incident Command Structure has been expanded to include the Public Information Officer function. If not, under ICS, the Incident Commander will retain this function and will be the contact for ECHO.

The person requesting ECHO services has established express authority from his or her agency to disseminate information through ECHO.

Requesting organizations have the authority to enter into a valid contract with ECHO to provide services hereunder.

Requesting organizations have the resources to pay for ECHO services based on the Fee Schedule in effect at the time of the request.

For purposes of style and document coherence, this plan will refer to the Public Information Officer (PIO) as the principal link between the officials in charge of the jurisdiction's response to the emergency (incident command) and ECHO. Nothing in this plan prevents ECHO from working with a state or local government official who is not designated a "Public Information Officer" so long as that person has express or implied authority from the jurisdiction's official in charge of the response to serve the functions of a Public Information Officer.

## **E. Concept of Operations, Direction and Control**

### **1. Jurisdictional Scope**

ECHO emergency services may be activated for an emergency response and accessed by any authorized state agency or local government entity within the State of Minnesota without the need for a preexisting agreement, subject to availability of ECHO resources. ECHO is also available to community organizations, faith-based organizations, educational organizations, non-profits and the business community.

### **2. Standard for Activation**

ECHO may be activated, for an emergency or non-emergency situation in connection with any incident that:

- involves a threat to the health or safety of the public; or
- may require public protective actions; or
- is likely to generate extensive media coverage or widespread public concern; or
- is likely to have a unique impact on communities or populations with limited English proficiency.

ECHO may be activated on an **emergency** basis (not in the ordinary course of business) in order to protect the life, health or safety of the public or to protect property or the environment:

- if the request for ECHO services must be handled outside of regular business hours; and/or
- where expedited contact with ECHO staff is warranted; and/or
- where expedited or enhanced service levels will be needed to support the request.

If the above emergency standards do not apply, the Public Information Officer may still contact ECHO for assistance during normal business hours by calling ECHO directly.

### 3. Notification and Alert Procedure

If an Incident Commander (or, within an expanded ICS structure, the Public Information Officer)<sup>2</sup> determines that it is necessary to provide emergency communications to persons with limited English proficiency, the Public Information Officer may request an ECHO activation.

Depending on the circumstances, ECHO resources may or may not be available to provide any or all services to more than one incident. In this event, requests shall be handled in the order received or pursuant to adopted ECHO policy.

#### a. Authority

A request for ECHO activation must be approved in accordance with the responding jurisdiction's procedures and authorities. The person requesting activation may be asked to verify, via a signed authorization or otherwise, that he or she has the jurisdiction's or incident command's actual authority to activate ECHO and approve any messages sent to ECHO for service.

#### b. Point of Contact

ECHO has designated the **State Duty Officer** as the single point of contact for contacting ECHO **in an emergency** as defined above.

**State Duty Officer (800) 422-0798 or (651) 649-5451**

This designation is for contact purposes only; to maintain a continuously-staffed, "one call" connection to ECHO. The State Duty Officer will have instructions on how to contact on-call ECHO staff.

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<sup>2</sup> This plan will assume that the on-scene Incident Command Structure has been expanded to include the Public Information Officer function. If not, under ICS, the Incident Commander will retain this function and will be the contact for ECHO.

Use of the State Duty Officer as a call center does not imply that the emergency must be state-wide or have state government involvement. Local **emergency** requests should be submitted through this phone number.

**Non-emergency requests (those not meeting the criteria above) may be handled by calling ECHO directly at (651) 789-4342.**

c. Request for Activation

To request an emergency ECHO activation, the Public Information Officer will contact the State Duty Officer and request activation. If an Emergency Operations Center or other Multiagency Coordination System element is activated to support the response, that element or its Public Information Officer may also activate ECHO through the Duty Officer.

d. Actions Following Alert

The Duty Officer shall alert the on-call ECHO Emergency Response Coordinator and provide the Emergency Response Coordinator with available information including the contact information for the requesting agency. The Emergency Response Coordinator shall place ECHO's translators and distribution chain on "standby" to process an emergency message. The Emergency Response Coordinator shall establish communications with the Public Information Officer and confirm activation and standby status. The Emergency Response Coordinator shall stand by to receive and process the message.

See Appendix ECHO Field Operations Guide for a guide to ECHO activation and procedures. See Appendix Emergency Activation Flow Chart for a graphic representation of this process.

#### **4. ECHO Emergency Operations**

a. Emergency Response Coordinator

The on-call ECHO Emergency Response Coordinator shall be a pre-designated ECHO staff member as established by ECHO staffing schedules and plans. ECHO standard operating guidelines shall establish the means by which the State Duty Officer contacts the on-call Emergency Response Coordinator.

b. Timing

Note that due to the need to call-up staff and contractors to provide service, ECHO services may not be immediately available. ECHO estimates that it may require up to four (4) hours after notification by the State Duty Officer to stand up full capabilities.

ECHO products have different times for turn-around and delivery based on emergency needs and resource availability. The ECHO Emergency Response Coordinator will consult with the Public Information Officer to establish applicable timelines. See Appendix for further information on projected time frames applicable to various ECHO products and services.

c. Cost of Response

The requesting organization must enter into a contract for ECHO's services which establishes the rate of reimbursement for ECHO services. See Administration, Finance and Logistics section and current Fee Schedule.

d. Message Planning

The Public Information Officer shall follow his or her jurisdiction's internal procedure for developing and approving the message to be processed by ECHO. This may include an alert to the jurisdiction's Special Populations Coordinator, health educators, clinics or other staff or sections working closely with limited English-proficiency populations.

In addition, the incident commander may need to approve the message and may need to work with any established unified command.

The message shall be composed or attached to a completed General Message form (ICS 213) and/or in accordance with the ECHO Field Operations Guide.

e. Transmission to ECHO

When the message is approved, the Public Information Officer will transmit the message to ECHO via best available means. ECHO shall confirm receipt and good copy of the message's content.

Standard Transmission:

Messages should be sent to ECHO as follows:

1. Transmit message via e-mail directed to [emergency@echominnesota.org](mailto:emergency@echominnesota.org)

This address is available in an ECHO activation only.

-- OR --

2. Send a legible FAX copy of the message to:

(651) 224-6540

Whether a message is sent by e-mail or sent by fax, the Emergency Response Coordinator shall confirm receipt of the message by telephone contact with the sender.

f. Coordinator's Duties

The Emergency Response Coordinator will send the message to appropriate translation staff and shall oversee translation and distribution of the message by any or all of the available requested ECHO Services.

The Emergency Response Coordinator shall:

1. activate and demobilize ECHO staff, contractors and networks;
2. assume overall responsibility for managing ECHO's services, staff, contractors, networks and other resources during an activated response;
3. serve as the principal contact with on-scene incident command and any multiagency coordination systems;
4. effectively transfer project direction to the next Emergency Response Coordinator in the event of extended incidents;
5. provide the Incident Commander or Public Information Officer with copies of any written materials produced by ECHO and, when possible, copies of any other format in which the message was produced;
6. confirm message release and establish message distribution schedule with Incident Commander or Public Information Officer;
7. release message on schedule in approved formats; and
8. maintain a Unit Log (ICS 214) documenting contractors, staff and major actions taken by ECHO and provide a copy of the Unit Log to incident command as requested.

g. Ongoing Operations

ECHO and the Public Information Officer shall monitor audiences and partners to receive feedback and understand communication and community needs. ECHO may recommend or advise the Public Information Officer on alternative communication strategies.

The Public Information Officer shall advise the Emergency Response Coordinator on the status of the emergency or disaster and the likely need for additional ECHO services as may be needed. ECHO shall advise incident

command of any transfer of responsibilities from one Emergency Response Coordinator to another during the incident.

For incidents that go beyond one operational period and incident command determines that ongoing ECHO support will be needed, the Public Information Officer shall provide the Emergency Response Coordinator with a copy of the Incident Action Plan including any Communications Plan (ICS 205).

## **5. Demobilization**

When the Emergency Response Coordinator determines that ECHO may stand down, he or she will advise the Public Information Officer and release staff and contractors as needed to complete, wind-up and shut down the operation including any debriefings, “hotwashes” or after-action reviews.

The Emergency Response Coordinator shall collect all documentation related to ECHO’s services, work-product, staff and contractors activated and the time and costs involved and shall provide a copy to the Public Information Officer or as otherwise directed by incident command.

## **6. Return to Readiness**

ECHO’s Executive Director shall direct any return-to readiness efforts needed and shall notify the State Duty Officer when ECHO is again available for service.

# **F. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **1. Requesting Organization**

- Establishes authority to engage ECHO and enters into contract for services
- Assumes or assigns PIO functions
- Requests ECHO activation
- Originates and approves message content
- Keeps ECHO informed as to situation and projected service needs
- Provides incident documentation such as Incident Action Plan
- Pays for ECHO services per preexisting or new contract

## **2. State Duty Officer**

- Serves as 24x7 emergency point of contact

- Relays request to ECHO

### **3. ECHO Emergency Response Coordinator**

- Receives and acts on request for activation
- Establishes contractual relationship if not pre-existing
- Supervises translation and message development
- Coordinates release of message through ECHO tools and services
- Monitors situation and coordinates with Requesting Organization for ongoing operations
- Maintains appropriate service documentation
- Determines need for and implements ECHO demobilization
- Leads ECHO response evaluation, captures lessons learned for future planning

### **4. ECHO Executive Director**

- Leads return to readiness efforts
- notifies State Duty Officer when ECHO is in service

## **G. Administration, Finance, Logistics**

### **1. Procedural Documents**

ECHO procedures to implement the Concept of Operations may be documented in procedural documents such as appendixes to this plan, Overviews, Standard Operating Procedures and Field Operations Guides as may be approved by the ECHO Executive Director.

### **2. Contracts, Paying for ECHO Services**

ECHO services are provided to a requesting organization based on a contractual relationship whether entered into at the time of the request or beforehand.

ECHO maintains a Fee Schedule for its services and the terms of the current Fee Schedule will be adopted into the contract.

If the requesting jurisdiction will incur any costs for the services, the Emergency Response Coordinator will advise the Public Information Officer of such costs or a good faith estimate. The Public Information Officer may approve the cost or estimate, if any, and if so ECHO will take further action. If the Public Information Officer does not approve the cost, ECHO will take no further action and will, if requested, work with the Public Information Officer to find services or products which are consistent with the Public Information Officer's expenditure authority.

### **3. Language Services**

ECHO translation and ethnic/community outreach services are provided primarily through a network of on-call independent contractors.

The availability of ECHO translation and ethnic/community outreach services will depend on the availability of translators/spokespeople to perform the services and technical tools (such as appropriate fonts) that are required to perform the work. Accordingly, it will be easier to translate more common languages (e.g., Spanish, Hmong and Somali) than less common languages.

ECHO will maintain a list of currently available languages as part of the Appendix to this plan ECHO Field Operations Guide and schedule of services.

### **4. Records**

ECHO will track service requests and maintain records documenting the services provided and the cost thereof. ECHO will make these records available to the activating agency or jurisdiction to support any effort to recover costs of incident response.

## **H. Plan Development and Maintenance**

### **Planning Process**

ECHO's planning process is overseen by the Board's Activation and Response Committee and implemented by the Executive Director. The plan is developed with input from community stakeholders including ethnic community leaders and state and local government personnel (including public health and emergency management).

The Executive Director has the authority to develop and implement Procedural Documents with input and advice from the Board and other stakeholders.

Overall planning and coordination as well as development and implementation of a training, testing and exercising cycle are assigned to the Executive Director.

This plan will be reviewed and updated no less than annually and after every activation.

### **Annexes and Appendixes**

At the direction of the Executive Director, Annexes and/or Appendixes which are not inconsistent with this plan may be attached to the plan without additional board action. These may include, but are not limited to, field operations guides, standard operating procedures, maps, charts, call-down lists, charts, tables, forms, job aids and checklists.

## **Amendments**

Except in the course of an emergency response, a board action will be required to amend the plan and a copy of that board action shall be included with the amended plan.

A new Statement of Approval and Implementation must be prepared and signed if there are changes in any of the signatories to the Statement.

## **I. Authorities and References**

ECHO Board Action dated November 3, 2010 adopting Plan.

FEMA, *Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans -- Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101* (March, 2009).

FEMA, *National Response Framework* (January, 2008).

FEMA, *National Incident Management System* (December, 2008).