USER ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE AND WIRELESS PRIORITY SERVICE

Introduction

The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) and Wireless Priority Service (WPS) support national leadership; Federal, State, local and tribal governments; and other authorized national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) users. GETS provides priority access and prioritized processing in landline networks, and WPS provides the same in all nationwide and several regional cellular networks. GETS and WPS are intended to be used in an emergency when the landline or wireless networks are congested and the probability of completing a normal call is reduced.
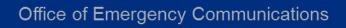
This document is directed to organizations using GETS / WPS and provides general information about:

- Point of Contact (POC) responsibilities
- Requesting service
- Event preparation
- Training and exercises
- Usage reports and billing
- Fraud and abuse
- Facility telecommunications management
- User responsibilities

Participating user organizations should incorporate this information in operational or contingency telecommunications plans.

POC Responsibilities

Each user organization is responsible for designating a POC, and, optionally, an alternate POC, to manage its GETS and WPS accounts. POCs make decisions regarding GETS and WPS user authorization and administration. Organizations should select POCs that have the authority or have clear guidance from the appropriate authority within the organization to make decisions regarding GETS and WPS. The primary POC should be able to perform routine GETS / WPS account maintenance, including:

- Requesting GETS and WPS service for new users, and managing current GETS and WPS users. POCs are required to cancel GETS cards when they are no longer in use.
- Reviewing GETS and WPS Usage Reports (e.g., Call Detail Records)
- Validating the accuracy of their GETS and WPS subscriber list on an annual basis

The primary POC must fulfil these responsibilities Organizations may designate an alternate POC who does not perform these function on a regular basis. The alternate POC is appropriate for senior managers or policy makers who primarily want to stay current with GETS and WPS updates, but do not complete the administration tasks required by the primary POC. Routine account correspondence will be sent to both POCs, though ad hoc questions will generally be directed just to the primary POC.

> **Best Practice**
> GETS and WPS POCs are responsible for managing their organization's users. GETS and WPS administration should be linked to human resources processes. If an employee's job change affects his or her need for GETS and/or WPS, request or delete service as appropriate.

Requesting Service

Each user organization is responsible for determining who should receive GETS and WPS. These individuals or positions typically require communications in order to implement emergency contingency plans and disseminate critical information. There are no specific limits to the number of GETS cards or WPS subscriptions an organization can request. However, each GETS and WPS user must support an NS/EP function and fulfil the eligibility criteria (see www.dhs.gov/publication/getswps-documents for GETS and WPS eligibility criteria).

The POC will submit an online request for each user to the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Emergency Communications (OEC). OEC will also accept requests using a preformatted spreadsheet. Please note that OEC will not accept classified personnel information. Contact the DHS Priority Telecommunications Service Center at 866-627-2255 or 703-676-2255 to receive a preformatted request spreadsheet or to arrange for handling of sensitive information.

> **Best Practice**
> When submitting requests, large organizations should separate related users into groups based on their functions. For example, a county government POC with users in the fire, police, and public works departments can indicate each user's department. All account reports would group the fire department users together, the police department users together.

Requesting GETS

GETS requests can be submitted for the following.

- **An individual:** POCs should provide the name of the requesting individual. The individual can continue to use the card in a new position as long as that position supports an NS/EP mission.
- **A position**: The service will be assigned to a permanent position, by title, for example, "Communications Director," or to a position where multiple people rotate through a schedule and only need the service while on duty, for example, "Dispatch Officer."

- **Stockpile:** Stockpile GETS cards serve as back-up supplement for cards issued to individuals or positions. In general, stockpile cards should not exceed 10% of an organization's overall subscribers.

Requesting WPS

WPS can be requested for any wireless phone offered by a participating WPS service provider (please visit www.dhs.gov/wps-carriers for a list of WPS carriers). A WPS enabled phone can be owned by a company, government entity, or private citizen, if the following requirements are met:

- The person using the phone is eligible for WPS. WPS can be requested for an individual or a position (see previous section for details)
- The person authorizing payment for use of the phone is willing to accept WPS-related charges (see www.dhs.gov/wps-costs). For government or company-issued phones, the person paying the bills should be aware of changes to the account. For personal phones, organizations need to determine whether to reimburse the owner for WPS-related charges.
- The phone has a regular monthly plan with a participating WPS carrier. Pre-paid plans are not eligible for WPS. Also note that WPS is for voice calls and is not compatible with wireless broadband devices, commonly referred to as broadband or wireless air cards.

When requesting WPS for an individual or a position, it is highly recommended that POCs also request GETS for that person/position as part of the same request. This provides three advantages:

1. WPS dialing instructions appear on the back of the GETS card.
2. GETS can provide priority on an available landline phone if cellular networks are unavailable or the user's cell phone has a dead battery.
3. In some cases, using WPS and GETS together can improve the probability of call completion. To make such a call from a WPS-enabled device, dial *272, then enter the GETS access number + SEND, and follow normal GETS dialing procedures. Additional instructions on making a combined GETS-WPS call can be found here: http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FINAL%20Making%20a%20Combined%20WPS%20and%20GETS%20Call%20050313.pdf

Report Changes to WPS Phones

Changes to WPS-enabled devices and accounts may result in the unintended removal of WPS service from active devices. POCs should log in to the GETS or WPS website to report changes to:

- Service provider;
- Phone number; and,
- Account number.

When simply upgrading to a new wireless device or phone, wireless carriers will typically automatically transfer WPS to the new device. To verify that WPS has been transferred to the new device following the upgrade, users should make a test WPS call on the new device. If the call does not go through, call the 24-Hour Assistance line at 800-818-4387 to report the problem.

Event Preparation

GETS and WPS users should carry their GETS cards and WPS-enabled phones with them at all times. During an emergency, GETS cards and WPS-enabled phones left in safes, file cabinets, or desk drawers may be unreachable or forgotten during a crisis situation. Further, even if GETS and WPS are successfully distributed during an emergency, it may be too late to train users or troubleshoot potential problems. Therefore, OEC strongly encourages authorized personnel to carry their GETS cards and WPS-enabled phone at all times.

In preparation for a planned NS/EP event, organizations sometimes decide to expand their participation in GETS / WPS. Organizations should allow enough time for activation and delivery of the service. As a general rule, allow one to two weeks before delivery of new GETS cards or activation of WPS. If it is necessary to expedite the provisioning processes, contact the DHS Priority Telecommunications Service Center at 866-627-2255 or 703-676-2255.

> **Best Practices**
> - Carry your GETS card and WPS phone at all times
> - Make regular familiarization calls
> - Memorize your GETS PIN number
> - Report any problems to 800-818-4387

In an emergency, a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for a stockpile GETS card may be distributed by express mail, telephone, e-mail, or fax. When issuing a stockpile card to an individual for long-term use, the POC should inform OEC by updating the card's online record. If the individual is not going to keep the GETS card, cancel it after the emergency is over.

In exceptional cases, users may share a GETS PIN with another member of the NS/EP community to support an active emergency. Because the shared use of the PIN may trigger fraud monitoring, it is recommended that users notify the 24-Hour Assistance line, 1-800-818-4387 or 703-818-4387, and the organization's POC as soon as possible. This will help prevent inadvertent termination of the GETS card for suspected fraudulent activity. Following the end of the emergency, the POC should cancel the shared GETS card and request new or replacement cards as needed.

Training and Exercises

All new users will receive an information packet with detailed GETS dialing instructions with their new GETS cards. Similarly, upon activation of WPS on a new device, the POC will receive email confirmation with WPS dialing instructions. The individual user will receive a similar email confirmation if the request included the user's email address. User organizations should review these training materials to determine whether to include them in the organization's contingency planning documents. Organizations may also need to compare the materials against site-specific calling instructions or policies.

All GETS and WPS users should make familiarization calls to the Familiarization Line (703-818-3924) upon receipt of the service and quarterly thereafter. Making familiarization calls helps users gain and retain familiarity with how to use the services, and it also helps ensure that the phones and networks the user is likely to use in an emergency are properly configured. Making familiarization calls will help reduce the occurrence of misdials, which are a significant source of incomplete GETS and WPS calls during major emergency events. Users should report any troubles using the services to the 24-Hour Assistance line, 800-818-4387 or 703-818-4387.

For additional training, use GETS and WPS when making calls during exercises. This allows organizations to evaluate user proficiency with the services and to verify the effectiveness of organizational GETS and WPS procedures. When possible, advise OEC before conducting an exercise to ensure that GETS calls are not construed as fraud or abuse because of the increased volume of calls. Upon completion of an exercise, report any problems to the 24-Hour Assistance line, 1-800-818-4387 or 703-818-4387. This will aid in ensuring proper GETS and WPS performance in future exercises or actual NS/EP operations.

Call Detail Records and Billing

OEC sends monthly emails to all POCs advising them that they can log into the GETS website to view call detail records (CDRs) for GETS calls made during the previous calendar month. These reports list the GETS PIN, destination number, origination number, time and day of call, call duration, and cost of the call. POCs are required to log in to review these records and accept these reports. Though these reports identify GETS usage and cost, they are not bills. There is no charge to subscribe to GETS; the only charge for GETS is usage. GETS calls are currently billed at a rate of 7 to 10 cents per minute (depending on carrier and other factors) for calls within the United States and its territories, Canada, and most of the Caribbean. For additional information on GETS costs, please visit www.dhs.gov/gets-costs.

WPS calling records appear in the monthly bills sent by the wireless service providers to the owner of the WPS-enabled phone. WPS subscribers are responsible for any cellular carrier charges for initial enrollment and monthly subscription, as well as per minute usage fees. Additional information can be found at www.dhs.gov/wps-costs.

Fraud and Abuse

GETS cards and WPS-enabled phones must be protected from unauthorized access and fraudulent use. Each organization should develop policies and implement procedures to ensure this protection.

All GETS calls undergo real-time monitoring to detect unusual usage and potential instances of fraud and abuse. Fraud is defined as the use of GETS by person(s) who are not authorized to use the service. Abuse is defined as the misuse of a GETS card by a GETS user for personal or non-official business calls. When appropriate, GETS representatives will contact a POC to determine if the reported activity is legitimate. POCs should review the monthly GETS CDRs to identify users who may be misusing or abusing the service.

Facility Telecommunications Management

The GETS capability is based in the public wireline telephone networks, i.e., the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). Access to the PSTN and to the local telephone company end office is the responsibility of the user organization, and must be addressed for each location where the organization's users are expected to perform NS/EP functions. In some cases, it may be necessary to modify facility telecommunications equipment to allow GETS access. Further information about this appears in a separate document titled Facility Telecommunications Management for the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service.

GETS and WPS User Responsibilities

GETS and WPS users are required to become familiar with how to use GETS and WPS and to safeguard the GETS cards and WPS-enabled devices. Users should make a familiarization call upon receipt of service and quarterly thereafter. Users can call any number for a short-duration test call, as long as the destination number is not one that you can also dial using just a local extension. A Familiarization Line, 703-818-3924, is also available 24x7 for these calls. To make a familiarization call, follow these steps:

- GETS:
    - o Dial 1+710-627-4387;
    - o after tone prompt, enter GETS PIN number;
    - o after voice prompt, enter destination number (recommended: 703-818-3924). (Note: Users should not make test calls from their office back to a number in the same office as this can lead to call termination problems.)
- WPS:
    - o Dial *272 + destination number (recommended: 703-818-3924) + SEND

To prevent fraud, users should immediately report a lost or compromised GETS card or PIN directly to the 24-Hour Assistance line, 800-818-4387 or 703-818-4387, and follow up with a report to the user's POC. If it becomes necessary to refer to the GETS PIN, use only the first eight digits, which are unique to the individual.

When a user's job responsibilities no longer require GETS and/or WPS, that person should notify the POC to cancel those services. After cancelling, it is not necessary to return GETS cards to OEC; instead users are requested to follow their office's procedures for disposing of any sensitive document.