



# Office of Emergency Communications Telecommunications Service Priority Operations Guide

December 2016

## Telecommunications Service Priority System for National Security Emergency Preparedness

1. Purpose. This operations guide implements policy, explains legal and regulatory basis, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures for the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) System for National Security Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP).
2. Applicability.
  - a. This operations guide is binding upon the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) and other affected Executive entities.
  - b. This operations guide applies to NS/EP telecommunications services for which initial or revised priority level assignments are requested pursuant to paragraph 12 of this operations guide.
3. Authority. This operations guide is issued under the following authorities:
  - a. Section 706 of the *Communications Act of 1934*, as amended (Title 47, United States Code, Section 606);
  - b. Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 64, Appendix A, *Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) System for National Security Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP)*.
  - c. Executive Order (E.O.) 13618, *Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions*
4. References.

- a. *Communications Act of 1934*, as amended (Title 47, United States Code, Section 151, et seq.).
  - b. *Defense Production Act of 1950*, as amended (Title 50, United States Code Appendix, Section 2061, et seq.).
  - c. *Disaster Relief Act* (Title 42, United States Code, Section 5121, et seq.).
  - d. *Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)*, (Title 50, United States Code, Section 1801, et seq. and Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2511, 2518, and 2519) as amended.
  - e. Title 47, CFR, Part 64, Appendix A.
  - f. *Defense Priorities and Allocation System* (Title 15, CFR, Part 700).
  - g. Executive Order (E.O.) 12472, *Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions*, April 3, 1984, 49 Federal Register 13471 (1984) as amended by E.O. 13286 of February 28, 2003 *Amendment of Executive Orders, and Other Actions, in Connection With the Transfer of Certain Functions to the Secretary of Homeland Security*
5. Cancellation and/or Supersession. NCS Directive 3-1, *Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) System for National Security Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP)*, August 10, 2000, is hereby superseded by, and canceled under the authority of this operations guide on its effective date.
6. Definitions. See Appendix A.
7. Scope of the NS/EP TSP System.
- a. Domestic NS/EP Services. The NS/EP TSP System and procedures established in Title 47, CFR, Part 64 and in this operations guide authorize priority treatment to the following domestic telecommunications services (including portions of U.S. international telecommunications services provided by U.S. vendors) for which provisioning or restoration priority levels are requested, assigned, and approved in accordance with this operations guide and any implementing guides:
    - 1) Common carrier services which are:
      - a) Interstate or foreign telecommunications services.

- b) Intrastate telecommunications services inseparable from interstate or foreign telecommunications services, and intrastate telecommunications services to which priority levels are assigned pursuant to paragraph 13 of this operations guide.
- 2) Services which are provided by Government and/or non-common carriers and are interconnected to carrier-provided services assigned a priority level pursuant to paragraph 13 of this operations guide.
- b. Control Services and Orderwires. The NS/EP TSP System and procedures implemented in this operations guide are not applicable to authorize priority treatment to control services or orderwires owned by a service vendor and needed for provisioning, restoration, or maintenance of other services owned by that vendor. Such control services and orderwires shall have priority of provisioning and restoration over all other telecommunications services (including NS/EP services) and shall be exempt from preemption. However, the NS/EP TSP System and procedures implemented in this operations guide are applicable to control services or orderwires leased by a service vendor or user from another service vendor.
- c. Other Services. The NS/EP TSP System may apply, at the discretion of and upon special arrangements by the entities involved, to authorize priority treatment to the following telecommunications services:
- 1) Government or non-common carrier services not connected to common carrier-provided services are assigned a priority level pursuant to paragraph 13 of this operations guide.
  - 2) Portions of U.S. international services which are provided by foreign correspondents. (U.S. telecommunication service vendors are encouraged to ensure that relevant operating arrangements are consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the NS/EP TSP System. If such arrangements do not exist, U.S. telecommunication service vendors should handle service provisioning and/or restoration in accordance with any system acceptable to their foreign correspondents which comes closest to meeting the procedures established in this operations guide.)
- d. Sub-priority and Precedence Systems. Service users may implement sub-priority and/or precedence systems that are consistent and do not conflict with the NS/EP TSP System.

8. Policy. The NS/EP TSP System is the regulatory, administrative, and operational system authorizing and providing for priority treatment (i.e., provisioning and restoration) of NS/EP telecommunications services (see definition in Appendix A). As such, it establishes the framework for NS/EP telecommunications service vendors to provision, restore, or otherwise act on a priority basis to ensure effective NS/EP telecommunications services. The NS/EP TSP System allows the assignment of priority levels to any NS/EP service across three time periods or stress conditions: Peacetime/Crisis/Mobilization, Attack/War, and Post-Attack/Recovery. Although priority levels normally will be assigned by the Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) and retained by service vendors only for the current time period, they may be pre-assigned for the other two time periods at the request of service users who are able to identify and justify in advance, their wartime or post-attack NS/EP telecommunication requirements. Absent such pre-assigned priority levels for the Attack/War and Post-Attack/Recovery periods, priority level assignments for the Peacetime/Crisis/Mobilization period will remain in effect. At all times, priority level assignments will be subject to revision by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Director, OEC, based upon changing NS/EP needs. No other system of telecommunications service priorities that conflicts with the NS/EP TSP System is authorized.
9. Legal Basis for the NS/EP TSP System. The laws and regulations authorizing the NS/EP TSP System are those cited above in paragraphs 3 and 4.
  - a. Communications Act of 1934. Sections 1, 4(l), and 201 through 205 and 303(r) of the *Communications Act of 1934* grant to the FCC the authority over assignment and approval of priorities for provisioning and restoration of common carrier-provided telecommunications services. “Under Section 706 of the *Communications Act of 1934*, this authority may be superseded, and expanded to include privately owned telecommunications services, by the war emergency powers of the President of the United States.”
  - b. E.O. 13618, *Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions*. E.O. 13618 identifies the NS/EP communications functions necessary for the Federal government. It states that “The Federal government must have the ability to communicate at all times and under all circumstances to carry out its most critical and time sensitive missions. Survivable, resilient, enduring, and effective communications, both domestic and international, are essential to enable the executive branch to communicate within itself and with: the legislative and judicial branches; State, local, territorial, and tribal governments; private sector entities; and the public, allies, and other nations. Such communications must be possible under all circumstances to ensure national security, effectively manage emergencies, and improve national resilience.”

- c. Defense Production Act. The *Defense Production Act of 1950* authorizes the President to require the priority performance of contracts and orders necessary to promote national defense. It also authorizes the President to allocate materials and facilities as necessary to promote national defense. Pursuant to the *Defense Production Act of 1950*, regulations promulgated by the Department of Commerce in the Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS) permit the assignment of priority ratings to equipment associated with NS/EP telecommunications services warranting priority treatment, if they support authorized programs under Schedule I of the DPAS.
- d. Contracts. NS/EP telecommunications service users may also employ contractual mechanisms to obtain the priority provisioning or restoration of service, including customer premises equipment and wiring. However, any such contractual arrangements must be consistent with NS/EP TSP System rules and regulations, including any priority order of provisioning and restoration assigned in accordance with the NS/EP TSP System.

#### 10. Responsibilities.

- a. FCC. As authorized by the *Communications Act of 1934*, the FCC will:
  - 1) Provide regulatory oversight of implementation of the NS/EP TSP System.
  - 2) Enforce NS/EP TSP System rules and regulations which are contained in Title 47, CFR, Part 64.
  - 3) Act as final authority for approval, revision, or disapproval of priority actions by the Director, OEC, and adjudicate disputes regarding either priority actions or denials of requests for priority actions by the Director, OEC.
  - 4) Function (on a discretionary basis) as a sponsoring Federal organization (see paragraph 10d below).
- b. Director, OEC. The Director, OEC, will:
  - 1) Implement the NS/EP TSP System under the oversight of the FCC.
  - 2) Administer the NS/EP TSP System, which includes:
    - a) Receiving, processing, and evaluating requests for priority actions from service users, or sponsoring Federal

Government organizations on behalf of service users (e.g., Departments of State (DOS) or Department of Defense (DOD) on behalf of foreign governments, the OEC on behalf of State and local governments, and any Federal organization on behalf of private industry entities). Action on such requests will be completed within 30 days of receipt.

- b) Assigning, revising, revalidating, or revoking priority levels as necessary or upon request of service users concerned, and denying requests for priority actions as necessary, in accordance with paragraph 16 of this operations guide. Notification of priority actions or denials of requests for priority actions will be forwarded to the requesting entities for disposition. Under circumstances short of exercising the Presidential war emergency powers under Section 706 of the *Communications Act of 1934* with time permitting, coordinate such changes in priority level assignments in advance with requesting and/or affected parties. Action on such requests will be completed within 30 days of receipt.
- c) Maintaining data on priority level assignments.
- d) Periodically initiating reconciliation.
- e) Testing and evaluating the NS/EP TSP System for effectiveness.
- f) Conducting audits as necessary. Any TSP System user, Federal Sponsoring Organization, or oversight organization may request the Director, OEC to conduct an audit (see the definition of an "audit" in Appendix A).
- g) Issuing, subject to review by the FCC, supplemental procedures regarding operation and use of the NS/EP TSP System consistent with this operations guide.
- h) Serving as a centralized point-of-contact for collecting and disseminating to all interested parties (consistent with requirements for treatment of classified and proprietary material) information concerning use and abuse of the NS/EP TSP System.

- i) Establishing and assisting a TSP System Oversight Committee (TSPOC) to identify and review any problems developing in the system and recommending actions to correct them or prevent recurrence. In addition to representatives from the OEC, representatives from private industry (including telecommunications service vendors), State and local governments, the FCC, and other organizations may be appointed to the committee.
  - k) Reporting operational status of and trends in the NS/EP TSP System and any recommendations for action, at least quarterly, to the FCC and the TSPOC, including:
    - i. Numbers of requests processed for the various priority actions, and the priority levels assigned.
    - ii. Relative percentages of services assigned to each priority level under each NS/EP category.
    - iii. Any apparent serious mis-assignment or abuse of priority level assignments.
    - iv. Any existing or developing problem.
- 3) Submit semiannually to the FCC and the TSPOC a summary report identifying each invocation of NS/EP treatment for an NS/EP telecommunications service under paragraph 13c of this operations guide and section 10c of Title 47, CFR, Part 64. These reports will be due by April 30 for the preceding July through December and by October 31 for the preceding January through June time periods.
- 4) Function (on a discretionary basis) as a sponsoring Federal organization. (See paragraph 10c below.)
- 5) Review and determine eligibility for sponsorship of State and local government requests for priority actions. Determinations will be based on paragraph 15 of this operations guide.
- 6) Review and determine eligibility for sponsorship of private industry requests for priority actions in which the private industry organization has not found sponsorship from other Federal agencies. Recommendations will be based on paragraph 15 of this operations guide.

- 7) Forward notification of priority actions or denials of requests for priority actions to the requesting State and local government entities and private industry organizations, where applicable, for disposition.

c. Sponsoring Federal Organizations. Sponsoring Federal organizations will:

- 1) Review and determine eligibility for sponsorship of private industry requests for priority actions. Federal organizations will forward sponsored requests with recommendations for disposition to the Director, OEC. Recommendations will be based on paragraph 15 of this operations guide.
- 2) Forward notification of priority actions or denials of requests for priority actions from the Director, OEC, to the requesting foreign, State, and local government and private industry entities.
- 3) Cooperate with the Director, OEC, during reconciliation, revalidation, and audits.
- 4) Comply with any regulations and procedures supplemental to and consistent with this operations guide which are issued by the Director, OEC.

d. Federal Organizations. Federal organizations will:

- 1) Ensure that NS/EP TSP System users within each organization comply with their obligations under the NS/EP TSP System.
- 2) Provision and restore Government-provided services (which are interconnected with commercially-provided services assigned a priority level pursuant to paragraph 13 of this operations guide) in accordance with NS/EP TSP System rules and regulations. [See paragraph 7a(2) of this operations guide.]
- 3) Function (on a discretionary basis) as sponsoring Federal organizations for private sector service users (e.g., Government contractors).
- 4) Cooperate with the Director, OEC, during reconciliation, revalidation, and audits.
- 5) After three-year revalidations, receive a complete summary of their TSP data from the OEC.



- e. Service Users. Service users, or entities acting on their behalf, will:
- 1) Identify services requiring priority level assignments and request and justify priority level assignments in accordance with this operations guide and any supplemental OEC issuances.
  - 2) Justify and revalidate all priority level assignments at least every three years or when changing service providers.
  - 3) For services assigned priority levels, ensure (through contractual means or otherwise) availability of customer premise equipment and wiring necessary for end-to-end service operation by the service due date and continued operation; and, for such services in the Emergency NS/EP category, by the time that vendors are prepared to provide the services. Additionally, designate the organization responsible for the service on an end-to-end basis.
  - 4) Be prepared to accept services assigned priority levels by the service due dates or, for services in the Emergency NS/EP category, when they are available.
  - 5) Pay vendors any authorized costs associated with services that are assigned priority levels.
  - 6) Report to vendors any failed or unusable services that are assigned priority levels.
  - 7) Designate a 24-hour point-of-contact for matters concerning requests for priority action and apprise the Director, OEC.
  - 8) Upon termination of services that are assigned priority levels, or circumstances warranting revisions in priority level assignment (e.g., expansion of service), request and justify revocation or revision of the priority level.
  - 9) Cooperate with the Director, OEC, during reconciliation, revalidation, and audits.
  - 10) Comply with any regulations and procedures supplemental to and consistent with this appendix that are issued by the Director, OEC.
- f. Service Vendors. Service vendors will comply with the provisions of Title 47, CFR, Part 64. When those provisions are superseded by Section 706 of the

*Communications Act of 1934*, vendors will continue to comply with Title 47, CFR, Part 64, subject to further direction by the Director, OEC.

11. Preemption of Existing Services. When necessary to provision or restore NS/EP services, service vendors may preempt services they provide as specified below. "User," as used in this section, means any user of a telecommunications service, to include both NS/EP and non-NS/EP services. Prior consent by a preempted user is not required.
  - a. The following is the sequence in which existing services may be preempted to provision NS/EP services assigned a provisioning priority level or restore NS/EP services assigned a restoration priority level:
    - 1) Non-NS/EP services: If suitable spare services are not available, then, based on the considerations in Title 47, CFR, Part 64 and the service vendor's best judgment, non-NS/EP services will be preempted. After ensuring a sufficient number of public switched services will remain available for public use, based on the service vendor's best judgment, such services may be used to satisfy a requirement for provisioning or restoring NS/EP services.
    - 2) NS/EP Services: If no suitable spare or non-NS/EP services are available, then existing NS/EP services may be preempted to provision or restore NS/EP services with higher priority level assignments. When this is necessary, NS/EP services will be selected for preemption in the inverse order of priority level assignment.
    - 3) Service vendors who are preempting services will ensure their best effort to notify the service user of the preempted service and state the reason for and estimated duration of the preemption.
    - 4) Service vendors may, based on their best judgment, determine the sequence in which existing services may be preempted to provision NS/EP services assigned a provisioning priority of "1" through "5". Preemption is not subject to the consent of the user whose service will be preempted.
12. Requests for Priority Actions. All service users are required to submit requests for priority actions to the OEC, in the format and following the procedures prescribed by the Director, OEC.
13. Assignment, Approval, Use, and Authorization of Priority Levels.

- a. Assignment and Approval of Priority Levels and Priority Actions.
- 1) Priority level assignments or other priority actions will be based upon paragraph 15 of this operations guide. A priority level assignment or other priority action made by the OEC will serve as the recommendation to the FCC.
  - 2) Until the President's war emergency powers under Section 706 of the *Communications Act of 1934* are invoked, priority level assignments or other priority actions must be approved by the FCC. (If the FCC does not approve the priority level assignment or other priority action, then it can direct the OEC to revise or revoke the priority level assignment or other priority action.) However, the FCC has instructed service vendors to implement any priority level assignments or other priority actions that are pending FCC approval.
- b. Use of Priority Level Assignments.
- 1) Official requests for priority provisioning for NS/EP services and priority level assignments will be conveyed to service vendors only if the vendors cannot meet needed service dates through the normal provisioning process.
  - 2) Any revision or revocation of either provisioning or restoration priority level assignments will also be transmitted to vendors.
  - 3) Service vendors shall accept priority levels and/or revisions only after assignment by the Director, OEC. [NOTE: Service vendors acting as prime contractors for NS/EP services will accept assigned NS/EP priority levels only when they are accompanied by the Director, OEC, designated service identification (i.e., TSP Authorization Code)]. However, service vendors are authorized to accept priority levels and/or revisions from users and contracting activities before assignment by the Director, OEC, when service vendors, users, and contracting activities are unable to communicate with either the FCC or the Director, OEC. Processing of Emergency NS/EP service requests will not be delayed for verification purposes.
- c. Authorization of Priority Provisioning. To authorize a priority provisioning of an NS/EP telecommunications service, an authorized Federal official either within, or acting on behalf of, the service user's organization must make a written or oral declaration to concerned service vendor(s) and the Director,

OEC, that the priority provisioning is warranted. Authorized invocation officials include the head or director of a Federal agency, State Governors, commander of a unified/specified military command, chief of a military service, or commander of a major military command; the delegates of any of the foregoing; or any other officials as specified in supplemental procedures issued by the Director, OEC. The authority to authorize a priority provisioning of an NS/EP service may be delegated only to a general or flag officer of a military service, civilian employee of equivalent grade (e.g., Senior Executive Service member), Federal Coordinating Officer or Federal Emergency Communications Coordinator/Director, or any other such officials from below the flag level in the military and below the senior executive level in the civilian service as specified in supplemental procedures issued by the EOP. Delegates must be designated as such in writing (by the Invocation Official), and written or oral priority provisioning authorizations must be accomplished, in accordance with supplemental procedures issued by the Director, OEC.

14. Appeal. Service users or sponsoring Federal organizations may appeal any priority level assignment, denial, revision, revocation, approval, or disapproval to the Director, OEC, within 30 days of notification to the service user. The appellant must use the form or format required by the Director, OEC, and must serve the FCC with a copy of its appeal. The Director, OEC, will act on the appeal within 90 days of receipt. Service users and sponsoring Federal organizations may only then appeal directly to the FCC. Such FCC appeal must be filed within 30 days of notification of the Director, OEC's, decision. Additionally, the Director, OEC, may appeal any FCC revisions, approvals, or disapprovals to the FCC. All appeals to the FCC must be submitted using the form or format required by the Director, OEC. The party filing its appeal with the FCC must include factual details supporting its claim and must serve a copy on the Director, OEC, and any other party directly involved. Such party may file a response within 20 days, and replies may be filed within 10 days thereafter. The Commission will not issue public notices of such submissions. The Commission will provide notice of its decision to the parties of record. Any appeals to the Director, OEC that include a claim of new information that has not been presented before for consideration may be submitted at any time.

15. TSP System Categories, Criteria, and Priority Levels.

- a. General. TSP System categories and criteria, and permissible priority level assignments, are defined and explained below.
  - 1) There are four categories of Essential NS/EP telecommunications services (i.e., National Security Leadership; National Security Posture and U.S. Population Attack Warning; Public Health, Safety, and Maintenance of Law and Order; and Public Welfare and

Maintenance of National Economic Posture). Each category has its own criteria. Criteria are also shown for the Emergency category.

- 2) Priority levels of "1", "2", "3", "4", and "5" may be assigned for provisioning and/or restoration of Essential NS/EP telecommunications services. However, in an emergency situation, NS/EP telecommunications services may be assigned a priority level "E" for provisioning. A restoration priority level from "1" through "5" may be assigned if an Emergency NS/EP service also qualifies for a restoration priority level under the Essential category.
  - 3) The NS/EP TSP System allows the assignment of priority levels with any NS/EP telecommunications service across three time periods, or stress conditions: Peacetime/Crisis/Mobilization, Attack/War, and Post-Attack/Recovery. Priority levels will normally be assigned only for the first time period. These assigned priority levels will apply through the onset of any attack, but it is expected that they would later be revised by surviving authorized telecommunications resource managers within the OEC based upon specific facts and circumstances arising during the Attack/War and Post-Attack/Recovery time periods.
  - 4) Service users may, for their own internal use, assign sub-priorities to their services assigned priority levels. Receipt of and response to any such sub-priorities is optional for service vendors.
  - 5) The following paragraphs provide a detailed explanation of the categories, criteria, and priority level assignments, beginning with the Emergency category.
- b. Emergency Category. Telecommunications services in the Emergency category are those new services so critical as to be required to be provisioned at the earliest possible time, without regard to the costs of obtaining them.
- 1) Criteria. To qualify under the Emergency category, the service must meet the criteria of directly supporting or resulting from at least one of the following NS/EP functions:

- a) Federal Government activity responding to a Presidentially-declared disaster or emergency as defined in the *Disaster Relief Act* (42 U.S.C. Section 5122).

- b) State or local government activity responding to a Presidentially, State, or locally declared disaster or emergency.
  - c) Response to a state of crisis declared by the National Command Authorities (e.g., exercise Section 706 of the *Communications Act of 1934*, supra).
  - d) Efforts to protect endangered U.S. personnel or property.
  - e) Response to an enemy or terrorist action, civil disturbance, natural disaster, or any other unpredictable occurrence that has damaged facilities whose uninterrupted operation is critical to NS/EP or the management of other ongoing crises.
  - f) Certification by the head or director of a Federal agency, commander of a unified/specified command, chief of a military service, or commander of a major military command, that the telecommunications service is so critical to protection of life and property or to NS/EP that it must be provided immediately.
  - g) A request from an official authorized pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).
- 2) Priority Level Assignment.
- a) Services qualifying under the Emergency category are assigned priority level "E" for provisioning.
  - b) After 30 days, assignments of provisioning priority level "E" for Emergency NS/EP services are automatically revoked unless extended for another 30-day period.
  - c) Emergency NS/EP services may be assigned restoration priority levels under the applicable restoration guidelines.
- c. Essential Category. Telecommunications services in the Essential category are those required to be provisioned by due dates specified by service users or restored promptly, normally without regard to associated overtime or expediting costs. They may be assigned priority levels of "1", "2", "3", "4", or "5" for both provisioning and restoration, depending upon the nature and urgency of the supported function, the impact of a lack of service or service

interruption upon the supported function, and for priority access to public switched services, the user's level of responsibility. Priority level assignments will be valid for no more than three years unless revalidated. To be categorized as Essential, a telecommunications service must qualify under one of the four categories described below: National Security Leadership; National Security Posture and U.S. Population Attack Warning; Public Health, Safety, and Maintenance of Law and Order; or Public Welfare and Maintenance of the National Economic Posture. (Note: Under emergency circumstances, Essential NS/EP telecommunications services may be re-categorized as Emergency and assigned a priority level "E" for provisioning.)

- 1) National Security Leadership. This category will be strictly limited to only those telecommunications services essential to national survival if a natural or man-made disaster, or terrorist attack threatens or occurs, and critical orderwire and control services necessary to ensure the rapid and efficient provisioning or restoration of other NS/EP telecommunications services. Services in this category are those for which a service interruption of even a few minutes would have serious adverse impact upon the supported NS/EP function.
  - a) Criteria. To qualify under this category, a service must be at least one of the following:
    - i. Critical orderwire or control service supporting other NS/EP functions.
    - ii. Presidential communications service critical to continuity of government and national leadership during crisis situations.
    - iii. National Command Authority communications service for military command and control critical to National survival.
    - iv. Intelligence communications service critical to warning of potentially catastrophic attack.
    - v. Communications service supporting the conduct of diplomatic negotiations critical to arresting or limiting hostilities.

- b) Priority Level Assignment. Services under this category will normally be assigned priority level "1", "2", "3", "4", or "5" for provisioning and restoration.
- 2) National Security Posture and U.S. Population Attack Warning. This category covers those minimum additional telecommunications services essential to maintaining an optimum defense, diplomatic, or continuity of government posture before, during, and after crisis situations. Such situations are those ranging from national emergencies to international crises, including a natural or man-made disaster, or terrorist attack. Services in this category are those for which a service interruption ranging from a few minutes to one day would have serious adverse impact upon the supported NS/EP function.
- a) Criteria. To qualify under this category, a service must support at least one of the following NS/EP functions:
    - i. Threat assessment and attack warning.
    - ii. Conduct of diplomacy.
    - iii. Collection, processing, and dissemination of intelligence.
    - iv. Command and control of military forces.
    - v. Military mobilization.
    - vi. Continuity of Federal Government before, during, and after crisis situations.
    - vii. Continuity of State and local government functions supporting the Federal Government during and after national emergencies.
    - viii. Recovery of critical national functions after crisis situations.
    - ix. National space operations.
  - b) Priority Level Assignment. Services under this category will normally be assigned priority levels "2", "3", "4", or "5" for provisioning and restoration.



- 3) Public Health, Safety, and Maintenance of Law and Order. This category covers the minimum number of telecommunications services necessary for giving civil alert to the U.S. population and maintaining law and order and the health and safety of the U.S. population in times of any national, regional, or serious local emergency. These services are those for which a service interruption ranging from a few minutes to one day would have serious adverse impact upon the supported NS/EP functions.
- a) Criteria. To qualify under this category, a service must support at least one of the following NS/EP functions:
    - i. Population warning (other than attack warning).
    - ii. Law enforcement.
    - iii. Continuity of critical State and local government functions (other than support of the Federal Government during and after national emergencies).
    - iv. Hospitals and distribution of medical supplies.
    - v. Critical logistic functions and public utility services.
    - vi. Civil air traffic control.
    - vii. Military assistance to civil authorities.
    - viii. Defense and protection of critical industrial facilities.
    - ix. Critical weather services.
    - x. Transportation to accomplish the foregoing NS/EP functions.
  - b) Priority Level Assignment. Services under this category will normally be assigned priority levels "3", "4", or "5" for provisioning and restoration.
- 4) Public Welfare and Maintenance of National Economic Posture. This category covers the minimum number of telecommunications services necessary for maintaining the public welfare and national economic posture during any national or regional emergency.

These services are those for which a service interruption ranging from a few minutes to one day would have serious adverse impact upon the supported NS/EP function.

- a) **Criteria.** To qualify under this category, a service must support at least one of the following NS/EP functions:
  - i. Distribution of food and other essential supplies.
  - ii. Maintenance of national monetary, credit, and financial systems.
  - iii. Maintenance of price, wage, rent, and salary stabilization, and consumer rationing programs.
  - iv. Control of production and distribution of strategic materials and energy supplies.
  - v. Prevention and control of environmental hazards or damage.
  - vi. Transportation to accomplish the foregoing NS/EP functions.
- b) **Priority Level Assignment.** Services under this category will normally be assigned priority levels "4" or "5" for provisioning and restoration.
- d. **Limitations.** Priority levels will be assigned only to the minimum number of telecommunications services required to support an NS/EP function. Priority levels will not normally be assigned to back-up services on a continuing basis, absent additional justification (e.g., a service user specifies a requirement for physically diverse routing or contracts for additional continuity-of-service features). The EOP may also establish limitations upon the relative numbers of services which may be assigned any restoration priority level. These limitations will not take precedence over laws or executive orders. Such limitations shall not be exceeded absent waiver by the EOP.

16. Effective Date. This operations guide is effective immediately.

17. Expiration. This operations guide is in effect until superseded or canceled.



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Date: December 6, 2016

1 Appendix:

A. Definitions

Summary of Changes: This OEC TSP Operations Guide replaces the prior NCS Directive 3-1 (dated August 10, 2000) in its entirety.

## APPENDIX A:

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Operations Guide:

Assignment

The designation of priority level(s) for a defined national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) telecommunications service for a specified time period.

Audit

A quality assurance review in response to identified problems or to confirm adherence to policy.

Government

The Federal Government or any foreign, State, county, municipal, or other local Government agency or organization. Specific qualifications will be supplied whenever reference to a particular level of Government is intended (e.g., "Federal Government", "State Government"). "Foreign Government" means any non-U.S. sovereign empire, kingdom, state, or independent political community, including foreign diplomatic and consular establishments and coalitions or associations of governments (e.g., North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization of American States, United Nations, and associations of governments or government agencies or organizations (e.g., Pan American Union, International Postal Union, and International Monetary Fund).

NS/EP Telecommunications Services or NS/EP Services

Telecommunications services that are used to maintain a state of readiness or to respond to and manage any event or crisis (local, national, or international) that causes or could cause injury or harm to the population, damage to or loss of property, or degrades or threatens the NS/EP posture of the United States. These services fall into two specific categories, Emergency and Essential, and are assigned priority levels.

Non-NS/EP Services

Non-NS/EP services are those which do not meet criteria in either the Emergency or Essential categories.

Office Of Emergency Communications (OEC)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) supports and promotes communications used by emergency responders and government officials to keep America safe, secure, and resilient. The office leads the Nation's operable and interoperable public safety and national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) communications efforts.

### Priority Action

The assignment, revision, revocation, or revalidation by the Director, OEC, in accordance with this operations guide, or a priority level associated with an NS/EP telecommunications service.

### Priority Level

The level that may be assigned to an NS/EP telecommunications service specifying the order in which provisioning or restoration of the service is to occur relative to other NS/EP and/or non-NS/EP telecommunications services. Authorized priority levels are designated (highest to lowest) "E", "1", "2", "3", "4", and "5" for provisioning and "1," "2," "3," "4," and "5" for restoration.

### Priority Level Assignment

The priority level(s) designated for the provisioning and/or restoration of a particular NS/EP telecommunications service.

### Private NS/EP Telecommunications Services

Those non-common carrier telecommunications services including private line, virtual private line, and private switched network services.

### Provisioning

The act of supplying telecommunications service to a user, including all associated transmission, wiring, and equipment. This includes altering the state of an existing priority service or capability.

### Public Switched NS/EP Telecommunications Services

Those NS/EP telecommunications services utilizing public switched networks. Such services may include both interexchange and intraexchange network facilities (e.g., switching systems, interoffice trunks, and subscriber loops).

### Reconciliation

The comparison of NS/EP service information and the resolution of identified discrepancies.

### Restoration

The repair or returning to service of one or more telecommunications services that have experienced a service outage or are unusable for any reason, including a damaged or impaired telecommunications facility. Such repair or returning to service may be done by patching, rerouting, substitution of component parts or pathways, and other means, as determined necessary by a service vendor.

### Revalidation

The re-justification by a service user of a priority level assignment. This may result in extension by the Director, OEC, in accordance with this operations guide, of the expiration date associated with the priority level assignment.

#### Revision

A change in priority level assignment for an NS/EP telecommunications service. This includes any extension of an existing priority level assignment to an expanded NS/EP service.

#### Revocation

The elimination of a priority level assignment when it is no longer valid. All priority level assignments for an NS/EP service are revoked upon service termination.

#### Service Identification

Information uniquely identifying an NS/EP telecommunications service to the service vendor and/or service user.

#### Service User

Any individual or organization (including a service vendor) supported by a telecommunications service for which a priority level has been requested or assigned.

#### Service Vendor

Any person, association, partnership, corporation, organization, or other entity (including common carriers and government organizations) that offers to supply any telecommunications equipment, facilities, or services (including customer premises equipment and wiring) or combination thereof. The term includes resale carriers, prime contractors, subcontractors, and interconnecting carriers.

#### "Spare" Circuits or Services

Circuits or services not being used or contracted for by any customer.

#### Telecommunications Services

The transmission, emission, or reception of signals, signs, writing, images, sounds, or intelligence of any nature, by wire, cable, satellite, fiber optics, laser, radio, visual, or other electronic, electric, electromagnetic, or acoustically coupled means, or any combination thereof. The term can include necessary telecommunications facilities.

#### Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) System User

Any individual, organization, or activity that interacts with the TSP System.

### **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Please contact the DHS Priority Telecommunications Center at 866-627-2255 or 703-676-2255, via email at [TSP@HQ.DHS.GOV](mailto:TSP@HQ.DHS.GOV), or visit [WWW.DHS.GOV/TSP](http://WWW.DHS.GOV/TSP).