REGIONAL UTILITY COORDINATION PLAN

Portland, Oregon / Vancouver, Washington Metropolitan Area

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to outline procedures for coordination between local governments and regional utility providers in the Portland metropolitan area during emergency response and recovery operations. The plan seeks to enhance overall incident management, minimize/ eliminate redundancy in resource utilization, and speed incident resolution through a pre-planned and coordinated sharing of situation, resource, intelligence, and risk management information and response and restoration priorities.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

The Portland metropolitan area is subject to a number of emergency or disaster circumstances that could occur locally or be part of a regional or national crisis. Floods, severe winter storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, terrorist acts and other natural and technological emergencies/disasters have the potential for disrupting critical utility services including power, water, sewer, natural gas, and telecommunications (voice and data).

The Portland metropolitan area is home to a number of large utility providers that serve numerous communities in multiple counties, and, in some cases, multiple states. They include federal, publicly-owned, and investor-owned organizations.

When disaster strikes, the region must have a system in place for local governments and utility providers to share utility outage reports; situation, resource status, and intelligence information; and response and restoration priorities. Such a system is necessary to most effectively coordinate response and recovery efforts, maximize the use of tactical resources, and best serve the citizens and customers of the region.

Since regional utility providers serve numerous communities, the system for coordination between local governments and those utilities must be designed in such a way as to maximize the sharing of information while

minimizing the frequency with which it must be shared.

B. Assumptions

Sufficient communications equipment and services will be available to permit the sharing of information between local governments and utility providers.

Local and state emergency declarations may be needed to allow the sharing of resources between government agencies and private utilities.

In a catastrophic emergency, extraordinary coordination will be required between government agencies and utility providers.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Definitions

1. Portland Metropolitan Area:

   For purposes of this plan, the Portland metropolitan area includes Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington.

2. Phases of Emergency Operation:

   a. Response – Activities taken during and immediately after an actual incident which are intended to reduce injuries and loss of life, prevent property damage, and stabilize the situation.

   b. Restoration – Short-term actions taken to restore critical systems and services to minimum operating conditions.

   c. Recovery – Long-term actions taken to return the impacted area to pre-disaster or better conditions.

3. Levels of Emergency Operation:

   a. Routine Operations – Daily activities, including incidents such as line breaks and down wires, which are routine in nature and managed by agency and/or company field resources without the need for higher level coordination.

b. Minor Emergency (Level 1) – A fairly common event that may be large in scale or scope and involve multiple sites and/or agencies, but which can still be managed with existing agency/company resources. A higher level of management and coordination is typically required. A local emergency may be declared.

c. Major Emergency (Level 2) – An uncommon event that is typically large in scale and scope and which requires outside assistance. Centralization of an agency's/company's incident management and coordination activities is required. Local emergencies (city and county) will be declared as appropriate and state emergencies (Oregon and Washington) may also be declared. A Presidential Disaster Declaration may be requested.

d. Catastrophic Emergency (Level 3) – A very rare event that is broad in scope, complexity, and impact and which significantly reduces an agency's/company's ability to help itself or others. Outside assistance is clearly needed and extraordinary incident management and coordination measures are required. Local and state emergencies will be declared and a Presidential Disaster Declaration will be requested.

B. Operations by Emergency Management Phase

1. Response

a. Collect outage and other relevant situation status information (e.g., road/bridge closures, hazardous environments, etc.)

b. Distribute/share outage and other situation status information

c. Identify and share critical restoration priorities

d. Respond to critical/high priority outages

e. Collect and share relevant threat and risk reduction information (e.g., new/ongoing threats; asset protection measures; etc.)

f. Identify opportunities to coordinate the use of and/or share tactical resources engaged in response operations

g. Coordinate the release of public safety messages and the distribution of other relevant public information

2. Restoration and Recovery

a. Formulate and share short and long term restoration priorities

b. Implement restoration activities

c. Identify opportunities to coordinate the use of and/or share tactical resources engaged in restoration work

d. Coordinate the release of public safety messages and the distribution of other relevant public information

C. Operations in General

Whenever an emergency impacts a regional utility provider and/or local government in the Portland metropolitan area, the impacted organizations will activate emergency facilities and implement emergency procedures that are appropriate for the size, complexity, and scope (or level) of the incident.

For routine incidents, agencies/companies will use normal (i.e., daily) procedures for notifying other affected organizations and coordinate response and recovery operations on site.

For minor (Level 1) emergencies, local governments and publicly-owned utilities will typically activate emergency operations centers (EOCs) to handle some of the notification and coordination needs of the incident and to direct and support crews operating in the field. The activated centers will likely be department or bureau operations centers, but could be city or county EOCs in smaller jurisdictions where a system of department/bureau centers does not exist. Private utility providers will typically respond to minor emergencies through activation of EOCs at the service center level. In this situation, the service centers will perform much of the same duties as local government EOCs (i.e., notification, coordination, direction, and field support). Whether government or private, the EOC activations may be very limited in scope (i.e., the EOCs may be activated with very limited staffing).

For major (Level 2) emergencies, local governments and publicly-owned utilities will activate one or more EOCs to handle notification,

coordination, direction, and support. The activated centers will include department or bureau EOCs (where they exist) as well as special district, city, and county EOCs. In the governmental emergency management system, department/bureau EOCs coordinate with the central EOC for their jurisdiction (city or county), city and special district EOCs coordinate with and request assistance from county EOCs, and county EOCs coordinate with and request assistance from state EOCs. Private utility providers will typically respond to major emergencies through activation of EOCs at both the service center and corporate levels. In these situations, the service centers will focus primarily on direction of field operations and the corporate centers will handle the majority of the company's notification, coordination, and support functions.

Local governments and utility providers will respond to catastrophic (Level 3) emergencies in much the same way as they respond to major emergencies. The primary differences at Level 3 are the magnitude and extent of response and recovery operations, the high dependence on outside resources, and the demands for high-level cooperation and coordination. Level 3 events may require local utility providers to dedicate a majority of their resources to the support of life safety operations and might also require local governments and utility providers to shift their focus from service restoration to organizational recovery or reconstitution. In any case, the extraordinary demands of a catastrophic emergency will require policy level coordination between public and private utility providers and state and local governments.

D. Inter-organizational Coordination

In general, the need for coordination between local government and utility service providers increases as the level of the emergency increases. However, a number of other factors will influence the degree to which that coordination may be required. The most significant other factor is the degree to which a local government or utility is directly impacted by a specific emergency event. As an example, a short duration snow or wind event may be a major emergency for a power, phone, or cable provider, but may simply be a routine operation or minor emergency for local governments and other utilities. For this reason, the inter-organizational coordination practices identified in this plan must be dynamic and flexible. The specific method of coordination utilized for a particular emergency must be decided by the impacted organizations at the time of the event.

E. Methods of Coordination/Communication

Numerous options exist for local governments and utility providers to coordinate their response and restoration activities. The methods range from simple on scene coordination, to various methods of voice and data communications, to more complicated regional coordination bodies. The simplicity or complexity of the method(s) utilized will typically track with the level of emergency. However, the manner in which a particular jurisdiction or utility is impacted by a specific emergency may dictate the use of a higher level of coordination/communication. The options include:

1. On site coordination between utility crews and first responders (police, fire, public works, etc.)

2. The assignment of liaisons to government EOCs, utility service centers, or other utility EOCs to coordinate government and utility operations

3. Coordination between utility and local government EOCs via the public switch network (i.e., landline communications including phone, fax, chat rooms, conference calls, bridge lines, and instant messaging)

4. Coordination between utility and local government EOCs via wireless or combined wireless/landline networks (e.g., cell phones, satellite phones, public safety and company radios, and amateur radio)

5. Activation of a regional Emergency Operations Center, Area Command, or other multi-agency coordination center to bring local government and utility providers together to coordinate operations on a regional level

F. Notification

The first step in the coordination process is notification. Local governments must notify utility providers whenever they activate their EOCs and their response and/or restoration activities will impact or involve the utilities. Utility providers must provide similar notifications. These notifications should be made between the emergency management officials of the respective organizations.

Once notifications have been made, the method(s) of coordination can be determined.

G. Response and Restoration Priorities

1. Utility Providers

a. Response Priorities – Safety; Damage Assessment; System Assessment and Reliability; Economics

b. Restoration Priorities – Health and Safety; Critical Infrastructure Facilities (e.g., control centers); Transmission and Pre-identified Critical Facility Service; Distribution Service; Individual Service

2. Local Government

a. Response Priorities – Life Safety; Incident Stabilization; Environmental and Property Conservation; Damage Assessment

b. Restoration Priorities – Critical Facilities and Services; Essential Facilities and Services; Other Facilities and Services (i.e., non-critical and non-essential public and private facilities)

H. Resource Control

Except when operating pursuant to mutual aid agreements, contracts, or other similar arrangements, or when otherwise directed by the Governor or President, control of all local government and utility resources rests with the resource owner.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. General

B. Task Assignments

1. For routine incidents and minor (Level 1) emergencies, local governments and utility providers will

a. Determine the level of event and their level of emergency operations

b. Notify other involved local governments and utility providers of their level of emergency operations

c. Identify the method of coordination to be used with other impacted agencies/organizations

d. Implement the methods of coordination identified

e. Share appropriate damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information

2. For major (Level 2) emergencies,

a. Cities and special districts will

i. Determine the level of event and their level of emergency operations

ii. Notify their respective county EOCs of their level of emergency operations

iii. Share appropriate damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information with their respective County EOCs using whatever means of communication is available

b. Counties will

i. Determine the level of event and their level of emergency operations

ii. Notify other involved counties, local governments within their counties, and regional utility providers of their level of emergency operations

iii. Identify the method of coordination to be used with other impacted counties and regional utility providers

iv. Implement the method of coordination identified

v. Share appropriate damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information with other impacted counties and regional

utility providers and with cities and special districts within their counties

c. Regional utility providers will

i. Determine the level of event and their level of emergency operations

ii. Notify involved counties and other utility providers of their level of emergency operations

iii. Identify the method of coordination to be used with impacted counties and other regional utility providers

iv. Implement the method of coordination identified

v. Share appropriate damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information with impacted counties and other regional utility providers

3. For catastrophic (Level 3) emergencies, local governments and utility providers will activate a regional emergency operations center or establish another regional forum to coordinate response and restoration activities. When this occurs,

a. Cities and special districts will communicate their damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information to their respective county EOCs

b. Counties will

i. Assign tactical resource management and policy level representatives to the regional center/forum as appropriate for the incident

ii. Consolidate information from within their respective counties and communicate it to the regional EOC or other group established to coordinate utility response and restoration activities via their representatives to the regional group

iii. Distribute information received from the regional

center/group to cities and special districts within their respective counties

c. Regional utility providers will

i. Assign tactical resource management and policy level representatives to the regional center/forum as appropriate for the incident

ii. Communicate their damage assessment, situation and resource status, risk management, and restoration information to the regional EOC or other group established to coordinate utility response and restoration activities via their representative(s) to the regional group

d. The regional EOC or other regional forum established to coordinate utility response and restoration activities will serve two primary purposes. It will:

i. Provide a central location for resource managers to receive and evaluate situation and resource status information provided by regional utility providers and county EOCs. This information can then be used to more effectively manage and coordinate the use of available resources.

ii. Provide a central location for government and utility policy makers (e.g., elected and appointed officials, CEOs, COOs, etc.) to coordinate strategic decision making and policy development relative to restoration priorities and the use of government and private utility response and restoration resources.

4. For catastrophic (Level 3) emergencies that impact an area greater in scope than the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area, the regional emergency operations center or other regional forum established to coordinate response and restoration activities in the metropolitan area will seek to coordinate or integrate its activities with any similar group created at the state level.

V. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. The Regional Emergency Management Group (REMG), which was formed by Intergovernmental Agreement in 1993 to coordinate emergency management activities in the five-county Portland metropolitan area, will serve as the focal point for review/critique of operations conducted pursuant to this plan.

B. Tab A to this plan identifies local government and regional utility provider contact information and summarizes the communications systems used at each organization to coordinate emergency response operations.

VI. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The Regional Emergency Management Technical Committee (REMTEC), which is the technical arm of REMG, is responsible for maintenance of this plan.

Tab A – Local Government and Regional Utility Provider Communications