WA State TERT
Team Leader Packet

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Overview

The working environment in a disaster area is generally very different from the working environment familiar to most telecommunicators. While the environment may range considerably depending on the disaster, the amount of destruction, and various other factors, telecommunicators must mentally prepare to thrive and function in less than ideal conditions.

Contact Information

1. **TERT Contact Information:**

    WA-TERT State Coordinator:
    Cory James - NORCOM
    cjames@norcom.org
    425.577.5583
    425.577.5580 (NORCOM 24/7 Supervisor line)

    WA-TERT State Committee Chair (State Coordinator Alternate):
    Cory Ahrens - CJTC
    cahrens@cjtc.state.wa.us
    msspode@yahoo.com
    206.835.7351
    206.779.0760 (cell)

    Regional Coordinator (NE Region):
    Jay Atwood - Spokane Fire
    jatwood@spokanecity.org
    jdatwood@msn.com
    509.532.8900 (Dispatch 24 hr.)
    509.532.8901 (Office)
    509.370.6337 (Work cell)
    509.879.6080 (Personal cell)
    509.893.2217 (Home)

    Regional Coordinator (SE Region):
    Stacey Garcia - Suncomm Yakima
    Stacey.garcia@yakima.gov
    staceymgarcia@gmail.com
    509.575.3012 (Office)
    509.901.9891 cell)

    Regional Coordinator (NW Region):
    Angee Iyall - Valley Comm
    angeei@valleycom.org
    angeei@comcast.net
    253.372.1490 (VCC 24/7 Supervisor line)

206.755.7996 (cell)
Lena Grubb - Snopac
lgrubb@snopac911.us
lenagrubb@comcast.net
425.407.3930 (Snopac 24/7 Supervisor line)
206.369.8214 (cell)
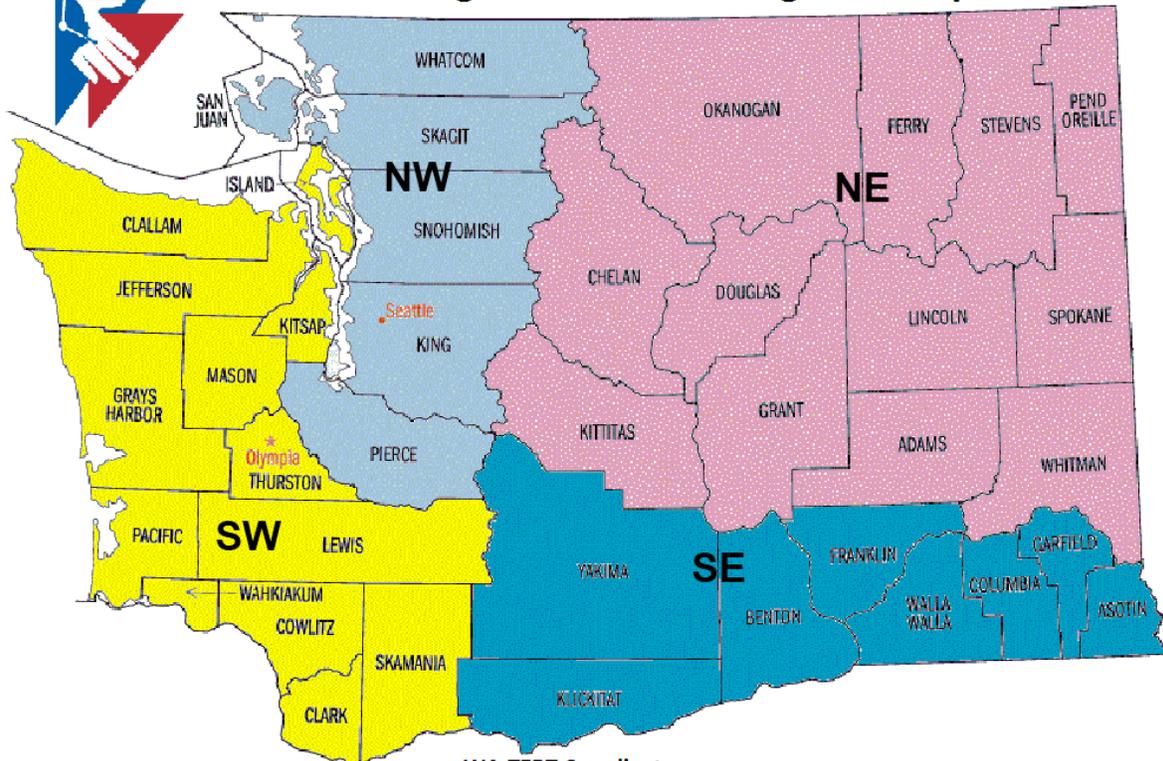

Regional Coordinator (SW Region):
Karl Hatton - Jeffcom
khatton@jcpsn.us
360.385.3831 (Dispatch)
360.744.6279 (Work cell)
360.775.6632 (Personal cell)
360.681.2176 (Home)

Website Information:

Website Information: WA APCO – information about TERT and TERT Forms: http://www.apcowa.org/TERT.htm
Our goal is to have all forms, TERT general info, and links to WA Emergency Management and their forms and agreements on the WA APCO/NENA website.

We further, hope to have a secure, password protected web portal on the CJTC Telecommunicator Program website. This portal will be used for actual deployments and have a password issued for the event allowing only deployed members, TERT Coordinator, etc.. This site may contain information such as team member/leader cell phone numbers, rendezvous locations and directions, information from the scene of the disaster, and other sensitive information not for public viewing. Persons receiving the password to the portal will be expected to keep the password protected and not divulge it to anyone else for any purpose.

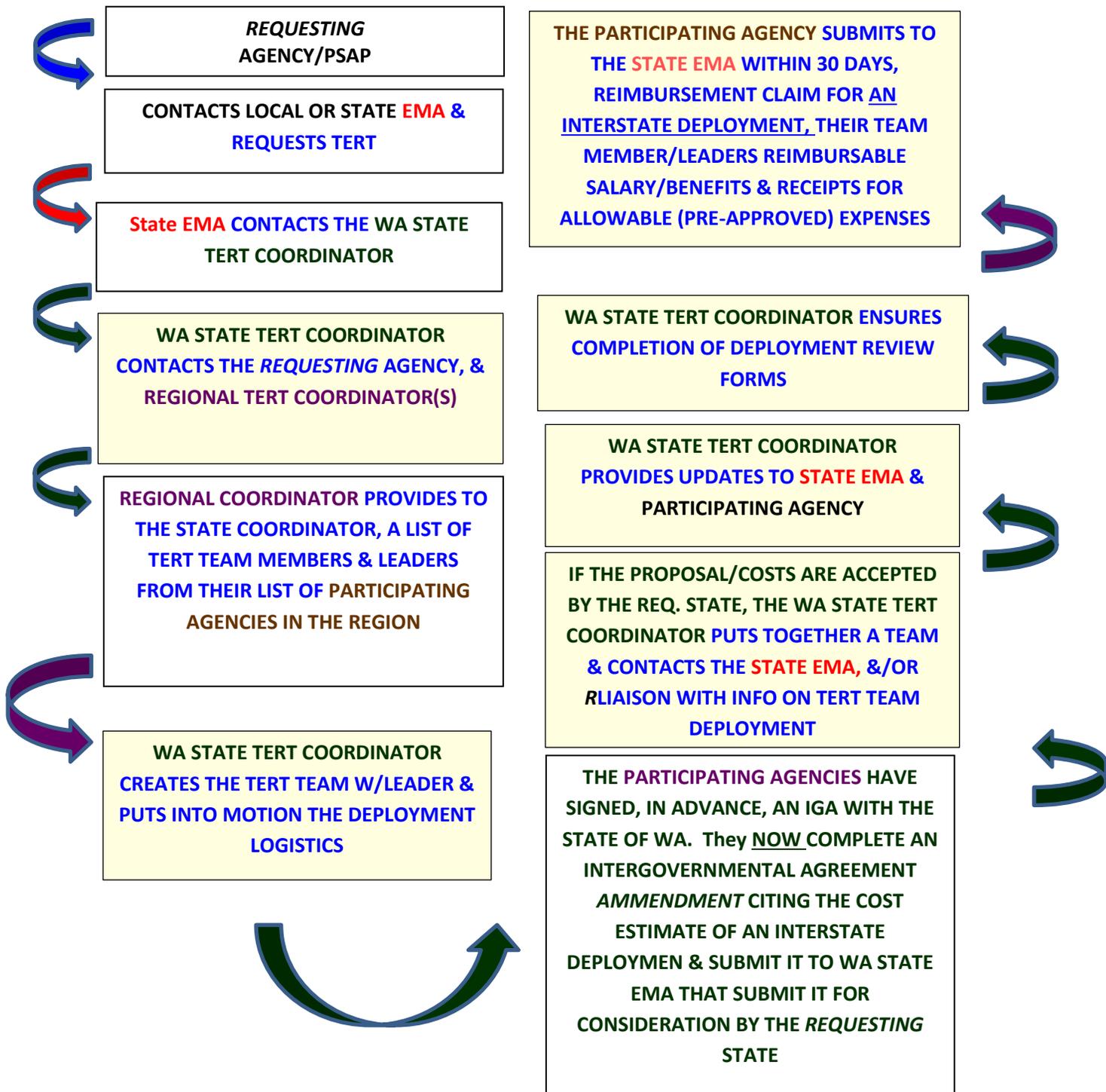# Washington State TERT Regional Map

WA-TERT Coordinators

NW Region: Angee Iyall & Lena Grubb   State Coordinator: Cory James   NE Region: Jay Atwood
SW Region: Karl Hatton   SE Region: Stacey Garcia

2.   TERT REQUEST/DEPLOYMENT FLOW CHART

REQUESTING
AGENCY/PSAP

CONTACTS LOCAL OR STATE EMA &
REQUESTS TERT

State EMA CONTACTS THE WA STATE
TERT COORDINATOR

WA STATE TERT COORDINATOR
CONTACTS THE *REQUESTING* AGENCY, &
REGIONAL TERT COORDINATOR(S)

REGIONAL COORDINATOR PROVIDES TO
THE STATE COORDINATOR, A LIST OF
TERT TEAM MEMBERS & LEADERS
FROM THEIR LIST OF PARTICIPATING
AGENCIES IN THE REGION

WA STATE TERT COORDINATOR
CREATES THE TERT TEAM W/LEADER &
PUTS INTO MOTION THE DEPLOYMENT
LOGISTICS

THE PARTICIPATING AGENCY SUBMITS TO
THE STATE EMA WITHIN 30 DAYS,
REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM FOR AN
INTERSTATE DEPLOYMENT, THEIR TEAM
MEMBER/LEADERS REIMBURSABLE
SALARY/BENEFITS & RECEIPTS FOR
ALLOWABLE (PRE-APPROVED) EXPENSES

WA STATE TERT COORDINATOR ENSURES
COMPLETION OF DEPLOYMENT REVIEW
FORMS

WA STATE TERT COORDINATOR
PROVIDES UPDATES TO STATE EMA &
PARTICIPATING AGENCY

IF THE PROPOSAL/COSTS ARE ACCEPTED
BY THE REQ. STATE, THE WA STATE TERT
COORDINATOR PUTS TOGETHER A TEAM
& CONTACTS THE STATE EMA, &/OR
*R*LIAISON WITH INFO ON TERT TEAM
DEPLOYMENT

THE PARTICIPATING AGENCIES HAVE
SIGNED, IN ADVANCE, AN IGA WITH THE
STATE OF WA. They NOW COMPLETE AN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT
AMMENDMENT CITING THE COST
ESTIMATE OF AN INTERSTATE
DEPLOYMEN & SUBMIT IT TO WA STATE
EMA THAT SUBMIT IT FOR
CONSIDERATION BY THE *REQUESTING*
STATE

TERT Team Member Requirements, Responsibilities, and Expectations – Team LEADER will need to meet Team Member Requirements

3.1.1. Completed all required training as listed in the WA-TERT Program Guide for Member and for Team Leader if in that position

3.1.2. Letter of affirmation of training requirements met and agency support signed by the Agency Head or designee

3.1.3. Minimum 2 years' experience as a Call Taker or Dispatcher if deployed in that capacity

3.1.4. Employee shall remain in good standing with PARTICIPATING Agency

3.1.5. No disciplinary activity within last 12 months

3.1.6. Be an excellent multi-tasker and problem solver

3.1.7. Be assertive in a positive manner

3.1.8. Be an outstanding team player

3.1.9. Possess an ability to adapt and be flexible with different policies, procedures, equipment, and geographic areas

3.1.10. Must be able to deploy on a mission of 5-7 days within 12 hours of the request

3.1.11. Possess ability to adapt to poor environmental conditions such as no beds, no power, cold meals, no refrigeration, and no running water

3.1.12. Lift/carry 40 pounds

3.1.13. Walk long distances over any type of terrain and navigate over and/or around debris as needed

3.1.14. Excellent working knowledge of the appropriate public safety emergency response operation and equipment as it relates to member classification

3.1.15. Possess positive interpersonal communication and leadership skills

3.1.16. Capable of improvising and functioning for long hours under adverse working conditions

3.1.17. Be aware of the signs, symptoms, and corrective measures of Critical Incident Stress Syndrome

3.1.18. Possess excellent people and teamwork skills inclusive of cultural diversity

3.1.19. Possess excellent documentation skills

3.1.20. Willingness and availability to participate in deployments with the possibility of immediate need

3.1.21. Attend team training annually or as prescribed by NJTI or the State TERT Program/Committee

3.1.22. Must have a working knowledge of TERT's organizational structure, operating guidelines, common safety practices, terminology, and general public safety communications protocols

4.   Pre-deployment Checklist

☐ Child, Elder, Pet Care, etc.: If necessary, will relatives (including spouse) be able to adequately care for children, elderly relatives, or pets during your absence?

☐ Personal Health: The environment in a disaster area may not have readily available pharmacies   and the air quality may be poor. Ensure allergies, medical or physical conditions will not interfere with job performance.

☐ Bills, Mail and Other Services: Can someone check your mail, pay your bills and check your home during deployment?

☐ Family Explanations: It will be necessary to thoroughly explain the deployment to family members. They must understand the constraints and work environment, as well as the inability to immediately call home or receive calls.

☐ "Go Bag" packed and readily available (supply list to follow)

☐ Recommended Vaccinations: CDC recommends all first responders have a Tetanus immunization with TDAP preferred with a recommendation for Hepatitis B. Guidelines located at
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/responderimmun.asp

5.   Deployment Checklist - "Go Bag"

The following has been adapted from the NC-TERT Team Member Deployment Supply List:

Supplies should be tailored to expected environmental and scene conditions, specific member needs, and guidance from the TERT State Coordinator, TERT Team Leader and/or Incident Commander. The deployed TERT Team should assure their members are able to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours when deploying to major disaster scenes but the Team shall meet the requirements of the EMAC Mission Order.

All TERT members should understand that deployment requires commitment and flexibility. Basic comfort facilities may not be available and only those willing and physically able to work in adverse conditions should become team members. Those requiring special diets and/or refrigerated medication or medical conditions requiring ongoing monitoring should not be selected for response.

In a Backpack or Day Pack (to be carried with you at all times):

☐ Canteen – 1 quart water / Canteen cover and/or Nalgene (or similar) wide-mouthed bottle. (Good for mixing powdered drinks)

☐ Canteen Cup

☐ Swiss Army Knife or Multi-tool

☐ Leather work gloves

☐ Eye protection / Ear protection

☐ Rain Gear

☐ Flashlight / Induction flashlight preferred. Extra bulb for regular flashlight. Reverse one battery to prevent accidental discharge.

☐ Camp knife

☐ Matches in waterproof case

☐ Notepad / pencil / pen

☐ ID / Driver's License / Cash / Debit or Credit Card

☐ Roll of quarters for vending machines

☐ Cell phone and charger

☐ Insect repellant

☐ Hat/ Handkerchief

☐ Lip balm / Ibuprofen / decongestants / basic first aid supplies

☐ Prescription medications for a term of deployment plus seven days

☐ Snacks & bottled water/soda

In a Duffel Bag, Camping Backpack or Luggage (Soft duffel bags are preferred over hard luggage):

- ☐ Sleeping bag, pillow, bedding
- ☐ Uniforms (2-5 changes of clothes) Long pants, long sleeved shirt, shorts, t-shirts (clothing appropriate to the season)
- ☐ Coat or jacket and gloves (as appropriate)
- ☐ Work or hiking boots that provide ankle support
- ☐ Sneakers/tennis shoes
- ☐ Trouser belt
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Mess kit / Camp cup / Eating utensils
- ☐ Spare batteries for flashlight
- ☐ Utility items: rubber bands, safety pins, needle and thread, extra buttons, duct tape, electrical tape, clothes line, etc.
  Note: re-roll a few feet of tape on a pencil or similar and break off ends for a compact supply
- ☐ Towel & Washcloth
- ☐ Swimwear (weather dependent)
- ☐ Shower Shoes
- ☐ Soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, razor, cosmetics, hand mirror, personal hygiene items, contact lens supplies etc.
- ☐ Zip lock bags (assorted sizes)
- ☐ Garbage bags
- ☐ Dirty laundry bag
- ☐ Half roll of toilet paper – smash flat to conserve space
- ☐ Hand & body towelettes / hand sanitizer
- ☐ Radio / batteries
- ☐ Reading materials / entertainment
- ☐ Small battery powered alarm clock, pager, or watch to be used as an alarm clock.

Special Considerations

- Keep your number of packs of your equipment to a *minimum*. You should be able to carry them all at once for a short distance.
- Military duffel bags are ideal. Vacation type luggage is acceptable, but *discouraged*.
- Label ALL equipment with your name and address.
- Absolutely NO Sterno, propane or compressed gas containers should be in your gear. Chemical heaters are acceptable.
- It is possible there will be no electrical outlets available. Electrically powered items are discouraged.
- Consider packing each of your days' worth of clothes in a separate zip lock bag for easy retrieval of that day's items.
- Pack all equipment in your pack in separate zip lock bags in case your pack is exposed to the weather.

6. Recording and Maintaining Documentation

Incoming Team Briefing

- [ ] Provide Briefing reports (morning and evening)
- [ ] Provide PSAP Equipment
- [ ] CAD
- [ ] Radio
- [ ] 9-1-1 Equipment
- [ ] Other (specify)
- [ ] Provide PSAP conditions
- [ ] Shift's working
- [ ] How many per shift
- [ ] PSAP Contact information
- [ ] Provide TERT Accommodations
- [ ] Location and address of where TERT members are staying
- [ ] Meals
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Provide Area / Location Updates
- [ ] Current location settings
- [ ] Road Conditions
- [ ] Restrictions to certain area
- [ ] _____

ASSIGNMENT LIST (ICS 204)

1. Incident Name:	2. Operational Period: Date From: Date Date To: Date Time From: HHMM Time To: HHMM	3. Branch:
4. Operations Personnel: Name / Contact Number(s)		Division:
Operations Section Chief: _____ XXX-XXX-XXXX		Group:
Branch Director: _____ XXX-XXX-XXXX		Staging Area:
Division/Group Supervisor: _____ XXX-XXX-XXXX		

5. Resources Assigned:

Resource Identifier	Leader	# of Persons	Contact (e.g., phone, pager, radio frequency, etc.)	Reporting Location, Special Equipment and Supplies, Remarks, Notes, Information

6. Work Assignments:

7. Special Instructions:

8. Communications (radio and/or phone contact numbers needed for this assignment):

Name /Function Primary Contact: indicate cell, pager, or radio (frequency/system/channel)

	/	
	/	
	/	
	/	

9. Prepared by: Name:	Position/Title:	Signature: _____
ICS 204	**IAP Page**	Date/Time: Date

Mental Preparation

The mental preparation for disaster deployment is an integral component of pre-deployment.

The ability to recognize the characteristics of disaster areas and the associated stress typically resulting from working in these areas, as well as different coping strategies, can have a significant impact on a telecommunicator's ability to function in a disaster area.

Disaster Working Conditions

The working conditions in a disaster area may vary depending on:

- The type of disaster.
- The length of time that has passed since the disaster.
- The magnitude of the emergency response effort.

Underlying each of these factors is the dynamic working conditions of a telecommunicator. Adaptability and flexibility are key considerations in working effectively in disaster areas as a telecommunicator.

The fundamental characteristics of working in a medium to large-scale disaster may include any one of the following barriers:

- **Amount of Change:** The recovery process after a disaster will be gradual and continually changing. As a result, telecommunicators may find the "chain-of-command" in response operations has changed, and the process in communicating with responders and the public may also change. Telecommunicators may find themselves in a dynamically changing set of circumstances and must quickly adapt to the protocols that are being followed in the impacted area. That is why it is important that a team leader establishes rapport with agency liaison who can guide team in following proper protocol.
- **Lack of Common Services:** Telecommunicators may find the availability of common services, such as lights, air conditioning, heat, showers, clean clothing, washers/dryers, working cellular telephone towers, and many other services to be limited or nonexistent. Telecommunicators may be unable to regularly contact family members.
- **Sleeping Conditions:** Telecommunicators in a disaster area may have a variety of sleeping accommodations, based upon the available resources in the area. They may sleep on cots and in closets, PODS (trailers equipped with 8 bunk beds and one small bathroom), a church, a tent, or a hotel room without air-conditioning. Sleep periods may also vary and not necessarily be in 8-hour intervals.
- **Working Conditions:** The typical working conditions will often be cramped with several telecommunicators occupying the same and often very crowded area. Other relief and emergency workers may be consolidated in the same building/room, the noise may be excessive from radio traffic and talking, the equipment may give off heat, and the lack of air circulation may make for difficult working environments.
- **High Stress Calls:** Depending on the situation where telecommunications assistance is being provided, there may be calls from the public or first responders and the telecommunicator is limited in sending assistance. For example, telecommunicators received calls in Louisiana from people/family members who became trapped when the roof or their business, church, or home collapsed on them when they returned to survey the damage several days later.
- **Mass Casualty Incidents:** The number of injured and dead in the wake of a major disaster may be staggering. The injured and dead may be unidentified, emotional callers may be looking for relatives and makeshift morgues may be created. TERT members may not only be working in situations where the loss of life and property is staggering for the public, but also extremely difficult for the PSAP employees and

local emergency workers who have lost their own homes and loved ones. Members must be prepared to deal with the potential emotional issues of their local co-workers.

Coping Skills

This section will review the various coping strategies to reduce the amount of mental stress associated with being deployed in a disaster area. These strategies only touch upon the wide assortment of peer support groups commonly available to telecommunicators before, during, and after deployment.

It is important to remember, stress and fatigue are common. However, stress and fatigue may easily progress to depression and, in some cases post-traumatic stress disorder. The nature of the deployment and the role assumed by the telecommunicator will vary, as will the degree of coping skills necessary to overcome stress and fatigue.

Most everyone is familiar with the signs of stress and fatigue. Try and remember a time when you were tired, overworked/loaded, and were in a situation in where you had little control over your surroundings.

What were the signs and symptoms?

They may have included:

- Irritability
- Inability to concentrate
- Mistakes in job performance
- Forgetfulness

The specific indicators of stress and how to cope with these stressors may vary considerably depending upon the:

- Nature of the disaster
- Work environment
- Job demands

Stress in disaster situations may include:

- Fear of making a mistake
- Disgust
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Many emotions all at once

This section will review several different strategies for coping with the stress and fatigue that may accompany deployment in disaster areas.

Coping Skills – Preparation

As previously mentioned, disasters may range from minor to severe and having an awareness of the potential deployment environment, conditions, duties, and constrains can prepare a telecommunicator to more effectively cope in mentally challenging situations.

Other preparation strategies include developing mental strategies in preparing for a diverse and seemingly "substandard" environment.

Being prepared for deployment to a disaster area includes understanding the key differences in:

- **Chain-of-Command:** When telecommunicators are deployed, they generally report to a team leader from their home state, who will act as a liaison between the task force, requesting PSAP, and incident commander. Beyond the team leader, the chain-of-command may vary and change daily.
- **Functioning Environment:** Take a vacation from your normal way of functioning and try to see how you would respond to not being able to take a shower; sleeping on the floor, with noise in the background, and with the lights on; and eating differently, at different times, and with less than enjoyable cuisine. This experience may be a small indication of your reactions and ability to function in a disaster environment.
- **Communication Equipment:** The specific communications equipment used across the nation varies. The hardware in terms of use of microphones or headsets, arrangement of screens, and vintage and manufacturer of consoles, as well as the software programs used to track and monitor emergency workers may vary. If the opportunity presents itself, telecommunicators may want to examine different systems, not to learn how to use them, but to recognize the differences and similarities. Remembering that the functions of the hardware and systems are the same will help you adapt and quickly learn to use different systems.

Coping Skills – Family Communication

The telecommunicator's possible inability to communicate with family members in a disaster area may be a frequent occurrence. As such, telecommunicators must be sure they not only recognize limitations of regular communication, but their family members understand the possible limitations in communication too.

Telecommunicators should talk with their family and explain how the destruction in a disaster area and shift work may impact their ability to call home. Additionally, telecommunicators who have been deployed in a disaster area may not be able to return home immediately and may need to wait for transportation or until the end of the deployment cycle. When the opportunity exists, call loved ones, friends, and family. Their voice, knowledge of events at home (even seemingly insignificant events, such as school activities), and an outlet for your emotions may relieve stress.

Coping Skills – Coping Strategies

Research into the coping strategies used by and found effective by emergency responders has generally focused on law enforcement and fire department responders. Compounding the difficulty in researching coping skills employed by all emergency responders is the very nature of these responders. They have been trained and have typically put their needs secondary to the needs of the citizens they have sworn to protect and help.

Research has found the following strategies have been effective in relieving and preventing stress. When these strategies are fitted together, stress can be alleviated.

- **Exercise:** Walk or engage in some other form of exercise to "de-stress."
- **Nutrition:** Eat at regular intervals and eat healthy to the extent possible.
- **Breaks:** Take adequate breaks with your team and other telecommunicators. The diversion from work and the opportunity to talk with others in a similar situation will help relieve stress.
- **Out of Place, Out of Mind:** Some people deal with stress better alone and by withdrawing from others, while others may need to talk to someone. Others can simply ignore the current situation and dedicate their efforts to helping more.
- **Sleep/Work Schedule:** Maintain these schedules as best as possible. If you are "off" take advantage of the time to rest, exercise, or to otherwise relax.

- **Remember, It Could Be Worse:** Regardless of how bad things may seem, it could always be worse. As a result, this perception may enable you to reduce the stress and to appreciate the situation better.
- **Think About Other Things:** Take a mental vacation and think about non-work-related and pleasant events.
- **Take a Deep Breath and Relax:** Take a deep breath and remember you have the strength, training, and experience to handle the situation. If you act calm, you will start to feel calm.
- **Talk to Others:** Talk to others in your team or from the PSAP. Discuss what has occurred, what is occurring, and what will happen.
- **Avoid Alcohol/Drugs:** These not only jeopardize job performance, but also increase stress after intoxication.
- **Humor:** The use of humor is often a natural expression to relieve stress and to make the best of a situation. However, there may be times when humor is inappropriate.

Coping Skills – Professional and Peer-Assistance

Depending on the nature of the deployment and disaster, the emotional impact of deployment may necessitate professional and/or peer assistance.

While it is beyond the scope of this document to prescribe at what point this should be considered, telecommunicators should seek assistance when the emotional stress interferes with employment, family, or other social events.

Changes in sleep, appetite, relationships, reoccurring dreams, or other indicators of depression may be signs of long-term emotional trauma.

The long-term consequences for failing to seek help, if necessary, can lead to a number of physical and mental illnesses. Unfortunately, professionals (including telecommunicators) are often independent and rarely acknowledge the need for help.

Communication Challenges

Telecommunicators who are deployed to a disaster area may face resentment from resident telecommunicators. The resentment factor may be challenging and not well understood for the deployed telecommunicator who is often anticipating an accepting and relieved telecommunicator reception. However, telecommunicators must remember many resident telecommunicators may feel an obligation to remain at their "post" until all calls for service have been resolved, may feel the deployed telecommunicator does not know the communication (radio/telephone) system, the surrounding area, or the community well enough to assume the position; or the resident telecommunicator may feel as if he/she is being "replaced" rather than supported. These emotional perceptions are difficult to adequately predict and may not be present in all cases.

Deployed telecommunicators must first recognize these perceptions may exist and they are not "personal", but rather a common reaction in a disaster situation. Patience, understanding, and a non-defensive response are all key techniques that should be employed as necessary. Most importantly, deployed telecommunicators should step back and try to view the situation from the other person's perspective in order to gain a better appreciation of the circumstances.

Three different communication techniques are presented in this section:

1. Effective/active listening
2. Calming emotionally upset persons
3. Assertiveness

These are by no means the only communication techniques available; rather these should be perceived as the minimum strategies a deployed telecommunicator should consider using in disaster areas.

Active and Effective Listening

There is an important difference between "hearing" and "listening." A resident telecommunicator (one permanently assigned to the PSAP) in a disaster area may be stressed, tired, and emotionally drained. They need to know you, as a deployed telecommunicator, are listening; not simply "hearing" them or letting what they are saying go in one ear and out the other ear.

Active listening requires conscious concentration on the verbal and nonverbal communications of the speaker.

Consider the following characteristics of an active and effective listener:

- **Develop a positive attitude –** Develop and maintain a positive attitude concerning the information sent by or being received by the other individual. A person's attitude will either facilitate or block effective communication.
- **Limit unnecessary talking/interruptions –** Refrain from excessive talking. It is difficult to listen if you talking or interrupting the person talking.
- **Remain objective to the message –** Listen to the person and the message completely. Things or events may be conveyed that are difficult to believe (i.e., working 24 hours a day for three days). If the speaker is mentally closed off, effective communication will not occur.
- **Paraphrase and use feedback –** When the speaker has finished talking, paraphrase what was interpreted. Feedback by the listener ensures what was said was interpreted correctly.
- **Do not formulate an instant response –** Avoid creating a response while the person is talking. When this occurs, listening has stopped and important points to the message are likely to be missed.
- **Maintain eye contact with the person –** It has been said that "listening is done with the eyes." A great deal of information may be obtained and credibility gained by looking at a person's eyes. Is the person being deceptive? Is the person maintaining normal eye contact? In many cases the speaker will believe he/she is being listened to if eye contact is maintained.
- **Control emotions and nonverbal communication –** With practice, emotions and nonverbal communication can be controlled.

Comforting Emotionally Upset Persons

A disaster often has an unpredictable emotional impact on telecommunicators, citizens, and other public safety personnel. When an emotionally upset person or telecommunicator is encountered, certain techniques should be used to calm or comfort the person before effective communication and dialogue can take place.

These include:

- **Use available time:** If the situation permits, take as much time as necessary to calm the person before talking.
- **Allow the person to talk:** Allow the person to tell his/her side of the story or to vent feelings. Avoid interrupting the person when he/she is talking.
- **Provide and enable support:** The use of supportive and reinforcing messages acknowledges an understanding of the person's message. Empower the person by describing the outstanding job they have been performing without being patronizing and remind them that you are only there to assist, not to take over.

- **Physical contact:** The use of physical contact (i.e., hand on the person's shoulder) should be non-invasive and non-intimate, as well as light and brief.

Assertive Communication

When a telecommunicator expresses him/herself, assertive communication techniques can enable firm, yet non-aggressive communication to occur. This section will define assertiveness and distinguish it from aggressiveness and submissiveness. Additional information is provided that reviews the composition and delivery of assertive messages.

The behavior of individuals can be described and placed on a continuum of being submissive, assertive, or aggressive. When one person violates the personal space or beliefs of another, the other person typically responds submissively, assertively, or aggressively.

- **Submissive:** A submissive person does not express his/her feelings, thoughts, or impressions and allows others to violate his/her rights.
- **Assertive:** An assertive person expresses his/her thoughts, feelings, and impressions in a direct and appropriate manner, while maintaining the respect of others.
- **Aggressive:** An aggressive person expresses his/her thoughts, feelings, and impressions in a direct and inappropriate manner, while violating the rights and respect of others.

Imagine you are in a movie theater where several people seated behind you are talking and distracting your attention from the movie. Now, consider how a submissive, assertive, or aggressive person would respond verbally.

- **Submissive –** A submissive person would say nothing and suffer in silence.
- **Assertive –** The assertive person would turn around; look directly at the talkers, and say, "Your talking is distracting from my enjoyment of the movie."
- **Aggressive –** An aggressive person would turn around and snarl at them, "Don't you have any respect for others? If you don't shut up immediately, I'll call the manager and have him throw you out of the theater!"

The components of an assertive message and additional techniques of using assertive communication are beyond the scope of this document. However, additional information may be obtained by selecting the link below and reviewing People Skills by Robert Bolton, which was the primary reference for this section.

Factors that Create a Dynamic and Difficult Working Environment

Two separate factors create a dynamic and difficult working environment in disaster areas:

- Changes in equipment
- Procedures and continual change

The operating environment in a disaster area will often be considerably different than what a telecommunicator is generally accustomed. Equipment, software, and facilities will be different.

As time passes, services will be restored and the operating conditions may change for the better or worse. Priorities, command structures, and the routing of citizen calls for services may change daily.

Security and Personal Safety

The personal security and safety of deployed telecommunicators is a critical consideration. The constituency in a disaster area immediately following the event may range from victims, emergency responders, to criminals.

When deployed, consider:

- Learn as much as possible about the deployment/disaster area. The terrain, conditions, and location of important landmarks. Danger areas, such as those not patrolled by law enforcement or known to have environmental risks, should be avoided.
- Do not go out of the PSAP alone. A "buddy system" should be used. This means telecommunicators should travel in pairs.
- Recognize signs and symptoms of stress and fatigue and react accordingly.
- Make sure drinking water is safe. Do not assume tap water is safe. Contamination of public water supplies and private wells after a disaster pose a significant threat of serious illness days and weeks after a disaster. If there is any uncertainty about the water quality, use only bottled water.
- Always carry identification and possibly health information. You should always carry your identification and deployment documents. If issued an identification card by the requesting agency, wear it at all times. Essential medical information, such as medical conditions, drug and food allergies, prescribed medicines and emergency contacts, should also be carried.
- No sightseeing. Take advantage of "down time" to relax or sleep. Telecommunicators may become injured or lost while sightseeing in unfamiliar areas after a disaster.
- Wear appropriate clothing. Clothing should be selected based on the working environment and weather conditions of the disaster area. Long pants and closed-toe shoes or boots should be worn in all conditions. TERT responders should only wear shirts, jackets, and hats with their team designations or their home agency designation. If these are not available, they should wear clothing without any team designation. Someone responding with TERT should not wear a USAR (urban search and rescue) shirt. Do not wear clothing that may be considered offensive because of language, images, or cut.

Differences in Disaster Type

The type of disaster will have a direct influence on the working conditions. Catastrophic disasters, such as hurricane Katrina, essentially eliminated safe drinking water, electricity, transportation routes, and brought the entire region to a standstill for days and weeks.

Terrorist attacks, such as the World Trade Center attacks, started and ended within a couple of hours, though the recovery took many months and even years.

A tornado may last minutes, yet the destruction may be widespread over a considerable and narrow area.

Depending on the extent of the destruction, the job duties of a telecommunicator and the length of deployment may vary considerably. The important point to remember is the recovery may change from deployment to arrival. As a result, telecommunicators must be able to adapt and change accordingly.

Improvise, Overcome, and Adapt

Since the operating environment will be different, it is imperative that telecommunicators:

- Overcome challenges.
- Improvise as necessary.
- Adapt to the situation.

This may be a continual process. Be prepared to learn quickly and "on the fly".

Make careful observations of how resident telecommunicators function and ask questions as often as necessary.

PSAP/Agency Structure and Protocol

The structure of the PSAP, technology, and the operational protocol are likely to be different and they may change over time as services are restored and additional emergency workers are brought to the area. You must adapt to the structure and protocols in use at the stricken PSAP.

Structure:

- **Chain-of-command:** The chain-of-command may be different and may change daily. The team leader of a deployed telecommunicator is your first point of contact. This will generally not change.
- **Center categorization:** In situations where the dispatch of calls was separated by function (i.e., different dispatch points for police, fire, and/or EMS), calls for services may be routed through a single PSAP or through a single dispatch console.
- **Dispatcher and call taker separation:** In situations where there may have been a clear distinction between call takers and dispatchers, those responsibilities may be combined in a single position. There may not be a distinction between these duties and the level of multi-tasking between different tasks may be higher.

Technology Differences – Equipment

- **The equipment (i.e., CAD, phones, software) will likely be different, not fully functional, improvised, or nonexistent.** Alternative methods of documentation, learning how to use existing equipment, and a general focus on the job should be the main priority. Do not be immediately concerned with "how outdated" the equipment may be or the "inefficiency" of the current system. These issues can be, if necessary, addressed later. The focus needs to be on learning the system to move to a supportive role as soon as possible.
- **Become familiar with equipment and limitations.** Identify the placement of equipment, resources, and information. Ask plenty of questions to ensure you have minimally obtained a basic ability to operate the equipment. The accessibility of local computer records, as well as the caller's information (ANI & ALI and/or Wireless Phase II location information) may not be fully accessible or functional.
- **Consider dynamics and continual change.** The equipment type and shortcomings may change as services are restored. As a result, the "system" of taking calls, dispatching first responders, and documenting activities may change daily.

Protocol

Consider:

- **Policy, codes, and local procedure.** Existing local procedures may not be in place depending on the nature of the disaster. The policy may be similar to the deployed telecommunicator's home policy, but the CAD codes, if used may be different. In addition, it is important to remember that the use of "10 codes" will be dropped in such situations and all radio transmissions will revert to plain English.
- **Prioritization of calls.** How calls are prioritized and the order in which emergency workers are dispatched may vary.
- **Documentation.** Automatic 9-1-1 and CAD documentation of incoming calls and dispatched units may be done manually with a pen/paper or log book.
- **Working with a diverse group of emergency responders.** It is not uncommon to work with a variety of different first responders (perhaps even including public works and private utility company employees). Keep in mind, these emergency responders may be from different states and may not have worked together before. Thus, the use of plain language in communication is critical.
- **Alternative job duties.** Deployed telecommunicators may be asked to do a number of different jobs/functions. These jobs should be appropriate given the situation, if not, remember you are in a disaster area and advise your team leader.

Request for Service/Assistance

The types of calls or requests for service will often be significantly different from those typically handled on a routine daily basis in a communication center. While it is common for telecommunicators to effectively manage high stress calls and periods of high volume, it is not common to continually handle a high volume of high stress calls.

Be careful in making assumptions based on the number of incoming calls. For example, if 200 calls come in one day, some telecommunicators from larger metropolitan areas may perceive this as a low number. However, if only two telecommunicators are taking the calls and dispatching emergency responders, the volume of calls has a new meaning.

Other Issues and Considerations for Deployed Telecommunicators

- **Geographical implications.** It is unlikely a deployed telecommunicator will be familiar with the geographical area in terms of streets, addresses, and other landmarks. By the same token, emergency responder may find it difficult to determine their location due to the destruction of landmarks and in the absence of street signs.
- **Type of service requests.** The PSAP may be the main point of contact for every citizen need, including restoration of utilities, resources, assistance, city/county offices, and any other type of need imaginable.
- **Quality of information.** The quality of information from callers may be poor. The caller may be emotional, angry, impatient, and may not know their physical location. Be prepared for a high volume of high stress calls. Remember, the caller has likely experienced a traumatic situation and their demeanor may be a result of the disaster and not a personal attack.
- **Responding to calls/questions.** Be truthful to callers and avoid promising anything that cannot be delivered. Avoid giving legal advice. The laws and civil statutes in states tend to vary considerably. What is true in one state may be incorrect in another state. Responses concerning similar questions must be consistent. The availability or lack of services/resources should be identified and any changes noted.
- **Inability to respond.** Be prepared to be unable to respond. The unavailability of first responders to provide a timely response may be limited due to limited personnel, impassable roads, or other conditions.

There may not be little, if anything you can immediately do for the caller. These and other difficult calls will be very challenging.

- **Emergency responder requests for assistance.** Generally when emergency responders request assistance, backup is immediately sent. However, the resources may not be available in disaster areas. Additionally, emergency responders may make unrealistic requests (that would otherwise be common in non-disaster areas). Be patient.

Fiscal Considerations for Deployed Team Members (sample expenditure log attached, spreadsheet on the website)

The Team Leader needs to impart to the members that unless extra expenses are pre-approved, they may not be reimbursable. An example might be that there is a item, i.e., a sleeping bag, which was lost on the flight to the disaster area. Before a new bag is purchased, it will be up to the Team Leader or designee to receive approval to purchase another bag in order for the cost to be reimbursed.

TERT Team Members/Leaders should keep *all receipts* for anything purchased or any cost incurred during the deployment. Reimbursements traditionally are not made without reciepts or proof of the expenditure.

Consider bringing an envelope or other mechanism to save and store all reciepts. An expenditure log may also help you track these costs.

Typically, the leader will contact the local or state Emergency Management representative at the location where you are deployed. This state's EMD will notify WA EMD of the request and circumstances surrounding the request. WA State EMD must agree to reimburse this cost before it will be reimbursable.

The following link is provided to give you information about what is generally allowable for purchase under and EMAC deployment.

EMAC Operations Manual (PDF)

Interstate Mutual Aid Deployment Guide (PDF)

These are posted on the EMD website on the Logistics' page, "Resources for Emergency Managers": http://www.emd.wa.gov/logistics/logistics_ResourcesforEmergencyManagers.shtml

These links will be posted on the WA APCO website with general information regarding TERT, or the CJTC TERT portal on the Telecommunicator Program Page that is used only for deploying teams.

Additional Forms and Information

TERT Member Deployment Review

This form should be completed by all deploying members upon completion of the mission. The Review should be turned into the WA State TERT Coordinator. These forms will be used to make future improvements to the program and future deployments.

Attachment H: TERT Member Deployment Review*

TERT Member Deployment Review

	YES	NO
Did you receive all the required information such as location, directions, contact name and number and team leader's name?		
When you arrived, were you briefed?		
Did you receive a TERT Package when you arrived?		
Did it contain the necessary resources for you to begin work?		
Was the equipment what you are currently trained on?		
Do you feel that the right amount of resources were requested?		
Do you feel you were welcomed by the agency?		
Were assignments clear and appropriate?		
Do you feel that you were of help to the PSAP?		
Please provide suggestions on how to improve the program.		
Other Comments (Feel free to type a narrative for any of the above questions)		

ICS Activity Log
To Be Completed Each Shift

ACTIVITY LOG (ICS 214)

1. Incident Name:	2. Operational Period:	Date From: Date Date To: Date
		Time From: HHMM Time To: HHMM

3. Name:	4. ICS Position:	5. Home Agency (and Unit):

6. Resources Assigned:

Name	ICS Position	Home Agency (and Unit)

7. Activity Log:

Date/Time	Notable Activities

1. Incident Name:		2. Operational Period:	Date From: Date	Date To: Date
			Time From: HHMM	Time To: HHMM
8. Prepared by:	Name:	Position/Title:	Signature: _____	
ICS 214, Page 1		Date/Time: Date		

ICS 214

Activity Log

Purpose. The Activity Log (ICS 214) records details of notable activities at any ICS level, including single resources, equipment, Task Forces, etc. These logs provide basic incident activity documentation, and a reference for any after-action report.

Preparation. An ICS 214 can be initiated and maintained by personnel in various ICS positions as it is needed or appropriate. Personnel should document how relevant incident activities are occurring and progressing, or any notable events or communications.

Distribution. Completed ICS 214s are submitted to supervisors, who forward them to the Documentation Unit. All completed original forms must be given to the Documentation Unit, which maintains a file of all ICS 214s. It is recommended that individuals retain a copy for their own records.

Notes:
- The ICS 214 can be printed as a two-sided form.
- Use additional copies as continuation sheets as needed, and indicate pagination as used.

Block Number	Block Title	Instructions
1	**Incident Name**	Enter the name assigned to the incident.
2	**Operational Period**	Enter the start date (month/day/year) and time (using the 24-hour clock) and end date and time for the operational period to which the form applies.

Block Number	Block Title	Instructions
	Date and Time From Date and Time To	
3	**Name**	Enter the title of the organizational unit or resource designator (e.g., Facilities Unit, Safety Officer, Strike Team).
4	**ICS Position**	Enter the name and ICS position of the individual in charge of the Unit.
5	**Home Agency** (and Unit)	Enter the home agency of the individual completing the ICS 214. Enter a unit designator if utilized by the jurisdiction or discipline.
6	**Resources Assigned**	Enter the following information for resources assigned:
	• Name	Use this section to enter the resource's name. For all individuals, use at least the first initial and last name. Cell phone number for the individual can be added as an option.
	• ICS Position	Use this section to enter the resource's ICS position (e.g., Finance Section Chief).
	• Home Agency (and Unit)	Use this section to enter the resource's home agency and/or unit (e.g., Des Moines Public Works Department, Water Management Unit).
7	**Activity Log** Date/Time Notable Activities	• Enter the time (24-hour clock) and briefly describe individual notable activities. Note the date as well if the operational period covers more than one day. • Activities described may include notable occurrences or events such as task assignments, task completions, injuries, difficulties encountered, etc. • This block can also be used to track personal work habits by adding columns such as "Action Required," "Delegated To," "Status," etc.
8	**Prepared by** • Name • Position/Title • Signature • Date/Time	Enter the name, ICS position/title, and signature of the person preparing the form. Enter date (month/day/year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

FEMA Assignment List Form 204

1. Incident Name	2. Operational Period (Date/Time) From: To:	Assignment List **ICS 204-TERT**
3. Branch	**4. Division/Group/Staging**	
5. Operations Personnel Name Affiliation Contact # (s)		

Operations Section Chief: _____

Branch Director: _____

Division/Group Supervisor/STAM: _____

6. Resources Assigned				"X" indicates 204a attachment with additional instructions	↓
Strike Team/Task Force/Resource Identifier	Leader	Contact Info. #	# Of Persons	Reporting Info/Notes/Remarks	
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐
					☐

7. Work Assignments

8. Special Instructions

9. Communications (radio and/or phone contact numbers needed for this assignment)

Name/Function   Radio: Freq./System/Channel   Phone   Cell/Pager

_____

_____	_____	_____	_____	___
_____	_____	_____	_____	___
_____	_____	_____	_____	___

Emergency Communications

Medical _____   Evacuation _____   Other _____

10. Prepared by: Date/Time	11. Reviewed by (PSC): Date/Time	12. Reviewed by (OSC): Date/Time

ASSIGNMENT LIST (ICS 204-TERT)

Purpose. The Assignment List(s) informs Division and Group supervisors of incident assignments. Once the Unified Command and General Staff agree to the assignments, the assignment information is given to the appropriate Divisions and Groups.

Preparation. The Assignment List is normally prepared by the Resources Unit, using guidance from the Incident Objectives (ICS 202-TERT), Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215-TERT), and the Operations Section Chief. The Assignment List must be approved by the Planning Section Chief and Operations Section Chief. When approved, it is included as part of the Incident Action Plan (IAP). Specific instructions for specific resources may be entered on an ICS 204a-TERT for dissemination to the field. A separate sheet is used for each Division or Group. The identification letter of the Division is entered in the form title. Also enter the number (roman numeral) assigned to the Branch.

Special Note. The Assignment List, ICS 204-TERT submits assignments at the level of Divisions and Groups. The Assignment List Attachment, ICS 204a-TERT shows more specific assignment information, if needed. The need for an ICS 204a-TERT is determined by the Planning and Operations Section Chiefs during the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215-TERT) development.

Distribution. The Assignment List is duplicated and attached to the Incident Objectives and given to all recipients of the Incident Action Plan. In some cases, assignments may be communicated via radio/telephone/fax. All completed original forms MUST be given to the Documentation Unit.

Item #	Item Title	Instructions
1.	Incident Name	Enter the name assigned to the incident.
2.	Operational Period	Enter the time interval for which the form applies.
3.	Branch	Enter the Branch designator.

| 4. | Division/Group/Staging | Enter the Division/Group/Staging designator. |

| 5. | Operations Personnel | Enter the name of the Operations Chief, applicable Branch Director, and Division Supervisor. |

| 6. | Resources Assigned | Each line in this field may have a separate Assignment List Attachment (ICS 204a-TERT). Enter the following information about the resources assigned to Division or Group for this period: |

Identifier — List identifier

Leader — Leader name

Contact Information — Primary means of contacting this person (e.g., radio, phone, pager, etc.). Be sure to include area code when listing a phone number.

Of Persons — Total number of personnel for the strike team, task force, or single resource assigned.

Reporting Info/Notes/ — Special notes or directions, specific to this strike team, task force, or single

Remarks — resource. Enter an "X" check if an Assignment List Attachment (ICS 204a-TERT) will be prepared and attached. The Planning and Operations Section Chiefs determine the need for an ICS 204a-TERT during the Operational Planning Worksheet (ICS 215-TERT) development.

| 7. | Work Assignment | Provide a statement of the tactical objectives to be achieved within the operational period by personnel assigned to this Division or Group. |

| 8. | Special Instructions | Enter a statement noting any safety problems, specific precautions to be exercised, or other important information. |

| 9. | Communications | Enter specific communications information (including emergency numbers) for this division /group. If radios are being used, enter function (command, tactical, support, etc.), frequency, system, and channel from the Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205-TERT). Note: Phone numbers should include area code. |

| 10. | Prepared By | Enter the name of the person completing the form, normally the Resources Unit Leader. |

Date/Time — Enter date (month, day, year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

| 11. | Reviewed by (PSC) | |

Date/Time — Enter date (month, day, year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

| 12. | Reviewed by (OSC) | Enter the name of the operations person reviewing the form, normally the Operations Section Chief. |

Date/Time — Enter date (month, day, year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

TERT MEMBER EXPENDITURE LOG

Date	Cost	Item	Purpose	Receipt Yes/No	Approval	Date Submitted - Reimbursement
Total	$0.00					

 This is an example of an expenditure log to help you track reimbursable costs. We will have these forms on the WA APCO TERT page for your convenience.

Notes: