

OREGON RESILIENCE CASE STUDY

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING: COMMUNICATIONS

A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) ensures an individual organization can continue to perform its **essential functions**, provide **essential services**, and deliver **core capabilities** during a disruption to normal operations.

Oregon utilities have implemented a number of BCP actions related to communications after an emergency.

Emerald People's Utility District

Communication lines may be down after an emergency, so Emerald has a two-way radio system in place if towers are still standing. Nearby utilities also have towers, so if Emerald's are down, radios may be able to connect to others. As an even more analog back-up, the PUD also has old fashioned walkie talkies powered by AA batteries.

McMinnville Water and Light

Three satellite phones are dispersed among on-call staff, with one permanently located at the utility's treatment plant.

McMinnville also built a portable communications center. It purchased a trailer, and fitted it with a HAM radio and portable generator.

Tillamook People's Utility District

Tillamook PUD has an exhaustive list of contact information in place, depending on what services may be available after an emergency. The list includes cell phones for staff and a 24-hour dispatch line where employees can call in to gather information about emergency response. A number of dispatchers also carry radios, and fleet vehicles have GPS and radio systems.

Tillamook PUD, Tillamook County, and the Port of Tillamook jointly own, through a separate entity called Tillamook Light Wave, a fiber line that could provide communications services after an emergency. Transpacific fiber lines come in to Pacific City from Hawaii and Japan.



McMinnville's generator will help keep operations running after an emergency.

To boost its communications options, Tillamook PUD is considering acquiring satellite phones, which will be stored in each of the service centers.

Central Lincoln People's Utility District

Central Lincoln enjoys a robust communications and fiber network with physically redundant routes; however, after a Cascadia earthquake portions of the service territory are expected to be without communications. To ensure a basic level of communication immediately following a disaster, the utility has deployed stand-alone contingency systems that will allow employees in the field to check in and provide for limited communication between the north and south operations centers.

The utility has identified four primary emergency communication needs including office-to-office, office-to-county, office-to-state, and dispatch-to-truck. To bridge the sixty mile gap between the utility's business offices, satellite phones are in place and may be used in an emergency for office-to-office and office-to-state communication. Counties within the Central Lincoln service territory have specified that they will use ham radios; therefore, office-to-county communication will be accomplished through the use of ham radios.

To address emergency dispatch-to-truck or truck-to-truck communication, Central Lincoln sought a radio repeater system that would be portable, easily deployed and provided sufficient coverage. In 2016, the utility purchased four radio repeater systems and staged them across the service territory. To ensure that the repeaters would be deployed when needed, all 125 employees were trained to assemble and operate the repeaters. Central Lincoln will continue to update and exercise current communication strategies including the Employee Hotline which allows an employee to call in from any location and receive messages from management.



All CLPUD employees are trained to deploy the radio repeater system.