



Shared Resources Manager—Emergency Communications

Getting Started – Users Guide

Summary

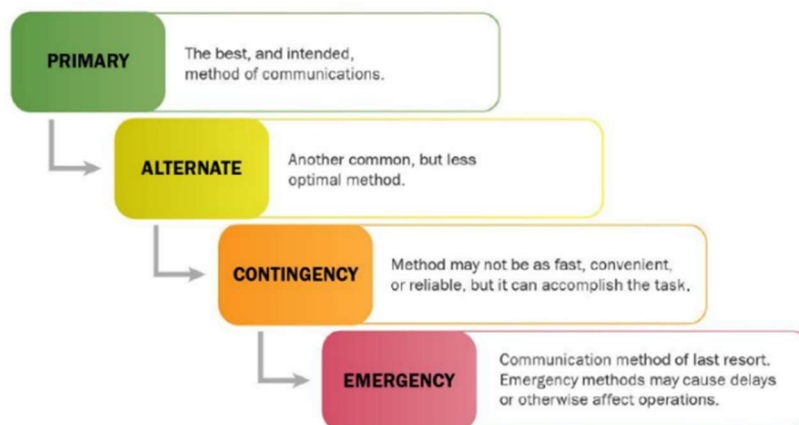
A PACE Plan can serve as either a standalone document or as a component of a broader Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Whether implemented independently or as part of comprehensive continuity planning, PACE provides a systematic approach to ensuring that critical functions can continue during operational disruptions.

What are your communication options if your primary method is unavailable? PACE—Primary, Alternate, Contingent, Emergency—is a simple framework for answering that question ahead of time. PACE planning provides up to four carefully considered options for any critical tool or process, ensuring continuity and readiness. This structured approach is an essential component of comprehensive emergency preparedness and business continuity planning.

CISA, NCSWIC, and SAFECOM all recommend PACE planning as an emergency communications best practice.

A Shared Resources Manager PACE Plan is a best practice approach to operational resilience. Developing a documented plan with multiple communication pathways demonstrates organizational commitment to maintaining critical services, even when preferred systems are unavailable for any reason.

PACE Concepts



Cooking

Cooking nicely illustrates a PACE:

PACE Plan	Primary (P)	Alternate (A)	Contingent (C)	Emergency (E)
Cooking	Electric stove	Restaurant	Charcoal grill	Camping stove

Your primary option is your electric stove. If that’s unavailable, a restaurant is a reasonable alternative. If restaurants aren’t accessible or affordable, use your charcoal grill. If you lack charcoal, a camping stove serves as your emergency fallback.



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The triggers are straightforward: when your primary method is unavailable, move to the next option. Because this example affects only your household, coordination isn't required.

Radio Communications

Your agency *may* have a Communications PACE Plan that looks something like this:

PACE Plan	Primary (P)	Alternate (A)	Contingent (C)	Emergency (E)
Dispatching	Primary trunked radio system	Secondary simplex channel	Cell Phone	Mobile Data Terminals

If the primary radio system fails, switch to a secondary simplex channel. If that's also unavailable, use cell phones. If cell networks are down, MDTs provide a fallback using an independent network. Triggers must be clearly defined and understood by all users.

Unlike the cooking example, radio systems affect many dispersed users, and impacts may be uneven. This complexity makes clear trigger definitions and comprehensive training essential.

Shared Resources Manager PACE Plan

A Shared Resource Manager PACE Plan *could* look something like this:

PACE Plan	Primary (P)	Alternate (A)	Contingent (C)	Emergency (E)
Shared Resources Manager	SRM	Group email	Announcement on an intercom channel + paper log or white board	Voice query on channel

If SRM is unavailable for an extended period, fall back to whatever you used before SRM—perhaps that was a group email. If email isn't an option, your plan could be to use a dispatch-to-dispatch intercom or PSAP hailing channel to coordinate resource needs, with each communications center logging resource assignments. As an emergency resort, you may announce your need on the radio channel you wish to use and, if no one responds, assume the resource is available.

As with radio communications, every SRM entity needs to understand the same triggers for moving from P to A to C to E. If agencies use different plans, the whole system breaks down. Define your triggers clearly, then train and exercise them.

Building a PACE Plan

Group effort

By nature, PACE plans are broad in scope, engaging the entire SRM community. Engaging the representatives of the whole community through a workgroup is an excellent approach to a plan's development.



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Keep it Simple

PACE plans should be realistic and simple. Moving from Primary to Alternate or Alternate to Contingent tools should not be more complicated than the loss of a Primary or Alternate resource.

Recognize the difference between a service disruption that warrants implementing a PACE Plan and an isolated disruption. Define clear triggers so that everyone knows when to move. Because not everyone may be experiencing the same issues, establish mechanism to communicate capability disruptions.

Train and Exercise

A plan that sits in a drawer won't help you if SRM goes down. Walk through your PACE plan at least once a year, and after any major change to your radio system or staffing. Use a tabletop exercise: pick a scenario, have everyone talk through what they'd do at each step, and fix whatever doesn't work. New staff should learn the plan as part of onboarding—not figure it out for the first time during an outage.

Use it

Don't wait for a real outage to find out your plan doesn't work. If SRM were to go down—even briefly—follow your PACE plan instead of improvising. Afterward, ask what worked and what didn't, and update the plan while it's fresh. A PACE plan that's actually used gets better every time it's needed.

More Information

Additional information about PACE can be found at these links:

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

- <https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/leveraging-pace-plan-emergency-communications-ecosystem>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5Tm7Tt2eXw>

National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators (NCSWIC)

- https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/2024_NCSWICPTE_Leveraging_PACE_Plan_Emergency_Comms_Ecosystems.pdf

Puget Sound Healthcare Emergency Communication Systems

- https://pushecs.org/resources/pace_resources/

SAFECOM

- <https://www.cisa.gov/safecom>

Wikipedia

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PACE_\(communication_methodology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PACE_(communication_methodology))