



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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STATEMENT FROM FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI ON RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS POST-HURRICANE IRENE

Washington, D.C. – The FCC issued the following statement from FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski regarding the Commission’s efforts following Hurricane Irene:

“I want to begin by offering my deepest condolences to those who lost loved ones as a result of Hurricane Irene. While we hope that the worst has passed, we continue to remain vigilant in our evaluation and response to the situation as it evolves. Working with FEMA, our other federal and state partners, and communications service providers, we’re focused on ensuring that people can communicate with each other and with first responders during this difficult time. Communications networks are of course essential for public safety and for the functioning of our economy.

“As Hurricane Irene gets downgraded to a tropical storm, the FCC continues to evaluate the damage from the areas affected in its aftermath. Based on reports to date, there have been some wireline and wireless outages. The good news, based on these initial reports, is that there hasn’t been major damage to our communications infrastructure, except for damage along coastal regions hit hard by the storm.

“We are pleased that current reports indicate no 9-1-1 center is without service, and we have received no reports of public safety communications outages. Overall, broadcast and radio are largely unaffected, though in North Carolina a significant number of cable customers are out of service.

“The FCC remains on active watch around-the-clock to assess and respond to outages where necessary. We currently have four Roll Call teams deployed to conduct post event scans of the radio signal environment. I have also spoken directly to the CEOs of wireless, telco and cable companies, and we are working to ensure continuation of service, and that service is restored quickly where needed.

“In the hours and days ahead, the hurricane’s impact is not over. The FCC will remain vigilant as we address continued outages from flooding and commercial power outages. During this time we have activated our 24-7 response capabilities and have resources deployed in the field and monitor and respond, as appropriate, to outages.

“We also continue to work with our federal and state partners on key steps to ensure that our emergency communications systems meet the needs of Americans in the 21st century – including getting an interoperable mobile broadband public safety network funded and built; launching PLAN nationwide, a new mobile alerting system which would provide a “fast-track” for emergency alerts around network congestion; and accelerating the move to Next Gen 911 so that people can send text, video or photos to 9-1-1 in times of emergency.

"I want to thank Ret. Admiral Barnett and the staff of the Public Safety Bureau and throughout the FCC who have been working to anticipate, and now respond, to this hurricane. I've seen first-hand, including this morning at the FCC Ops Center, the dedication and commitment of FCC staff, and we owe them our thanks for their ongoing service."

FCC: TIPS FOR HOW TO COMMUNICATE DURING AN EMERGENCY

1. Limit non-emergency phone calls. This will minimize network congestion, free up "space" on the network for emergency communications and conserve battery power if you are using a wireless phone;
2. Keep all phone calls brief. If you need to use a phone, try to use it only to convey vital information to emergency personnel and/or family;
3. For non-emergency calls, try text messaging, also known as short messaging service (SMS) when using your wireless phone. In many cases text messages will go through when your call may not. It will also help free up more "space" for emergency communications on the telephone network;
4. If possible try a variety of communications services if you are unsuccessful in getting through with one. For example, if you are unsuccessful in getting through on your wireless phone, try a messaging capability like text messaging or email. Alternatively, try a landline phone if one is available. This will help spread the communications demand over multiple networks and should reduce overall congestion;
5. Wait 10 seconds before redialing a call. On many wireless handsets, to re-dial a number, you simply push "send" after you've ended a call to redial the previous number. If you do this too quickly, the data from the handset to the cell sites does not have enough time to clear before you've resent the same data. This contributes to a clogged network;
6. Have charged batteries and car-charger adapters available for backup power for your wireless phone;
7. Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers in your phone;
8. If in your vehicle, try to place calls while your vehicle is stationary; Have a family communications plan in place.

9. Designate someone out of the area as a central contact, and make certain all family members know who to contact if they become separated;
10. If you have Call Forwarding on your home number, forward your home number to your wireless number in the event of an evacuation. That way you will get incoming calls from your landline phone;
11. After the storm has passed, if you lose power in your home, try using your car to charge cell phones or listen to news alerts on the car radio. But be careful – don't try to reach your car if it is not safe to do so, and remain vigilant about carbon monoxide emissions from your car if it is in a closed space, such as a garage.
12. Tune-in to broadcast and radio news for important news alerts.
13. If you have an emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately. But if it's not an emergency, use other options.

More information on emergency communications during Hurricane Irene from the FCC can be found at www.fcc.gov. Residents can also find more information at www.ready.gov, <http://www.redcross.org/en/irene> or www.fema.gov.

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News and other information about the FCC is available at www.fcc.gov