
	<p><b>EMERGENCY MEASURES RADIO GROUP</b></p>
	<p><b>OTTAWA ARES</b></p>

Two Names - One Group - One Purpose

# CITY WIDE TELEPHONE SYSTEM FAILURE

Presentation to EMRG/ Ottawa ARES meeting Jan 27 2007

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 20, 2006  
COMMUNICATIONS FAILED IN  
SAINT JOHN'S FOR 5 HOURS.**

**WHAT IF IT WAS LONGER?**

**WHAT IF IT WAS HERE?**

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**In Newfoundland, it was a fire in some DC bus cables.**

**It could as easily be a software bug, power surge or big weather event.**

**Murphy *always* finds a way in.**

**The actual cause doesn't concern us.**

*We (most of us) don't design telephone systems for a living.*

# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

Suppose the communications failed in the middle of the day,  
in the middle of the week.

What are the **consequences**?

- What is the **response** of the City of Ottawa?
- Where does **EMRG** fit in?
- Between the 1998 ice storm and the Y2K scare, the city has looked at this possibility.
- Phones could be out for minutes, hours or days..

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**What are the consequences?**

- Some broadcast services would be affected.**
- Any residual telephone capacity would be overloaded.**
- ATMs would stop dispensing cash, since they can't communicate back to head office.**
- Internet would go out for most people**
- People will still need to contact police, fire, ambulance**
- People will be puzzled, then annoyed, then scared.**
- In these circumstances people often call 911 so the problem can “snowball”**

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**From the point of view of the city, this is the same as a failure of the 911 phone system, plus a few additional hurdles. Notification of the public is via whatever mass media are still operating.**



## **NOTE:**

**It does *not* require any action on the part of the city to evacuate, shelter or otherwise deal with masses of its residents.**

**No extra neighbourhood patrols are required.**

# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

## CITY OF OTTAWA EMERGENCY PLAN

### What is the response of the city?

- Every radio equipped city vehicle is a contact point.
- City radio systems become tie points between services.



- Departments relying on telephones scale back, work around, or re-locate.
- Calling in staff means knocking on doors.



# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

What is the response of the city? ..continued

**-As time goes on, other radio equipped fleets (taxi, delivery, utility, etc.) join the contact plan.**



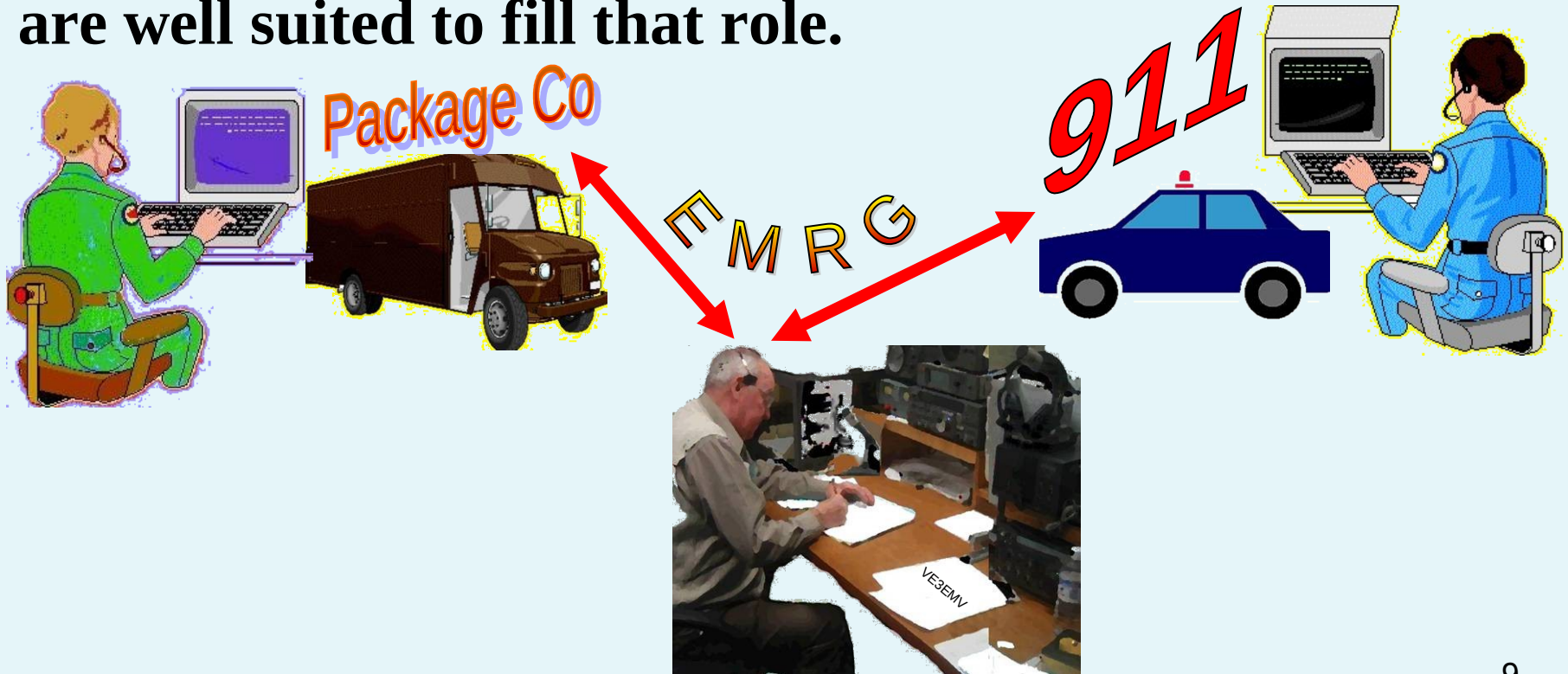


# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

What is the response of the city? ..continued

## Where do we fit in?

-The dispatchers of *these other fleets* won't have good communications with the 911 system either. Amateurs are well suited to fill that role.

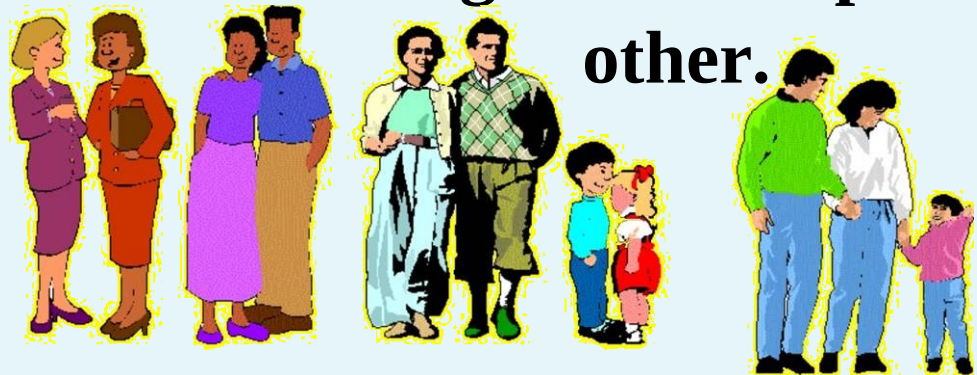


# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

## CITY OF OTTAWA EMERGENCY PLAN

### Meanwhile...

The public contacts emergency services via any city vehicle or location that has a radio. House bound residents are instructed to use a red ribbon or other device to indicate distress, as they did in the ice storm of 1998. In Saint John's, they were directed to the nearest station. Neighbours help each other.



# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

What is the response of the city? ..continued

## Where else do we fit in?

- Other hams, with the time and skills could assist rural patrols if they develop.
- If the city decides to use neighbourhood watch organizations as contact points, hams could keep in touch with them via FRS or other means.
- Hams are good at gathering information about the big picture beyond the city borders. We can gather more specific information than the “Newsworld” model.

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**What do you need?**

**-As assignments go, this is an easy one. Nearly everything still works.**

**-Paying for lunch will be your biggest problem, if you haven't included some cash in your 72 hour emergency kit.**

**-Bring 'phones, notepad and pencils and you're in business.**

**...But don't go wandering out on your own without being dispatched. "Loose cannons" need not apply. While on the don'ts, avoid "no problem" reports. (If it ain't broke, we don't need to hear about it)**

# **CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE**

**What do YOU do?**

- Prepare to deploy. (we discussed all that before)**
- Wait for instructions , LISTEN**
- Once deployed: document everything.**

**When did the call arrive?**

**Who originated it?**

**Who was it for?**

**What was the problem?**

- Pass the information on as exactly as you get it,  
as soon as you get it.**
- Sit back and wait for the next one.**
- Write up your notes for the debrief.**

# CITY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

## - Wrap Up

- Relatively easy, from an amateur point of view
- Minimal preparedness required, but it think about it.
- Collect feedback for next time.

..ZZZ?



Can we go home now? What's for lunch? What's on TV?