



Jefferson County - City of Port Townsend
COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN



Part 3: Emergency Operations Guide

EOG 3.2.01-A

ALL HAZARDS ALERT BROADCAST (AHAB) WARNING SYSTEM

August 18, 2008

BACKGROUND - There are three All Hazards Alert Broadcast (AHAB) warning sites in Port Townsend. These units can be activated from the local Emergency Operations Center for a range of alerts, as well as by the State EMD Duty Officer in the event of a coastal tsunami warning. These combination "siren"/public address sites have a wide range of uses in alerting persons at risk.

This guide discusses timely dissemination of tsunami alert to persons at risk, provides guidance in the use and activation of the local AHAB stations, and the methods for periodic system checks to assure operability when needed

AHAB STATIONS

- **AHAB Station 1** – Port Townsend Marina (near the POPT Yard Office). This is a low power station with an effective range of 1,800 feet (weather dependent). This roughly covers the West and Central portion of the marina and the area from Landes St. to Kearney Street.
- **AHAB Station 2** – Point Hudson (Port of Port Townsend property near the intersection of Monroe and Water Streets). This is a medium power station with an effective range of 2,500 feet. This covers the area West to Tyler Street and North across the RV park along the beach to Chetzemoka Park.
- **AHAB Station 3** – Fort Worden on the beach side of the campground (hosted by Washington State Parks). This is also a medium range station. Coverage includes the campground, beach area to Point Wilson, and across the lower bunkers.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATIONS - The audio (announce) function is less effective than the "siren" function. Audio messages broadcast over the stations should be brief, clear, and concise. Local activation of the stations will likely result in a spike of citizen calls due to the difficulty of understanding the message at the outer distances.

WEATHER CONDITIONS AFFECT RANGE - Weather conditions, specifically wind direction/speed and relative humidity, will impact the effective range of the stations. The "siren" function carries further than the "announce" function.

SELECTIVE ACTIVATION - All local AHAB stations can be activated simultaneously or separately and needed. Each station has an individual code sequence.

REMOTE ACTIVATION VIA SATELLITE - AHAB stations can be remotely activated from the State Emergency Operations Center upon receipt of a tsunami warning affecting the warning area. The voice message that accompanies remote activation is agreed upon in advance (see Attachment A). Activation of local AHAB stations for any other hazard than tsunami is a local responsibility.

LOCAL ACTIVATION VIA RADIO - The stations can be activated for tests and alerts via a dedicated local radio frequency. A tone sequence can be added to the frequency (using a tone pad on the sending radio) that "opens" the stations or activates a WAV file. The voice transmitted when the station is open is broadcast to the warning area. The primary local activation point is the Emergency Operations Center

(Comm 4 position). Activation is also possible via the EOC mobile. Additional local activation points are pending.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOCAL ACTIVATION - AHAB stations will be activated locally according to standing orders. All activations, regardless of purpose, will be coordinated with the Department of Emergency Management unless such circumstances are present that make independent activation a necessity to save lives.

AGENCIES AUTHORIZED TO ACTIVATE AHAB STATIONS

- Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management (coordinating agency)
- State of Washington Emergency Management Division (tsunami only, by agreement)
- Port Townsend Police Department (all hazards)
- East Jefferson Fire and Rescue (all hazards)
- Fort Worden authorities (all hazards affecting the Park)
- Port of Port Townsend (all hazards affecting the Port area)

LOCAL ACTIVATION EQUIPMENT - Activation of the AHAB stations requires a VHF transmitter programmed to the activation frequency, with a DTMF (tone) pad for entering the activation codes. The Emergency Action Checklist (EAC 3.3.14) contains the activation codes for all three stations.

ACTIVATION FREQUENCY AND CODES ARE CONFIDENTIAL - The activation frequency and the authorization codes for initiating alerts are covered by the EOC Sensitive Information Handling Policy to prevent unauthorized or accidental use of the stations.

USE FOR HAZARDS OTHER THAN TSUNAMI - These criteria will be used for local activation of an AHAB station:

- Scheduled tests and periodic demonstrations (coordinated by the Department of Emergency Management).
- Immediate/imminent life threat within the warning area where rapid action is required on the part of the persons at risk (i.e., hazardous materials releases, etc.).

MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR LOCAL ACTIVATION

- Warning of an immediate life threat to persons in the risk area
- Message contains life-threatening action that can be taken by persons at risk
- Rapid response is required to a sudden onset event.
- No other effective method of warning is available.

GENERAL AHAB ACTIVATION GUIDANCE – CONCEPT OF OPERATION

1. Hazardous incident occurs requiring activation of any or all of the stations.
2. Responsible authority (according to standing orders) determines need for activation.
3. Voice message is composed according to protocol.
4. Activation frequency is selected on the source point radio.
5. Initiation codes are entered for activation of the alert siren WAV file.
6. Stop codes are entered to silence the siren alert.
7. Initiation codes are entered for activation of the voice/announce function.
8. Voice alert is broadcast via the source radio.
9. Stop codes are entered to silence the station.
10. Response agencies are queried for alert response/effectiveness.
11. Alert is repeated if necessary.
12. Alert is cancelled when appropriate.

CLARIFICATION OF SOME OF THE TERMS USED HERE

- Activation – initiation of the device for tests or actual alerts.
- AHAB – All Hazards Alert Broadcast unit.
- Siren alert – activation of a siren-sounding .wav file via the AHAB speakers.
- Voice alert – public broadcast of a voice message via the AHAB speakers.
- Warning area – the hazard affects persons within sound of the AHAB station



Point Hudson AHAB Station