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

Two Names - One Group - One Purpose

Yearly Strategy Plan EMRG-303

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2008

EMRG PUBLIC

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1. REVISION SUMMARY

Date of Change	Revision Number	Summary of Changes (Section #, type of change)
2004-05-04	1.0	Initial document
2004-05-23	1.1	Re-number as EMR-303 and add classification to page header
2004-07-29	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change name to Year 1 Project Plan to reflect the 12 months of work, rather than calendar year. • Update sections of document based on known changes since last update • Add Carlington Heights requirement
2005-02-16	1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update objectives based on discussion in January Management team meeting
2006-02-12	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change name to Yearly Strategy Plan • Update for 2006 using previous plan as a base
2006-03-31	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add general objectives so plan becomes overall EMRG strategy, not just a technical project plan.
2007-01-12	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial 2007 Plan
2007-01-18	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update with Management Team review input
2007-05-05	3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add section 3.4, Guiding Principles
2007-10-13	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft changes for 2008 plan
2007-10-18	4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes per review at management team meeting Oct 17, 2007
2007-11-04	4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes per final management team review.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Yearly Strategy Plan defines the work that EMRG will focus on for the year, to guide planning and maintain focus.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 5 YEAR PLAN

The Emergency Measures Radio Group (EMRG) developed a 5 year plan in 2003, called the "*EMRG Disaster Communications 5 Year Plan*" [EMRG-302]. The plan defined a series of projects that EMRG identified as required in order to provide effective communications in an emergency.

Most of the objectives of the 5 year plan remain viable, so the plan is still an important reference document, although the time lines are no longer valid.

3.2 YEAR 1 (2005) – LESSONS LEARNED

The first year of the Yearly Strategy Plan was 2005. The year was very successful in terms of moving forward, but in the end, many tasks remained to be completed. The project objectives set for year one turned out to be far too aggressive and the work activity realistically will require several years to complete.

Some of the lessons learned that impact progress, includes;

- 1) The planning, engineering and organization of many of these projects takes as much or more time than the project itself. There are a limited number of people who have the skills to plan many of the projects.
- 2) The projects are only one aspect of EMRG activity. Meetings, exercise and training sessions must also be prepared and delivered in parallel. The strategy needs to include these as part of a total yearly plan.
- 3) Sometimes things move slowly, so equipment or space does not always become available when planned, although it does become available eventually.
- 4) Unexpected events force sudden changes in the plan, such as the Pioneer Amateur Radio Club shutting down their UHF repeater, which introduced an additional project for EMRG.

3.3 YEAR 3 (2007) – LESSONS LEARNED

By the fall of 2007 it was clear that the EMRG plan for 2007 included expectations for meetings, training, exercises and projects, which would not be achieved. It is critical that partner expectations align with EMRG capability to deliver, so it is important to understand what EMRG can realistically deliver. This includes the yearly training and exercising, plus incremental project work.

It takes a lot of work to keep EMRG running effectively and there is a small group of people to do the work. Good meetings, training, exercises and projects take a LOT of time to plan, prepare, deliver and wrap up. Future plans will further reduce the project section, with more emphasis on training and exercises.

3.4 FUNDING

The City of Ottawa, through the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), provides funding for EMRG projects. Year 1 (2005) had the largest grant, \$5000, while subsequent years are funded at \$1000 each.

Funding is used to buy parts and equipment required to complete projects. This also includes work done to adjust radio equipment for repeaters, which EMRG contracts to TimeMCI. EMRG and OFS have an agreement that EMRG will use a commercial radio shop to align repeater equipment to ensure there is no interference to OFS or other radio systems.

3.5 2008 STRATEGY SUMMARY

The EMRG strategy until the end of 2008 builds the basic voice infrastructure, then focuses on training and exercises. In the fall of 2008 the strategy will be reviewed and updated for 2009.

The major components of the 2008 strategy are listed below in the order that they will be completed.

1. VHF/UHF voice solutions at the 3 permanent sites (Randall, Red Cross, EOC)
2. Hands on training and exercises for the permanent sites.
3. VHF/UHF portable voice solutions for the Community Services command centre.
4. Strengthen relationships with the 2 primary clients, Community Services & Ottawa Red Cross. Demonstrate our capabilities and get them involved in providing feedback and requirements.
5. Hands on training and exercises with the permanent sites and portable equipment.

3.6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.6.1 EMRG Will Not Take On Tasks That Cannot Be Done Well

It is better to have a few solutions that are well documented, understood and practiced, than a long list of solutions that may not be available.

3.6.2 Partner Relationships Are Important

We must invest time in our partner relationships, so we understand what they need, they understand what we can provide and they are confident we will be able to meet their needs in an emergency.

- Agreements and MOUs are required, but it is the people to people contact that ensures we are recognized as a viable solution.

3.6.3 The EOC Is a Decision Centre

The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is a decision making centre. EMRG provides a radio operator to provide a channel for information into, and out of the EOC.

- EMRG Net Control should be separate from the EOC, either in another room, or another facility.
- Information not destined for the EOC, should not route through the EOC.

3.6.4 Deploy Communications Co-located With Users

We are an alternative to the phone, so we should be located where the phone would be, with the users. Radio operators at the back of the room, down the hall, or in the parking lot, are not effective communications solutions.

3.6.5 Local Communications Is The Priority

Almost all Amateur Emergency communications will be within the local area. This communications will be used for collecting and distributing information from shelters, Community Services, Red Cross, EOC or local citizen patrols.

- The probability of a localized communications failure is much higher than the probability of a City Wide or Eastern Ontario communications failure.
- Any long distance (HF) communications still requires a local infrastructure to collect and distribute information.

3.6.6 Promote The Benefits Of The “1 To Many” Controlled Net

Even if phones are working, there are benefits to using radio communications due to the “1 to many” aspect of radio, where everyone gets the same message at the same time. No busy signals or voice mail.

- Amateur radio can and should be more than the “solution of last resort”.

3.6.7 Where Possible, Build Portable Solutions

Make solutions as portable as possible, so equipment is moveable within our own area, or for Mutual Aid.

3.6.8 We Are A Communications Provider

There are a limited number of Amateurs available in an Emergency. In some situations, the Amateur will set up and maintain the communications system at a site, but may not operate the radio.

- Solutions must be simple enough that partner staff can operate them if required.

3.6.9 We Are Not A Replacement For Municipal Responsibility

Municipalities have a responsibility to their residents and to their employees, to provide suitable and sufficient communications capability to support Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS).

- Amateur radio is not means to avoid legitimate Municipal costs.

4. STRATEGY FOR THIS YEAR

4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

There are 4 areas that make up the general objectives. These areas are the non technical aspects of EMRG as an organization.

4.1.1 Meetings

Meetings are opportunities to get people together for group think sessions, training, or exercises, with a brief EMRG information session at the beginning. Meetings can include a mix of training, hands on practice, or tabletop exercises, all aimed at developing and testing specific skills.

The meeting strategy has evolved over several years and remains unchanged. There are typically **3 General Meetings** per year; September, January and May/June.

4.1.2 Training

The key objective for this year is to continue to implement the training plan. While training has been taking place in the past, there was no overall strategy for course structure, content, development paths for members, and linking of training with exercises.

The training plan will pull together the ideas and concepts that have been implemented so far, or discussed in general terms, putting them into a common document. One of the longer term objectives for the training plan is an outline for a basic Amateur radio course, so we are prepared in the event we are approached to offer one.

The training strategy is to **offer 5 courses** per year, which can include a mix of meetings, evening, and half day/full day weekend sessions. Some training will be new, while other courses will be existing courses presented for new members or people who missed a previous session.

4.1.3 Exercises

Exercises provide an opportunity to practice skills, identify areas that need improvement and work together as a group. Each exercise is designed to from an objective, such as practising skills learned in a course.

The exercise strategy is to **complete 3 exercises** per year, which can include a mix of tabletop, limited deployment and full deployment exercises.

Where possible, deployment exercises should be with partner agencies, to build skills and understanding between the partner staff and EMRG members.

4.1.4 Recruitment

Recruitment is an ongoing task aimed at maintaining the membership level. Each year some members drop out due to loss of interest, family, work, or health constraints. The strategy is to maintain visibility within the Amateur radio community through presentations at local Amateur radio club meetings and the yearly EMRG booth at the Ottawa Amateur Radio Club fall Hamfest. **We will attempt to find someone who will specialize in recruiting suitable new members.**

4.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The yearly project objectives are a subset of the objectives outlined in the EMRG 5 Year Plan and continue the work originally set out for year 1. **We will complete VHF/UHF voice communications for key sites, to support training and exercises.** Completion includes proper wiring, documentation and training on the equipment.

4.2.1 VHF/UHF Voice – 3 Permanent Sites

Complete VHF/UHF (144/220/440) voice communications for the 3 sites equipped with radios; City of Ottawa EOC, EMRG Command Centre at Fire Dispatch and the Ottawa Red Cross. These sites have all undergone changes that have required removal, re-packaging and re-installation of the permanently wired radios.

4.2.2 VHF/UHF Voice – 1 Portable System For CSCC

Complete a portable VHF/UHF (144/440) voice communications system to support the Community Services Command Centre (CSCC) at Ben Franklin Place.

4.2.3 As Time Permits – Other Project Work

There are other important projects that EMRG recognizes, but cannot complete this year. In a few cases these extra projects may get completed this year because they are single day projects such as the Barrhaven UHF repeater, or because they are something EMRG will pay others to do, such as the Carp VHF repeater, which depend on available funds.

The “As Time Permits list” represents EMRG project work that will take place over the next 2 to 3 years. Additional new requirements and ideas will be generated over time, so the list will be reviewed and prioritized as required, to ensure the most important and valuable projects are being worked on.

As Time Permits Projects List

1. Complete battery backup on VE3OCE repeaters
2. Complete battery backup on EMRG communications room
3. Complete 2 portable VHF/UHF (144/440) voice communications system to support shelters or other temporary locations.
4. Install Barrhaven UHF repeater on temporary antenna
5. Install VHF repeater at Carp which includes getting OFS approval and funding TimeMCI to do the work. This repeater would use the second MTR-2000 (like VE3OCE) with built in controller.
6. Complete portable radio packages for Randall, the EOC and the portable systems. This would include a HT, wired for dual headphones, speaker, 4AH battery etc, in a small tabletop package.
7. Replace the repeater made from 2 mobile radios in Cumberland with a MSR-2000 and battery backup.
8. OEM funded project to configure proper antennas at Barrhaven
9. Complete 220 MHz in 2 portable systems
10. Complete packet radio at 3 permanent sites
11. Complete 3 portable packet radio systems
12. Complete solutions to support Mutual Aid voice communications
13. Complete solutions to support Mutual Aid packet radio solutions