**Topic:** Backup communications and radio functions

An overview of communications contingency planning, based on questions that arose at our summer REMC meeting in Dummerston. We will discuss communications failures, backups, and answer technical questions about radio function in Vermont.

**Objective:** Get more understanding of backup communications options in Windham County.

**Guest Speaker(s):**

- Zack Borst is a Regional Coordinator for Vermont Emergency Management covering the Northeast Kingdom and a Technical Sergeant in the Vermont Air National Guard. With experience spanning emergency management roles with the University of Vermont, Everbridge, and Vermont's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, he specializes in crisis communications and emergency planning. He currently serves on VEM's communication planning team, developing emergency communications plans, procedures, and PACE plans with local, state, and federal partners across Vermont.

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions

2. Guest speaker discussion

   o Communications: who, what, when, where, why and how
      - Routine vs crisis vs catastrophe
      - Communication is always on AARs – whether exercise or real-world, communication is always the biggest challenge
      - Radio communications training is often insufficient
      - Consider backups, access to communication systems, and vulnerabilities to cyber attacks
      - What are your team's training needs?
      - Who are you communicating with?
         - How does this change with routine vs. crisis communication?
         - What methods are you using for each audience?
      - Do an assessment:
         - Map out systems and stakeholders, assess reliability, redundancy and lifespan, and assess threads, vulnerabilities and hazards to communication
      - During an event – what happens if everyone is impacted at the same time?
         - Consider bottlenecks in technology, equipment, etc.
      - Are there possibilities for regional communication plans? How could REMCs create regionalized planning to reduce capacity issues and increase redundancy?
   o When things start to break
      - Technology will not save you – relationships will
      - PACE planning – Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency
      - Redundant planning for communications
         - Primary – systems you use every day
         - Alternate – systems you use less often

- Contingency – backups that might not be as reliable or capable
- Emergency – system of last resort
    - Analyze AARs from past events to predict where the failures might be in the future
    - The goal is redundancy and resilience
    - What are you currently using, and what is available?
    - Define your trigger points for moving from one communication method to another – what does it take to activate your PACE plan? How do you tell your team you're moving from one communication method to another?
  - Train and exercise your plans
    - Consider workshops, tabletops, functional exercises
    - Share lessons learned with VEM, with the REMC, etc.
    - Start basic, and ramp up in difficulty

3. Question and answer session

4. Updates and other items:
   - Topic suggestions/requests for meetings/events/trainings/speakers:
     - Zack Borst part two – cover more detailed information on community comms assessments
       1. Ask one town to volunteer and go through their communications plan together – Guilford is willing to volunteer
     - Zone systems/zone captains discussion featuring Guilford, Duxbury and Hardwick
   - [Local Emergency Management Plans](#) reminder – all towns represented have current plan approved!
   - Upcoming trainings:

     **November 2025**
     **State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) Orientation**
     The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of the State Emergency Operations Center. This course is ONLY available to those who staff the Vermont State Emergency Operations Center. If you require an accommodation for this class, please email [DPS.EMHSTraining@vermont.gov](mailto:DPS.EMHSTraining@vermont.gov) no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of the class.
     **LOCATION:** DPS Headquarters, Waterbury, VT
     **DATE/TIME:** November 18, 2025, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
     **REGISTRATION**: via State Learning Management System: [https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/04f1ce01-32df-4658-89d6-eda38e586ef0](https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/04f1ce01-32df-4658-89d6-eda38e586ef0)
     *You must be rostered for the SEOC to attend.*

     **\*\*JUST ADDED\*\*Cybersecurity in a Resource Constrained Environment for Public and Rural Utilities**
     The course introduces foundational cybersecurity principles in the context of community and critical infrastructure protection. Through classroom instruction, guided labs, and applied exercises, participants explore common threats, examine open-source tools for monitoring networks and systems, and review key cybersecurity standards and policies. Using these concepts, participants will develop a practical outline for a cybersecurity program that reflects their organization's resources and operational realities, incorporating both technical and administrative controls to support ongoing program development and implementation.
     **LOCATION:** Vermont Public Power Supply Authority, Waterbury Center, VT
     **DATE/TIME:** November 18-19, 2025, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day
     **REGISTRATION**: via NUARI: [https://nuari.org/ncpc_per-utilitiespilot3_waterburycentervt_11182025](https://nuari.org/ncpc_per-utilitiespilot3_waterburycentervt_11182025)

Must attend both days to receive credit.

**December 2025**
**MGT 328 Critical Thinking and Risk Management in a Cyber-Converged World**
A four-hour instructor-led course designed to strengthen decision-making and risk assessment in today's interconnected environment. The course introduces participants to the principles of critical thinking and applies them to real-world risk scenarios involving cyber, physical, technological, and natural hazards. Learners examine models of critical thinking, explore common cognitive biases and logical fallacies, and practice anticipating unintended consequences that affect organizational resilience. The course highlights widely used risk frameworks, including NIST CSF, ISO 31000, OCTAVE, and FAIR, and emphasizes the importance of adopting a common language taxonomy to improve communication across technical and executive leadership. Participants also gain practical experience with applied tools, such as calibrated estimation and Monte Carlo simulations, to measure and communicate risk in meaningful, actionable ways. By blending critical thinking skills with structured frameworks for risk management, this course prepares leaders to navigate complex decisions, allocate resources effectively, and align cybersecurity risk communication with organizational priorities
**LOCATION:** Burlington City Arts- Burlington, VT
**DATE/TIME:** December 4, 2025 12:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.  each day
**REGISTRATION**: via NUARI: [https://nuari.org/ncpc_mgt-328_burlingtonvt_12042025](https://nuari.org/ncpc_mgt-328_burlingtonvt_12042025)https://nuari.org/ncpc_mgt-328_burlingtonvt_12042025https://nuari.org/ncpc_mgt-328_burlingtonvt_12042025

**\*\*JUST ADDED\*\* G2300- Intermediate Emergency Operations Center Functions**
The G 2300 Intermediate Emergency Operations Center Functions is a three-day course with the goal of assisting individuals and jurisdictions who desire to develop or improve their Emergency Operation Centers (EOC). By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate, through activities and a Final Exam, the managerial and operational roles of the modern-day EOC as a NIMS Command and Coordination functional group operating within a Multi-agency Coordination System (MACS).
**LOCATION:** DPS Headquarters, Waterbury, VT
**DATE/TIME:** December 10-12, 2025, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. each day
**PREREQUISITES**: IS-100 and IS- 2200
**REGISTRATION**: via State Learning Management System: [https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/b04c89fc-78e7-46e4-9df4-d4f641cff451](https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/b04c89fc-78e7-46e4-9df4-d4f641cff451)
*Must attend **all three** days to receive credit.*

- REMC business – none at this time.

5. Thank you for attending!  Remember that REMC meeting agendas and minutes can always be found [here](#).