

Session title:

Public Safety Impacts: Coordinating Power & Comms

Session speakers:

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Session summary:

Today's emergency operations and first response plans are more technically advanced and technology dependent than ever before. At the same time, our citizens are connected globally to friends and family, gathering news and information, and driving economic growth and sustainability into our communities. One storm, one man-made event can take this all down.

For years, planners have considered the dependencies on the telecommunications and electrical infrastructure. For without either one, neither will operate. Telecommunications networks require energy to operate whether it be at cell sites, switching offices, data centers and everything in between. The electrical grid requires communications to support telemetry, control, and remote monitoring systems, while restoration crews require communications to coordinate repair activities.

Recent destructive events have clearly demonstrated our collective needs for both power and telecommunications. Particularly, Hurricanes Michael and Maria have highlighted the interdependencies between telco and power, the other life-line sectors, as well as the successes and shortcomings in incident management and long-term recovery. As communications systems advance, issues of coordination between power, telecommunications, and all levels of government will become more important and challenging during all phases of the disaster planning cycle.