



Pennsylvania
Emergency Management Agency

WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT

Emergency Management and Utility Coordination in Pennsylvania

Molly Dougherty, External Affairs Director
PUC Safety Conference
September 10, 2026



“

“Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success.”

What We Will Cover



Commonwealth Response Coordination Center

1. Where it Starts: Local Matters
2. What Happens Next: Consequences Travel
3. How We Connect: Timely, Cross-Sector

Thousands of Jurisdictions



County
Borough
City
Town
Township

12 - 24 – 36 Example

	12 HOURS	24 HOURS	36 HOURS
Utility Condition	75,000 without power Damage assessment underway	35,000 remain out Restoration estimates clearer	8,000 remain out Hardest-hit areas remain
Cascading Impacts	Hospital on generator Wireless sites on backup power	Generator fuel becoming a concern Wireless deploying/refueling generators Water facility on backup power	Some critical facilities still on backup Localized access and service impacts remain
EM Planning	How long can backup systems sustain? Any immediate access or life-safety needs?	What support needs to be sustained? Where could refueling or resource needs develop?	Who and what are still affected? What needs continue despite broader restoration?

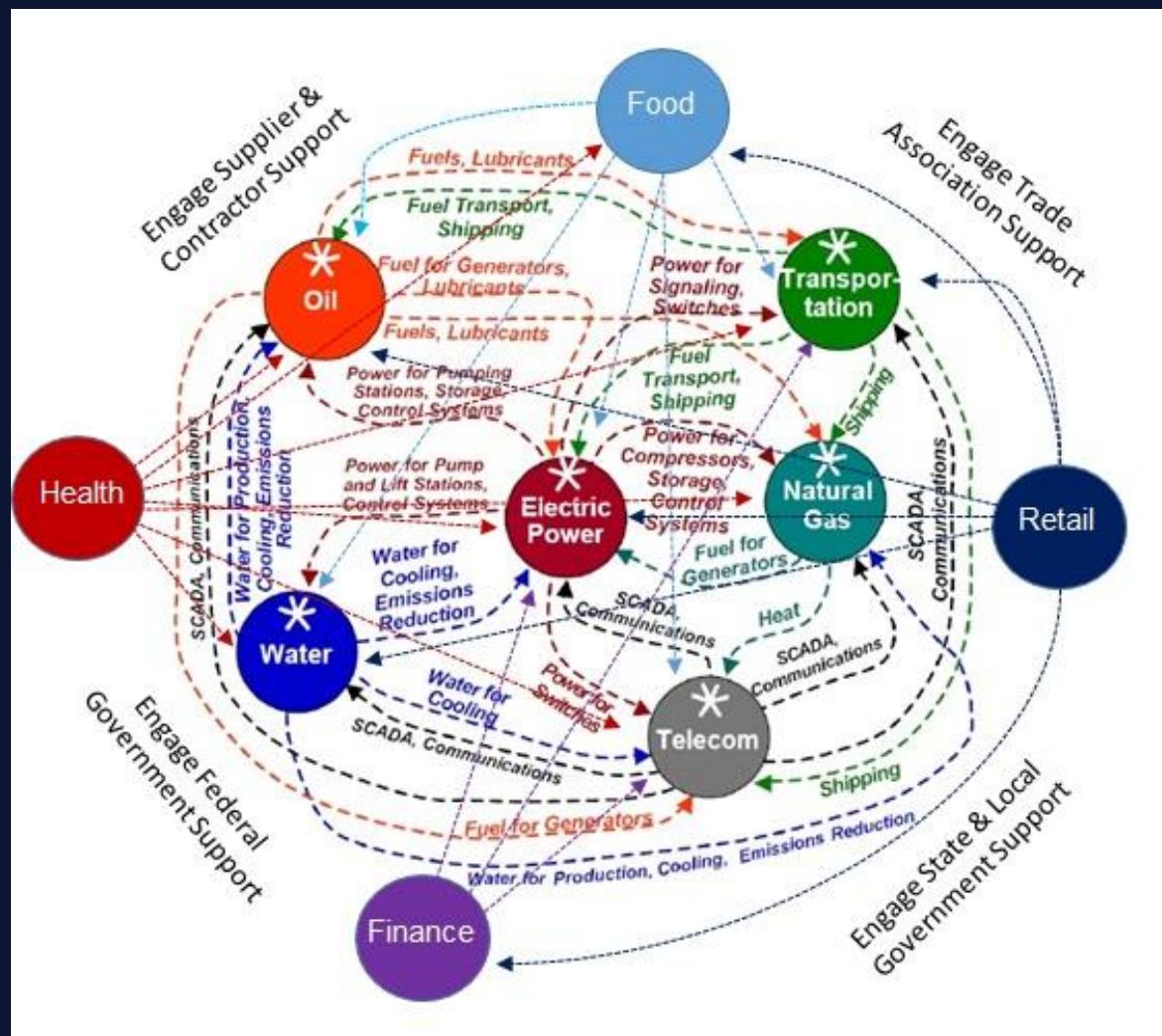
HYPOTHETICAL ELECTRIC EXAMPLE. Time and numbers are to illustrate possible planning progression.

12 - 24 – 36 Example

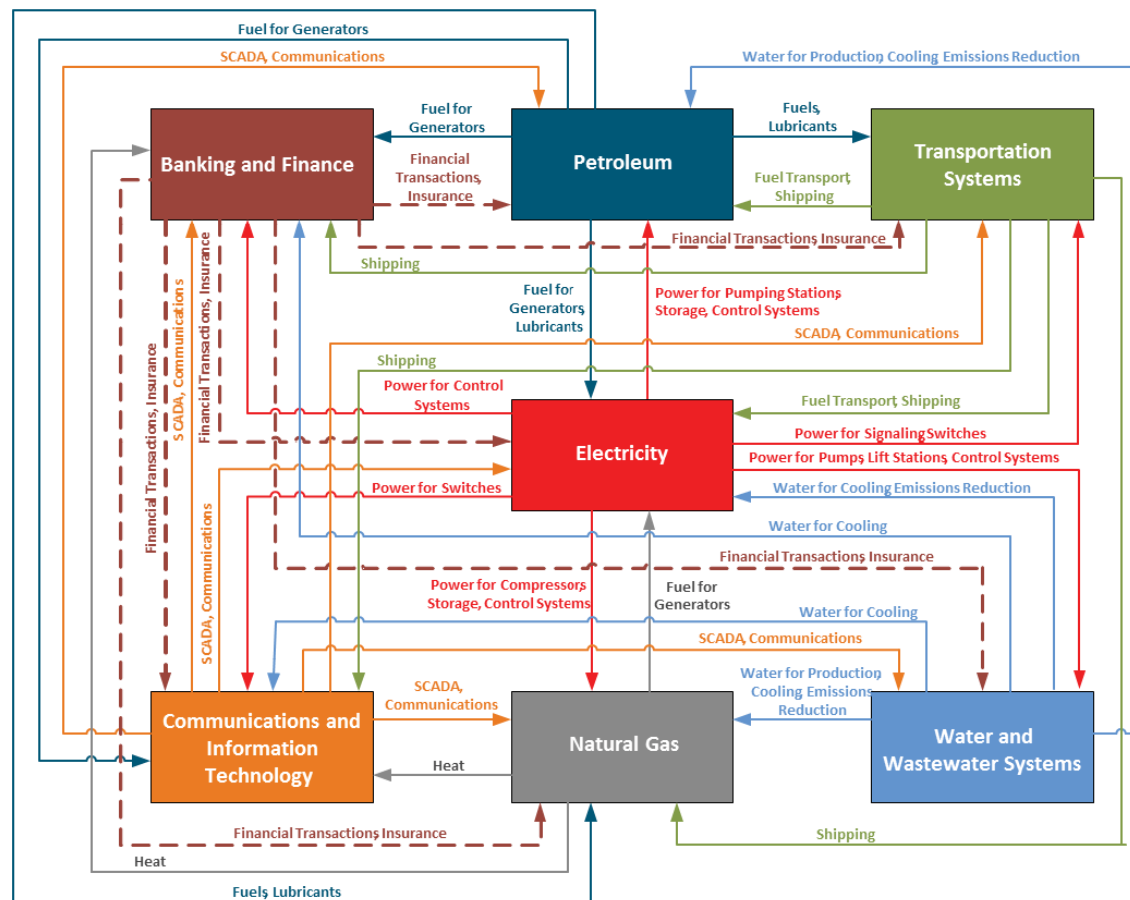
	12 HOURS	24 HOURS	36 HOURS
Utility Condition	500 customers affected Damage assessed Repair planning underway	300 remain without service Repair underway Restoration plan developing	Line repaired Service restoration and relight underway
Cascading Impacts	200 residents displaced 2 roads closed Assisted-living facility affected Local businesses inaccessible	75 residents still displaced Assisted living without heat Businesses remain closed Road/access impacts continue Some residents unable to return home	Most residents returning Some buildings awaiting access or relight Some customers remain without service Localized business impacts continue
EM Planning	Shelter overnight? Transportation or relocation needs? Alternate heat? Road and responder access?	Continue shelter? What if restoration extends? What access issues need coordination?	Who still cannot return? What support remains? Any access or transportation needs? What community impacts continue?

HYPOTHETICAL NATURAL GAS EXAMPLE. Time and numbers are to illustrate possible planning progression.

Interdependencies: The Reality



Interdependencies



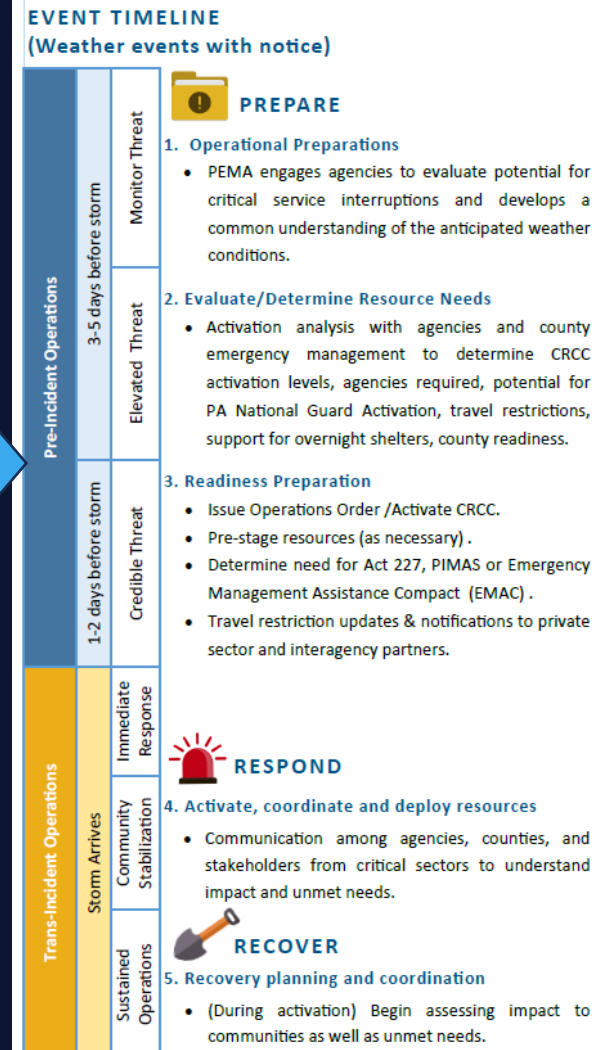
Interdependent Coordination

PREPARE:

Before the weather system arrives

Activation Analysis:

- Anticipate needed resources with input from county emergency management, agencies, private sector and PA VOAD organizations.
- Drives decisions about pre-staging, agencies/partners to activate, initiating preparedness plans, Proclamations, etc.

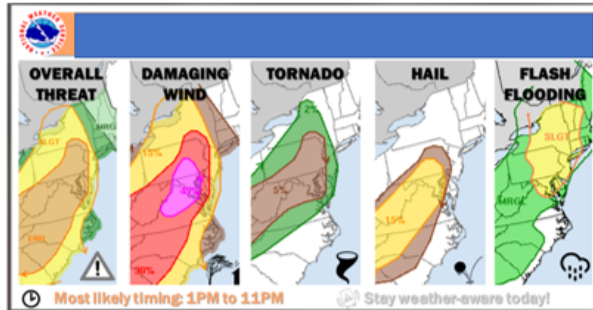


Interdependent Coordination

Activation Analysis Meeting Example

Agenda

1. Situation



2. Complexity Factors

- **Status/ any planned special events:** Summer vacation stays, campgrounds, etc.
- **Timing and Duration:** Today from 2-11pm
- **Location:** Most danger expected South and East but could go up into the NE

Other Factors to Consider in Identifying Incident Complexity Level	
Level of threat to life and property	significant
Jurisdictional boundaries	Surrounding states affected (EMAC issues) – Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia – DC EOC activating at 1pm.
Organizational complexity – how many different organizations, levels of authority, stakeholders, and resources	Anticipate state, local government agencies, NGOs, private sector, FEMA R3 activating enhanced watch
Routine or unusual event	Unusual strength of storm for PA

3. Likely Impacts to Lifelines:

Community Lifeline	Current Status	Projected Impact
 LE Fire Service SAR Government Service Community Safety	LE dealing with traffic accidents, downed trees, large hail damage, tornadoes, isolated flooding low lying areas SAR - limited Summer fairs/festivals ongoing throughout PA (Farm Show,)	
 Food Hydration Shelter Agriculture	Power outages due to downed trees/ power lines Crop damage from wind, hail, tornadoes	
 Medical Care Patient Movement Public Health Fatality Management Medical Supply Chain	Cascading effects due to power outages - Generator support Power outages at critical facilities, cyberattack affecting a number of hospitals in PA	
 Power grid Fuel	Power outages need for generators Debris management -access issues	
 Infrastructure Alerts, Warnings, Messages 911 and Dispatch Responder Communications Finance	NWS State College radar down for maintenance – low level radar will be limited throughout much of Central PA Damage to towers Cellular infrastructure impacts	
 Highway, roadway, motor vehicle Mass Transit Railway Aviation Maritime	Roadways closed due to debris Aviation delays due to high winds Public transportation delays due to high winds and flooding Speed restrictions on some roads	



Before the Next Event



- 1. Connect Locally**
- 2. Build Shared Understanding**
- 3. Know Your Operational Liaison**
- 4. Share information with Context**
- 5. Connect with the PA BEOC**

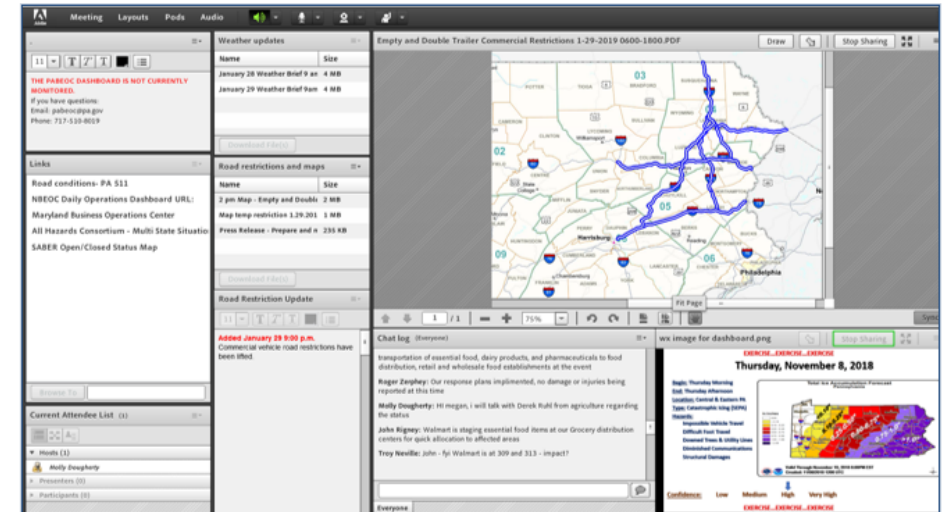
Cross Sector, Business and Infrastructure

2 Way Information Exchange

The PA BEOC Trusted Partner Network: How we communicate

1. Multi-sector updates distributed through the PA BEOC Trusted Partner Network (Dashboard and Email)
2. Cross Sector Coordination Meetings
3. PA BEOC Dashboard

<https://share.dhs.gov/paboc>



Pennsylvania
Emergency Management Agency



Pennsylvania
Emergency Management Agency

ready.pa@pa.gov

pabeoc@pa.gov



Contact Me

Molly Dougherty, Director, External Affairs

 modoughert@pa.gov

 717-651-2739

 pema.pa.gov ready.pa.gov

 Find us on social: @pemahq