

ESTABLISHING A WATCH DESK



Situational Awareness: An Essential Element Of Emergency Management

MISSION

Offer 24/7 situational awareness to leadership, staff, partners, and the public by analyzing diverse information sources and monitoring events affecting public safety and government operations.

OBJECTIVE

Educate Emergency Managers on the value of creating an impactful and scaleable Watch Desk.

FEDERAL LITERATURE

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: A watch desk ensures critical information reaches government decision-makers during emergencies and disasters at all government levels.



WHAT IS A WATCH DESK?

- Grounded in Emergency Management
- Provides situational understanding for effective decision-making
- Tracks resources, demands, and evaluates threats
- Supports Emergency Operation Centers (EOC)
- Scalable to needs of stakeholders

ARLINGTON'S WATCH DESK

General Situational Awareness

- Provides daily situational awareness to County and department leaders that may impact the agency and/or community.
- Primary administrator of Arlington Alert, the mass notification system for employees and public.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activations

- Manages mass notification system for Employee and Arlington Alerts.
- Controls online incident management system and maintains situational awareness during activations.
- Uses mass notification software to prepare incident alerts for agency leadership, community members and employees.
- Develops Situation Reports for command staff and county leadership.

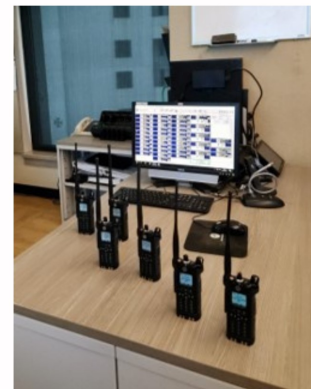
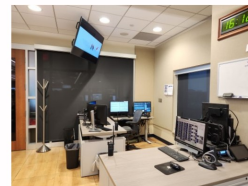
HOW WE SHARE INFORMATION

- Critical Information Requirement (CIRs) notifications sent to Arlington leadership and employees.
 - Police
 - Fire
 - Weather Events
 - Act of Violence
 - Missing Persons
 - Bomb Squad
 - Utility Outage
 - Situational Awareness
 - Drone Sightings
- Weather Alerts
- Information bulletins inform leadership on planned or unplanned events and incidents
- Situation Reports (SitReps) provide updates on evolving events or incidents
- County status (employees)
- School notifications (lockdowns)
- EOC activations
- Hazardous weather conference call
- Arlington Alerts (Public)
 - Utility Outages
 - County status
 - General emergency alerts
 - Social media template alerts
 - Transit alerts
 - 9-1-1 outages
- Radio (BOLO, Camera Sightings, etc.)
- Telephonic Updates

WHAT WE MONITOR

- Multiple local and national news channels
- All social media platforms
- Camera systems, traffic, transit alerts, state highway, schools, facilities, police trailers, etc.
- Regional partners: Fusion Centers, Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), FEMA NCR Watch Desk
- National Warning System (NAWAS)
- License Plate Recognition Reader (LPR system)
- 33 radio channels including local, regional, federal, and Virginia State
- Weather channels and sites
- Utility websites
- EOC online portals for county and state
- VESTA, CAD, and event websites

INSIDE A WATCH DESK



KEY TAKEAWAY

Proactive situational awareness is essential for informed decision-making. Watch Officers gather, understand, and forecast relevant information, making a Watch Desk crucial in the face of threats like terrorism, severe weather, cyber-attacks, and transit issues.