

ACN Report

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NCS Transition to the Department of Homeland Security

It is official, on March 1, 2003, the National Communications System's (NCS) functions and employees transferred into the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection (IAIP) Directorate. DHS officials will continue to consult with the NCS about its functions and capabilities and how best to structure the Agency within the IAIP Directorate. The NCS is developing a 120-Day Integration Plan outlining the best solutions for meeting DHS mission requirements and the Nation's needs, while preserving the NCS' interagency and industry planning partnerships. More information about the transition and NCS related activities can be found at the DHS homepage at www.dhs.gov under DHS Organization > Department Components > Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection (IAIP).



The Department of Homeland Security is protecting the Nation's vital homeland interests.

Recent Enhancements to the ACN

The ACN network has changed dramatically in the last decade. As technology evolves and the need to keep up with the latest communications systems grows, the ACN has responded with increasingly sophisticated capabilities. The transformation has been apparent over the last year with upgrades to a variety of aspects of the network. Over the network's lifetime, new functions, features, and procedures have evolved to meet emerging needs.

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<http://www.ncs.gov/acn.htm>



Just one year ago the network consisted of regular analog telephones using Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) based on an analog point-to-point network. Two months later, NCS upgraded the network to include voice-enabled Private Branch Exchange (PBX) switches. New telephones were then distributed with Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) capabilities. A month later, NCS introduced an upgraded voice-mail platform throughout the network, and the telephone lines were switched from analog to

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digital. In the next phase, NCS provided updates using a new service pack revision. Plans for the future include possible enhanced features.

With each improvement, the ACN becomes more flexible and robust. As real-time use of the network increases with these enhancements, more experience is gained. Technicians recommend adjustments and users provide functional feedback, lending continual improvement to the ACN's operation. As new sites join, the increasing amount of user input will contribute to the network's effectiveness. The ACN continues to serve as the Government's emergency voice communications network, connecting communications service providers and emergency operations centers.

ACN Upgrades Since Summer 2002

- Voice-enabled PBX switches
- Digital phone lines
- VoIP telephones
- Voice-mail upgrade
- Service pack update

Your Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ's from ACN Users:

- Q. How often will telephone software updates occur?
- A. Updates occur as new service packs and revisions become available. Updates are performed during times of scheduled maintenance at off-peak hours. Most updates do not involve outages and only affect the network with a couple minutes of down time.
- Q. Who will contact the users if something critical happens?
- A. If a critical event occurs, the Service Management Center (SMC) will contact the users.
- Q. Who should the users contact if something critical happens?
- A. Should a critical event occur, the users should contact the SMC.



The ACN - changing with the times.

Engineer's Corner: *Disaster Recovery Procedure*

With Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology, mobility and disaster recovery from the remote and/or hub sites is seamless. Should a critical event occur, and hub site users suddenly need to switch operations to the backup site, users can easily logon their extension to the PBX from any IP phone at the designated backup site. Remote locations and non-hub sites will not be affected should the hub sites switch to their designated backup locations. Connectivity and operations for users at the remote locations and non-hub sites will continue without interruption but will be serviced from the backup sites, rather than from the affected hub site.

The following procedure to logoff/logon an IP phone is posted by each IP phone at the hub sites.

If the IP phone displays an extension other than the one assigned to you:

- 1) Press HOLD.
- 2) Dial 564663# (LOGOFF#). The screen prompts "LOGOFF?".
- 3) Dial # for YES. The screen displays "LOGGING OFF", then prompts "EXT = [Original Ext #]"
"# = OK, NEW = [New Ext #]".
- 4) Dial the new extension number. Dial #. The screen prompts "PASSWORD =".
- 5) Dial the password (password is reverse of extension). The screen displays new extension in upper left.

Conference Calling Feature

The "conference" feature of the 4620 IP Telephone allows up to 6 parties to connect simultaneously. To begin a conference call:

- Dial the first number, then press the CONFERENCE button. The call is placed on hold, and a dial tone will sound.
- Dial the next number, wait for an answer, then press the CONFERENCE button.
- Repeat the previous step for each number.
- Add in any parties on hold by pressing the CONFERENCE button, then the LINE/FEATURE button for that party, then the CONFERENCE button again.
- Talk away!



The CONFERENCE feature...



**24/7 Help Desk
877-441-9330**

**ACN ON NET
Ext. 4357 (HELP)**

that may arise - from a critical situation, to an equipment question. Dial "HELP" at anytime from your ACN phone to reach an SMC assistant.

User Directories

The ACN continues to grow, with the majority of installations now finished and up and running. The entire network will be completely operational within a few months, with its full capabilities available to users. As more sites join the network, the NCS continues to update the User Directory to reflect the most current roster and contact information. This directory is e-mailed monthly to the point of contact for each site.

Your Input

The ACN is a crucial system, especially during these challenging times, and the NCS strives to create the most efficient and effective network possible. You, the users, are the real-world operators, and input from all of you is welcomed and encouraged. If you have any suggestions or questions concerning the equipment, literature, or procedures of the ACN, please contact the ACN Program Manager. The ACN welcomes and thanks you for your participation.

ACN News

SMC Update

The NCS's Service Management Center (SMC) is staffing additional personnel and incorporating the latest technology to best serve ACN users. The SMC is on hand with live operators 24/7 to assist with any events



Did You Know?

In the early days of the telephone, someone raised the question, "How do we tell those we are calling to answer?" Someone got the bright idea to install a bell at each phone. A few vigorous cranks on a magneto generator caused the bell to ring, alerting the other parties of the incoming call. Since the line connected along each residence, anyone who lifted the receiver heard the complete conversation, even if it wasn't meant for their ears! This first system, known as the party line, proved to be very popular - especially among bored housewives.

2003 Test Schedule Dates & Times

10am - 2pm EST

May 15th

June 15th

July 15th

August 15th

Points of Contact

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