



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Alternate Disaster Answering Point (ADAPT)

### **OVERVIEW**

During major incidents, the NMSU Emergency Dispatch Center receives a high volume of telephone calls from people reporting emergencies, faculty, staff, and students wanting to know what is happening, concerned parents inquiring about the safety of their children, and the news media wanting incident information. The staff of the EDC is insufficient to be able to handle this large call volume. This situation is common for modern dispatch centers, as the proliferation of cellular telephones has resulted in a geometrically increasing ability for the general public to place telephone calls to dispatch centers. At the same time, the need to gather as much information as possible from the general public regarding the emergency, as well as the general customer service aspect of needing to answer questions from the public, indicate that as many telephone calls as possible need to be answered. With limited EDC staff, the solution to this issue is to be able to divert as many calls to an answering center as possible. The added benefit is that EDC staff are then able to focus on responding to the needs of the public safety responders working the incident.

### **OPERATION**

The ADAPT is designed to off-load non-emergency calls (those not coming in through 911) from the EDC and provide maximum capacity for assisting the general public. When the dispatcher determines activation is appropriate, local support (employees within the NMSU Police Department) will start setting up the center and contacting pre-registered volunteers for assistance. Within 30 minutes, call takers can be on scene and receive specific information related to the situation. They can then start handling the calls that come into the center, with the ability to obtain direction on unknown requests to team leaders within the ADAPT. Liaisons from the appropriate public safety agencies will help formulate information sheets for the call takers to utilize, and will be able to help answer high-order questions requiring call specific information. (NOTE: While the ADAPT is being set up to support the NMSU EDC, it can also support requests from off campus by other agencies/entities. However, staffing of the center for those events will be the responsibility of those agencies/entities. The NMSU Police Department will assist in setup and coordination to the extent possible, but cannot commit to handling the call volume from outside jurisdictions.)

The ADAPT system is based on internet protocol (IP) telephones contained within a portable case. This allows the call center to be scaled (in a relatively brief period of time) to handle a very large incident with a minimal investment. It also allows the call center to be located anywhere NMSU has computer network connections. As a result, the hardware can also be used to support other operations at the university. The system also has the capability of being hooked up to other networks (with a little extra work) so that outside requesting agencies could set it up at their own facilities.

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Overview as of March 6, 2007

