



# Fact Sheet

## Government Emergency Telecommunications Service

**What is GETS?** The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) is a program administered by the National Communications System (NCS) that prioritizes telephone calls over wireline networks. Although GETS is in a constant state of readiness, it is intended to be used in an emergency or crisis situation when the public switched telephone network (PSTN) is congested and the probability of completing a call over normal telecommunications systems is reduced. To access GETS, users dial a universal access number (710-NCS-GETS) using common telephone equipment and enter a personal identification number (PIN) to verify access. Once authenticated, GETS calls use enhancements based on existing commercial technology that avoid congestion and network outages by routing calls between more network elements than normal public-switched calls. This allows GETS calls to complete when other calls may fail.

**Who Uses GETS?** Typical GETS users are responsible for the command and control functions critical to management of, and response to, national security and emergency situations, particularly during the first 24 to 72 hours following an event. These users may be in Federal, State, local, or tribal government, critical infrastructure sectors in industry, or non-profit organizations that perform critical National Security and Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP) functions.

**Why is GETS Important?** National security/emergency preparedness personnel rely daily on wireline communications services to perform critical functions, including those areas related to safety, maintenance of law and order, and public health. Acts of terrorism, natural disasters, power outages, cable cuts, and software problems can cripple the telephone services of an entire region. Congestion alone (e.g., the Mother's Day phenomenon) can prevent access to circuits. During times of emergency, the NS/EP community needs to know their calls will go through. In actual emergencies, GETS has consistently met or exceeded 90 percent completion rates.

### What Else Should I Know?

- GETS is primarily designed for calls within the United States and its territories, but can be configured to handle international calls. (Priority service is only provided on the U.S. portion of the call.)
- No special hardware or software is required to use GETS.
- All major PSTN service providers support GETS, providing nationwide connectivity and allowing every public-switched telephone to have GETS access.
- GETS calls may be placed from cellular phones; however, priority service is not received until the call reaches a landline network. To receive priority access to wireless networks, users must register with the Wireless Priority Service (WPS).
- GETS can be accessed through FTS/Networx, the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service, the Defense Switched Network, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Switched Network.
- There is no cost to apply or to obtain GETS. A charge of up to 10 cents per minute applies to calls made through the GETS.

**For Further Information:** For questions about the GETS program, please contact the NCS NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Service Center at 866-NCS-CALL (866-627-2255) or, in the Washington, DC metro area, 703-760-CALL (703-760-2255), option 1. ♦ Web Site: <http://gets.ncs.gov> ♦ E-mail: [gets@dhs.gov](mailto:gets@dhs.gov)