



Executive Summary



Command Hub

Managing emergency events both with an interactive map and reports



Alerts

Mass notification by phone, email, text, and fax



Instant Teleconference

Teleconferences that dial out and connect users, rather than having participants dial in



Live Survey

Instant feedback and updates on evolving situations



Recall

Recall staff and determine who can respond



OnCall

Automated dialing to manage duty rosters and only contact people that are on call



Blueprints

Create, manage, and map assets that allow pertinent information about critical infrastructure to be shared

Background

Imagine a wildfire that results in an entire community being evacuated, a hurricane that causes widespread flooding and multiple power outages, or a plane crash that results in multiple casualties. It is during these types of events that EmergHub allows for the coordination among first responders, governments, non-government organizations, the private sector and the public. Through a strong collaboration with SimplyCast, the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), we have been able to develop and implement EmergHub: the world's first common operating picture that shows local areas and their interaction with emergency messages.

The development and execution of EmergHub had many stages. First, through Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC's) Build in Canada Innovation Program (BCIP), SimplyCast secured funding and a government sponsor to test and pilot this innovation. The partnership within PHAC and DHW allowed for the development of this new emergency communication system platform.

Detailed is the timeline of events that led to the innovation of EmergHub:

- 2014 – SimplyCast applied for the PSPC BCIP and was accepted with top marks.
- February 2016 – SimplyCast was matched with the PHAC as a test partner and the DHW came on as a local third-party tester.
- February 2016 – SimplyCast met with and received the requirements from DHW for the capabilities in the emergency communication solution. These criteria enhanced the capabilities of the SimplyCast tool.
- March to July, 2016 – The testing contract was finalized while progress was made to develop the EmergHub platform.
- June 15, 2016 – A live demo of the EmergHub platform was presented at different Emergency Operation Centres (EOC) across Nova Scotia, coinciding with the province's Adverse Juncture exercise.
- July 19, 2016 – An Order in Council was issued to SimplyCast by the Nova Scotia government enabling the EmergHub pilot to proceed.
- July 19, 2016 – A tri-partite agreement among SimplyCast, DHW, and PHAC.
- was signed.
- July to October 2016 – Testing of the app and training of super users occurred on an ongoing basis.
- December 15, 2016 – The EmergHub platform will be utilized in a live test by DHW, involving over 150 employees for an office closure scenario.

Platform

EmergHub allows for a robust, streamlined communication among emergency event stakeholders and the general public. The development of EmergHub was funded through the Build in Canada Program, and through extensive input and criteria from the Nova Scotia government, the platform was able to be created as the most comprehensive emergency communication solution available.

EmergHub provides intuitive interfaces with powerful capabilities that help save lives in rapidly evolving emergency situations. EmergHub enables simultaneous communication to thousands of people in an affected area in minutes and allows important safety messages to be communicated quickly in order to keep people informed and minimize risk during emergency situations.

EmergHub utilizes multiple communication channels for maximum reach, yet all messages are sent out from a single, all-in-one platform. EmergHub's unique permissions enable key departments and individuals to have complete control over emergency communication plans.

The EmergHub platform has six main tools that aid in both emergency and non-emergency communications:

- Alerts provides users with a multi-channel communication tool that can be used to provide immediate notifications via email, telephone, SMS messaging, and fax. These alerts can be sent to notify emergency officials of an ongoing event and, if used in conjunction with the available contact management tools, send out mass alerts to subscribed members of the public.
- Live Survey provides users with the ability to easily request and receive information from the field via email, SMS, or telephone. Surveys can be used to quickly gather information such as hospital bed availability per health facility or the status of on call personnel. Responses are tracked in real-time so a consensus can be made in minutes.
- Recall allows authorities to quickly rally teams of qualified professionals to respond to crises as soon as possible. The feature functions over existing telecommunication networks, allowing recipients of the recall to respond to the message via voice, SMS, or email.
- OnCall is EmergHub's schedule management feature that can be used to automatically reach the currently scheduled on call personnel at a facility, ensuring there is someone available to respond to emergencies at all times. If the on call staff member cannot be reached at any given time, a fallback number can be specified to provide users with assistance.
- Instant Teleconference is a feature that will allow an organization to easily and quickly set up a conference call with all relevant and important personnel within minutes of a crisis. This feature of EmergHub is unique in that it allows a user to automatically dial out to the people with whom they need to communicate rather than having to send out call-in numbers and codes to everyone. However, the module does also support standard dial-in teleconference participation.
- Command Hub is the main dashboard for creating and managing emergency events. Command Hub provides multiple views that contain elements for managing an ongoing emergency event, such as launching pre-made campaigns, mass alerts, surveys, recalls, and teleconferences.

Goals

The goal of the pilot project, and EmergHub as a whole moving forward, is to supplement existing emergency procedures and improve communications at all levels of government. EmergHub as a scalable and flexible platform has modules specifically designed with government input to present the most complete system on the market. The EmergHub platform will change how communications are handled in emergencies and will create more effective day-to-day communications.