



Fact Sheet

Government Emergency Telecommunications Service

Purpose: The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS) is an emergency service designed for use when national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) personnel are unable to complete emergency calls through their regular telecommunications means. GETS uses a calling card to provide Federal, State, local, and tribal government and industry NS/EP users with a higher probability of call completion during catastrophic events that cause congestion or network outages. Such events include the consequences of terrorist threats or attacks against the U.S. critical infrastructure or natural and man-made disasters. GETS features are implemented as software enhancements to the telephone switches throughout the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). GETS calls are afforded access to many more routes between and among network elements than normal public switched calls. This allows GETS calls to complete when other calls may fail.

Background: The National Communications System (NCS) developed GETS in response to White House tasking to provide NS/EP users emergency access and specialized processing in local and long distance telephone networks. The PSTN is the backbone for GETS because of its survivability, ease of use, availability, robustness, reliability, and technological currency. GETS is maintained in a constant state of readiness, maximizing the use of all available PSTN resources in the event of congestion or outages caused by emergency, crisis, or war.

Highlights of GETS Features:

- ❑ **Access Authorization:** GETS access control is accomplished through the use of Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) to protect against fraud and ensure only authorized users gain access to GETS features. GETS is initiated by dialing 710-NCS-GETS (627-4387), waiting for the prompt, and then entering the assigned PIN located on your GETS card, followed by the destination number.
- ❑ **Access from Federal Telecommunications Systems:** GETS can be accessed through the Federal Technology Service, the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service, the Defense Switched Network, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Switched Network.
- ❑ **Enhanced Routing:** GETS calls use extensive software enhancements to the PSTN's robust network of interconnecting paths between switches. With these enhancements, GETS calls can be completed in a damaged or congested network by being re-routed by the enhanced PSTN software around the points of damage or congestion.
- ❑ **Ubiquitous Coverage:** GETS is supported by the major PSTN service providers, providing nationwide connectivity and allowing every public switched telephone to have GETS access.
- ❑ **Priority Treatment:**
 - Unique NS/EP codepoint carried across the signaling network; used to trigger priority features such as trunk queuing
 - Priority within the signaling network

- Exemption from restrictive network management controls used to reduce network congestion

Contact Information: NCS NS/EP Priority Telecommunications Service Center, 866-NCS-CALL or, in the Washington DC metro area, 703-760-2255, option 1.

◆ Web Site: <http://gets.ncs.gov/> ◆ E-mail: gets@dhs.gov.