

## Chapter-III

### HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

#### Implementation of Emergency Response Support System – 'Dial 112' in Punjab

The delayed formation of key Committees, lack of monitoring and inadequate funding hampered the implementation of ERSS in the State. Despite nine years since the issuance of ERSS Guidelines by the Government of India, Standard Operating Procedures were yet to be formulated. Besides, the emergency services (other than Police Services) viz. Fire (101), Health (102 & 108), Women's Helpline (181), etc. were yet to be integrated with ERSS - 'Dial 112'. Insufficient funds delayed the procurement of Emergency Response Vehicles and other infrastructure, resulting in a significant shortfall - only 258 of the required 1,866 vehicles were deployed, with just 165 equipped with Mobile Data Terminals. During the period 2021-2024, critical delays in emergency response time further undermined the scheme's effectiveness in providing timely assistance.

### 3.1 Introduction

In order to bridge the existing gaps and to meet the current challenges being faced by Police forces in the country for an immediate emergency response system specifically inclined towards women's issues, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India (GoI) issued guidelines (August 2015) on National Emergency Response System (NERS), referred to as Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) comprising an integrated Computer Aided Despatch System for an emergency response. The vision of ERSS was to have a nationwide unique and single emergency number, which could be used by the public in case of any emergency. The project, at State level, aimed at setting up the State-wide emergency response system which would integrate various emergency numbers of different services<sup>1</sup> into a single emergency number (112). The emergency number '112' would function not only as a 'receiver' of emergency calls but also as a 'responder', ensuring prompt action within a short timeframe.

The main objectives of the ERSS are to:

- Provide a single emergency response number across the State;
- Provide 24x7<sup>2</sup> efficient and effective response system which can receive

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<sup>1</sup> 100 (Police), 101 (Fire), 102 & 108 (Health), 181 (Women's Helpline), etc.

<sup>2</sup> 24 hours and 7 days.

inputs from various voice and data services such as voice call, SMS, email, Internet of Things (IoT), panic buttons in public transport, etc. to attend to citizen in distress;

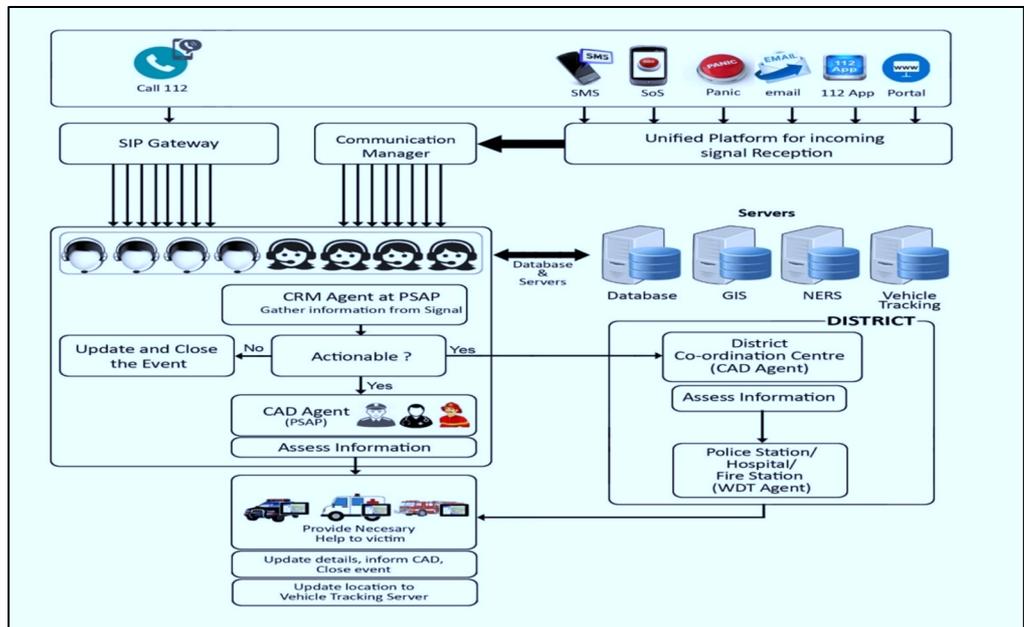
- Identify the location of person in distress connecting through voice or data with the system;
- Timely dispatch of field resources (police, health, fire, disaster management, etc.) to the location of incidence using the system;
- Locate and dispatch GPS (Global Positioning System) enabled vehicles; etc.

### 3.2 How does the Emergency Response Support System work?

The implementation of NERS involves setting up three major components viz. (i) **Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)** – implementation at the State/UT Capital; (ii) **District Coordination Centres (DCC)** – extensions with associated Emergency Response Units (ERU) (vehicles fitted with mobile data terminals); (iii) **National Support Services (NSS)** – implementation at the National Capital. The functioning of these components is elaborated in **Appendix 3.1**.

The functional flowchart of NERS (ERSS) is given in **Chart 3.1**.

**Chart 3.1: Functional flowchart handling of emergency signals**



Source: Detailed Project Report

On receipt of a call or an SMS, email or a message in other forms, the PSAP agent creates a case file in the system and categorises the call according to pre-established grading criteria. The case information is then relayed to a dispatcher, who has real-time access to emergency vehicle availability on a Geographic Information System (GIS) map. The dispatcher consolidates all relevant details and deploys the nearest emergency vehicle to the incident site.

Once on the scene, the emergency response team reports the action taken back to the PSAP via Mobile Data Terminal (MDT). Following the incident, feedback can be solicited from the caller or provided by the PSAP agent through multiple channels, including calls, messages, email, or mobile app notifications, ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement of emergency services.

### 3.3 Organisational set-up

In the State, the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, Government of Punjab (GoP) is the administrative head. The Punjab Police under the overall charge of Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) supported by Senior Superintendents of Police in the Districts is the Nodal Agency for implementation of ERSS in Punjab. The Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC<sup>3</sup>) is the Total Service Provider (TSP) for the purpose on turnkey<sup>4</sup> basis.

### 3.4 Audit Objectives

The audit was conducted to assess:

- Whether planning and financial management was efficient and effective;
- Whether adherence to quality in Emergency Response Services was ensured; and
- Whether efficient, coordinated and effective response system, across the State 24 x 7, was implemented/put in place as envisaged in ERSS Guidelines.

### 3.5 Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit was conducted (June – October 2024) by test-checking the records for the period 2021-22 to 2023-24<sup>5</sup> at the office of the Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab Chandigarh and in six<sup>6</sup> selected Districts.

An entry conference was held (August 2024) with the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, GoP, wherein audit objectives, scope, criteria and audit sample were discussed. Upon completion of audit, an exit conference was held (February 2025) with the Administrative Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, GoP, to discuss the audit findings. Replies of the Department received

<sup>3</sup> C-DAC is the premier Research and Development (R&D) organisation of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), GoI for carrying out R&D in Information Technology, Electronics and associated areas.

<sup>4</sup> A turnkey computer system is a complete computer including hardware, operating system and application(s) designed and sold to satisfy specific business requirements.

<sup>5</sup> The financial status was examined since inception (August 2015) of ERSS project.

<sup>6</sup> (i) Commissioner of Police, Amritsar; (ii) Superintendent of Police, Barnala; (iii) Superintendent of Police, Hoshiarpur; (iv) Commissioner of Police, Jalandhar; (v) Superintendent of Police, Patiala; and (vi) Superintendent of Police, SAS Nagar.

during the exit conference and subsequently in July 2025 have been suitably incorporated in the report.

### 3.6 Audit Criteria

The audit criteria were derived from the following sources:

- Nationwide Emergency Response System (NERS), referred to as Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) Guidelines issued (August 2015) by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), GoI.
- Detailed Project Report (DPR) of ERSS submitted (February 2018) by C-DAC (TSP) to the Nodal Agency (GoP).
- Other orders, Circulars and Notifications issued by GoI and GoP from time to time.

### Audit Findings

#### 3.7 Planning

##### 3.7.1 Delayed/Non-constitution of various Committees for Implementation of ERSS

Paragraphs 4.2 and 6.2 of ERSS Guidelines provide for constitution of three Committees viz. State Apex Committee, State Steering Committee and District Mission Committees for proper monitoring of implementation of ERSS in the State. The status of these Committees is as under:

##### *(i) State Apex Committee*

The ERSS Guidelines provide for constitution of a State Apex Committee (SAC) comprising eleven members<sup>7</sup> under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. The SAC, the highest level Committee in the State, was responsible for overall project implementation, reporting any concern to the Steering Committee at the Centre, reviewing progress of the project, finalisation of the State level Standard Operating Procedures, taking decisions regarding adding new services/helplines in ERSS at State level and conducting periodic meetings to discuss the progress of the project, at least once a quarter as required under the guidelines.

Audit observed (June 2024) that though the State Government had received first instalment of grant-in-aid from GoI in March 2017 for implementation of ERSS,

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<sup>7</sup> (i) Chief Secretary (Chairperson); (ii) Principal Secretary (Home); (iii) Director General of Police; (iv) Principal Secretary (Disaster Management); (v) Principal Secretary (Women & Child Development); (vi) Principal Secretary (Health); (vii) Secretary (Information Technology); (viii) Representatives from National Informatics Centre (NIC); (ix) Representatives from MHA, GoI; (x) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS; and (xi) ERSS Nodal Officer (Convener).

the SAC was constituted in February/April 2018<sup>8</sup> as per the structure defined in the guidelines i.e., after more than two years from issue of the guidelines.

It was further noticed (August 2024) that as against the requirement of 24 meetings<sup>9</sup> till March 2024, only one meeting of the SAC was held (March 2018). The Department attributed (June 2024) the reasons for convening only one meeting to administrative reasons and lockdown in the entire country.

The Department stated (July 2025) that the meetings of SAC were also held in September 2019 and February 2023<sup>10</sup>, however, the minutes of meetings were not shared. Further, the Department assured that SAC meetings would henceforth be conducted in accordance with the guidelines *ibid*.

### **(ii) State Steering Committee**

As per ERSS Guidelines, the State was required to set up a State Steering Committee (SSC) comprising of eight<sup>11</sup> members from different prescribed departments under the chairmanship of the Director General of Police. This Committee was responsible for overall direction, monitoring and guidance of the project; managing implementation across all Districts; controlling operational budgets; monitoring PSAP operations; monitoring hardware and application roll-out at Call Centres and field; monitoring service levels at State and regularly communicating with the Steering Committee at the Centre on progress, challenges and requirements; overseeing and managing integration with other services/ministries; guiding to the District Mission Committee; and conducting regular meetings to discuss the project (preferably once a month).

Audit observed (August 2024) that the SSC was initially constituted in November 2015 with members solely from the Police Department, lacking representation from other departments. The SSC was subsequently reconstituted in March 2024, aligning with the ERSS Guidelines, more than eight years after issuance of guidelines by GoI (August 2015). Further, instead of the required 80 monthly meetings, only two meetings were held, one in July 2017 and another in March 2021, as of March 2024. Thus, the SSC played a negligible role in the project’s implementation, including providing overall direction, monitoring, guidance, managing implementation across Districts, PSAP operation, operational budget, etc.

On being pointed out in audit, the Department reported (July 2025) to have conducted two additional meetings of SLSC in March 2025 and June 2025, and assured to hold future meetings as per guidelines *ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> SAC was reconstituted in April 2018 after incorporating the name of Director General of Police and representative from Department of Local Government.

<sup>9</sup> From April 2018 to March 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Another meeting was held in May 2025 after pointed out by Audit in August 2024.

<sup>11</sup> (i) Director General of Police (Chairperson); (ii) NERS (ERSS) Nodal Officer; (iii) Representative from Home Department; (iv) Representative from Women & Child Development Department; (v) Representative from Health Department; (vi) Representative from Disaster Management; (vii) Representative from Information Technology Department; and (viii) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS.

**(iii) District Mission Committees**

As per ERSS Guidelines, the State was required to establish District Mission Committees (DMC) having seven<sup>12</sup> members under the chairmanship of the District Collector or Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in each District. These Committees were responsible for coordinating with other Departments, ensuring smooth integration of all services with ERSS, monitoring the cases handled through the system, collecting feedback from people to ensure quality of services at the District level.

Audit observed (June-September 2024) that no DMCs were constituted even after nine years of the issuance of the guidelines (August 2015).

On enquiry about the reasons for non-constitution of DMCs, the Department instead of giving a specific reply, intimated (August 2024) that all CsP/SSsP had been instructed for constitution of DMCs.

The Department stated (July 2025) that DMCs had been constituted (September 2024 - April 2025) in all CsP/SSsP. It was added that the instructions had been issued to all Commissioners of Police and Senior Superintendents of Police to convene the DMC meetings regularly for reviewing the project and ensuring smooth integration and effective functioning of NERS.

The fact remains that due to delayed or non-constitution of various committees as well as inadequate monitoring at State and District levels, implementation of ERSS in the State was hampered, as evidenced by various inconsistencies highlighted in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **3.7.2 Non-preparation of Standard Operating Procedures**

The ERSS Guidelines mandate the State to define the State level Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for responding to emergency calls by the State Call Centre as well as field units.

Audit observed (June 2024) that the State had not prepared the SOP defining operations of ERSS in the State (November 2024) even after a lapse of more than nine years of issuance of ERSS Guidelines by GoI. In the absence of a clearly defined SOP, the State's ability to address emergency situations in a timely and organised manner could be hindered, potentially impacting public safety and the overall effectiveness of the ERSS system, as is evident from various deficiencies pointed out in **Paragraph 3.9**.

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<sup>12</sup> (i) District Collector/SSP of District (Chairperson); (ii) Representative from Women & Child Development Department; (iii) Representative from Health; (iv) Representative from Disaster Management; (v) Representative from Information Technology Department; (vi) Any other representative based on the services added to ERSS; and (vii) ERSS Nodal Officer of District (Convener).

The Nodal Agency stated (June 2024) that no separate SOP was issued to Districts for responding to emergency call and the State level control rooms and field units were following the guidelines of MHA for responding to emergency calls. The reply of the Nodal Agency was not satisfactory because the State was required to prepare SOP defining *inter alia* the ‘average time taken to receive the emergency services’ and ‘average time taken to reach incident site’.

The Department stated (July 2025) that the draft SOP had been prepared, which was yet to be finalised by the State Apex Committee. Further, action/reply of the Department was awaited (September 2025).

### 3.8 Financial Management

As per ERSS Guidelines, GoI would optimise and allocate resources such as hardware, network and Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) devices to the States and the States would provide infrastructure for setting up Call Centre/Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), manpower and operations.

The details of funds provided by GoI and GoP for the purpose during the period from 2015-16 to 2023-24 are given in **Table 3.1**.

**Table 3.1: Details of funds allocated, released and expenditure incurred thereagainst during the period 2015-2024**

(₹ in crore)

Year	Funds allocated by GoI	Funds allocated by GoP	Funds sanctioned/released			Expenditure incurred	
			State	GoI		GoP funds	GoI funds
				Funds released by GoI to GoP	Central funds released by GoP to the Nodal Agency		
2015-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016-17	9.83 <sup>13</sup>	-	-	9.28 <sup>14</sup>	-	-	-
2017-18	-	-	-	-	3.00	-	-
2018-19	-	10.00 <sup>15</sup>	-	-	5.28	-	3.00
2019-20	-	5.87 <sup>16</sup>	-	0.55	-	-	2.01
2020-21	-	6.00 <sup>17</sup>	-	-	-	-	1.67
2021-22	-	6.00 <sup>18</sup>	-	-	-	-	0.70
2022-23	-	8.00 <sup>19</sup>	7.99 <sup>20</sup>	-	1.00	7.99	1.90
2023-24	-	10.00 <sup>21</sup>	8.00 <sup>22</sup>	-	-	7.97	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.83</b>		<b>15.99</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>9.28</b>	<b>15.96</b>	<b>9.28</b>

Source: Departmental data

<sup>13</sup> ₹ 5.82 crore for Capital Expenditure (inclusive of ₹ 1.05 crore for MDTs); ₹ 3.02 crore for Operating Expenditure; and ₹ 1.00 crore for Emergency Response Vehicles.

<sup>14</sup> Amount of ₹ 8.54 crore was released on 30.03.2017 and amount of ₹ 0.74 crore was released on 31.03.2017.

<sup>15</sup> ₹ 7.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 3.00 crore for Vehicles.

<sup>16</sup> Machinery and Equipment.

<sup>17</sup> ₹ 4.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 2.00 crore for Vehicles.

<sup>18</sup> ₹ 4.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 2.00 crore for Vehicles.

<sup>19</sup> For vehicles.

<sup>20</sup> For vehicles.

<sup>21</sup> ₹ 3.00 crore for Machinery & Equipment and ₹ 7.00 crore for Vehicles.

<sup>22</sup> For vehicles.

**Table 3.1** shows that:

- GoP did not allocate funds for implementation of ERSS in the State till 2017-18. Though funds ranging from ₹ 5.87 crore to ₹ 10.00 crore were allocated by GoP during 2018-2022, no funds were released by GoP to the Nodal Agency (Punjab Police) during this period.
- The Government of India released ₹ 9.83 crore<sup>23</sup> between March 2017 and July 2019 for the implementation of ERSS. However, the State Government's disbursement of these funds to the Nodal Agency was significantly delayed, as amount of ₹ 3.00 crore was released (March 2018) with a delay of more than 10 months; ₹ 5.28 crore was released (March 2019) with delay of more than one year; ₹ 1.00 crore was released (December 2022) with a delay exceeding five years; and the final instalment of ₹ 0.55 crore was disbursed (April 2024) with delay of more than three years.

The Department attributed (February 2025) the reasons for this to non-release of requisite funds by the Finance Department (FD). The FD did not furnish any reply (February 2025). Thus, delayed/non-release of funds hampered the implementation of ERSS in a timely and effective manner in the State, as is evident from various deficiencies highlighted in **Paragraph 3.9**.

### **3.8.1 Non-release of Interest on Delayed Transfer of Funds**

While releasing (March 2017) the grant-in-aid for the implementation of ERSS (erstwhile NERS), GoI directed the State Government to transfer the funds to the Nodal Agency within 15 days failing which the State Government was required to release the funds with interest, at the prevailing Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bank rate for the period of default.

Audit observed (August 2024) that though the State Government released the Central funds to the Nodal Agency with a delay ranging from one to five years (as discussed in the preceding paragraph), the accrued interest amounting to ₹ 1.24 crore on delayed release of funds was not released to the Nodal Agency.

In the exit conference, the Department attributed (February 2025) the reasons for delayed release of funds to time taken for stabilisation of procedures regarding Single Nodal Agency (SNA) Account by the State Government. However, the reply was silent regarding transfer of Central funds prior to implementation of SNA (1 July 2021).

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the funds amounting to ₹ 9.28 crore allocated by GoI were directly utilised for project-related expenses and were not transferred to any external implementing agency. It was added

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<sup>23</sup> ₹ 8.54 crore (30 March 2017); ₹ 0.74 crore (31 March 2017); and ₹ 0.55 crore (19 July 2019).

that since the funds had been utilised by the State Government as required, no interest was payable.

The reply of the Department was not in line with the GoI guidelines *ibid*. The interest liability arose due to the delayed transfer of funds to the Nodal Agency, regardless of the internal utilisation for project purposes. The Department did not provide any documentary evidence or calculations to substantiate the claim that the accrued interest of ₹1.24 crore was not payable.

### 3.9 Implementation and Operationalisation of ERSS

#### 3.9.1 Non-integration of Dial 112 with Emergency Services other than Police

ERSS Guidelines required integration of existing emergency services such as firefighting, ambulance and other emergency services with Dial 112. As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted (February 2018) by C-DAC to the Nodal Agency, the first phase would include police emergency services. The second phase would cater to services like health, fire force and disaster management. However, the DPR did not specify the commencement and completion dates of phases for integration of Dial-112 with the emergency services.

Accordingly, C-DAC was required to conduct system studies and technical discussions with Police, Medical, Fire and Disaster Management Departments to customise the core solution for Public Safety Answering Point and District Coordination Centre. However, no evidence was found of such studies, consultations or meetings. Instead, the Total Service Provider (C-DAC) implemented the core solution exclusively for police services, which was launched in February 2019, setting up the Control Room of ERSS Dial-112 temporarily within the Police Department. Further, delays in the constitution of various Committees and non-release of essential funds by the State, as discussed in **Paragraphs 3.7.1** and **3.8** respectively, hampered the timely implementation and operationalisation of ERSS in the State. This hindered effective integration with other emergency services, potentially compromising coordination, efficiency and resource utilisation, thereby undermining the objectives of the 112-based Emergency Response System.

In the exit conference, the Nodal Agency attributed (February 2025) the reasons for non-integration of other emergency services to non-availability of adequate space for additional workstations. It was added that the funds of ₹ 140 crore had been allocated for construction of ERSS building, which would facilitate integration with other services envisaged under the ERSS framework.

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the integration of Police and Disaster Management Organisations with Dial-112 had been completed in 2019 and 2022, respectively. It was added that in the case of Fire Services, dispatchers

from the Department had been deployed, and for Health/Ambulance Services, two computer systems of medical service dispatchers had been installed at the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

The reply of the Department was not convincing as the ERSS guidelines envisaged phased integration of all emergency services supported by system studies and consultations, evidence of which was not furnished to Audit. Further, these measures indicated only partial arrangements and did not constitute full integration as projected. Thus, the fact remains that even after lapse of more than nine years of issue of the guidelines (August 2015) by GoI and more than six years of launching ERSS in the Police Department, the State Government could not provide requisite infrastructure to make the ERSS fully operational.

### 3.9.2 Inadequate Deployment of Vehicles for ERSS

The State was responsible for providing sufficient number of two-wheelers and four-wheelers for dispatch in case of emergency. As per ERSS Guidelines, each State was to be provided with an average of six Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) per police station for the actual number of vehicles available. Any increase in the number of dispatch vehicles had to be communicated to the Government of India, which would grant approval based on its assessment.

Accordingly, 1,866 vehicles (933 four-wheelers and 933 two-wheelers) were proposed in August 2023, with the plan later revised in October 2024. The allocation included two four-wheelers and two two-wheelers for each rural police station; three four-wheelers and three two-wheelers for each urban police station; and one four-wheeler and one two-wheeler for each jail. These vehicles were to be deployed across 382 police stations<sup>24</sup> and 25 jails<sup>25</sup>.

The State Government procured 192 vehicles (175 four-wheelers and 17 two-wheelers) under ERSS during the years 2022-23 and 2023-24. The status of the vehicles required and deployed for ERSS in Punjab is given in **Table 3.2**.

**Table 3.2: Status of vehicles deployed vis-à-vis vehicles required for ERSS in the State as on 31 March 2024**

Description	Vehicles required	Vehicles deployed	Shortage of Vehicles	Percentage shortage
Four-Wheeler	933	241	692	74
Two-Wheeler	933	17	916	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,866</b>	<b>258*</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>86</b>

Source: Departmental data

\* Includes 66 existing vehicles (four-wheelers) of Punjab Police fleet.

**Table 3.2** shows that as against the requirement of 1,866 vehicles, only 258 vehicles were deployed under ERSS, thereby depicting a substantial

<sup>24</sup> Rural Police Stations (238 x 2) = 476 four-wheelers and 476 two-wheelers; and Urban Police Stations (144 x 3) = 432 four-wheelers and 432 two wheelers.

<sup>25</sup> 25 four-wheelers and 25 two-wheelers.

shortfall of 1,608 (86 per cent) vehicles. Further, no vehicle was deployed for ERSS in any of 25 Jails in the State.

The status of vehicles required and deployed for ERSS in test-checked Districts is given in **Table 3.3**.

**Table 3.3: Status of vehicles deployed *vis-à-vis* vehicles required for ERSS in test-checked Districts as on 31 March 2024**

District	Vehicles required	Vehicles deployed	Shortfall of vehicles	Percentage shortfall
Amritsar	176	54	122	69
Barnala	42	9	33	78
Hoshiarpur	66	6	60	91
Jalandhar	160	33	127	79
Patiala	120	11	109	91
SAS Nagar	94	16	78	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Departmental data

**Table 3.3** shows that as of March 2024, the shortfall in six test-checked Districts ranged from 69 per cent to 91 per cent. This shortage would significantly impact the ability of facilities to respond effectively, as is evident from the fact that in 22,629 cases (52 per cent), the vehicles took more than 30 minutes to reach the incident sites, as discussed in **Paragraph 3.9.4**.

The Nodal Agency stated (July 2024) that during the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, no funds were released by the State Government for purchase of Emergency Response Vehicles. In the exit conference, the Administrative Secretary informed (February 2025) that additional 700 vehicles had been purchased for ERSS during the year 2024-25.

The Department further stated (July 2025) that the State Government had allocated ₹ 100 crore in the financial year 2025-26 for procurement of new Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV), which would be deployed to ensure handling of emergency cases within the shortest possible timeframe. Subsequent action of the Department was awaited (September 2025).

### 3.9.3 Shortage of Mobile Data Terminal Devices

As per ERSS Guidelines, Mobile Data Terminal<sup>26</sup> (MDT) devices would be provided to the police vehicles which would be tracked using GSM/GPRS/GPS at data centre. Information about the incidents would be sent to the field officers through MDT devices in terms of messages, mails and calls. The



Emergency Response Vehicle at Barnala having MDT (November 2024)

<sup>26</sup> Tracking and communication device.

guidelines stipulate that MHA, GoI would optimise and allocate required resources such as hardware, network and MDTs to the States.

The GoI released (March 2017 - July 2019) ₹ 9.83 crore which included ₹ 1.05 crore for procurement of MDTs and for allied activities. However, as of March 2024, though 258<sup>27</sup> vehicles were available for ERSS, MDT devices were installed in 165<sup>28</sup> vehicles (64 *per cent*) only.

The status of MDT-fitted vehicles deployed in six test-checked Districts as of March 2024 is depicted in **Table 3.4**.

**Table: 3.4: Status of MDT-fitted vehicles deployed in six test-checked Districts as of March 2024**

District	No. of vehicles deployed for ERSS	MDT-fitted vehicles	Vehicles without MDTs	Shortfall (In <i>per cent</i> )
Amritsar	54	47	7	12.96
Barnala	9	7	2	22.22
Hoshiarpur	6	3	3	50.00
Jalandhar	33	22	11	33.33
Patiala	11	5	6	54.55
SAS Nagar	16	9	7	43.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27.91</b>

Source: Departmental data

**Table 3.4** shows that ERSS vehicles ranging from 13 *per cent* to 56 *per cent* were not equipped with MDT devices. The Department, however, did not take up the matter with C-DAC/GoI to meet the shortfall of MDTs. Without MDTs, vehicles would rely on manual communication methods like radio or telephone calls, which often lead to delays and higher chances of mistakes. With MDTs, vehicles receive timely, direct and accurate data, enabling faster responses, better situational awareness and more efficient operations overall. MDTs streamline the flow of information and allow personnel to act quicker, reducing response time significantly.

Thus, the shortfall of MDTs could impact the efficiency of emergency response operations, potentially delaying critical interventions.

The Department reported (July 2025) to have purchased 175 smart phones for two-wheelers and 150 tabs with semi-rugged case during the year 2024-25, and assured to install these MDTs in additional ERVs shortly. It was added that MDTs would be installed in new ERVs to be procured during 2025-26. However, subsequent action/reply of the Department regarding installation of MDTs in ERVs was awaited (September 2025).

<sup>27</sup> As detailed in Table 3.2.

<sup>28</sup> 99 MDTs were fitted on the Vehicles procured during 2022-23 and 2023-24 and 66 MDTs were installed on vehicles of Punjab Police Fleet.

### 3.9.4 Adherence to Quality in Emergency Response Services

As per ERSS Guidelines, maintenance of quality is the key to successful operation of the ERSS. The State would ensure adherence to the quality parameters and submit an adherence report to the Steering Committee every month. The status of adherence to the important quality parameters for operation of ERSS during the period 2021-2024 is given in **Table 3.5**.

**Table 3.5: Status of adherence to the quality parameters for operation of ERSS during 2021-2024**

Sr. No.	Quality parameters (Target)	Achievement	Achievement in number of cases		
			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1.	Average time taken by call taker before forwarding to dispatcher ( <i>Less than two minutes</i> )	< 2 minutes	3.80 % (12,719)	2.19 % (6,516)	2.99 % (11,071)
		2-5 minutes	66.90 % (2,23,778)	66.60 % (1,98,685)	68.47 % (2,53,176)
		> 5 minutes	29.30 % (97,999)	31.21 % (93,103)	28.54% (1,05,517)
2.	Average time taken by dispatcher to identify and dispatch emergency vehicles ( <i>Less than two minutes</i> )	< 2 minutes	-	-	56.45 % (26,713)
		2-5 minutes	-	-	21.76% (10,296)
		> 5 minutes	-	-	21.79 % (10,313)
3.	Average time taken by emergency vehicle to respond through MDT ( <i>Less than 15 seconds</i> )	< 15 seconds	-	-	10.13% (4,713)
		15-30 seconds	-	-	21.50 % (10,007)
		> 30 seconds	-	-	68.37 % (31,827)
4.	Average time taken to reach incident site ( <i>Less than 30 minutes</i> ) *	< 30 minutes	-	-	47.71% (20,647)
		30-45 minutes	-	-	16.56% (7,167)
		>45 minutes	-	-	35.73% (15,462)
5.	Number of cases closed within three hours of reporting ( <i>80 per cent of cases reported</i> )	< 3 hours	74.47 % (2,49,260)	60.20 % (1,79,558)	61.80 % (2,28,388)
		> 3 hours	25.53 % (85,444)	39.80 % (1,18,725)	38.20 % (1,41,184)

Source: ERSS Guidelines and data/information provided by Nodal agency

Note: Quality parameters at Sr. Nos. 2,3&4 are based on MDT device, which was installed in vehicles in May 2023.

\* As per proposal of the Department, the State did not prepare requisite SOP for the purpose (February 2025).

**Table 3.5** shows that:

- During 2021-2024, the average time taken for attending a call before forwarding it to the dispatcher was less than two minutes only in 2-4 *per cent* cases. In majority of the cases (67-68 *per cent*) the process took 2-5 minutes, while in a significant proportion of the cases (28-31 *per cent*), call attendants took more than five minutes before forwarding the call to the dispatcher, indicating a major delay in emergency response initiation during the period. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to language barriers and difficulties in accurately identifying the incident location at night.
- As many as 56 *per cent* of cases met the target of dispatching vehicles within two minutes; 22 *per cent* took 2-5 minutes; and 22 *per cent* cases took more than five minutes during 2023-24, signifying delays in dispatching emergency vehicles in a substantial number of cases. The Department stated (July 2025) that in some cases, the callers failed to provide complete details about the incident location, requiring the dispatcher to call back to obtain the necessary information before dispatching ERV.
- During 2023-24, only 10 *per cent* of cases met the prescribed response time of less than 15 seconds for emergency vehicles responding through MDTs, while 22 *per cent* of the cases took 15-30 seconds. A significant proportion (68 *per cent*) took more than 30 seconds, indicating a slow system response time, which could lead to delays in attending to emergencies. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to persistent network connectivity issues, which critically impacted operational efficiency.
- In 48 *per cent* cases, vehicles arrived at the incident site within the 30-minute target; 17 *per cent* took 30-45 minutes; and in 35 *per cent* cases, it took more than 45 minutes, implying that in over one-third of cases, emergency vehicles took an extended period to reach the incident site. The Department attributed (July 2025) the reasons for the delay to availability of limited number of vehicles, State's vast geography and traffic congestion in densely populated areas.
- The performance in resolving cases within three-hour target fluctuated between 60 *per cent* and 74 *per cent*, while 26 *per cent* to 40 *per cent* of cases remaining open beyond three hours during the period 2021-2024. The Department stated (July 2025) that in cases involving heinous crimes, the police required more time at the scene to investigate the incident, assist victims, or transport them to hospitals. The reasons for the delay were also attributed to relay the case details via phone to local police stations in areas lacking ERVs or PCR vehicles.

The Department's explanations did not adequately address the systemic issues underlying persistent delays. The shortfall in ERVs, inadequate monitoring and

progress review through structured meetings, and incomplete integration of allied services compounded operational inefficiencies. These challenges, coupled with slow MDT response times, indicated that unless sufficient ERVs along with MDTs are procured in proportion to the State’s geographical requirements, such delays would continue to persist.

Furthermore, the quality standards outlined in the ERSS guidelines were not adequately met even in the Police Services, while other critical emergency services *viz.* Fire, Health, Women’s Helpline, etc. were yet to be integrated with Dial-112 ERSS.

### 3.10 Conclusion

The delayed or non-constitution of key Committees including State Apex Committee (SAC), State Steering Committee (SSC) and District Mission Committees (DMC) along with inadequate monitoring, hampered the implementation of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) in the State.

Despite more than nine years since the issuance of ERSS Guidelines by the Government of India (GoI), the State was yet to formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for its operations.

Timely and adequate funds were not released to the Nodal Agency for procuring Emergency Response Vehicles and for Mobile Data Terminals (MDT).

The emergency services (other than Police services) *viz.* Fire (101), Health (102 & 108), Women’s Helpline (181), etc. were yet to be integrated with ERSS-‘Dial 112’, thereby undermining the objectives of the Scheme. As of March 2024, only 258 vehicles had been deployed under ERSS against the requirement of 1,866, reflecting a significant shortfall of 1,608 vehicles (86 *per cent*). Additionally, Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) were installed in only 165 out of 258 vehicles (67 *per cent*).

An analysis of ERSS quality parameters during the period 2021-2024 revealed significant delays in key stages of emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle response time and incident resolution. These inefficiencies undermine the scheme’s core objective of providing immediate emergency assistance to those in distress.

### 3.11 Recommendations

In the light of the audit findings, the State Government may ensure:

- (i) *Timely formation and operationalisation of mandated Committees to strengthen governance and oversight of ERSS;*
- (ii) *Development and implementation of comprehensive SOPs for ERSS operations, and emergency response protocols across the State;*

- (iii) Prompt release of sufficient funds to the Nodal Agency for procurement of Emergency Response Vehicles, Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), etc.;*
- (iv) Integration of other emergency services like Fire, Health, Women's Helpline, etc. with ERSS- 'Dial 112'; and*
- (v) Implementation of measures to reduce delays at all stages of emergency response, including call forwarding, dispatcher response, vehicle deployment and incident resolution, to enhance service delivery.*

The matter was referred (December 2024) to the State Government; their replies were awaited (March 2025).