

PURPOSE:

The Greene County Fire Departments, working in cooperation with the Greene County Emergency Management Agency and numerous other township, city and county agencies and departments, developed this regional radio communications guideline to be used by all local emergency responders that utilize *Greene County's Multi-Agency Radio Communication Systems (MARCS)* communications systems. This guideline provides direction and establishes radio protocols for operating in the region using MARCS.

The following guidelines provide an overview of how departments are to use and interoperate on and off of the trunked radio system.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of each department to adopt and ensure compliance with these guidelines as they apply to each organization.

DEFINITIONS:

Default Operations Talkgroup: Operations talkgroup designated for primary use by an assigned organization

Dispatch Talkgroup: Talkgroup specifically designated for communications with the specified agency's dispatcher.

Fire Apparatus: Any piece of fire equipment operated by a fire or EMS department for the purpose of hazard mitigation. This excludes all staff and command vehicles for the purpose of this SOG.

Interoperable Talkgroup: A talkgroup accessible to multiple agencies and / or jurisdictions that is used to provide direct communications for units working on the same assignment. Talkgroups can be restricted to specific agencies and jurisdictions based on their intended purpose.

Inter-Public Safety Answering Point (IPSAP) / 911 Talkgroup: Talkgroup designated for use only by dispatch centers as a direct mode of voice communication

Simplex Channel: Places radio in a "walkie-talkie" mode. Radio does not use or rely on a microwave tower or repeater in this mode.

Tactical Talkgroup: Talkgroup designated for communications between units assigned to an incident.

FIRE AGENCY PROCEDURES:

REGIONAL GROUPING:

To facilitate interoperability and interdepartmental cooperation, Greene County Fire Agencies have been divided into two (2) regional zones *Greene Fire East (GFE)* and *Greene Fire West (GFW)*. *GFE* encompasses the following agencies Cedarville Twp., Jefferson Twp., Miami Twp., New Jasper Twp., Silvercreek Twp., Spring Valley Twp., Xenia and Xenia Twp. *GFW* includes Beavercreek Twp., Bellbrook, Fairborn and Sugarcreek Twp.

TACTICAL TALKGROUPS:

For the purpose of incident operations, sixteen (16) *Fire Tactical* talkgroups (29FTAC1 thru 29FTAC16) and four (4) *Countywide* talkgroups (29CW1 thru 29CW4) have been implemented. *Fire Tactical* talkgroups have been divided between the two (2) regional zones with *GFE* agencies utilizing 29FTAC9 thru 29FTAC16. *GFW* agencies are assigned 29FTAC1 thru 29FTAC8. The *Countywide* talkgroups are designated for overflow, mutual aid and special events. All Greene County MARCS capable radios have access to these talkgroups. Law enforcement agencies have their own set of tactical talkgroups. For security, those talkgroups are not available to non-law enforcement MARCS radios.

All on scene radio communications shall be conducted on the *Fire Tactical* talkgroup(s) assigned to that incident.

Communications to the dispatcher shall be conducted on the agency's dispatch talkgroup.

OPERATIONS TALKGROUPS:

Each agency has their private *Operations* talkgroup. This talkgroup is only available in radios owned by that specific agency. This talkgroup operation is solely determined by the specific agency. If incidents are managed on this talkgroup, the Incident Commander needs to be aware incoming mutual aid will not have access to agency specific *Operations* talkgroups. Therefore incidents requiring mutual need to be assigned a *Fire Tactical* or *Countywide* talkgroup.

INCIDENT USAGE OF FIRE TACTICAL TALKGROUPS:

During the dispatch of an incident that involves three (3) or more pieces of fire apparatus, the dispatcher will assign the responding companies a *Fire Tactical* talkgroup. The dispatcher shall use the *odd* numbered talkgroups first, in sequence, before assigning an *even* numbered tactical talkgroup to an incident.

Assigning of any additional talkgroups to an incident shall be conducted by a formal request through the Incident Commander to the dispatcher. Should the request for a talkgroup exceed the number of *Fire Tactical* (29FTAC1 thru 29FTAC16) talkgroups available, the dispatcher may use a *Countywide* (29CW1 thru 29CW4) talkgroup for overflow. *Fire Tactical* and *Countywide* talkgroups are tracked as resources in CAD.

Therefore coordinating their use with the dispatcher is critical for maintaining accurate usage information and eliminating these resources from be assigned more than once.

For incidents not meeting the criteria for an automatic assignment of a *Fire Tactical* talkgroup, no talkgroup will be issued until the Incident Commander requests it. Once a *Fire Tactical* talkgroup is requested, it will follow the same procedure as above. When *Fire Tactical* talkgroups are not assigned, agencies are encouraged to utilize their agency specific *Operations* talkgroup. This helps to reduce the amount of radio traffic over dispatch talkgroups.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

EMERGENCY BUTTON

All fire department radios shall have their emergency declaration buttons enabled where available on their radios. Emergency transmissions are set to the highest priority level within the radio system so that their transmission will be handled quickly by the system. The button shall be programmed to activate after a 1-2 second push to prevent accidental activation. The emergency will be transmitted on the talkgroup the radio is currently selected on. All Greene county dispatch centers will be alerted simultaneously. Incident traffic will need to be moved from the current talkgroup to a different talkgroup so the person declaring the emergency can have radio traffic priority. **If an emergency exists, the dispatcher will automatically assign a *Fire Tactical* or *Countywide* talkgroup, as previously outlined. All non-emergency radio traffic will then be moved to the newly assigned talkgroup.**

MUTUAL AID REQUESTS

Upon the initial request for mutual aid, the dispatcher will inform the requested mutual aid agency of the *Fire Tactical* talkgroup assigned.

Responding:

Companies in need of contacting their dispatcher will contact them by means of their dispatch talkgroup. Responding mutual aid companies shall continue to contact their own dispatcher according to their departments' existing guidelines or policies.

Mutual Aid companies shall also contact the requesting agency's dispatcher on that agency's dispatch talkgroup. Status changes such as en-route, at scene, in service, etc. shall also be conducted over that dispatch talkgroup.

Arrival:

After a status change has been noted on the appropriate dispatch talkgroup, arriving companies will then switch to the assigned operations talkgroup and inform the Incident Commander or appropriate person of their arrival.

Apparatus Staffing:

Due to the significance of mutual aid requests, the following guidelines are designed to help Incident Commanders meet their incident needs when requesting mutual aid. All staffing numbers assume that the personnel meet the minimum state certifications as they

apply to each category. Staffing above the minimum can include non-certified personnel for training purposes.

Engine Company:	3 personnel
Tanker:	2 personnel
Ladder Company:	3 personnel
Brush Unit:	2 personnel
Rescue:	2 personnel
Squad:	2 personnel
Medic:	2 personnel (at least 1 Paramedic)
Ambulance:	2 personnel (2 EMTs per state requirement)
Boat:	3 personnel
Air Supply Unit:	1 person

Response Identification:

For apparatus that serve dual purposes such as Rescue/Engine or Engine/Tanker, identification when responding to mutual aid requests is critical. When a request is made for a specific type of equipment and a dual-purpose rig is to respond, the unit shall identify themselves by the type that they intend to respond as. Example: Mutual aid request for a tanker is made; Engine 411 qualifies as an Engine/Tanker and will respond. The unit shall identify themselves as Tanker 411 for the duration of the incident.

FIRE / POLICE INTEROPERABILITY

All fire and police agencies operating on the Greene County's MARCS radio systems will utilize the *Fire Tactical* (29FTAC1 thru 29FTAC16) or the *Countywide* (29CW1 thru 29CW4) talkgroups.

Additional statewide interoperability talkgroups are available to MARCS users should other talkgroups be required. Procedures regarding usage of these talkgroups must follow MPP-15.0.

A fire or police Incident Commander may initiate the use of an interoperable talkgroup whenever he or she deems it necessary. This is done by contacting their respective dispatch center and requesting that a specific talkgroup be assigned to their incident. The I.C. shall identify which jurisdictions will participate. The dispatcher will assign the requested talkgroup if it is available. If the requested talkgroup is unavailable, another shall be selected from the list of interoperable talkgroups.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTEROPERABILITY

The use of these talkgroups should be pre-determined with neighboring agencies as to select the best and most efficient practice before an incident.

{Nathan.... Please provide input on this section!}

DISPATCH CENTER PROCEDURES

GENERAL DISPATCH INFORMATION

911/IPSAP TALKGROUP

The 911 or IPSAP talkgroup is shared between all dispatch centers on the 800 MHz radio system. Its intent is to provide dispatch centers with another efficient means of communication with other dispatch centers in the Miami Valley. The following are general guidelines for the use of the talkgroup, which is referenced in other parts of this procedure:

- Must be monitored at all times.
- May be used to make emergency announcements to all dispatch centers (ex, major incidents, mass casualty, hazmat, severe weather warnings and events, etc).
- Shall be used when assigning an interoperable talkgroup .
- Shall be used at relinquishment of an interoperable talkgroup.
- May be used for quick communication to other dispatch centers for the purpose of sharing important information when other methods would cause delay.
- Dispatch centers making announcements and/or messages shall identify themselves and identify what jurisdiction(s) the announcement and/or message is directed to.

911/IPSAP CALLS

- A 911/IPSAP call is defined as a radio message intended for a specific dispatch center
- Dispatch centers named, as a participating jurisdiction during a call must acknowledge this fact over 911/IPSAP before the calling agency can proceed with their message. (Example: “Central dispatch to Beavercreek and Fairborn” “Fairborn Dispatch, Go ahead” “Beavercreek Dispatch, Go Ahead”)
- All normal radio etiquette shall be observed during a 911/IPSAP call.

911/IPSAP ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A 911/IPSAP Announcement is defined as a radio message intended for multiple dispatch centers.
- There is no need for confirmation of receipt for an announcement unless requested by the announcing agency.
- All normal radio etiquette shall be observed during an IPSAP announcement.

FIRE DISPATCH PROCEDURES

FIRE TACTICAL TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Dispatchers shall assign each incident involving three (3) or more pieces of Fire Apparatus a tactical talkgroup. This assignment should come from the department's regional zone and assignments within that zone shall assign the *odd* numbered talkgroups sequentially first, before assigning the *even* numbered talkgroups. The assigned talkgroup shall be reserved for that incident until the incident is terminated.

If the Incident Commander requests an additional operational talkgroup to be assigned to that incident, the adjacent even numbered tactical talkgroup shall be used first then continue consecutively until the incident needs are met. If the next consecutive talkgroup is not available, the assignment of an interoperable talkgroup will then be used if available, followed by any *Countywide* (29CW1 thru 29CW4) talkgroup in consecutive order. If the overflow talkgroups are not available, the dispatcher shall then contact a mutual-aid jurisdiction assigned to that incident request the use of tactical talkgroups for their incident. Once a talkgroup has been assigned to an incident, both dispatch centers will mark it as such to avoid assigning that talkgroup to another incident. Once the incident has been terminated, the primary dispatch center will re-contact the agency from which the talkgroup was borrowed, and inform them of its open status.

This procedure may be done by phone or over IPSAP talkgroup.

INCIDENTS NOT RECEIVING TACTICAL TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Incidents that do not receive a talkgroup assignment, will remain on the dispatch talkgroup until the incident commander requests a talkgroup assignment; or requests enough additional equipment to meet the criteria for a tactical talkgroup assignment. *Agency Operations* talkgroups should be considered to limit radio traffic on primary dispatch talkgroups.

INTEROPERABLE TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENTS

A Fire or Law Enforcement member can initiate the use of an interoperable talkgroup for any incident whenever he or she deems necessary. Contacting their respective dispatch center and requesting an interoperable talkgroup will accomplish this. The Incident Commander shall identify to the dispatcher which jurisdictions and / or agencies will participate as well as the talkgroup requested. The dispatcher will check the availability of the requested talkgroup and assign if available.

- 29FTAC1 thru 29FTAC16 are used for incidents involving Law Enforcement and Fire/EMS use only
- 29CW1 thru 29CW4 are for incidents involving any public service agency on the Greene County MARCS communications systems.

The following procedure applies when assigning an interoperable talkgroup:

- All Dispatchers shall maintain a list of the available Interoperable Talkgroups by monitoring the 911/IPSAP Talkgroup. This list will include talkgroup names, status, and their quadrant associations (if applicable).
- The dispatcher will assign the Interoperable talkgroup based on availability and request.
- If the requested talkgroup is unavailable, the dispatcher can suggest a talkgroup based on the above criteria.
- Upon assigning an Interoperable Talkgroup the dispatcher will announce this fact over the 911/IPSAP talkgroup. The announcement shall include:
 - Lead agency / jurisdiction acquiring the talkgroup(s).
 - The talkgroup(s) being designated for use.
 - The incident type and location, when appropriate.
 - Participating jurisdictions.
- Upon relinquishment of the interoperable talkgroup, the dispatcher will announce this fact over the 911/IPSAP Talkgroup.
- All Participating dispatch centers within the 911/IPSAP network are required to maintain a running log regarding the availability of the nine interoperable talkgroups at all times to prevent interference with any agency using the talkgroups, and to be aware of incidents which may expand to involve their jurisdiction.

EXTENDED INTEROPERABILITY PROCEDURE

RESPONDERS FROM OUTSIDE MONTGOMERY COUNTY

If personnel respond from adjacent counties or from state and/or federal agencies, radio communications may be established by utilizing one or more of the five National Mutual Aid talkgroups that have been programmed into 800 MHz radios.

FD SIMPLEX

Occasionally MARCS radio users will find themselves in areas, particularly inside large buildings, where their portable radio is unable to reach a microwave linked tower or a conventional repeater. The simplex channel offers the user a communications back-up for these instances. This channel is the simplex side of 8T93D FD which is designated for Fire Department use.

Fire departments may use their FD Simplex channel in a variety of ways; however, the intent of this guideline is for all participating fire departments to adopt procedures that will assure that someone monitors the FD Simplex channel at a working incident, but operating outside of the affected area.

This channel can also be used for quick, local interoperability between fire departments on different radio systems, provided they have access to this channel.

Users will need to be familiar with the specifics on accessing this channel on their agency's radios as some agency radio programming will differ slightly.

MARCS STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY TALKGROUPS

Below are descriptions for the various MARCS Statewide Interoperability Talkgroups. This information is based on MPP-15.0.

MCALL 1 thru 4

MARCS "Hailing Channel", Zones 1-4 (see map titled "MARCS Zones") Allows any user to call for help from anywhere in the state. These talkgroups are monitored 24/7 by all OSHP Posts within the physical limits of each Zone. The talkgroups are also monitored 24/7 by ODNR's Columbus Central Dispatch. (It is preferred the call be directed to the zone the call originates from, but is not required.)

MCOMM 1 thru 4

MARCS users generic talkgroups for any user to be able to talk to any other user. These talkgroups are NOT monitored by MARCS base locations. Generally, a dispatcher would direct you to "go to MCOMM 1 to talk to Officer A," etc. (While each MCOMM has statewide capability, the theoretical purpose is for "direct" communications in each geographic Zone.)

ECOMM 7 thru 28

MARCS users generic "emergency" talk groups. To be used to talk to any other user when involved in a MARCS coordinated emergency. At a multi-agency scene,

Command/ Communications/ Control would steer responders to these talkgroups, based on functional work groups. (e.g. A MARCS-equipped CCC would direct “All incoming traffic units go to ECOMM 9”, “all incoming rescue units go to ECOMM 11”, “all incoming hot zone units go to ECOMM12”, etc.) E-COMM 7-20 will be coordinated through ODNR/OSHP Comm. Centers. E-COMM 21-28 utilized for Homeland Security Regions 1-8 (HS Region 1–use ECOMM 21).

SCOMM 7 thru 12

MARCS users generic “emergency” talk groups for communication with the OEMA Transportable Communication System (TCS). To be used to talk to any other user when involved in a MARCS-coordinated emergency only when the OEMA TCS is deployed. As with the ECOMMs, units would be “steered” to these talkgroups by OEMA TCS personnel.

SO Regions

These talkgroups correspond with the geographic regions established by Buckeye State Sherriff Association (BSSA) and MARCS during the planning for the MARCS radio installations at each SO. They follow established ODNR boundaries–see attached map titled “Sheriff Offices”. Calling on an SO regional talkgroup will result in all SO’s within that region being hailed. ODNR’s central dispatch center in Columbus also monitors these talkgroups.

LECOMM 1 thru LECOMM8

MARCS non-state agency users generic “event/emergency” talkgroups–offers the ability to talk to any other non-state user when involved in an planned event or emergency. These talkgroups are NOT monitored by MARCS. (Prior to using, caller must announce intent to use and determine if objections exist. These LECOMM talkgroups are specifically for “local” event/emergency situations, and are only imbedded in non-state agency equipment.)

OIT Helpdesk

This talkgroup is constantly monitored by the Ohio Office of Information Technology/MARCS-dedicated helpdesk, located at the State of Ohio Computer Center in Columbus. The Helpdesk primary purpose is to assist MARCS equipment users with problems encountered with the MARCS voice or data systems statewide. It can also be used as the initial point of contact for MARCS command staff. Helpdesk may also be reached 24/7 @ 1-866-OH-MARCS (1-866-646-2727).

8ICALLTA, 8ITAC1TA thru 8ITAC4TA

These are the five National Public Safety Analog Talk-Around Frequencies. All five of these talkgroups are available for local, off the system, analog “walkie-talkie”communications. (Due to being analog, static may be noticed. Range is three miles or less, depending on terrain. Allows MARCS radio users to talk to ANY 800 radio programmed with these talkgroups.)

SFM-HQ, SFM-OPS 1-5, OFCA1-2, OSFA-1

These are mutual aid talkgroups created by the State Fire Marshall and Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, respectively for mutual aid purposes during emergencies. Although these are

not regularly monitored, they will be assigned by the Incident Commander on site during emergencies and monitored at that time.

LF-DISP, LIFEFLT, MEDEVAC1, MEDFLT, CAREFLT

These are talkgroups established for contacting “air ambulances” in Ohio. LF-DISP and LIFEFLT (Toledo LifeFlight) and MEDFLT (MedFlight Columbus) are monitored by their respective Communications Centers. MEDEVAC1 (MedEvac-Cleveland) and CAREFLT (CareFlight-Dayton) are not monitored on a daily basis, therefore, it is recommended contact be made via land line with each respective air ambulance to set up and incorporate these talkgroups into your agency communications plan. Currently these talkgroups are not utilized to communicate with air ambulances.

MARCS 1 thru MARCS 16

These are talkgroups established for additional interoperability between MARCS users. They may be used for state or local emergency coordination if desired.

M TA-1 thru M TA-3

These are MARCS licensed conventional simplex channels that can be assigned for an incident by the Incident Commander.

AIR AMBULANCE CHANNELS

The utilization of air ambulances (i.e. Careflight, Medflight, etc.) is sometimes essential for patient care of critical patients. Following with the recommendations made to the Ohio State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC), two channels are available with common naming conventions for use with any air ambulance within the state of Ohio.

8TAC92D is the primary channel and 8TAC94D the secondary channel for use when communicating with air ambulances. This channel can be used for two adjacent incidents or at the helicopter pilot’s request.