METRO REGION
800 MHz Trunked Regional Public Safety Radio System
Standards, Protocols, Procedures

Document Section:	**1 - Management**	Radio TOC Recommendation
Sub-Section:	**METRO 1.5.2**	Date: 5/24/01
Procedure Title:	**Revisions and Changes**	
Date Established:	**3/19/01**	MESB Approval - Signature:
Replaces Document Dated:	**11/30/11**	
Date Revised:	**1/27/16**	Date: 06/01/01

1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this section is to set forth the process by which changes to METRO region radio operating procedures will be solicited, evaluated, and adopted for implementation.

2. Technical Background:

- **Capabilities**   **N/A**
- **Constraints**   **N/A**

3. Operational Context:

The Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) is charged with setting standards and determining protocols and procedures for the smoothest possible operations between and among the users of the shared region-wide 800 MHz digital trunked public safety radio system.

METRO region radio system users fall into multiple groups:
- Full participants in the shared ARMER infrastructure within the METRO region.
- ARMER users from other regions transiting into and through the METRO region.
- Conventional users who will have access to the regional system by utilizing interoperability equipment that has been designed into the system.

The ability to communicate among and between these multiple groups is possible due to the interoperational hardware and software installed on the region-wide system. The improper use of this equipment can have minor to grave consequences. These standards, policies and procedures have been set forth by teams consisting of radio users and managers from all groups so as to provide optimum service to the citizens of the metropolitan area, while minimizing potential negative consequences. Therefore, changes must not compromise the integrity of the Regional Public Safety system or any of its participants.

4. Recommended Protocol/ Standard:

All operational and technical changes that require a change to the METRO region ARMER Standards, Protocols, and Procedures, or otherwise impact system users must be evaluated and approved through this change management process.

5. Recommended Procedure:

Whenever possible, major operational and technical changes will be made on an 18-24 month cycle or longer to allow users to match their subscriber radio maintenance cycle to the major change cycle and to minimize the number of times that major changes need to be incorporated. The MESB will determine when a new change planning process needs to be initiated based on synchronizing with similar Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) processes. Minor changes may be made at any frequency.

Solicit & Evaluate
- Change proposals may be submitted at any time. Proposals should be submitted through the proposer's subsystem owner or regional subscriber contracting entity. Change proposals should be submitted on a standard form provided on the MESB or SECB website, and shall include a proposed implementation plan.
- Once a change planning process has been initiated, MESB staff will collect suggestions for changes from subsystem owners and regional subscribers and will present the collected suggestions to the next scheduled meeting of the RTOC who shall determine if the proposed changes are major or minor.

Minor changes have one or more of the following characteristics:
1. Minor changes affect a relatively small number of users or are contained to a small portion of the region.
2. Minor changes generally do not contain mandates for other users.
3. Minor changes do not require significant retraining of other users.
4. Minor changes whose costs are accepted by the user.

Major changes have one or more of the following characteristics:
1. Major changes impact the majority of users in the region.
2. Major changes impact users in adjoining regions.
3. Major changes mandate the placement of resources in communications equipment.
4. Major changes require revisions to operational procedures.
5. Major changes require updated dispatcher and/or user training.
6. Major changes require reprogramming of console and subscriber equipment.

- Minor changes may be referred by the RTOC to the Regional Radio Services Coordinator, Emergency Communication Networks (ECN's) metro Regional Interoperability Coordinator, and others as necessary for evaluation and recommendation. The Coordinators shall perform the necessary evaluation and recommend changes to the RTOC. The RTOC may elect to vet the request through additional Committees or other user groups. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the RTOC, the Board may approve or deny the requested change.
- Major changes shall be held by the RTOC until such time as the RTOC determines that the number and importance of proposed major changes warrants the initiation of a major change process. At such time, the RTOC will direct MESB staff to notify stakeholders that a major change cycle is beginning through a notice published on the MESB website and distributed to all subscriber agencies.

- The solicitation period should last **at least three months** to allow sufficient time for proponents to submit change proposals through their subsystem owner or regional subscriber contracting entity.
- At the close of the solicitation period, MESB staff will schedule presentations by the major change proposers to the RTOC. Change proposals will be made available for public review on the MESB website at least one week prior to the RTOC meeting.
- The RTOC shall consider the proposed changes and determine which proposals have sufficient need and benefit to warrant further evaluation. If the RTOC determines that a change proposal does not warrant evaluation, and rejects the proposal, the proponent of the change request may appeal the decision as per MESB Standard 7.3.0.
- Change proposals selected for further evaluation shall be assessed to discover and document the impacts of each proposed change, including the impacts of the proposed transition plan. The RTOC may exclude any of the following assessments or may add other assessments, depending upon the nature and complexity of the change proposals. For complex assessments, the MESB may utilize a professional facilitator to expedite the process.

    1. Facilitated focus groups of discipline specific users (such as fire, police, EMS)
    2. Table top scenarios conducted by the METRO Communications Response Task Force including creation of ICS205s to test proposed revisions
    3. Tactical Interoperability Communications Plan (TICP) conformity review
    4. Cost/benefit analysis
    5. MnDOT technical review for backbone impacts
    6. Interoperability Subcommittee review and comment
    7. Training needs assessment
    8. Other stakeholder review groups

- The assessment process must be completed within 90 days of initiation of assessment. Input received after 90 days may still be considered, but consideration is not guaranteed. The request for assessment from the RTOC is not asking for a recommendation on the change proposal, but is meant to review how the proposed change will impact operations, finances, training, etc.
- Once all assessments are received or 90 days has passed, MESB staff and the facilitator will assemble the comments and prepare a summary document for public review and comment.

Plan & Approve
- The completed change proposals should be vetted by all MESB member entities and regional subscriber agencies. The discipline associations (Police Chiefs, Fire Chiefs, Sheriffs, Metro Region EMS' Communications Subcommittee, state agencies, etc.) and other interested stakeholders shall be notified of the pending changes and shall be afforded an opportunity to provide comments. MESB staff along with regional or discipline association representatives to the MESB Committees and working groups will be responsible to facilitate this review and discussion. MESB staff will provide a summary of all comments received.

- If there is a cost to implement the change proposals, MESB staff will forward the recommendations through the Executive Committee who will be responsible for determining how the costs should be allocated.
- Once the cost allocation is approved or if there are no costs to allocate, MESB staff will present the change proposals to the RTOC for final review and recommendation. The MESB staff summary shall include a draft change plan addressing comments received.
- The RTOC shall review the comments, recommend approval or denial of each change proposal, and create an overall change plan for approval by the Board.
- The change plan including transition steps and schedules will be made available for review and comment prior to presentation to the Board.
- The Board shall review the recommendations of the RTOC and may approve the change recommendations, reject the change recommendations, or return the recommendation to committee for further review.

Create & Implement
- This phase will vary in length depending upon the transitional plan adopted by the Board. The change plan may also involve multiple changes on different implementation schedules.
- Activities in this phase may include code plug development, radio programming, procedure writing and implementation, training development and implementation, physical construction, equipment replacement, or other activities as outlined in the change plan. Entities named in the plan will be responsible for completing the changes in the plan as per the approved schedule and reporting their status in writing to the MESB.
- MESB staff will report on the status of the implementation to the Board, including any waivers filed under Metro Standard 1.5.3.

6. Management
The Executive Director and staff of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board, acting on behalf of the board, will manage this process.