

Metro Region ARMER Standards

Section 3 – Metro 3.14.0 Use of Metro ARMER ME TACS

Date Established

1-06-01

Date Revised/Reviewed

10-19-18

1. Purpose or Objective

To establish policy and procedures for use of the metro region ARMER ME TAC 1-12E talkgroups. These talkgroups are a region-wide resource to facilitate communications between agencies that typically do not communicate with each other on a regular basis. This policy will serve to minimize usage conflicts when an interoperability talkgroup is needed for an event.

2. Technical Background

- Capabilities

It is possible to have access to ME TAC talkgroups in radios used by metro agencies that share use of the ARMER system. These common talkgroups can be used for a wide range of intercommunication when coordination of activities between personnel of different agencies is needed on an event. Patching of the talkgroups can be done to any single non-hard patched conventional resource, other common talkgroups or to private talkgroups as needed to facilitate communications for an event.

- Constraints

Some of these talkgroups may be used as part of a soft patch to common VHF channels that are restricted for use by personnel of specific services, such as the VLAW31 VHF frequency that may only be used by law enforcement and EMS personnel. The dispatch center creating the patch is responsible for checking for proper talkgroup authorizations when creating soft patches.

Because many different agencies may be communicating with one another, for purposes of safety, plain English/common terminology must be used when communicating on these regional resources. **The use of ten codes is not permitted.** This pertains to direct or indirect (when in soft patch) use of these regional resources.

The availability and the use of these talkgroups should be easily understood by radio user personnel who are primarily concerned with their mission.

ME TACs are not to be used for an internal event. Private, other tactical, administrative, or common talkgroups are for internal agency communications. ME TACs should be used only when interoperability with external agencies is needed or is likely.

ME TAC's 1-10 shall not be encrypted.

ME TAC's 11E and 12E are always encrypted.

Metro region-wide ARMER talkgroups may only be in one patch at a time.

3. Operational Context

These talk groups are metro region resources to facilitate communication between agencies that typically do not communicate with each other on a regular basis.

ME TAC1-10 are available for use by all users.

ME TAC11E-12E are only available for law enforcement.

Agencies not included under the MESB joint powers agreement require written permission from the MESB for use of the ME TAC E talkgroups.

4. Recommended Protocol/Standard

ME TAC 1-10 Talkgroups

TG Requirements

Highly Recommended
Recommended
Optional
Not Allowed

For Whom?

All public safety and public service mobiles, portables, PSAPs
All public safety and public service mobiles, portables, PSAPs
None
None

Cross Patch Standard

Soft Patch
Hard Patch

Yes/No

Optional
No

To Talkgroup(s)

As needed
None

In order to meet the communication needs for an event, the ME TAC1-10 talkgroups may be patched to:

- Conventional RF resources, such as VHF, UHF, etc.
- Private agency talkgroups, such as dispatch mains, tactical talkgroups, etc.
- Direct patches between the ME TAC talkgroups, although this would not be preferred as a method of resolving communications needs.

ME TAC11E-12E Talkgroups

TG Requirements

Highly Recommended
Recommended
Optional
Not Allowed

For Whom?

All public safety and public service mobiles, portables, PSAPs
All public safety and public service mobiles, portables, PSAPs
None
Non-law enforcement users

Cross Patch Standard

Soft Patch
Hard Patch

Yes/No

Optional
No

To Talkgroup(s)

As needed
None

ME TAC11E and 12E talkgroups may only be patched to another talkgroup encrypted by ADP, DES, or AES encryption.

The Status Board application will be used to manage the talkgroup resources.

The ME TAC talkgroups shall only be used when there is a significant need for interagency communications and other suitable means for interagency communications are unavailable, to avoid a reduction in availability of these resources when needed for important events.

None of the ME TAC talkgroups shall be part of any system-configured multi-group.

It is highly recommended that metro region ARMER system public safety dispatch consoles have all the ME TAC talkgroups available for patching.

If an agency elects to not program a sufficient quantity of these tactical talkgroups, it is the individual agency's responsibility to understand that it will be limiting its ability to communicate with other agencies during an emergency event. The agency will be responsible to resolve its interagency communications methods during an event.

5. Recommended Procedure

The pool talkgroups may be either used directly or be patched to other resources to meet the communication needs of an event.

The usage of ME TAC 1-10 talkgroups for **EMERGENCY or IN PROGRESS** interoperability events should be ME TAC 1, 2, 3, 4, . . .10 in that order.

The usage of ME TACs for **PREPLANNED NON-EMERGENCY** interoperability events should be ME TAC 10, 9, 8, 7, . . .1 in that order. ***ME TAC 1 will not be reserved for planned events.***

When formulating communications plans, COMLs should check with the agencies involved in interoperability events to see what shared resources are available.

When a resource is needed, the requesting agency will contact the appropriate metro region ARMER dispatch center to have the next preferred available talkgroup granted. The dispatch center will utilize the Status Board application to identify the status of the resource.

At the conclusion of the event, the ARMER dispatch center will remove any patches that were used for the event and update the Status Board.

Resources that are patched to these talkgroups, such as VLAW31, VFIRE23, and VMED28 VHF radio frequencies shall continue to adhere to the rules set forth by the groups that govern the use of their respective conventional radio resources.

NOTE: Dispatch centers initiating any soft patches must announce the patch after it is set up AND prior to it being taken down.

6. Management

Metro Region dispatch center managers and supervisors for agencies on the ARMER system shall ensure that this procedure for usage and assignment of the ME TAC talkgroups be adhered to, as well as the setting up of soft patches for which they are responsible.

The Minnesota Status Board System Administrator shall be responsible for the Status Board application.

Dispatch center operators shall receive initial and continuing training on the use of this procedure.

The Metropolitan Emergency Services Board will be responsible for the ME TAC E encryption key.