

Metro Region ARMER Standards

Section 3 – Metro 3.21.0 Recommended Initial Communications Plan for Large Scale Disaster Level Mutual Aid Incidents

Date Established

5-28-08

Date Revised/Reviewed

6-27-18

1. Purpose or Objective

To recommend an initial “default” incident communications plan utilizing the statewide ARMER interoperability talkgroups to facilitate effective command, control, situational awareness, coordination and staging for the initial response to a large scale and/or disaster level incident.

2. Technical Background

• Capabilities

The Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) has established a standard for use of the statewide incident response talkgroups in State ARMER Standard 3.16.0. This standard encourages communications interoperability among first responders and establishes common statewide talkgroups to facilitate interoperability. The statewide talkgroups authorized for communication between service branches are S-TAC 1-12. Law enforcement has an additional four statewide tactical talkgroups.

• Constraints

Experience has shown that all agencies have used many different processes in the past. Not all responding agencies to a large-scale incident may have regional interoperability talkgroups. This standard strives for consistency among all metro agencies.

3. Operational Context

These recommendations are based on core principles of NIMS, including establishment of an Incident Communications Plan to support the Incident Command System (ICS) as it is established for a large-scale mutual aid incident. Lessons learned from the Twin Cities Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) Tactical Interoperable Communications (TIC) Plan validation exercise evaluated by the Department of Homeland Security and after action reports from the I-35W bridge collapse also provide a basis for this standard.

4. Recommended Protocol

State ARMER Standard 3.16.0 (effective June 12, 2017) requires STAC 1-12 plus STAC 13E and 14E to be programmed in *all* PSAP consoles. Any PSAPs which do not have space in its consoles for these resources must file a variance with the SECB.

5. Recommended Procedure

When an emergent large scale or disaster level incident requires an immediate and massive mutual aid response, the following initial Incident Communications Plan should be implemented by the dispatch center with primary control of the incident:

- A. The Incident Commander (IC) should be identified. A Command Net should be immediately established utilizing the first available STAC talkgroup. The Command Net should be used for communications between the IC, the controlling dispatch

center, other dispatch centers providing resources and the Emergency Operations Center if established.

- B. A Staging Net should be established utilizing the next available STAC talkgroup. The Staging Net STAC should be patched to conventional interoperability resources as necessary depending on the response, e.g. VLAW31. During initial response, this talkgroup would be used to notify responders of situation updates. The use of this talkgroup will transition to a Staging Net talkgroup.
- C. A Staging Officer should be assigned by discipline (Police, Fire, EMS) and a physical location for the incident staging area(s) designated.
- D. In the absence of an ICS structure and Staging Officer, during the initial phase of the response, the controlling dispatch center may designate a staging area as a collection point for responding mutual aid agencies from all branches. Once the ICS structure and Staging Officer are in place, units will be moved to the designated discipline staging by that specific Staging Officer.
- E. Operations Section Tactical Nets should be established for each major service branch on statewide TACs using the first available STAC after the Command and Staging Nets are established. Units will be assigned to the designated Tactical Net upon receiving their assignment at staging.
- F. The attached ICS-205 should be used as a *sample* ICS-205 for the initial recommended Incident Communications Plan until the incident Communications Unit Leader (COML) prepares the ICS-205 for the next operational period.

Upon initial response the dispatch center with primary control of the incident is responsible for the following:

- Assigning the proper STACs for the Command Net and the Staging Net
- Assigning the proper STACs for Operations Section Tactical Nets; Law enforcement may use their service branch-specific talkgroups
- Establishing the necessary patches to conventional channels as required
- Updating the status of the incident to effected PSAPs using the METCOM talkgroup
- Announcing the mutual aid staging collection point if there is no ICS structure to designate
- Announcing the location of the incident staging area(s) to incoming units
- Announcing the need for personnel and resources
- Updating the Status Board application to designate which interoperability resources have been assigned for use
- Advising when responding units can be cancelled
- Utilize regional talkgroups when feasible

This communications plan deals with the gap between the initial dispatch of the incident and the establishment of an ICS Communications Unit to prepare the Incident Communications Plan for the next operational period.

6. Management

Dispatch center managers and supervisors for agencies on the metropolitan region of the ARMER system shall insure that this procedure for usage and assignment of the STAC talkgroups be adhered to, as well as the setting up of soft patches for which they are responsible.

MINNESOTA METRO REGION ICS205 INCIDENT, EVENT OR EXERCISE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN			INCIDENT/EVENT NAME			DATE/TIME PREPARED		OPERATIONAL PERIOD DATE/TIME	
			LARGE SCALE AND DISASTER LEVEL EVENT					INITIAL COMMS PLAN TEMPLATE	
Line	Function (NET) <small>(COMMAND, TACTICAL, SUPPORT, AIR)</small>	Talkgroup/Channel/Phone	Assignment <small>(LAW, FIRE, EMS, OTHER)</small>	RX Freq (N or W)	RX Tone/NAC	TX Freq (N or W)	TX Tone/NAC	Mode <small>(A, D or M)</small>	Remarks
1	COMMAND	STAC2 (or first available STAC)	INCIDENT COMMAND	ARMER		ARMER		D	AREA COMMAND, INCIDENT COMMAND, COMMAND STAFF, GENERAL STAFF (SECTION CHIEFS), INCIDENT DISPATCH CENTER, EOC, ETC.
2	SUPPORT	STAC3 (or next available STAC)	STAGING	ARMER		ARMER		D	ALL INCOMING UNITS – CHECK IN AND INITIAL ASSIGNMENT – PATCHED AS NECESSARY TO VHF CONVENTIONAL RESOURCES
3	TACTIAL	STAC4 (or next available STAC)	LAW	ARMER		ARMER		D	INITIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TACTICAL OPERATIONS – EXPAND AS NECESSARY
4	TACTIAL	STAC5 (or next available STAC)	EMS	ARMER		ARMER		D	INITIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR EMS TACTICAL OPERATIONS – EXPAND AS NECESSARY
5	TACTIAL	STAC6 (or next available STAC)	FIRE	ARMER		ARMER		D	INITIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR FIRE TACTICAL OPERATIONS – EXPAND AS NECESSARY
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS									
COML: AGENCY: PHONE: EMAIL:					INCIDENT/EVENT LOCATION				

SAMPLE

The convention calls for frequency lists to show four digits after the decimal place, followed by either an "N" or a "W", depending on whether the frequency is narrow or wide band. Mode refers to either "A" or "D" indicating analog or digital or "M" indicating mixed mode. All channels are shown as if programmed in a control station, mobile or portable radio. Repeater and base stations must be programmed with the Rx and Tx reversed. (MESB Version 1.0, 11/2015)