

Metro Region ARMER Standards

Section 5 - Metro 5.5.0 System Access by Non-Governmental Organizations

Date Established

12-21-05

Date Revised/Reviewed

1-11-06

1. Purpose or Objective

To establish a policy that provides for non-government entities and individuals not specifically addressed in other ARMER or MESB standards, which in an emergency or under contract, require cooperation and coordination with governmental users, to be included as “Authorized Users” of the metropolitan region of the ARMER system for communications services.

2. Policy Background

A government entity holding an FCC license for the ARMER system may allow radios to be used by certain non-governmental entities with whom the licensee requires cooperation and coordination during an emergency. Section 90.421 of the FCC Rules states: “Mobile stations, as defined in §90.7, include vehicular-mounted and hand-held units. Such units may be operated by persons other than the licensee, as provided for below, when necessary for the licensee to meet its requirements in connection with the activities for which it is licensed. The licensee is responsible for taking necessary precautions to prevent unauthorized operation of such units not under its control. Mobile units licensed in the Public Safety Pool may be installed in any vehicle which in an emergency would require cooperation and coordination with the licensee, and in any vehicle used in the performance, under contract, of official activities of the licensee. This provision does not permit the installation of radio units in non-emergency vehicles that are not performing governmental functions under contract but with which the licensee might wish to communicate.”

3. Operational Context

This standard shall apply generally to non-governmental entities and individuals not addressed specifically in other MESB Standards and is intended for those non-governmental users that will be issued radios on a long-term basis. Examples include, but are not limited to, railroads, utilities, pipelines, refineries, haz-mat response contractors, vehicle recovery contractors, commercial aviation, educational institutions, large manufacturing plants, large retail and entertainment facilities and private security contractors. Certain of these entities work directly with public safety in emergency situations involving imminent safety to life or property.

These entities must be sponsored and authorized by a governmental entity that holds an FCC license for the ARMER system. The sponsoring agency must be either the State of Minnesota, a county or a first-class city that has a licensed subsystem.

4. Recommended Protocol/Standard

Non-governmental entities and individuals not addressed specifically in other ARMER or MESB Standards which are sponsored by a licensee of the system, may apply under either or both of following categories:

1. Emergency coordination with the licensee.
2. Performance, under contract, of official activities of the licensee.

Both categories require a sponsorship letter by a system licensee which must be received by the MESB by the time the request is presented to the Radio TOC for review.

Non-governmental entities may be authorized to use the system by the MESB for the following types of communications: Emergency coordination with other authorized users during an emergency event which is under incident command of a governmental entity; and coordination among other authorized users in the performance, under contract, of official governmental activities of the sponsoring licensee. Prohibited uses include internal day-to-day, administrative and non-emergency communications by non-governmental entities that are not governmental functions being performed under contract.

All fleetmaps must be reviewed and approved by the Radio TOC of the MESB.

Non-governmental entities under both categories shall be required to enter into a Subscriber Agreement either with the MESB or the sponsoring licensee. Additionally, entities desiring to use the system under category 2 above, shall be required to enter into a contract with the sponsoring licensee specifying the official governmental activities which are being provided under contract.

Nothing in the Standard shall be construed to prohibit a licensee from temporarily issuing radios to non-governmental entities as necessary to protect life and property.

5. Recommended Procedure

The requesting non-governmental entity shall submit to the MESB:

1. An operating plan indicating the number of radios, the proposed uses and a fleetmap.
2. A signed sponsorship letter from a system licensee.
3. A Subscriber Agreement executed by the non-governmental entity.
4. Copies of any other contracts related to the performance of official governmental functions by the sponsoring licensee if the entity is applying under category 2.

The Radio TOC will then conduct an eligibility review, operational review, and technical review of the proposed use. The TOC will issue its recommendations, including any revisions to the proposed use, for consideration and actions by the MESB.

6. Management

The staff of the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board shall manage the Subscriber Agreement process for those non-governmental entities not sponsored by a subsystem owner and maintain a list of all non-governmental entities that have been approved to use the system within the metropolitan area.

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is the lead agency for overall planning and coordination of ARMER radio system use for disaster and emergency response by non-governmental entities. Radio IDs for non-governmental entities will be allocated by MnDOT unless reassigned by the System Administrator to a local system manager. Non-governmental radios shall be considered part of the State of Minnesota subscriber fleet for purposes of FCC licensing.