

	Standard Operating Procedure		
	Title / Subject <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Radio Cache</u></p>	Effective Date <p style="text-align: center;">09/13/11</p>	Revision Date <p style="text-align: center;">09/13/11</p>
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1. Purpose:

Establish SOPs for the use of a radio cache to support communications interoperability between emergency responders at the scene of an incident or event. The communications resources provided by the radio cache facilitate communications between issuing entity/agency and the external responding on-scene agency (Federal, State, regional, etc.) in need of interoperability. The objective is to have a SOP in place for the issuing entity/agency to have pre-established procedures for the utilization of radio cache resources that are made available to external responding on-scene agencies with the need to interoperate during an event or incident.

2. Technical Background:

A radio cache comprised of standby radios can be deployed to support regional incidents. These radios may be from a regional cache or from a participating agency. Responding agencies (Federal, State, regional, etc.) will have access to the cache resources to support multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional communications capabilities during mutual aid incidents and events. The cache of radios has been programmed to operate on talkgroups, channels, frequencies, or systems.

3. Operational Context:

Established mutual aid response protocols between the issuing entity or agency and the external responding on-scene agency (Federal, State, regional, etc.) will provide the basis for operational deployment of the radio cache. The following is a hierarchy of projected operations based on priority, with the first operation holding the highest priority:

1. A large-scale emergency incident that requires a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional response (e.g., a natural disaster such as a hurricane, a terrorist incident involving weapons of mass destruction) or everyday emergency incidents that require mutual aid response from multiple agencies (e.g., a hostage situation, a large warehouse fire requiring mutual aid response).
2. Special event control activities, generally of a pre-planned nature, involving joint participation of two or more agencies (e.g., a large sporting event such as a college football game, a dignitary visit).
3. Drill, maintenance, and test exercises.

4. Recommended Protocol/Standard:

The following bullets define the basic standards that should be in place during the use of a radio cache:

- **National Incident Management System** – Depending on the size of the incident, the use of an Incident Command System (ICS) compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is recommended when using any regional interoperability resource for large-scale multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional incidents.
- **Plain Language** – All interoperable communications during multi-agency, multi-discipline incidents should be in plain language. Avoid using radio codes, acronyms, and abbreviations as they may cause confusion between agencies. Ensure that all verbal requests for assistance or backup specify the reason for the request.
- **Unit Identification** – Announce your home agency prior to announcing your unit identifier during interoperable communications situations when utilizing the radio cache.
- **Encryption** – Use of encryption is not recommended for general interoperability. Operational

needs may require the use of encryption (secure communication) with special operations, narcotics interdiction, or SWAT team activities. If all potential users have access to the encrypted system, then the use of encryption may be appropriate.

- **Monitoring** – If ICS is established and it is deemed appropriate, the Incident Commander, or his/her designee, will ensure that each channel or talkgroup used for interoperability is monitored while in use.
- **Equipment Accountability** – Agencies utilizing the radio cache are responsible for the use and return of equipment as dictated by existing agreements, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and/or field-specific asset deployment instructions.

5. Recommended Protocol Procedure:

5.1 Dispatch Center Responsibility

The dispatch center of the agency initiating the incident is responsible for all primary dispatch tasks unless the decision is made by the Incident Commander, Agency Lead, or the incident dispatch center to transfer the responsibilities to another center where authorized.

5.2 Radio Cache Request

The Incident Commander, or the Agency Lead, determines when a situation exists that requires the use of a radio cache and notifies the State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The responsible entity will follow internal agency procedures to contact the Communications Unit Leader (COML), or supporting agency point of contact, and relay pertinent information regarding the event. The requesting agency should provide the following information to the agency managing the radio cache:

- Requesting agency name, contact information, and appropriate authorization verification (e.g., name of authorized user, name of lead responder for this agency, security credentials).
- Identification of requesting agency command (e.g., Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, or lead relevant to the radio cache request).
- Reason for requesting the radio cache/type of event (e.g., wild land fire, hurricane).
- Primary purpose of the use of the radio cache (e.g., command and control, tactical response, logistical support).
- Type of radio cache assets required.
- Quantity of radio cache assets required.
- Expected duration of the event.
- Required location/access information.
- User/requestor and/or servicing dispatch contact phone number.
- Whether or not the voice communications require monitoring. If it does, name of the responsible agent (e.g., dispatch center, Incident Commander, Radio Operator [RADO]).
- Additional support services (e.g., technician, chargers) requested. The supporting agency determines what radio cache assets are available for use, identifies a specific cache, activates that cache, and coordinates the cache deployment with the requesting agency's Incident Commander or Agency Lead.

5.3 Radio Cache Activation:

Upon receiving a request for the deployment of a radio cache, the supporting agency should follow these deployment procedures:

- Contact the person responsible for radio cache deployment.
- Verify the availability of required resources (coordinate among control point dispatchers, if applicable).
- Coordinate delivery of the radio cache to the scene or arrange for pick up.
- If appropriate, inform the requesting agency that the radio cache is en route and provide an estimated time of arrival (ETA), if available.

The person and/or team responsible for the deployment of the radio cache should follow these deployment procedures:

- If appropriate, provide dispatch or requesting Agency Lead with an ETA to the scene of the incident.
- Ready the radio cache and deploy to the incident scene if on-site deployment is required. If requesting agency will pick up the radio cache assets, then prepare a pick up location.
- If deployed, report to the Incident Commander or Agency Lead upon arrival.
- Once on-scene, assign the cache to the requesting agency for incident use or, if assigned to remain on-scene, coordinate radio cache deployment procedures with the Communications Unit.
- Each radio in the radio cache should have a unique identification number for inventory tracking. Ask the lead for the receiving agency to sign a Radio Cache Asset Deployment Form.

The requesting Incident Commander, Agency Lead, or Communications Unit Leader will be responsible for:

- Supporting radio deployments on-scene.
- Maintaining a record of each user and agency to which a radio and associated accessories have been distributed.
- Documenting the identification number of each radio deployed.
- Documenting the talkgroup(s) or channel(s) in use from the predetermined talkgroup(s) or channel(s).
- Provide radio call sign/designator information to responding agencies as necessary.
- Notify the responding units of where to obtain a cache radio on-scene and which talkgroup(s) or channel(s) to use for the incident or event.
- Confirm responding units are operating on the appropriate talkgroup(s) or channel(s).
- Identify users on the interoperability talkgroup(s) or channel(s) using their agency name and unit identifier through a roll call when appropriate (users in a secure setting or a mutual aid response may not require dispatcher validation).
- Announce to users at predetermined time intervals, that interoperability communications procedures are in effect as deemed necessary by the Incident Commander or Agency Lead.
- Monitor the interoperability talkgroup(s) or channel(s), if applicable, to address requests as required.
- Monitor the system for problems that may require technician intervention.

Each user and/or agency that receives a radio from the radio cache will be financially responsible for returning that radio, and all associated accessories, to the cache at the end of the incident.

5.4 Radio Cache Deactivation:

When the radio cache is no longer required, agencies should follow these deactivation procedures:

- The authorizing requesting agent requests the radio cache be deactivated.
- An announcement will be made over the interoperability talkgroup(s) or channel(s) that the radio cache will be deactivated.
- Prior to radio cache deactivation, agencies should ensure that all personnel have returned to their appropriate home systems, talkgroup(s), or channel(s).
- Agencies may want to conduct a roll call of all affected personnel to confirm they returned to their home systems.
- After deactivation of the radio cache, normal operations should be resumed.
- Coordinate the return of all cache radios to the Communications Unit through the Incident Commander or the Agency Lead.
- The person and/or team responsible for the deployment of the radio cache will be responsible for inventorying all radios and accessories returned to the cache. Before leaving the incident scene, the radio deployment team will determine if any radios have not been returned to the radio cache and note the user and agency to which the radio was distributed. This information will be provided to the Incident Commander or his/her designee.
- If the missing radios cannot be recovered at the incident scene, the radio deployment team will provide this information to the supporting agency radio cache manager or point of contact (POC) for resolution.

5.5 Radio Cache Problem ID and Resolution

- Report any problems with the radio cache to the radio cache manager or appropriate POC for the agency responsible for the radio cache.
- A routine radio cache maintenance and test schedule should be established monthly to confirm availability and operational readiness.
- After action reports should be utilized to help identify potential problems and prospective solutions.

6. Management:

The cooperating agencies are responsible for the operational management of their system. A governance structure will be established to ensure that legal, operational, technical, training, and funding issues are addressed.