

# **EL PASO COUNTY FIRE RADIO SYSTEM**

**2004**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**(DRAFT)**

# **EL PASO COUNTY FIRE RADIO SYSTEM**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

These policies and procedures for use of the El Paso County Fire Radio System which consists of those radio frequencies licensed to and operated by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office are approved and become effective as of this date.

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Terry Maketa  
Sheriff

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Date

## **ARTICLE I PURPOSE**

- A. The **PRIMARY PURPOSE** of the El Paso County Fire Radio System is to provide dispatch of user agencies and initial emergency response coordination of user agencies within El Paso County and surrounding Counties as necessary.
- B. The **SECONDARY PURPOSE** is to provide communications for initial contact between user agencies (not personal communications). Conversation shall be moved to another talkgroup once units arrive on scene.

## **ARTICLE II ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Eligibility shall be restricted to Fire/Rescue and other emergency response agencies within the vicinity of El Paso County, Colorado, subject to the rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.
- B. All agencies desiring to use the 800 MHz system talkgroup must make written application to the Communications Section of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. User agencies must have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with El Paso County in order to be granted permission to operate on the system. The request will be put before the User's Group for discussion.
- C. Non-emergency response agencies desiring radio communications with participating users may be granted permission to utilize the system subject to the approval of the license holder under conditions stated in a MOU.

## **ARTICLE III USERS GROUP**

- A. A Users Group shall be established to serve as the technical advisory committee to monitor the systems operations and its Policies & Procedures and make recommendations to the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.
1. Membership of the Users Group shall consist of one representative from each member agency. Agencies are recommended to appoint a member who is familiar with this radio system and its procedures.
  2. Department representatives shall have authority to make recommendations on behalf of their member district / department.
  3. Each member district / department shall annually notify the Users Group Chair, in February, by letter, signed by the chief of the district / department, of the appointed representative's name, address and telephone number. The annual list of representatives shall become Appendix 5 of these Policies & Procedures.
  4. The Chairperson of the Users Group shall be a representative of the Sheriff's Office appointed by the Sheriff.
  5. The Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the Users Group members annually at the February meeting.
  6. Duties of the Users Group:
    - a. Monitor technical operations of the system, evaluate effectiveness of the Policies & Procedures, and make recommendations to the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.
    - b. CHAIR: It shall be the duty of the Chair to call all meetings, set the agenda for the meeting, appoint sub-committees when necessary and to carry out the general affairs of the committee.
    - c. VICE-CHAIR: It shall be the duty of the Vice-Chair to carry out the duties of the Chair during his/her absence.

7. Changes in Policies & Procedures.
  - a. The Policies & Procedures shall be reviewed by the users group at least annually and proposed changes sent to the Sheriff for approval.
  - b. Users may present written proposals for changes to the operations section (Appendix 1) of this manual at any meeting of the Users Group. All members shall be informed of the proposal by the chairperson, a special meeting will be scheduled for voting on the change, and the recommendation will then be forwarded to the Sheriff for final approval.
8. Meetings
  - a. The Users Group shall meet quarterly on a date and location established by the committee.

## **ARTICLE IV OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

- A. The oversight Committee shall serve as a Policy and Procedures oversight committee to investigate alleged infractions of these Policies & Procedures and make recommendations to the Sheriff for disciplinary action.
1. Membership of the Oversight Committee shall consist of 7 members:
    - a. One representative of the Sheriff's Office, appointed by the Sheriff
    - b. Five representatives of member fire districts / departments from different geographical areas, appointed on a case by case basis by the Deputy Fire Marshal or his designee
    - c. The El Paso County Deputy Fire Marshal or his designee
  2. The committee shall meet as needed.
  3. Duties of the committee:
    - a. To investigate all allegations of misuse of the system or violation of the Policies and Procedures of the System
    - b. To make a recommendation to the Sheriff of actions to be taken
  4. The Deputy Fire Marshal, or his designee, will:
    - a. Chair the committee
    - b. Make notification to the chief of the fire district / department and gather information relating to the alleged offense
    - c. Schedule the meeting
    - d. Appoint members of the committee
    - e. Facilitate the meeting
    - f. Report the results of the investigation and recommended actions to the Sheriff and the User's Group
    - g. Cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie in a decision of the committee

**ARTICLE V**  
**MISUSE OF THE NETWORK**

- A. All complaints of alleged misuse of the system and/or violations of these Policies & Procedures and/or FCC regulations will be submitted to the El Paso County Deputy Fire Marshal (or his designee) through the User's Group Chairperson in writing as soon as possible. The date, approximate time and a detailed account of the alleged misuse and/or violation will be outlined.
- B. The Deputy Fire Marshal, or his designee, will obtain all possible information on the alleged misuse and / or violation and convene a meeting of the Oversight Committee in as timely a manner as is practical.
- C. The alleged misuse shall be investigated by the Oversight Committee and the findings and recommended actions forwarded to the Sheriff for action in accordance with Article IV.
- D. A written response will be sent to the complainant, alleged offender, fire chief, the district board (if applicable), and to the Users Group following the Oversight committee's review and subsequent action by the Sheriff.
- E. The ruling of the Sheriff shall be final.
- F. Consequences:
  - 1. Disciplinary action may result in the offending district / department being denied use of the system for all coordinating activities with the exception of initial alarm notification by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.
    - a. The first offense will result in a Notice of Violation (NOV) from the Sheriff to the responsible fire chief.
    - b. The second offense by the same district/department within one year will result in a NOV from the Sheriff and a meeting between the fire chief and district's board of directors (if applicable) and a representative of the Sheriff's Office.
    - c. The third offense by the same district/department within one year will result in loss of use of the system by that department with the exception of initial alarm notification by the Sheriff's Office.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPATING USERS**

- A. Users shall comply with applicable rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission and Colorado Revised Statutes pertaining to communications.
- B. Users shall comply with all the Policies and Procedures of the El Paso County Fire Radio System as adopted by the Sheriff. The fire districts/departments will be held responsible for the actions of their individual members.
- C. Users shall promote the efficient use of the system for the mutual benefit of all. User agencies shall confine the use of the system to fire, medical, rescue, or disaster related communications.
- D. Users shall comply with all the operational requirements as defined in Appendix 1 of this document.
- E. Radio equipment privately owned by department members may not be programmed with Sheriff's licensed frequencies without express written permission from the Sheriff.
- F. Base stations may not be programmed with Sheriff's licensed frequencies without express written consent from the Sheriff.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS/PROCEDURES**

- A. Life threatening situations, emergency incidents and dispatch of alarms shall have first priority of transmission. The Red Channel shall not be utilized to report routine or non-emergent incidences by users.
- B. Non-emergent communications between users should be transmitted on another frequency whenever possible and shall be transmitted on the Red Channel only when there is no other traffic on the frequency and shall be moved to another frequency as soon as possible.
- C. Use of the Red channel will be limited to dispatch, response coordination and administration.
- D. Dispatchers shall have the authority / responsibility to request that the Incident Commander move incident operations to another channel.
- E. At an emergency scene, an alternate channel(s) will be utilized for on-scene tactical operations. Incident Commanders shall select tactical communications frequencies to meet emergency scene requirements. No changes will be made without concurrence of the Incident Commander. Incident Commanders must monitor the Red Channel for communications from the Dispatcher.
- F. The plan for designating unit identifiers is the responsibility of the Users Group subject to the approval of the Sheriff's Office. Assignment of unit identifiers to individuals or equipment in accordance with the plan is the responsibility of the Chief of the user agency. Each agency Chief has the responsibility of notifying the User Group and the Sheriff's Office Communications Manager of changes of equipment (mobile, portable, base and transmitters) as they occur.
- G. All complaints of radio system technical problems shall be submitted to the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Communications Section Manager as soon as possible, providing the date, time and detailed account of the trouble. A response will be forwarded to the Users Group Chairperson.
- H. Non-user agencies needing to access the system during times of emergency may be granted such authorization during that time of emergency subject to approval of the Incident Commander or Sheriff's Office representative.

- I. When possible, communications to other units should be transmitted directly to that unit or those units without going through dispatch.
- J. Requests for response of a Deputy Sheriff should go directly through Fire Dispatch.
- K. The incident commander may request that the Deputy go to the Red Channel when the Deputy is responding for a support function such as traffic control or crowd control. **DEPUTIES MUST REMAIN ON THEIR LAW ENFORCEMENT CHANNEL WHEN RESPONDING TO CRIMINAL OR VIOLENT SCENES.**
- L. Requests from the scene for ETA's, responder status, etc. should be made only when such information might affect tactics.
- M. Updates from the scene should be transmitted only if the situation is different than as dispatched.
- N. Units will respond on calls for service in accordance with their individualized tiered response levels. Updates/requests on response status should be made from the scene only when the status changes.
- O. Complaints should be submitted in memo format on the complainant's letterhead. The letter should include a point of contact, who, what, why, where and when. If there are general concerns please list the concern and possible solutions.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **COMMON DISPATCH PROCEDURES AND TERMINOLOGY**

- A. When dispatching notification of alarm, dispatchers will send the appropriate Alpha page(s) dispatch over the red channel, both will be prefaced with the primary responder. The radio page will be prefaced with the name(s) of the responders, and the call type prior to the tones going out. After the radio tones have been sent out, the dispatcher will provide the following minimal information: name of the responders, type of call, address. If further information is available at that time, it may be given as well. If no further information is available on the initial radio page, then the first unit in service will be appropriately updated. The map page and section number will be provided when applicable.
- B. Dispatchers will use the term "hot channel" to alert all users when another call or calls is/are in progress. Dispatchers may, at their discretion, request "equipment only traffic" during times of high usage on the Red Channel.
- C. The first unit in service will announce on Red Channel "Dispatch (department) received the page to (address), (type of incident)." No other responding resources need to confirm the information.
- D. All personnel and apparatus acknowledging and responding will keep transmissions short and concise. An alternate talk group will be utilized for vehicle to vehicle transmissions. Fire Districts should make every effort to clear all department apparatus and personnel with one transmission when possible.
- E. Utilizing the Incident Command System when applicable, the first arriving unit / person on scene will:
  - Report arrival
  - Provide an initial size-up
  - Designate the incident name
  - Advise the command post location
  - Announce the talk group
  - Provide the staging area if applicable
- F. If Dispatch does not receive at least a size-up report within 2-3 minutes of the arrival of the first unit they should call for one.

- G. Incident Commanders shall make status reports to dispatch on the RED channel whenever status changes. Dispatchers may call for status reports at their discretion.
- H. On scene times, mileage and other necessary information related to a call will be acknowledged by dispatch on the RED channel stating the current time. Retrieval of this information shall be made by calling the fire dispatcher at 391-8918. All non-emergent requests such as this will be held in the event of multiple calls on the Red Channel.
- I. Informational transmissions such as controlled burns, tests shall only be transmitted when there are no priority transmissions being made and should be held to the minimum required to conduct business. Individual fire districts will be responsible for alerting their personnel to business information.
- J. Dispatchers will obtain an ETA or current location from AMR (when applicable) as additional information following the initial dispatch.
- K. MUTUAL AID DISPATCH:
  - 1. The dispatch center for the department having jurisdiction for the incident will become the **PRIMARY DISPATCHER** for that incident and will dispatch all resources for that incident.
  - 2. The **PRIMARY** dispatch center will notify the **SECONDARY** dispatch center of the dispatch by pager, radio, or telephone, which ever is most efficient.
  - 3. The **SECONDARY** dispatch center will acknowledge receipt of the notification.
  - 4. Responding resources will report to the **PRIMARY** dispatcher.
  - 5. Each dispatch center will be responsible for tracking times, mileage, etc. for the departments they normally dispatch.
  - 6. Departments will contact their normal dispatch center for times, etc. following the incident.

## **APPENDIX 3 GLOSSARY**

### **A. El Paso County Fire Radio System:**

1. The talk group is licensed to the El Paso County Sheriff. This talk group are commonly referred to as the Red Channel.

### **B. License Holder:**

1. El Paso County Sheriff

### **C. System users:**

1. Those Fire/Rescue or other emergency response agencies operating within or near El Paso County and having signed an Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

### **D. Standard Terminology:**

**Clear of the Scene** – informing dispatch that you are clear of the scene means that you are no longer at this scene. This can be accomplished by the IC when all the units have left or individually.

**Close the Call** – IC reports the incident as completed – no further support is required.

**Fighting Fire** – Incident Commander (IC) reports to dispatch when agent is being put on the fire.

**In Quarters** – Vehicle is back in the fire station and ready to respond.

**On-Scene** – Informs dispatch that the responding unit is on the scene of the incident.

**Out of Service** – The unit is not available for response.

**Responding** – Used to inform Fire Dispatch that the responsible units are responding to the call.

**Under Control** – IC reports that the fire is no longer doing anymore damage and that the crews have control of the fire.

## APPENDIX 4 DESIGNATOR SYSTEM

*Note: XX represents the two-digit number assigned to each agency*

XX00 through XX09	Chief and nine senior leaders with Chief as XX00
XX10 through XX24	Engines
XX25 through XX29	Mini Pumpers/other pumping apparatus
XX30 through XX34	Trucks (ladders, snorkels, quints etc.)
XX35 through XX39	Full Capability aircraft crash trucks
XX40 through XX49	Brush Trucks
XX50 through XX59	Miscellaneous Apparatus / Units (Utility Vehicles, Air Cascade, HazMat, etc.)
XX60 through XX69	Tenders/Tankers
XX70 through XX79	Medical/Rescue non-transport
XX80 through XX89	Medical transport ambulances
XX90 through XX99	Department personnel

### DEPARTMENT DESIGNATORS

0-99	Search and Rescue	1300	Cimarron Hills	2600	AF Acad.
100	Security	1400	Calhan	2700	Peterson AFB
200	State Forest	1500	SW Hwy 115	2800	Ft.Carson
300	Falcon	1600	Woodmen Valley	2900	
400	Stratmoor	1700	Simla	3000	El Paso County
500	Wescott	1800	Cascade	3100	WL/HZMT
600	Broadmoor	1900		3200	
700	Black Forest	2000	Palmer Lake	3300	Ellicott
800	Green Mt. Falls	2100	Woodmoor-Mon	3400	
900		2200	Tri-Lakes	3500	Hanover
1000	Manitou Spgs.	2300	Schriever AFB	3600	Peyton
1100	Fountain	2400	Chey.Mtn.AFB	3700	Tri-County
1200	Colo.Spgs.FD	2500		3800	Edison
				4700	NE Teller

\*Infrequent users of the net, Military FD, etc. can use their normal department designator preceded by department name. Example: "Forest Service Engine xxx"

\*Specialty resources will use their common designator. Example: "Life Guard 3"

\*Department Officers will use their century system designator preceded by their rank. Example: "Falcon Chief 300", "Palmer Lake Captain 2004", etc.

\*Apparatus would use century system designator preceded with district name and type: \*Example "Cimarron Hills engine 1310", "Wescott brush 540", "Calhan ambulance 1480"etc.

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The El Paso County Sheriff's Office agrees to allow \_\_\_\_\_  
to transmit and receive on the following talk group licensed by the Sheriff for emergency  
response coordination:

Red Channel

Signature of this Memorandum of Understanding indicates that you agree to abide by the  
El Paso County Fire Radio System Policies and Procedures (enclosed) as adopted by the  
Sheriff.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Title (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Terry Maketa  
Sheriff