



State of Maryland

Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
Lieutenant GovernorMICHAEL G. LEAHY  
Chairman of the Board

## MD Call / MD EVENT Standard Operating Procedures

### 1 Purpose

The State of Maryland has created fifteen unique talkgroups for the purpose of coordinating interoperable communications. These talkgroups are assigned and coordinated by the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and are located in a Zone called MD EVENT within the MD FiRST Interoperability Template. The statewide talkgroup known as MD CALL is used for hailing and coordination, while MD EVENT 1 through MD EVENT 15 are tactically assigned by MEMA as required. These talkgroups will generally be used for pre-planned events that are scheduled to occur at future date(s) and time(s).

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a common set of procedures for requesting MD EVENT interoperable communications resources for public safety agencies utilizing the MD EVENT talkgroups.

### 2 Scope

This policy applies to both primary users and interoperability users on the Maryland FiRST Radio System.

### 3 Authority

The Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board has the authority to establish Standard Operating Procedures, Quality of Service Standards and maintenance guidelines for the Maryland FiRST radio system in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Public Safety Article, § 1-501, §1-503.

### 4 Objective

The primary objective of the MD EVENT talkgroups is to provide public safety agencies a means of coordination and the ability to request interoperable talkgroups for direct voice communications during a multi-jurisdictional/multi-discipline pre-planned event. Not only will this enhance the efficiency of a multi-agency response, it will provide a means of disseminating critical information to heighten the preservation of life and property for participating emergency responder agencies. Additionally, the talkgroups will enable the Command or Unified Command of the incident to maintain control of all responders during the event. Some examples of usage may be:



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- During a pre-planned event where multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional communications are needed and MD EVENT talkgroups are available.
- Mutual aid response during a planned event outside of local radio system coverage.
- Training and exercises to familiarize personnel with MD CALL and MD EVENT operations.

**NOTE:** MD EVENT talkgroups are not intended to replace the 800 MHz National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee ("NPSPAC") and 700 MHz nationwide interoperability channels. Public safety agencies that have adopted the NPSPAC 800 MHz channels (8TACs) for interoperability should continue the use of these resources for interoperability communications.

## 5 Policy/Procedures

The primary purpose of the MD EVENT talkgroups is to provide communication interoperability for state agencies. MD EVENT talkgroups may also be used by local government partners when interoperable multi-county and/or multi-agency public safety communication is required with MD FiRST users.

Use of the MD EVENT talkgroups should be identified during the planning stage, so that the Incident/Unified Command will be able to communicate directly with other agency representatives who have access to the MD EVENT talkgroups. It is important to note that use of these talkgroups must comply with all Federal and State Laws and must also comply with local and radio system rules and regulations.

The MD EVENT Zone should be made accessible on all P25 compliant public safety communication equipment.

The MD EVENT talkgroup is intended for the coordination of communications during a pre-planned event.

MD EVENT talkgroups have been configured for use across the state by geographic region. In each region, defined encrypted and unencrypted talkgroups are available for use and will be assigned within that region only as much as possible. Cross-region talkgroup assignments will only occur if all other talkgroups are being utilized.

The Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) will monitor MD CALL and will control assignment of all MD EVENT talkgroups. Once MD EVENT talkgroup(s) are assigned, the requester shall make arrangements to monitor the talkgroup(s) on a priority basis until its use is discontinued.



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Chairman of the Board**Priority of Use**

The use of MD EVENT talkgroups is limited to appropriate public safety use and its personnel. Any misuse of the talkgroup(s) shall be reported by the MJOC to the senior communications official of the agency/jurisdiction of the alleged offender(s) and to appropriate MD FIRST personnel.

Use of the MD EVENT talkgroups will be prioritized as follows:

1. Pre-planned events
2. Administrative or Itinerant Training and Drills.

NOTE: The scheduled use of any EVENT talkgroup will only be superseded when an incident of immediate peril, extreme emergency, or disaster and when all other statewide interoperability talkgroups are already being utilized.

**Plain Language**

Plain language is to be used when communicating on the intra-jurisdictional MD EVENT talkgroups. When necessary, the phonetic alphabet may be used to communicate over the channel.

**Unit Identification**

Resources from various agencies interacting in an incident/event shall announce their home agency prior to announcing its unit identifier during interoperable communication situations. This will avoid confusion if units from different involved agencies have the same or similar unit identifiers.

**Incident Command System (ICS)**

Each agency will use NIMS/ICS as an operational guide at incidents/events where the intra-jurisdictional MD EVENT talkgroups are activated.

**Activation**

Since these talkgroups are for pre-planned events, permission for use will be requested prior to the start of the event. MD EVENT talkgroups are activated and assigned through a request to the MJOC (**410-517-3600, 877-636-2872**) by a designee of the lead agency directing the event. The requestor should identify the nature of the event, the geographical region, and the approximate time period the talkgroup will be needed. Contact may be via telephone, email, or MD CALL. Once the MD EVENT talkgroup(s) is activated, the IC or designee of the lead agency will notify his/her respective dispatch/radio communications center of the activation and the designated MD EVENT resources assigned. Once MD EVENT channels are activated, the requester shall make arrangements to monitor the talkgroups on a priority basis until its use is discontinued. The communication/dispatch centers for all agencies actively engaged in the incident/event are also encouraged to monitor these talkgroups throughout its duration if such capabilities are available.



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In those incidents where personnel are operating on an MD EVENT resource, the MJOC shall be responsible for monitoring emergency activations and making the appropriate announcements and notifications.

**Encryption**

MD EVENT 3, 8, 9, 12, and 15 are configured as strapped AES encryption. The key used shall be designated by the MD FiRST Operations Committee. The lead agency and/or designee of an incident shall make the decision whether encryption will be utilized for communication based on the capabilities of responding public safety agencies and/or need of the incident. The lead agency will request from the MJOC, use of appropriate regional encrypted talkgroup for the event.

**Patching**

Any patching of communication resources to an MD EVENT talkgroup shall be approved by and/or coordinated through the MJOC.

**Deactivation**

When the assigned MD EVENT talkgroup is no longer required, the incident commander or designee shall notify his/her respective dispatch/radio communications center and the MJOC that the incident has concluded, that the talkgroup can be released and made available for other assignments.

**Problem Resolution**

If problems are encountered using the MD EVENT resources, they should be reported to the MJOC immediately (**410-517-3600 or 877-636-2872**).

**Training**

The MD EVENT Talkgroup resources should be used whenever possible in training and exercises to ensure that personnel are familiar with these talkgroups. Use of the MD EVENT talkgroups for training may be interrupted as needed for operational situations as identified in the **Priority of Use** section of this document.



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## 6 Acronyms

<b>IC</b>	Incident Commander
<b>MD Call</b>	MD FIRST State Interoperability talkgroup used for hailing and coordination.
<b>MD EVENT</b>	15 talkgroups, both encrypted and clear configured for specific regions of the state.
<b>MJOC</b>	Maryland Joint Operations Center
<b>Radio Control</b>	Designated frequency or frequencies
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure(s)
<b>Talkgroup</b>	Designated talkgroup on a trunked radio system that is similar to a radio channel on a non-trunked system.

## 7 MD EVENT CHANNEL/TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENT

Talk Groups will be assigned to incidents/events only by the MJOC

Talkgroup	Area	Encryption
MD CALL	Statewide	Clear
MD EVENT 1	Eastern Shore*	Clear
MD EVENT 2	Eastern Shore	Clear
MD EVENT 3	Eastern Shore	Encrypted
MD EVENT 4	Central/NCR*	Clear
MD EVENT 5	Central/NCR	Clear
MD EVENT 6	Central/NCR	Clear
MD EVENT 7	Central/NCR	Clear
MD EVENT 8	Central/NCR	Encrypted
MD EVENT 9	Central/NCR	Encrypted
MD EVENT 10	Western*	Clear
MD EVENT 11	Western	Clear
MD EVENT 12	Western	Encrypted
MD EVENT 13	Southern*	Clear
MD EVENT 14	Southern	Clear
MD EVENT 15	Southern	Encrypted

*\*Available Statewide*



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**MD TAC Service Areas**

<b>Statewide</b>	All areas with MD FiRST service
<b>Eastern Shore</b>	Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester
<b>Central/NCR</b>	Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's
<b>Western</b>	Allegany, Garrett, Washington
<b>Southern</b>	Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's

**8 Contact Information**

Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) via telephone (410 517-3600, 877- 636-2872) or via radio on the MD CALL talkgroup. The Maryland FiRST System Manager may be contacted at: [MDFirstSystem.Manager@maryland.gov](mailto:MDFirstSystem.Manager@maryland.gov)

**9 Approval**

This SOP was reviewed by the Maryland FiRST Operations Group on June 3, 2020 and was approved by the Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board, by majority vote on June 17, 2020.

Norman J. Farley  
Director of the Board

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Michael G. Leahy  
Chairman of the Board