



State of Maryland

Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

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Lieutenant GovernorMICHAEL G. LEAHY
Chairman of the Board

MD Call / MD LAW

Standard Operating Procedures

1 Purpose

The State of Maryland has created fifteen unique talkgroups for the purpose of coordinating law enforcement interoperable communications. These talkgroups are assigned and coordinated by the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and are located in a Zone called MD LAW within the MD FiRST Interoperability Template. The statewide talkgroup known as MD CALL is used for hailing and coordination, while MD LAW 1 through MD LAW 15 are tactically assigned by MEMA as required. These talkgroups will generally be used for expanding critical incidents or 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 LAW interoperable communications resources for public safety agencies utilizing the MD LAW 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 LAW talkgroups is to provide law enforcement agencies a means of secure communications for coordination and the ability to request encrypted interoperable talkgroups for direct voice communications during a multi-jurisdictional/law enforcement - specific incidents and/or events. Not only will this enhance the efficiency of a multi-agency response, it will provide a secure means of disseminating critical information to heighten the preservation of life and property for participating law enforcement 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 an expanding critical incident that requires additional multi-agency law enforcement responders, and where secure interoperable communications have been identified as needed. These talkgroups could be used in lieu of or in addition to other MD FIRST interoperability talkgroups.
- During a pre-planned event where multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional law enforcement secure communications are needed and MD LAW talkgroups are available.
- Mutual aid response during unplanned incident or pre-planned event outside of local radio system coverage.
- Training and exercises to familiarize personnel with MD CALL and MD LAW operations.

NOTE: MD LAW 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 LAW talkgroups is to provide secure communication interoperability for law enforcement state agencies. MD LAW talkgroups may also be used by local government partners when interoperable multi-county and/or multi-agency law enforcement secure communication is required with MD FIRST users.

The MD LAW talkgroup is intended for the coordination of law enforcement secure communications during an expanding incident or pre-planned event.

MD LAW talkgroups should be identified during the planning stage so that the Incident/Unified Command will be able to communicate directly with other law enforcement agency representatives who have access to the MD LAW secure 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 LAW Zone should be made accessible on all P25 compliant law enforcement communication equipment.



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MD LAW talkgroups have been configured for use across the state by geographic region. In each region, defined encrypted 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 LAW talkgroups. Once MD LAW talkgroup(s) are assigned, the requester shall make arrangements to monitor the talkgroup(s) on a priority basis until its use is discontinued.

Priority of Use

The use of MD LAW talkgroups is limited to appropriate law enforcement functions and only by appropriate law enforcement 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 LAW talkgroups will be prioritized as follows:

1. Expanding critical incidents
2. Pre-planned events
3. Administrative or Itinerant Training and Drills.

NOTE: The scheduled use of any LAW 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 LAW 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 LAW talkgroups are activated.



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Chairman of the Board**Activation**

Since these talkgroups are for expanding critical incidents and pre-planned events, permission for use may be requested either for immediate need/response, or prior to the start of the planned event. MD LAW 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, and the geographical region. Contact may be via telephone, email, or MD CALL. Once the MD LAW 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 LAW resources assigned. Once MD LAW 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.

Emergency Activations

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

Encryption

ALL MD LAW talkgroups are configured as strapped AES encryption. The key used shall be designated by the MD FiRST Operations Committee. The lead agency will request from the MJOC, use of appropriate regional encrypted talkgroup for the incident/event.

Patching

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

Deactivation

When the assigned MD LAW 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 LAW resources, they should be reported to the MJOC immediately (**410-517-3600 or 877-636-2872**).

Training

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



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the **Priority of Use** section of this document.

6 Acronyms

IC	Incident Commander
MD Call	MD FiRST State Interoperability talkgroup used for hailing and coordination.
MD LAW	15 talkgroups, encrypted for specific regions of the state to be used by law enforcement only.
MJOC	Maryland Joint Operations Center
Radio Control	Designated frequency or frequencies
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure(s)
Talkgroup	Designated talkgroup on a trunked radio system that is similar to a radio channel on a non-trunked system.

7 MD LAW CHANNEL/TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENT

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

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

**Available Statewide*



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**MD TAC Service
Areas**

Statewide	All areas with MD FiRST service
Eastern Shore	Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester
Central/NCR	Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's
Western	Allegany, Garrett, Washington
Southern	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 LAW CALL talkgroup. The Maryland FiRST System Manager may be contacted at: 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