State of Maryland
Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

MICHAEL G. LEAHY
Chairman of the Board

Maryland FiRST System Key Control Policy
Standard Operating Procedure

1   Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish the controls and policy for the Maryland FiRST System Key.

2   Scope

This policy applies to both primary users and interoperability users on the Maryland FiRST Radio System who have access to the Maryland FiRST System Key for programming radio subscriber units. This policy (SOP 0.01B) supersedes and replaces the Advance System Key Policy that was approved by the Radio Control Board on December 16, 2014 and later modified on September 23, 2015.

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   Background

Maryland FiRST is a P25 Phase II statewide public safety land mobile radio system designed to support Maryland's First Responders. Maryland FiRST provides services and features to radio users through the programming software of the subscriber radios. Programming of the subscriber radios is controlled by an electronic "System Key." As this programming application directly affects Maryland FiRST operations it is important that the System Key is protected from potential security-related risks that can cause disruption of operations or failure in service. The System Key consists of either an "Advanced System Key" or a "Software System Key" which permits technicians to program subscriber devices with Maryland FiRST code. Primary users on Maryland FiRST are required to use an "Advanced System Key" (which allows for additional security measures), while interoperability partners are authorized to use a software system key.

5   Policy Statement

- The System Key is and will always remain the property of the State of Maryland. The Maryland FiRST System Manager will control, maintain, and distribute the System Key as permitted by this policy.

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- A system key will be provided to the land mobile radio system managers or their designated representatives of participating agencies in accordance with the provisions herein.

- The system key is furnished to participating agencies in Maryland FiRST under a license to use the file for official business only and in compliance with 47 USC §337(f). It is to be used only under the terms of this agreement and of agreements which will be established in the future.

- No copies of the system key will be made in any form or loaned or furnished to any person other than technicians and engineers within the participating organization or under contract to that organization for radio maintenance and service. The approved participating organization shall record and make available to representatives of Maryland FiRST or the Radio Control Board when requested the names of persons to whom the system key was disseminated.

- Radios programmed using the system key will be programmed to conform to Maryland FiRST's prescribed configuration, with any features, limitations, control settings, or other parameters as dictated by the Maryland FiRST System Manager. This includes uniformly designed zones and channel assignments for nationwide interoperability channels in 700 and 800 MHz, as well as established MD Call and MD TAC talkgroups as determined by the State of Maryland's Statewide Interoperability Coordinator ("SWIC").

- Radios may only be programmed with nationwide interoperability channels, MD Call – MD TAC, and talkgroups that have been authorized for use by the "owning agency" of the talkgroup. A "Talkgroup Sharing Agreement" must be obtained and signed by both parties before programming information is shared.

- Participating agencies with P25 Phase I subscriber units may have their access to Maryland FiRST limited to specific talkgroups to ensure the integrity of the Maryland FiRST system.

6   Supporting Rules

- Requests for obtaining the Maryland FiRST system key for non-Maryland FiRST radios shall be made by the appropriate representative of the requesting agency to the Maryland FiRST System Manager.

- Any breaches in the Maryland FiRST system key use shall immediately be reported to the Maryland FiRST System Manager who shall take immediate steps to minimize the danger to the operational capabilities of Maryland FiRST.

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- Participating agencies must also report to the Maryland FiRST System Manager, in accordance with the Maryland FiRST Lost or Compromised Radio Standard Operating Guidelines dated March 22, 2017, if a radio programmed with the Maryland FiRST system is missing, lost, stolen, destroyed, or otherwise rendered inoperable.

- Upon notification that the written request for a system key has been accepted, the Maryland FiRST System Manager will arrange for the distribution of the system key and its receipted transfer to the responsible party.

  o The Maryland FiRST System Manager will work with the requesting agency to facilitate a radio programming template for use with the system key.

  o The requesting agency is required to notify the Maryland FiRST System Manager of the radio IDs to be enabled in the infrastructure before the radios will be operational on the Maryland FiRST network.

  o Maryland FiRST reserves the right to audit the system keys, radio IDs, and associated templates.

7   Responsibilities

- Agencies with primary users or interoperability users are responsible for complying with this policy.

- The Maryland FiRST System Manager is responsible for the development of internal controls for the protection of the Maryland FiRST system key.

- The Maryland FiRST System Manager is responsible for monitoring issues related to the use of the system key and to investigate actions involving misuse of the key. Results of any investigations will be reported to the Director of the Radio Control Board.

- The Director of the Radio Control Board may approve temporary changes or modifications to this policy to ensure the security of the system or to accommodate an emergency condition. Any permanent changes to this policy require the approval of the Radio Control Board.

8   System Manager Contact Information

The System Manager may be contacted at: MDFirstSystem.Manager@maryland.gov

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9 Approval

This SOP was reviewed by the Maryland FiRST Operations Group on June 13, 2017 and was approved by the Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board, by majority vote on: June 21, 2017.

Norman J. Farley
Director of the Board

Michael G. Leahy
Chairman of the Board