



## Talkgroup Sharing Agreements Standard Operating Procedures

### 1 Purpose

To establish standard operating procedures for the creation and management of Maryland FiRST Talkgroup Sharing Agreements.

### 2 Scope

This SOP applies to all agencies or government entities who are approved by the Radio Control Board to use the Maryland FiRST Public Safety 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 Background

With the advent of digital radio communications and the P25 standard, traditional radio “channels” have been replaced with frequency independent “talkgroups”. Normally, each talkgroup is assigned a name/designation, has a particular purpose, and has designated who is authorized to use the talkgroup. To support interoperability, many public safety agencies have entered into Talkgroup Sharing Agreements with allied agencies.

### 5 Policy Statement

Only a Primary User may enter into Talkgroup Sharing Agreements of its own talkgroups with another Primary User or Interoperability User. Talkgroup Sharing Agreements between two or more Interoperability Users is not authorized since these users are not authorized to establish their own talkgroups.

### 6 Supporting Rules/Procedures

- A. With respect to talkgroups on the System, Primary Users, unless otherwise limited by their MOU agreement or by Radio Control Board action, may create and use talkgroups as reasonably required to support the public safety requirements of their agencies.



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Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

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Chairman of the Board

Primary Users are encouraged to identify a specific talkgroup manager and provide the name to the Maryland FiRST System Manager.

- B. Primary Users are expected to use their best efforts to create and share only such talkgroups as may be necessary for operations consistent with eligibility as defined by the Federal Communications Commission in 47 CFR §90.523.
- C. Primary Users may share in the use of their talkgroups with other primary and interoperability users within their area of operation, as defined in paragraph 7B of this SOP. Talkgroup Sharing Agreements must be made between the Maryland FiRST agencies. An example of the format for Talkgroup Sharing Agreements is found in Attachment One of this SOP. The example includes mandatory information that must be provided, but agencies may add information to the talkgroup sharing agreement as necessary to meet any other informational requirements.
- D. Unless specific arrangements are made otherwise, Talkgroup Sharing Agreements are intended for Mutual Aid and/or Coordination. A Talkgroup Sharing Agreement does not grant permission for an agency to use another's talkgroups for their primary operations.
- E. Copies of executed Talkgroup Sharing Agreements shall be provided to the Maryland FiRST System Manager for retention.
- F. Configuration Changes: In the event a talkgroup owner changes the configuration of a shared talkgroup, notification shall be made to all agencies who have been granted permission to access said talkgroup.

## 7 Technical Issues

- A. Primary Users shall use Time Division Multiple Access ("TDMA") technology, also known as P25 Phase II, when operating on the Maryland FiRST system unless such use is on an affiliated special purpose frequency<sup>1</sup>.
- B. A Talkgroup's area of operation is typically the home jurisdiction as well as those jurisdictions that touch its political borders. Areas of operation will not be modified as a result of Talkgroup Sharing Agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> Special purpose frequencies include MD DIRECT (licensed under WPTZ805 and WQYK328), Regional Interservice ("RINS"), Low Power channels (licensed under WQJU874 and WRAG702), Deployable Trunked, or nationwide interoperability frequencies licensed by FCC rule as defined in 47 CFR §90.531(b)(1).



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## 8 Emergencies

The Director of the Radio Control Board or a designee 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.

## 9 Contact Information

The Maryland FiRST Agency Coordinator/Customer Liaison may be contacted at:  
[md-first.radio@maryland.gov](mailto:md-first.radio@maryland.gov)

The Maryland FiRST System Manager may be contacted at:  
[MDFirstSystem.Manager@maryland.gov](mailto:MDFirstSystem.Manager@maryland.gov)

## 10 Approval

This SOP was reviewed by the Maryland FiRST Operations Group on, September 11, 2019 and was approved by the Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board, by majority vote on, September 18, 2019.

Norman J. Farley  
Director of the Board

Michael G. Leahy  
Chairman of the Board



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Attachment One

Sample Talkgroup Sharing Agreements (Note: Switch positions are provided for reference only and not required):



Talkgroup Sharing Agreement **SAMPLE ONLY**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency 1: \_\_\_\_\_ County Law Enforcement Agency

Agency Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency 2: \_\_\_\_\_ State Law Enforcement Agency

Agency Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Radio Zone		Switch 1	Switch 2	Switch 3	Switch 4	Switch 5	Switch 6	Switch 7	Switch 8	Switch 9	Switch 10	Switch 11	Switch 12	Switch 13	Switch 14	Switch 15	Switch 16
COUNTY LAW	TG Alias	COUNTY LAW DSP	COUNTY TAC 2	COUNTY TAC 3													
	TG ID (Dec)	12345	23456	34567													
	Encryption "CLR/SEL/STR"	CLR	CLR	STR													
	CKR (if applicable)	N/A	N/A	6													
	Emerg "None/Tact/Rev"	Tact	Rev	Rev													
	Emerg Rev ID (if applicable)	N/A	12345	12345													
STATE LAW AGENCY	TG Alias	STATE LAW DISP	ST LAW TAC 1	ST LAW TAC 2													
	TG ID (Dec)	98765	87654	76543													
	Encryption "CLR/SEL/STR"	CLR	STR	STR													
	CKR (if applicable)	N/A	6	6													
	Emerg "None/Tact/Rev"	Tact	Rev	Rev													
	Emerg Rev ID (if applicable)	N/A	98765	98765													
	TG Alias																
	TG ID (Dec)																
	Encryption "CLR/SEL/STR"																
	CKR (if applicable)																
	Emerg "None/Tact/Rev"																
	Emerg Rev ID (if applicable)																

Restrictions / Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 For programming in LE-Radios only.

Console Permission (if applicable): Yes, Dispatch TGs only.