



State of Maryland

Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board

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MD CALL / MD TAC

Standard Operating Procedures

1 Purpose

The State of Maryland has created sixteen unique talkgroups for the purpose of coordinating interoperable communications for use during critical or active incidents/emergency situations. These talkgroups are assigned and coordinated by the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and are located in a Zone called MD TAC within the MD FiRST Interoperability Template. The statewide talkgroup known as MD CALL is used for hailing and coordination, while MD TAC 1 through MD TAC 15 are tactically assigned by MEMA as required.

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

2 Scope

This policy applies to both primary users and interoperability users on the Maryland FiRST Radio System. This policy supersedes and replaces the MD CALL/MD TAC SOP (SOP 0.02A) that was approved by the Radio Control Board on April 11, 2018.

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 TAC talkgroups is to provide public safety agencies a means of coordination during a multi-jurisdictional/multi-discipline critical or active incident/emergency situation. Not only will this enhance the efficiency of a multi-agency response, it will provide a means for quickly disseminating critical information to heighten the preservation of life and property for participating emergency responder agencies anywhere in the State. Some examples of usage would be:



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- Any critical or active incident/emergency situation involving one or more public safety agencies that are responding or on the scene, and interoperable communications are needed.
- Any unplanned emergency situation where multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional communications are needed and MD TAC talkgroups are available.
- Mutual aid response of an active/crisis situation outside of local radio system coverage.
- Training and exercises to familiarize personnel with MD CALL and MD TAC operations.

NOTE: MD TAC 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 TAC talkgroups is to provide communication interoperability for state agencies. MD TAC 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.

The MD TAC talkgroups should be used at an active emergency situation when an incident commander (IC) or designee determines the need to communicate directly with other agency representatives who have access to the MD TAC 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 TAC talkgroups are not intended to replace the establishment of an on-scene communications plan among responding agencies.

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

MD TAC talkgroups have been configured for use across the state by geographic region. In each region, defined encrypted and unencrypted talkgroups are available for use as deemed appropriate by the IC and/or designee.

The Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) will monitor MD CALL and all MD TAC talkgroups and control assignment of all MD TAC talkgroups. Once MD TAC talkgroup(s) are assigned, the



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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 TAC 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 TAC talkgroups will be prioritized as follows:

1. Immediate Peril - An immediate threat to human life exists.
2. Disaster or Extreme Emergency - An imminent threat to human life or of large scale property destruction exists or in the event of a technology failure.
3. Routine Emergency - Distinguished from the above by scale or nearness of threat
4. Urgent Administrative or Itinerant Training and Drills.

NOTE: The use of MD TAC Talkgroups is NOT designed for Pre-Planned events or Routine response of public safety personnel. Other MD FIRST talkgroups exist, and should be used for those purposes.

Plain Language

Plain language is to be used when communicating on the intra-jurisdictional MD TAC 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 TAC talkgroups are activated.

Activation

MD TAC talkgroups are activated and assigned through a request to the MJOC (**410-517-3600, 877-636-2872**) by the Incident Commander or designee. 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 or MD CALL. Once the MD TAC talkgroup(s) is activated, the IC or designee of the lead agency will notify his/her respective dispatch/radio



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communications center of the activation and the designated MD TAC resources assigned.

When MD TAC 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 TAC resource, the MJOC shall be responsible for monitoring emergency activations and making the appropriate announcements and notifications.

Encryption

MD TAC 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 and will notify the MJOC for the proper talkgroup assignment.

Patching

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

Deactivation

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

Training

The MD CALL and TAC Talkgroup resources should be used whenever possible in training and exercises to ensure that personnel are familiar with these talkgroups. Use of the MD TAC 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

IC	Incident Commander
MD CALL	MD FiRST State Interoperability talkgroup used for hailing and coordination.
MD TAC	15 talkgroups, both encrypted and clear configured for specific regions of the state.
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 TAC CHANNEL/TALKGROUP ASSIGNMENT

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

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