

# Mutual Aid Box Alarm System – Illinois Communications – Tactical Frequency Use Guideline

Index #: C-01-05-02

Adopted: 8/16/2004

Revised: 12/1/2021

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Subject: Tactical Frequency Use Guideline  
Functional Area: Communications  
Category: Guideline  
Approved By: MABAS Executive Board



## PURPOSE

To provide an operational guideline for member fire departments and their personnel for establishing an effective communications component for the Incident Action Plan at both routine and major emergency incidents.

## RESPONSIBILITY

This recommended practice is applicable to all MABAS member agencies. This procedure is intended to comply with the operational concepts provided under and in support of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Unified Incident Command System (UCS) and Incident Command System (ICS) principles.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Enforcement of this specific policy rests initially with the Co-Chairs of the MABAS Communications Committee, then the MABAS CEO, followed by the MABAS President, 1st Vice President and 2nd Vice President.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENT

There is no routine reporting requirement for this guideline.

## BACKGROUND

The MABAS organization has grown significantly over the past few years in size, geographical service area and responsibility. The complex nature of the various incidents that member fire departments respond to has mandated the use of additional mutual aid dispatch, coordination and tactical operations radio channels to effectively manage these incidents. As a result, the MABAS Communications Committee has developed this recommended practice to assist local Incident Commanders with the task of implementing a communications plan at all emergency incidents and training evolutions.

## GUIDELINE

The MABAS Communications Committee hereby establishes the following guideline:

### 1. Definitions

#### ▪ Dispatch

Local frequency(ies) normally used for daily dispatch (base/mobile) of emergency calls.

#### ▪ IFERN

MABAS mutual aid dispatch and response frequency (base/mobile) (154.265 MHz - 210.7 Hz).

#### ▪ IFERN2

Alternate base/mobile mutual aid dispatch frequency (154.3025 MHz – 67.0 Hz). (Reserved for future implementation and/or major incident coordination.)

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- **Fireground**

Low power tactical frequencies used for on-scene communications between the Incident Commander and units working the incident.

<u>RED</u>	<u>153.8300 MHz</u>	<u>67.0 Hz</u>	<u>GOLD</u>	<u>153.8375 MHz</u>	<u>91.5 Hz</u>
<u>WHITE</u>	<u>154.2800 MHz</u>	<u>74.4 Hz</u>	<u>BLACK</u>	<u>154.2725 MHz</u>	<u>94.8 Hz</u>
<u>BLUE</u>	<u>154.2950 MHz</u>	<u>85.4 Hz</u>	<u>GRAY</u>	<u>154.2875 MHz</u>	<u>136.5 Hz</u>

- **IREACH**

Illinois Radio Emergency Assistance Channel (155.0550 MHz – D156). Used for interdisciplinary coordination.

- **MERCI**

VHF ambulance to hospital frequencies. (155.1600, 155.2800, 155.3400 & 155.4000 MHz).

## 2. Guideline

- 2.1 The following guideline may be used by a fire service Incident Commander to develop the communications component of an Incident Action Plan.
- 2.2 Please consider that it is extremely difficult for a single individual to effectively monitor more than 1 or 2 radio frequencies during an emergency incident. As the communications plan becomes more complex, the Incident Commander must rely on aides to assist with communications management at the Command Post.
- 2.3 Occasionally, a jurisdiction may respond to multiple simultaneous incidents, or neighboring jurisdictions may experience simultaneous emergencies. Use of a single fireground channel for both incidents may be counterproductive and cause unnecessary harmful interference. Incident Commanders at subsequent incidents should consider adjusting their communications plan and assign a different primary fireground channel to avoid operational difficulties.
- 2.4 The recommended frequency use matrix on the following page can be used as a quick reference sheet for the Incident Commander or other communications personnel within the Command Post. It should be noted that the chart in Appendix 1 is not intended to replace the ICS205 developed by an incident Communication Unit Leader, but can be used as a basis for ICS205 frequency selection.

## 3. Frequency Guideline

See Appendix 1.

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing provides a uniform approach for MABAS members to develop the communications component of an Incident Action Plan. This is only a guideline and local conditions must be taken into consideration when implementing this procedure.

*(Approved by the MABAS Communications Committee on August 16, 2004. Revised by the MABAS Communications Committee on December 1, 2021.)*

