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

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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 (ICS) 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.

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

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.)

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Appendix 1

MABAS TACTICAL FREQUENCY USE GUIDELINE

December 2021

	Routine Incidents	Box-2nd Alarms	Major Alarms	Mass Casualty	Fire & MCl	Tech Rescue	Haz- Mat	Water Rescue	Major Disaster
IC to Local Dispatcher	Dispatch	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN
IC to MABAS Dispatcher		IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN
Staging		IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN	IFERN
Scene/First Due Companies	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED
Interior/Fire Companies	RED	RED	RED		RED				RED
Operations Officer	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED			RED
Safety Officer	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED
RIT Team(s)	RED	RED	RED		RED				RED
Accountability	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED	RED
Water Supply	RED/BLUE	BLUE	BLUE		BLACK	BLUE	BLUE		BLACK
Aerial Operations	RED/BLUE	BLUE	BLUE		BLACK	BLUE	BLUE		BLACK
Logistics		WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	GRAY
Public Information Officer		WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	GRAY
Liaison Officer(s)		WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	GRAY
Support Functions		WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	WHITE	GRAY
Extrication & Manpower				RED					RED
Triage Sector				BLUE	BLUE				BLUE
Treatment Sector				BLUE	BLUE				BLUE
Transport to Ambulances				IFERN	IFERN				IFERN
Transport to Med Control				MERCI	MERCI				MERCI
Helicopter Landing Zone	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH
SRT Entry Teams						GOLD			GOLD
Haz-Mat Officer							RED		
Haz-Mat Resource							BLACK		
Haz-Mat Entry/Back- up							BLACK		
Divemaster/Dive Operations								BLUE	
Boat Operations								BLUE	
Base Camp Operations									IFERN2
Fire Operations									RED
SRT Operations									WHITE
EMS Operations									BLUE
Interdisciplinary Coordination	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH	IREACH