

# LORAIN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENTS

## Standard Operating Guidelines

Communications and Tactical Frequency Use	SOG: 019
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### .10 PURPOSE

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

### 2.0 DIVISIONS AFFECTED

All Lorain County emergency response personnel

### 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- This procedure is applicable to all Lorain County fire departments. 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.
- The procedure provides a uniform approach for departments 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.
- All fire officers are responsible to comply with and ensure that personnel under their command are adequately trained, fully understand, and comply with this guideline.
- All fire department personnel have the responsibility to learn and follow this guideline.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND

Fire department operations have grown significantly over the past years in size, geographical service area and responsibility. The complex nature of the various incidents those 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 Mutual Aid 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.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Definitions

**Primary Channel** Frequency normally used for daily dispatch (base/mobile) of emergency calls and communications between Incident Command and dispatch, found in Zone 1.

**Fireground Channel** Low power tactical frequencies used for on-scene communications between the Incident Commander and units working the incident, found in Zone 1.

TAC 7	153.830
TAC 8	154.175
TAC 9	154.160
TAC 10	151.325
TAC 11	154.340
TAC 12	154.235
TAC 13	153.770

**Inter-TAC** Lorain County emergency assistance channels. Used for coordination between interagency units, found in Zone 1.

TAC 15	154.265
TAC 16	154.295

**EMS** VHF ambulance to hospital frequencies, found in Zone 2.

HEAR Area	155.280
HEAR Local	155.340

5.2 Primary channels (Channels 1 to 6):

Each fire department has been assigned to a primary operations/dispatch frequency. These assignments were based on past local operations, dispatching, and commonly used mutual aid departments.

Primary channel use will be subject to the following procedures:

- All operations on assigned primary frequencies will be self-governed by those departments assigned to that frequency.
- Departments may use (and are expected to use) the primary frequency for local, day-to-day operations and incidents.
- All communications between the incident and dispatch (LC 911 or other) shall be conducted on the primary channel.
- There are no requirements for a department to switch to a tactical channel just because one or two mutual aid departments are called to an incident. Rather, the extent of radio communications and courtesy to neighboring departments should dictate use of tactical channels.

5.3 Tactical channels (TAC 7 to TAC 13):

Occasionally, a department may respond to a single large/complex incident, multiple simultaneous incidents, or neighboring jurisdictions may experience simultaneous emergencies. Use of the primary frequency may be counterproductive and cause unnecessary harmful interference on other departments. Incident Commanders must consider adjusting their communications plan and utilize different tactical channels to avoid operational difficulties.

Tactical channel use will be subject to the following procedures:

- Tactical channels will be assigned by LC 911 upon request of the Incident Commander. The best opportunity to request a TAC channel is when a MABAS or mutual aid (MA) request is made to LC 911. This allows the responding MA companies to report directly to the assigned channel.
- Request for a tactical channel may also be entered on a MABAS box alarm form. This has been used for several water shuttle box alarms. The actual channel will be assigned at the time of alarm request.
- Tactical channels will not be used by any department or agency prior to obtaining assignment and approval.
- Tactical channels will not be preassigned.
- Since tactical channels are designed for incident use only, are low power (5 watts), and are not approved for dispatch operations, LC 911 will provide limited instant recall/recording capability for all TAC channels. NOTE: Dispatch will not communicate on tactical channels.
- Due to low power and licensing limitations, LC 911 can not transmit an EVAC tone over a TAC channel. LC 911 capability is limited to tactical channel reception only.
- If IC's have difficulty effectively monitoring more than one or 2 TAC radio frequencies during an emergency incident, consider the use of aides to assist with communications management at the Command Post.

5.4 Interagency Tactical Channels (TAC 15, TAC 16):

Interagency tactical channels are designed for communication and coordination with non-fire responders; i.e., police, EMS, public works, road crews, etc.

5.5 Special Operations and Situations:

Countywide incidents. Infrequently, there may occur weather-related or other emergencies that require a substantial amount of radio communications for many or all departments. The amount of communications on primary channels may create more problems than responders can alleviate. Accordingly, a preplanned assignment of tactical channels may be initiated to assure reasonable communication channels for all responders. This operational assignment may be initiated by LC OHS&EM or by request of multiple incident commanders based on the increasing amount of activities.

NOTE: This pre-assignment will not be considered approval for everyday TAC channel usage.

**Preassigned Special Ops Channels:**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>TAC</b>
SE Fire	7
NW Fire	8
NE Fire	9
SW Fire	10
Elyria	11
Lorain	12

During these operations, TAC 13, 15 and 16 will remain available for multi-alarm incidents.

5.6 Multi-alarm TAC recommendations:

The recommended frequency use matrix in Appendix 1 can be used as a quick reference sheet for the Incident Commander or other communications personnel within the Command Post. This listing suggests how TAC channels may be used during incidents that require multiple alarms and/or use of Incident Management Teams for command systems.

