

Annex F

Communications

A. INTRODUCTION

Delaware County is dependent on a functional public safety communications system which allows responders to communicate on a regular day to day basis and during times of large scale disaster. It is imperative that Delaware County set forth a common operating picture of the current public safety radio system and alternate modalities that are available during a failure of heavy radio traffic.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to provide an overview and alternate communications plan for Delaware County during a time of need. The plan will outline the current radio system, the 911 system and back-up 911 dispatch system, procedure for transfer and procedure for activation of amateur radio personnel during the event we need additional or alternate communications capability.

C. SCOPE

This attachment will apply to all responders who depend on the Public Safety Radio Communications System.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM OVERVIEW

1. Fire Radio System

The Delaware County fire radio system operates on the low band frequency. The system is made up of several components: hilltop stations (tower sites), local base stations located in each firehouse, mobile radios and portable radios. See Appendix B for tower locations. The hilltop stations are connected to the dispatch center by microwave radio equipment.

a. Fire Radio Frequencies

The county utilizes the following frequencies for radio traffic. Some departments will have additional out of county frequencies in their radios. Generally, these are departments that provide frequent mutual aid to other counties.

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Table 1 – Delaware County Fire Frequencies

Frequency	Purpose	Notes
45.88	County to County Frequency	Used between counties to communicate when mutual aid is needed from another county. This frequency is restricted to use by Dispatch Centers, County Fire Coordinators and State Fire Prevention & Control Units.
46.06	Primary Dispatch Frequency	Used as the primary frequency to dispatch emergency units. Units may also contact Fire Control on this frequency. This frequency is channel 1 on mobile and portable units. It IS NOT to be used by field units as an emergency scene frequency.
46.22	Primary Fireground Frequency	Known as truck to truck, this frequency is to be used by units operating on emergency scenes. This is a “statewide” frequency. Most apparatus in NYS has this frequency, so that they can communicate in the event of a large-scale incident that crosses county lines. This is generally known as channel 2. The consoles can transmit on channel 2, when necessary to reach command.
46.30	Secondary Fireground Frequency	This frequency is restricted to use in portable radios. It serves as a secondary on scene frequency. Department fire police units commonly utilize this frequency for traffic control. This frequency is not on the dispatch consoles.

In addition, several of the larger departments have their own frequencies.

Departments that have separate frequencies include:

Fire Department	Frequency
Franklin	46.42
Margaretville	46.16
Sidney	46.40
Walton	42.96
Delhi	154.145

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b. EMS Radio Frequencies

The ambulances throughout the county generally have both a low band radio and high band radio. The low band radio enables personnel to communicate with fire units and Fire Control. Generally they have channel 1, 2 and any departmental fire ground frequency. Some ambulances are also allowed to have other counties’ frequencies, as they provide frequent mutual aid, or travel through that county.

The high band radios are utilized to communicate with medical control (hospitals) while enroute to a facility or from an emergency scene.

Patient information and medical directions are transmitted over these frequencies. Patient information is not to be transmitted over the low band radio, unless the high band system is not operating.

County EMS units use the following frequencies when transmitting over the high band system:

Frequency	Purpose	Notes
155.340	Primary County Hospital Frequency	Used by the following hospitals (medical control): The Hospital (Sidney), Delaware Valley Hospital (Walton), O’Connor Hospital (Delhi), Margaretville Memorial Hospital, Bassett Hospital (Cooperstown)
155.400	Secondary County Hospital Frequency	Used by the following hospitals (medical control): Fox Hospital (Oneonta),
155.280	Hospital to Hospital Frequency	Used by Hospitals to communicate with one another via radio.
155.715	Statewide EMS Frequency	Used by EMS units during a large scale, multiple agency response anywhere in the state.
46.040	EMS Tactical Channel	Low band tactical channel

c. Commercial Ambulance Services

There currently is one commercial ambulance service operating in Delaware County – Cooperstown Medical Transport (CMT). Refer to attached protocol for proper contact and communication with CMT.

461.4250 Meridale Tower

463.5000 Utsayantha

464.600 Oneonta

463.325 Sidney

461.4250 Local

Hospital Communications

Communications between hospitals and the Delaware County EOC will primarily be performed by land line methods. If standard land line is unable to handle the volume or become inoperable, the Delaware County RACES program may be initiated to form a communications ring with area medical facilities as needed.

d. Law Enforcement

453.4750 UPD SUNY Delhi Campus

156.030 Delaware County Sheriffs Office

156.040 Delaware County DSS Special Investigations

Surrounding County Primary Communication Frequencies

46.100 Sullivan Fire

155.205 Sullivan EMS

46.440 Otsego Fire

46.220 Otsego Trucks

46.180 Schoharie Fire

155.220 Schoharie EMS

46.380 Chenango Fire

155.895 Green County

155.175 Ulster County

V. 911 SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Delaware County 911 system is located at NYSP Troop C Headquarters in Sidney New York. The 911 system is responsible for dispatching all Fire and EMS emergencies as well as all priority law complaints. Delaware County has a second PSAP available for dispatching during a time of

need. This Alternate dispatching facility is located at the PSB in Delhi. The alternate 911 Dispatch center is only used for failure of the primary 911 system. Co-located at the Alternate dispatch center is the Sheriff's office communications center and the 24 hour warning point for the Emergency Services Office.

VI. ALTERNATE COMMUNICATIONS

The potential exist for Delaware County to suffer a component failure or overflow for its current radio system. If this should occur Delaware County has facilitated a few plans to assist with the handling of these situations. First the problem will be attempted to be rectified without drastic change in operations. If the problem cannot be rectified within a timely fashion buy ten contracted radio maintenance staff, an activation of the amateur radio group (See Amateur Radio Annex for procedure) may occur to facilitate alternate communications. Other means of communications may be used as well, station manning with phone capability, cell phone use, or a request for state and other counties communications assets may be placed.

VII. GOVERNANCE

The Delaware County Department of Emergency Services will:

- Maintain and update the Communications Annex at regular intervals, or as critical updated information is identified.
- Disseminate updated public safety communications information to all participating agencies.
- Establish training requirements in support of the interoperable and emergency communications.
- Promote interoperable communications capabilities through trained communications personnel.
- Initiate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Agreements for interoperable communications as necessary.
- Promote regular interoperable equipment/solutions testing, assist agencies with test evaluations, and dissemination the results.
- Re-evaluate regional requirements as technology evolves and circumstances dictate.
- Review communications related SOPs created by the included agencies, to preclude conflicts or non-compliance with current standards or initiatives.

Public safety agencies utilizing the Delaware County communications system will retain the following rights and responsibilities:

- Where applicable, agencies will be responsible for consistently maintaining, testing, and exercising connectivity to interoperable communications.
- Agencies retain the right to decide when and where to participate in interoperable communications. For example, agencies will retain the right to accept or decline a patch to a gateway system to provide interoperable communications during an incident.

VIII. PRIORITIZATION AND SHARED USE OF REGIONAL INTEROPERABILITY ASSETS

In response to events or incidents which cross over political jurisdictions, there will potentially be competing demands and priorities for interoperable communications assets.

Until such time as Incident Command is established, the lead agency designee (i.e., communications supervisor/command personnel), in cooperation with assisting agencies, will have the authority to designate the use of interoperable assets. Once Incident Command has been established, Command Staff or Communication Unit Leaders (when designated) direct the further coordination and delegation of the interoperable communications assets assigned to the event or incident in question.

Agencies should judiciously activate needed interoperable assets so as to both effectively respond to the event and/or incident and also minimize any negative impact on surrounding agencies or jurisdictions. Specifically, interoperable communications should be attempted with the following order of operations in mind (subject to variability based on the agencies involved and the nature of the event/incident):

1. Leverage face-to-face communications wherever appropriate. For example, the co-location of all Command and General Staff at the incident command post (ICP) provides the best direct communications and reduces the demand on interoperability resources.
2. Employ local communications assets until such time as either those assets become taxed or inadequate based on the nature and/or scope of the incident.
3. If response agencies are users of a shared system, utilize that shared system to establish interoperable communications.
4. If response agencies operate on disparate systems, utilize shared or mutual aid channels to establish interoperable communications.
5. If response agencies do not share systems or channels, utilize a gateway solution to establish interoperable communications.
6. Where interoperable communications cannot otherwise be established between response agencies, utilize swap or cache radios to establish operable communications for responders.

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7. If no other method of interoperability can be established, relay communications through staff members.

When the same resources are requested for two or more incidents, resource assignments should be based on the priority levels listed below:

1. Disasters, large scale incidents, or extreme emergencies requiring mutual aid or interagency communications.
2. Incidents where imminent danger exists to life or property.
3. Incidents requiring the response of multiple agencies.
4. Pre-planned events requiring mutual aid or interagency communications.
5. Incidents involving a single agency where supplemental communications are needed for agency use.
6. Drills, tests and exercises.

In the event of multiple simultaneous incidents within the same priority level, the resources should be allocated with the following priorities in mind:

1. Incidents with the greatest level of exigency (e.g., greater threat to life or property, more immediate need, etc.) have priority over less exigent incidents.
2. Agencies with single/limited interoperable options have priority use of those options over agencies with multiple interoperable options.
3. When at all possible, agencies already using an interoperable asset during an event should not be redirected to another resource.

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