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**WASHTENAW COUNTY CENTRAL FIRE DISPATCH  
COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK**

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**GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The digital radios contain a number of talkgroups that can be useful for monitoring. Unfortunately they cannot be programmed for scan only. So we need to avoid broadcasting on other agencies dispatch talkgroups, some examples would be: AAPD DISP, METRO East and WEST, HVA D1 and D2. If you need to communicate with units from other agencies request an Interop Talkgroup and have that unit switch over or go through your dispatch center. You can also use 81Com if needed.

Since the automatic aid SOG defines the amount of manpower expected with each type of apparatus, it is undesirable to request an apparatus and manpower. This could lead to confusion between specific apparatus request and full assist. If you are requesting a Tanker for Mutual Aid use this format. "Central, Engine Sixteen Two request; a Tanker from Saline".

When covering another Departments area during Mutual Aid move ups, switch to their primary dispatch talkgroup.

Listen before broadcasting a message. If after a reasonable period of listening, the talkgroup appears to be clear, transmit your message.

A good way to remember the standard order of traffic is the phrase; "hey you it's me". Example; "Central", Rescue Seven Four arrival".

Do not monopolize the air. If lengthy transmissions are required, break the message every ten seconds to enable another calling party to broadcast.

Speak with an even voice and at a moderate speed. Be clear and concise. The MPSCS is digital and your voice is converted to digital and then converted to voice simulation. If you yell or have a very high tone or very low tone the system will be unable to translate it.

Do not announce training sessions over the air, except for emergency meetings where prior notice through other means is not practical.

Do not announce the time after each message. Departments should contact dispatch by telephone or computer to get their times.

Do not perform routine daily or weekly radio and pager equipment checks. Firefighters who believe that their radio equipment may be experiencing problems are encouraged to test individually with the dispatch center as necessary. You should first do radio test on your proprietary talkgroup in house. Then if necessary test with Dispatch.

When possible avoid unnecessary traffic on the main dispatch talkgroups, use other means of communications when you do not need Central involved. For example utilize pre-established response guidelines, or use your proprietary talkgroup to find out if anything is needed on scene.

Communications should be in plain English, brief and to the point. Use of codes is discouraged.

If possible, combine communications on behalf of other apparatus. As an example, if three apparatus arrive on the scene together, only one should notify dispatch of the arrival. Example: "Engine Twelve Four arrival with Engine Twelve Seven and Rescue Twelve Four"

Central shall be advised when a unit is in service and available for another response. The units could be still at the scene but available. Likewise, when the unit is "returning" it shall be assumed that resource is in service, complete, and released by command, unless advises otherwise.

Individual firefighters in their personal vehicles should consult their department policy on radio usage.

Radio messages sent to and from Central shall be repeated back, in paraphrased form. To reduce the possibility of misunderstanding a message, the use of "clear, 10-4, message received" and other similar terms should be replaced with a brief paraphrase of the message received.

Avoid creating extra transmission by calling Central, waiting for a response and then transmitting your message. Just proceed with your message. Prolonging your message increases the likelihood that your dispatcher will be distracted by other functions, and you will have to repeat your message.

Upon dispatch of any reported structure fire, Central will assign an Interop Talkgroup for that incident.

# **RADIO SYSTEMS, TALKGROUPS AND CHANNEL USAGE**

## **MICHIGAN PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (MPSCS)**

### **Fire Dispatch**

<b>81 FIRE 1</b>	Ann Arbor City Fire Department dispatch
<b>81 FIRE 2</b>	City of Ypsilanti Fire Department and Ypsilanti Township Fire Department dispatch
<b>81 FIRE 3</b>	Ann Arbor Township, Augusta, Dexter Area, Salem, Saline, Scio, Superior, Manchester and Northfield Fire Departments dispatch
<b>81 FIRE 4</b>	Pittsfield Township Fire Department dispatch
<b>81 FIRE 5</b>	Chelsea Fire Department dispatch (Future)
<b>81 FIRE 6</b>	Milan Fire Department dispatch (Future)

### **Interoperation Talkgroups**

Interoperation Talkgroups are designed to allow responders from multiple agencies the ability to communicate directly. Interop talkgroups can also be used to move events with higher radio traffic volume off the main dispatch talkgroups. These talkgroups are county based, not state wide. Any county agency may request assignment of one or more Interop Talkgroup(s) from their primary dispatch center. Your dispatch center may also assign an Interop for varies reasons including work load division. Consider using interop talkgroups during response to incidents involving multiple agencies, especially if searching for exact location.

<b>INTEROP 1</b>	Ann Arbor Police
<b>INTEROP 2 and INTEROP 3</b>	Washtenaw County Metro Dispatch
<b>INTEROP 4 and INTEROP 5</b>	Central Fire Dispatch and Huron Valley Ambulance
<b>INTEROP 6</b>	Pittsfield Township dispatch
<b>INTEROP 7</b>	Saline dispatch
<b>INTEROP 8</b>	Milan dispatch
<b>INTEROP 9</b>	Chelsea dispatch
<b>INTEROP 10</b>	Eastern Michigan University dispatch
<b>INTEROP 11 and INTEROP 12</b>	Open
<b>INTEROP 13</b>	Fire ground operations after the initiation of a mayday call
<b>INTEROP 14 and INTEROP 15</b>	Open

### **Proprietary Talkgroups**

These talkgroups are no longer called fire ground. They should be referred to by their alias such as Augusta FD. **AAFD, AA TWP FD, AUGUSTA FD, CHELSEA FD, DEXTER FD, MANCSTR FD, MILAN FIRE, NORTFLD FD, PITTS FD, SALEM FD, SALINE FD, SCIO FIRE, SUPER FIRE, YPSI FIRE YPSI TWP FD. 81 HAZ MAT and 81 TRT**

### County Wide Talkgroups

<b>81 COM</b>	Used between dispatch centers. If you are not on an active incident and have a need to communicate with a dispatch center it is permissible to use 81 Com
<b>81 WCRC 3</b>	County Roads
<b>81 EOC</b>	Washtenaw County Emergency Operations Center

### Neighboring County Talkgroups

<b>47 COM</b>	Livingston County Dispatch Centers
<b>47 FD 911</b>	Livingston County Fire Dispatch
<b>47 EMER 1, 47 EMER 2, 47 SPEV 1 and SPEV 2</b>	Similar to our Interop
<b>58 COM</b>	Monroe County Dispatch Centers
<b>58 F 911</b>	Monroe County Fire Dispatch
<b>58 EMER 1, through 58 EMER 5</b>	Similar to our Interop
<b>58 SPEV 1 and 58 SPEV 2</b>	Special Events Monroe County
<b>63 F911</b>	Oakland County patch to MPSCS System (Researching further.)
<b>33 MPSCS1 and 33 MPSCS2</b>	Ingham Central monitors these

### Medical Talkgroups

<b>AIR LZ 1 and AIR LZ 2</b>	Statewide for air ambulance to ground communications
<b>SURVIV FLT</b>	used for flight communications and ground to aircraft at the discretion of the pilot
<b>HVA D1</b>	Huron Valley Ambulance primary dispatch
<b>HVA D2</b>	Huron Valley Ambulance response support
<b>81 MRCC</b>	Medical Radio Control Center, HVA performs this function in the event of a mass causality incident. The purpose is to coordinate with area hospitals for patient transportation
<b>UM MD</b>	for medical direction from the doctor
<b>UM ER, UM MOTT ER, ST JOE ER, CHELSEA ER, SALINE ER, and VA ER</b>	EMS use for communicating report to the ER

### Law Enforcement Talkgroups

<b>AAPD DISP</b>	Ann Arbor Police Dispatch at Metro Dispatch
<b>METRO EAST</b>	Police at Metro Dispatch
<b>METRO WEST</b>	Washtenaw County Sheriff and Michigan State Police dispatch at Metro Dispatch
<b>PTPD</b>	Pittsfield Police
<b>81 POLICE 4</b>	Pittsfield Police Dispatch

**Statewide Talkgroups**

<b>81STATEWID</b>	Outside of area communications
<b>EVENT 01 through EVENT 30</b>	Activated and assigned by the (NCC).
<b>DYN RGRP</b>	NCC can put any talkgroup in this position
<b>STATEWIDE1 through STATEWIDE8</b>	MSP regional dispatch centers

**NATIONWIDE PUBLIC SAFETY INTERPRETATIONAL CHANNELS (NPSIC)**

<b>ICALL, ITAC1 through ITAC4</b>	Repeater capable
<b>ICALL TA, ITAC1 TA through ITAC4 TA</b>	Walkie talkie

**WASHTENAW COUNTY 800MHZ ANALOG SYSTEM**

Washtenaw County analog system remains in place and is one of our two backup systems.

**Backup Channels**

<b>W BACKUP F</b>	First backup for 81 FIRE 3
<b>W BACKUP G</b>	First backup for 81 FIRE 2

**Other Channels**

<b>W PS CALL</b>	Public safety call (no longer monitored)
<b>W TAC 1 through W TAC 9</b>	Washtenaw County tactical channels

**UNIVERSITY of MICHIGAN 800MHZ ANALOG SYSTEM**

**Backup Channels**

<b>UM BACKUP 7</b>	Ann Arbor Fire primary backup for 81 FIRE 1, 2 <sup>ND</sup> backup for other departments.
<b>UM BACKUP 12</b>	Pittsfield and Milan backup

**Other Channels**

<b>UM FIRE-MED 1 and UM FIRE-MED 2</b>	Fire and EMS use on campus as needed
<b>UM DPS EVT 1 through UM DPS EVT 4</b>	UofM event channels
<b>UM BACKUP 8</b>	HVA, Medical Control, Survival Flight and UofM events
<b>UM BACKUP 1</b>	Mutual Aid, 81 COM
<b>UM DPS DISP</b>	UofM Public Safety Dispatch

## **STANDARD RADIO TERMINOLOGY**

**Affirmative** Term used to indicate a "yes" answer.

**Arrival** Term used to indicate units have reached the scene. *Example: "Engine 1-1 arrival".* (Would indicate Engine 1-1 has arrived at the incident scene).

**Automatic Mutual Aid** Term for pre-designated mutual aid.

**Cancel** Term used to indicate a person or unit need no longer continue with their respective assignment. *Example: "Engine 1-1 you can cancel"* (Would indicate Engine 1-1 can cancel the response it was dispatched to).

**Can Handle** Indicates unit(s) at the scene can handle the incident. *Example: "Engine 1-1 can handle".* This can be followed by a disposition of additional units. *Example: "Engine 1-1 can handle, all other units can cancel"* (Would indicate that Engine 1-1 has sufficient personnel at the scene and they can handle the incident they were sent to).

**CPR in Progress** Term used to indicate that crews at the scene have initiated CPR on a patient.

**Disregard last message** Self explanatory.

**Dual Response** Term for Pre-designated response of a closer department to facilitate a reduced response time.

**Emergency Radio Traffic Only** Indicates the person broadcasting has some sort of need to limit all radio traffic to very emergent radio traffic only. This can only be rescinded by the person originally requesting or by the Incident Commander. *Example: "Central, "Engine 1-1, All Units Emergency Radio Traffic Only"* (This would indicate Engine 1-1 has some sort of emergency at their location and they have ordered all units to hold their non-priority radio traffic until the talkgroup is released by Engine 1-1.) This term could also be used by the Chief, another Officer or even by Central if so indicated.

**En route to the Hospital** Indicates that the designated unit is en route to the designated hospital.

**Fire Under Control** The fire is under control. *Example: "Central, Main Street Command, fire under control".*

**In Quarters** Term used to indicate that a unit is in a station.

**\*Intox** This term will be used to refer to an intoxicated person.

**In Service** Term used to indicate that a unit is available to respond to an alarm, may indicate that unit is out of quarters and available by radio. *Example: "Engine 1-1 in service for a detail",* (Which might indicate the unit will be in their assigned area, for some sort of task, available by radio); *"Engine 1-1 in service at the scene"* (Would indicate the specified unit is remaining at the scene but that it is available for another incident response).

**K by Protocol** Term used to indicate a patient meets specific criteria establish in the "Dead on Scene" protocol and CPR was not started or has been discontinued.

**Loud and Clear** Self explanatory.

**Move up** Indicates the desire to have a designated unit moved up to cover a vacant station or location. Example: “*Central, Main Street Command, requesting XYZ Fire Department be moved up with an Engine to cover ABC Station 1*”, (This would indicate that the Incident Commander is requesting Mutual Aid from XYZ Fire Department to move a staffed Engine to ABC Fire Departments Station 1 for coverage).

**Negative** Term used to indicate a "no" answer.

**Out of Service** Term used to indicate a unit is unable to respond to either their dispatched alarm or an additional alarm. A unit could be out of service for any number of reasons. Each Department will set their own standards as to what dictates a unit is in or out of service for response purposes.

**\*Priority 1** Indicates the units should respond with lights and siren operational, expediting as much as safely possible.

**\*Priority 2** This is an immediate response that allows the use of lights and sirens as necessary to arrive in a timely manner.

**\*Priority 3** Indicates the units should respond "normal traffic", obeying **all** traffic laws.

**Priority 4** Indicates the units should respond to their fire station, normal traffic. Example: “*Central, Main Street Command, Priority 4*” for Dexter. The priority 4 message should always be transmitted on VHF, digital dispatch, and the incident Interop Talkgroup by Central.

**\*10-13** Calling personnel need emergency assistance.

**\*10-37** Is suspect present? Commonly used to call out with suspect by PD.

**\*10-72** Dispatch calling to check on your security after activation of the emergency button.

**\*10-74** I am okay, emergency button activated in error.

**\*EDP** This term will be used to refer to an “Emotionally Disturbed Person”  
Intox – this term will be used to refer to an intoxicated person.

**Repeat** Self explanatory.

**Request** Term used to indicate you "want" something. Example: “*Central, Main Street Command, Requesting Detroit Edison to pull the meter*”.

**Respond to** Term used to indicate a unit needs to respond to a location for an incident in progress. Example: “*Engine 1-1, respond to 123 Main Street for a House Fire*”. Predefined priority levels will be set by each department as per their SOP's.

**“X” Before** Your designator indicates that you have an urgent / emergent problem and need Police to respond, without alert parties on scene.

**Responding to....** Term used to indicate someone or an apparatus is en route to their dispatched location. The unit should repeat where it is responding to. Example: “*Central, Engine 1-1 responding to 123 Main Street*”, (Would indicate that Engine 1-1 received the order to respond to an incident at 123 Main Street).

**Resume Normal Radio Traffic.** Used to rescind the “Emergency Radio Traffic” order. This can only be rescinded by the person originally requesting or by the Incident Commander.



**Returning** Term used to indicate apparatus and/or personnel are complete with assignment and are en route to their assigned quarters. It will be assumed that the unit is “in service” (available) unless the unit indicates otherwise. It will also be assumed the unit is en route to their assigned station unless indicated otherwise by the unit. Example: “Engine 1-1 returning”, (Would indicate that Engine 1-1 is clear from the incident, in service available for another incident, and returning to their assigned fire station); “*Engine 1-1 returning, en route to Station 4*”, (Would indicate that Engine 1-1 is clear from the incident scene and en route to Station number 4 for some reason).

**Stand By** Hold your radio traffic until told otherwise by the person advising you to “stand by”.

**Stop Transmitting** Self explanatory.

**Unreadable** Used when the signal received is not clear. In most cases, try to add the specific trouble. Example: “*Central, Main Street Command, you are unreadable, check your background noise*” (Would indicate that there is a lot of back ground noise on the radio which is interfering with your radio traffic).

**What is your Location** Self explanatory.

**Working Fire** Indicates confirmation of fire conditions that require mitigation.

**Talkgroup** Term for how the digital system groups users, formally known as channel or frequency.

\*Recommended codes for use by all agencies per the 800 MHz Consortium.

**PHONETIC ALPHABET**

A - Adam	E - Edward	I - Ida	M - Mary	Q - Queen	U - Union	Y - Yellow
B - Boy	F - Frank	J - John	N - Nora	R - Robert	V - Victor	Z - Zebra
C - Charles	G - George	K - King	O - Ocean	S - Sam	W - William	
D - David	H - Henry	L - Lincoln	P - Paul	T - Tom	X - X-ray	

## RADIO DESIGNATORS

The following standardized radio designator numbering scheme is adopted for Departments in the Washtenaw Area Mutual Aid Association.

### *Normal Operations for Apparatus:*

1<sup>st</sup> Designator type  
2<sup>nd</sup> Department base number  
3<sup>rd</sup> Unit designator

Example:        Engine - 9 - 1  
                  (1<sup>st</sup>)    (2<sup>nd</sup>) (3<sup>rd</sup>)

### *Normal Operations for Chiefs:*

1<sup>st</sup> Designator type  
2<sup>nd</sup> Department base number

Example:        Chief - 12  
                  (1<sup>st</sup>)    (2<sup>nd</sup>)

### *Normal Operations for Officers and other Personal:*

1<sup>st</sup> Department base number  
2<sup>nd</sup> Designator type  
3<sup>rd</sup> Unit designator

Example:        3 - S - 1  
                  (1<sup>st</sup>) (2<sup>nd</sup>) (3<sup>rd</sup>)

Apparatus numerical can be identical for more than one apparatus within a department, as long as the apparatus type is different. Example: A department may have Engine 8-1 as well as Tanker 8-1.

Refer to the Department Base Number as one number. Example: Engine 16-1 should be broadcast as "Engine Sixteen One" and not "Engine one six one". Do not use zeros in the identifier.

All Chiefs shall be identified as "Chief" followed by the Department Base Number. Example "Chief 12" would be the Fire Chief for Department 12. There will only be one Chief 12, see additional Chiefs below.

Any additional Chiefs or Assistant Chiefs shall be identified as "Chief" followed by the Department Base Number, followed by a number. Example "Chief 12-2" (Chief-Twelve-Two)

The Command Officers are identified by the Department Base Number, followed by the Officer abbreviation ("C" for Captain, "L" for Lieutenant and "S" for Sergeant), followed by a number. Example 12-C-1 "Twelve-C-One" or 14-L-2 "Fourteen-L-Two".

Firefighters shall be identified by the Department Base Number, followed by the Firefighter abbreviation "F", followed by the firefighter's number assigned to him/her. Example: 12-F-26 (Twelve-F-Twenty six).

Radio designators for other divisions might include, "Mechanic", "Fire Prevention" as a couple of examples, may also be used where appropriate. The same format should be maintained.

Fire Stations shall be identified as "Base" followed by the department base number, followed by the station number if necessary. Example "Base 11-2" (Base Eleven-Two).

Ann Arbor FD: Hazmat 1-1 (Spartan truck), Hazmat 1-2 (van and decon trailer).

Superior Township FD: Hazmat 11-1 (semi trailer/foam).

Ypsilanti City FD: Hazmat 2-1 (box truck and trailer).

### **From Washtenaw 800 MHZ Consortium**

Because agencies county-wide use differing types of call signs (some with badge numbers, some with car numbers, and some with area designators) it was proposed that when calling another dispatch center other than one's own, the calling person will precede their normal call sign with the agency name. Thus, Saline Police unit 738, when calling in to Ann Arbor dispatch would identify themselves as "Saline Police 738".

#### *Interoperation Talkgroups or out of County:*

1<sup>st</sup> Agency Name  
2<sup>nd</sup> Designator type1

3<sup>rd</sup> Unit designator

Example: Manchester Fire - Tanker - 1  
(1<sup>st</sup>) (2<sup>nd</sup>) (3<sup>rd</sup>)

The names used for each letter of the alphabet should always be given as: "A-Adam", "B-Boy", not as "A as in Adam" or "B as in Boy". The phonetic alphabet should only be used when necessary.

### **Apparatus Descriptions**

**Air** This is a specialized vehicle which carries a cascade or compressor system onboard with capability of filling a large number of SCBA bottles.

**BC** Battalion Chief vehicle for command response.

**Brush** A 4-wheel drive vehicle capable of off-road fire fighting, i.e. brush, grass, etc. These apparatus are basically set up to go where its larger predecessor the Engine or Pumper may not be able to go. The Brush trucks normally carry 50-200 gallons of water and normally have small pumps onboard. They also carry typical grass and brush fire fighting equipment.

**Engine** Engines are required to have a water pumping capacity of at least 1000 gallons per minute.

**Echo Unit** Medical response unit with a single Paramedic and advanced life support equipment.

<b><u>Foam</u></b>	This designation is used for the Mutual Aid Foam Trailer or for any other unit designed specifically to transport fire fighting foam and associated appliances and equipment. The Mutual Aid Foam trailer is set up to carry a large amount of fire fighting foam, which can be used to help extinguish fires involving petroleum and alcohol products.
<b><u>Hazmat</u></b>	This is a specialized vehicle primarily used to transport hazardous materials equipment. Normally a special call type unit, which is kept in reserve until needed.
<b><u>Ladder</u></b>	A Ladder carries multiple ground ladders along with a mechanical ladder that is permanently mounted to the apparatus. A Ladder does not normally have a bucket. Used for elevated waterways, access and rescue functions.
<b><u>Pumper</u></b>	A Pumper is an apparatus with a minimum 500gpm pump, but less than 1000gpm. A Pumper is like a small version of an Engine, usually the Pumpers do not carry all of the amenities of its larger counterpart. Sometimes a Pumper is used when the larger Engine cannot access a location.
<b><u>Rescue</u></b>	A Rescue is an apparatus specifically set up to carry basic life saving equipment. It may also carry extrication equipment as well as other specialized rescue equipment. Most Rescues are not designed to transport patients. Rescues are normally smaller vehicles but they do not have to be, some are 4 wheel drive allowing access to difficult terrain.
<b><u>Squirt</u></b>	A Squirt has a 50-75 foot boom with a ladder attached to it. The apparatus also has a pump and water onboard. It is set up basically the same as an Engine with an extending elevating boom with a nozzle attached. This type of unit is normally not used to rescue civilians but could be, the boom is more designed to be used to fight fire with.
<b><u>SRU</u></b>	A SRU is a unit, which could be a truck or trailer that is designed to transport specialized or technical equipment.
<b><u>TRT</u></b>	This is a specialized apparatus primarily used to transport technical rescue mitigation equipment. This is normally a special call type unit, which is kept in reserve until needed.
<b><u>Tanker</u></b>	Carry a minimum of 1000 gallons of water. Some Engines can also be classified as Tankers if they have 1000+ gallons of water on board, the designation is up to the local department.
<b><u>Tower</u></b>	A "Tower" would be considered an apparatus which is very similar to a Ladder, with the exception that the end of the Ladder or extending boom has a partially enclosed basket attached. A Tower also carries a full compliment of ground ladders. A Tower may or may not have a pump onboard and it may or may not carry water.
<b><u>Utility</u></b>	A general use apparatus, with or without a pump. A Utility may carry various types of specialized equipment.