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To: Municipal, County and Tribal Officials with Agencies Using Public Safety Radio Communications

From: Keith Kesler, NW-Regional SCIP Implementation Council Chairman and Tad Matheson, NW Regional SCIP Implementation Coordinator

Date: December 14, 2010

Subject: FCC and Wisconsin Deadlines for Narrowbanding of Public Safety Radio Equipment

**This is an urgent communication that requires your immediate attention.**

To take advantage of technology advances and to promote better spectrum efficiency for radio communications, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has ordered changes to public safety radio operations that will affect your community. By January 1, 2013, as soon as the clock strikes midnight, all radios operating in the Public Safety license pool must begin to operate on narrow-band frequencies. This means that local communities must take immediate action to ensure continued radio communications and avoid federal fines.

Operators that do not meet the narrowbanding deadline will be in violation of FCC regulations and subject to actions by the FCC. In summary:

**As of January 1, 2013 most licenses for VHF or UHF systems operating 25 KHz frequencies will no longer be valid.** The FCC has ordered that all local and state public safety licensees operating at this frequency modify their existing licenses and reprogram radio equipment to operate on narrowband channels (12.5 KHz). If equipment can't be reprogrammed to narrowband operations, it must be replaced. Agencies that fail to convert for narrowband operations will lose their FCC license *and* risk fines of up to \$10,000 per day.

In anticipation of the federal deadline, **Wisconsin will modify its FCC licenses for statewide mutual aid channels to narrowband during 2011.** Users of these statewide channels should prepare their radios for narrowband operations **between April and November 2011.** Channels affected by this conversion include: EMS A, EMS B, EMS C, FG BLUE, FG RED, FG WHITE, IFERN, MARC1, MARC2, MARC3, MARC4, NATSAR, POINT, WEM CAR and WISPERN. All radio units (local, state, or tribal) using these channels will need to be reprogrammed or replaced during this period to ensure reliable communications using statewide mutual aid channels.

Public safety agencies that use their local VHF or UHF system for both mutual aid *and* day-to-day operations will need to **carefully coordinate the conversion to narrowband with neighboring jurisdictions** to minimize disruptions to local operations and regional mutual aid communications.

At our December 1, 2010 NW-Regional SCIP Implementation Council meeting a recommendation was made to comply with the Wisconsin statewide mutual aid channel narrowband deadline. **The Council has chosen the month of September 2011 to convert the statewide mutual aid channels to narrowband**

**operations.** Additional plans will be made later to comply with the FCC narrowbanding of all frequencies by the deadline of January 1, 2013.

For additional information or questions you may contact Tad or I or your local emergency service leaders about the importance of narrowbanding and radio interoperability. **We hope we can have your support in making this transition go smoothly.**

Sincerely,

Keith Kesler  
NW-Regional SCIP Implementation Council Chairman  
1316 N 14th Street Superior, WI 54880  
715-395-1391  
keslerk@ci.superior.wi.us

Tad Matheson  
NW-Regional SCIP Implementation Coordinator  
403 14<sup>th</sup> Ave East, Superior, WI  
715-398-7324  
Hatzad@chartermi.net