

Emergency Medical Services Communication System (EMSCOM) News

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A couple of weeks ago I attended the Statewide Interoperability Communications Working Group (SICWG) General Meeting in Albuquerque. The two day event was put on by the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), their contractors, and core members of the SICWG, and included briefings, orientations and breakout sessions that were informative and helpful.

Although I have attended one of these general meetings before (last year as a brand new State employee), there was a little more excitement with this meeting due to the information that was presented on a couple of the hot topics for EMSCOM users;

- Radio Standards
- Radio Narrow Band Implementation

Radio Standards

The DHSEM and SICWG Core Group have presented their Minimum Standards for Field Radios. This is the standard for all new portable and mobile radios operating on the EMSCOM system:

- 128 Channels
- Minimum of 25 channels reserved for NM interoperable frequencies
- 8 character alpha numeric display
- MDC 1200 signaling in & out (or equivalent optional)
- 2 tone sequential paging on receive (or equivalent optional)
- Narrow band 12.5 compatible
- Mil Std. 810 part c, d, & e
- Portable- Minimum 3 watts
- Mobile- UHF & VHF Minimum 35 watts or per FCC license
- Mobile- 800 MHz @ 15 watts or per FCC license
- High performance batteries
- New digital system must be P25 compliant

Although the minimum standard for hospital base stations was not included, we will post that standard on the EMS Bureau web page in the near future.

Narrow Band Implementation Strategy

One of the presentations on day two of the General Meeting was put on by Mike Scales, a core member of the SICWG. His presentation “FCC Mandated Transition to Narrower Band Channels” was of particular interest due to the January 2013 compliance date set by the FCC for all Public Safety radios in the VHF and UHF frequencies below 512MHz.

What this means for EMSCOM radio users is that by January 1st 2013, all radios on the EMSCOM system must be up and operating on the new narrow band frequencies. This mandate may require “new” radios that can operate on the new 12.5 KHz channel spacing.

In addition to possible new radios, all FCC licensed base stations and repeaters must be re-licensed for the new narrowband frequencies. Those base stations and repeaters under State of New Mexico FCC license will be taken care of by the State. Individual license holders will be responsible for their own license. Right now you can update your existing license, add the Narrowband component and save some money if done by the end of the year.

This information (and a lot more) can be found on the DHSEM web site

(www.nmdhsem.org)

Under the “Navigation” menu select “Communications” and follow that link to the SICWG page. There will be more information concerning the narrowband mandate and other topics on the EMS Bureau web page (www.nmems.org) in the near future.

Thanks and stay safe.