

Operating Guideline # 1001

Radio Channel Selection

September 17, 2019



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to establish guidelines for the use of the primary station radio channels, to describe the initial radio report to be communicated by the first arriving officer at all emergency incidents and to provide general instructions for the arrival of additional units.

ISSUE/RATIONALE:

The first few minutes of offensive fire ground operations can often dictate the next several hours of activity. A consistent, timely and accurate initial report by the first arriving unit “sets the stage” for all other responding fire crews – the initial officer must paint a verbal description of the situation being confronted so that other crews can prepare to support the initial crew with appropriate and efficient fire ground actions.

GUIDELINE:

1. Every fire department apparatus that responds to an incident will notify dispatch by radio that they are responding using MLFD channel.
2. While responding, all units will advise other units of any observations relating to the emergency e.g. obstructions to traffic, road conditions etc.
3. All apparatus will report to dispatch upon arrival. The first member with a radio or officer on scene will transmit a SITREP (situation report).
4. All units on arrival shall remain on the primary radio channel unless directed by Command to a different channel. Generally, primary fire ground operations should be maintained on the primary radio channel (i.e. – fire attack, search & rescue, ventilation, roof operations etc.) while secondary support activities (i.e. - water sector activities, air support & communication with MNR or other support agencies) can be assigned to other radio channels to avoid radio “clutter”. The Incident Commander must be in a position to directly monitor all radio channels or dedicate an aide whose responsibility it will be to monitor secondary radio channels and report directly to the Incident Commander any radio transmission of a critical or urgent nature.

Changing Repeaters/Channels

5. Apparatus shall use the MLFD channel when responding to alarms within their own coverage area. Should an apparatus or task group or sector be assigned to another Tactical channel, the group, sector, or apparatus shall change channel to the designated frequency. As part of the first transmission made after the switch, the apparatus/group/sector shall include the statement that the apparatus/group/task is on the channel.
(For example Pumper 6 is assigned fire attack at the C side of the Bala Arena and instructed to move to TAC 1 as part of an emergency response. As part of its first transmission after the switch Pumper 6 will announce that it is operating on TAC 1. “Command, Pumper 6 assuming attack on C side, now on TAC One.”)
6. There may be instances due to geography or other conditions where radio communications may be better using a different repeater than that which normally covers the area. In these instances the operating Units or portable radios should make use of the better coverage provided by the different repeater. Units making the change shall broadcast

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the change in repeater usage so that Dispatch and other responding members can monitor the change.

Mutual Aid

7. When responding to calls for mutual aid in neighbouring municipalities, the responding apparatus shall report their response to dispatch in the normal manner. Upon approaching the municipal border the Apparatus(s) shall inform dispatch of their switching frequencies onto the host department's radio channel. The apparatus shall then monitor the host frequency for a clear channel and then contact the host department's dispatch giving the Apparatus's location, apparatus type and availability.

8. Upon being released from the mutual aid call, the returning Apparatus(s) shall switch to a MLFD frequency at the municipal border and contact Muskoka Lakes Fire Dispatch advising of their status and availability.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all Emergency Operations Division staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

DEFINITIONS:

N/A

REFERENCES:

N/A