

State of Wisconsin

Public Safety Radio Channel Naming Standards

Introduction

Public safety agencies in the State of Wisconsin recognize that inter-discipline, inter-agency cooperation and coordination is vital to the rapid and efficient response to critical incidents that affect our citizens. The cornerstone of any response is the ability to communicate effectively.

Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidance and establish standards for channel names that are logical, understandable and consistent across jurisdictions and disciplines. These standards would bring uniformity to public safety radio systems at the agency and county shared channel levels and would be similar to the channel nomenclature that has been established at the regional, state and federal mutual aid levels.

A uniform format for channel names will promote improved understanding and usage of operable and interoperable communications pathways by enabling standardized training curriculums for first-line emergency responders; consistent tactical interoperable communication plan (TICP) development; facilitate the implementation of incident communication plans during large scale, multi-agency emergency situations; and promote the development of region-wide programming templates to inter - connect differing radio systems through various means such as patches, gateways and other emerging technologies.

Standard Channel Naming Format

For purposes of this directive, the ten character channel nomenclature will be the default standard display format. The channel naming structure would be adjusted for smaller radio displays first by eliminating any {space} placeholders, then shortening the APCO/NPSTC purpose codes (if applicable) and finally eliminating the two-digit county code at the agency channel naming level.

Radios that have more than the ten character display may include other information in the channel name provided the information is not inconsistent with the standards established by this guidance. This standard would be applied consistently across all public safety frequencies licensed by Wisconsin agencies and jurisdictions.

Agency Level Radio Channel Naming Standard

The format for the 10 character radio display is shown below.

County Code	{space}	Agency Code	Function/Discipline Code Channel number/modifier
1 st – 2 nd digits	3 rd digit	4 th – 5 th digits	6 th – 10 th digits

Characters 1 - 2

- Two letter county codes derived from the TIME System

Character 3

- {Space}. This is an optional placeholder intended to improve readability.

Characters 4 – 5

- Two letter agency code derived from the TIME System terminal mnemonic.

Characters 6 – 10

- The 1st two or three characters reflects the agency function/discipline based upon the following codes:
 - SO – Sheriff's Office
 - PD – Police Department
 - FD – Fire Department
 - PH – Public Health
 - DPW (PW) – Dept. of Public Works
 - HWY (HY) – Highway Department
 - EM – Emergency Management
 - MED – Emergency Medical Services
 - DA – District Attorney
- The remaining characters will be used to indicate a channel number or other appropriate modifier. A {space} placeholder may be inserted after the agency function/discipline code for readability.
- All agencies will identify their agency's primary communications/dispatch channel using the modifier "DISP" or "DIS". Large agencies with multiple dispatching channels should add a number after the modifier as appropriate.

- A “D” for Direct (or talk around) on a simplex (non-repeated) channel.
- Other channel modifiers may include the repeater name/location or other unique identifiers based on specific local needs. Agencies may incorporate the APCO/NPSTC definitions as part of their local channel naming conventions.

Examples:

Cedarburg Police Department Dispatch Channel would be:	OZCEPDDISP
Janesville Dept. of Public Works Channel 2 would be:	RO JVDPW 2
Milwaukee Police Department Dispatch Channel 2 would be:	MCMWPDDIS2
Wausau Fire Department Channel 3 talk-around would be:	MNWSFD3D
Superior Police Department tactical channel 1 would be:	DGSUPDTAC1
Vilas County Fire channel repeater at Phelps would be:	VIFIRPHE

County Level Shared/Interoperable Channel Naming Standard

County Code	{space}	Channel Use Designator Channel number/modifier
1 st - 2 nd digits	3 rd digit	4 th – 10 th digits

Characters 1 - 2

- Two letter county codes derived from the TIME System

Character 3

- {Space}. This is an optional placeholder intended to improve readability.

Characters 4 – 10

The channel use designators signify the primary purpose of operations on the channel as defined by APCO/NPSTC ANS 1.104.1-2010 and modified for use in Wisconsin.

Large Character Display Format	Small Character Display Format	Definition
CALL	CAL	Channel is for purpose of interoperability calling (hailing) or for use during a vehicle pursuit or other dynamic emergency incident in which there is likelihood that the incident will cross-jurisdictional boundaries.(See special note below).
DISP	DIS	Modifier used to identify the agency’s primary communications/dispatch channel(s).

FIRE	FIR	Primarily used for incident communications by fire services.
IFERN	IFRN	Primarily used for incident communications by fire services operating under the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).
GTAC	GTC	Primarily used for communications between public safety entities and eligible non-government organizations.
LAW	LAW	Primarily used for incident communications by law enforcement agencies.
MED	MED	Primarily used for incident communications by emergency medical services.
TAC	TAC	Primarily used for communications by any public safety agency. Generally incident-based and not used for wide-area communications.
COMND	CMD	Primarily used for interdisciplinary incident command level communications.
TRVL	TRV	Primarily used for communications by any public safety eligible entity to coordinate travel when responding to/from an incident outside of an agency's own jurisdiction.
COM	COM	Primarily used as common channel for general non-incident specific communications.
PAG	PAG	Primarily used for paging system communications.

Special Note – Call/Hailing Channel

Every county level radio system will designate a channel/talkgroup as a dedicated Calling (hailing) channel used to establish an initial point of contact for interagency/inter-discipline communications using the following format:

County Code	Channel Use Designator
1 st - 2 nd digits	CALL

Examples:

Kenosha County would be: **KECALL**
 Jackson County would be: **JACALL**
 Vilas County would be: **VICALL**

Individual agencies may also establish a distinct call/hailing channel/talkgroup due to its size, geographic location or other unique circumstances utilizing the following format:

County Code	4 digit Agency/Function Code	Channel Use Designator
1 st - 2 nd digits	AA/FF	CALL

Examples:

Milwaukee Police Department would be: **MCMWPDCALL**
Madison Police Department would be: **DAMAPDCALL**
Green Bay Police Department would be: **BRGBPDCALL**

Channel Configuration Recommendations

With the increasing channel capacity of mobile and portable radios that contain a multitude of zones or banks, careful consideration should be given to the logical grouping of channels by function or frequency of use by the primary first line users.

Recognizing the unique regional, function/discipline and individual agency communications requirements, along with the vast array of radio makes and models, it would be impossible to establish specific standards.

The following list is general bank/zone configuration considerations (prioritized):

1. Agency channels and high priority/frequently used/scanned non-agency channels
2. County/proprietary radio system interoperable channels and additional non-agency channels.
3. State of Wisconsin mutual aid channels that do not have a national counterpart.
4. National mutual aid channels.

For additional information on usage and implementation of state and national interoperable channels, refer to the current State of Wisconsin Plan for Mutual Aid Communications Frequencies, (as referred to as "Annex K").