

ARMER PARTICIPATION STEP BY STEP FOR REGIONAL USERS

Definitions

“Full participant” means an entity whose primary voice communications are fully integrated into the ARMER backbone.

“Limited participant” means an entity whose primary voice communications are integrated with the ARMER system via patches, audio gateways, or other means.

“Interoperability participant” means an entity who desires access to the ARMER system, via subscriber equipment, for purposes of interoperability and not as the entity’s primary voice communication system. Interoperability participants may be authorized to maintain and operate subscriber equipment programmed to talk groups in accordance with the standards adopted by the SRB.

Full Participation

The process begins when an entity (county, city, ems provider, etc.) determines that it wishes to become a full or limited participant on the ARMER system. The desire to become a participant is generally expressed in the form a board or council resolution.

The following procedure is from the perspective of a county or a city who is a member of a Regional Radio Board. If an entity is within a county or city who is a member of the Regional Radio Board, it should work through its county or city and be incorporated into their participation plan and contract.

Step 1. CREATE A PLAN

After electing to become a full or limited participant, develop a design plan that is compatible with the plan of the Regional Radio Board (RRB), and with the plan adopted by the Statewide Radio Board (SRB). Many counties have already adopted plans, and so examples are available from Mn/DOT, the counties, or from the various consultants that prepare them.

Items that should be in the plan include:

- o Site additions
- o Channel additions
- o Equipment additions
- o Frequency plan
- o Subscriber radios
- o Talk groups
- o Prelim Fleet Map
- o PSAP consoles
- o PSAP logging
- o ATIA data requirements
- o Contingency plans
- o Backup equipment
- o Connectivity
- o System administration
- o Alarm & monitoring
- o Training plan
- o Cut over plan
- o Schedule
- o Interop plan
- o Maintenance
- o Other local elements

Mn/DOT radio engineers are available to review and comment on elements of your plan or to provide some technical assistance so that your plan can be formally approved later in the process without delay.

Step 2. MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST

Request participation by submitting the design plan, and a letter requesting participation, to the RRB.

Step 3. GET THE PLAN APPROVED BY THE REGION

The RRB, typically through its Advisory Committee (RAC) determines whether the requesting entity's plan is consistent with regional and statewide plans. The RRB may choose to resolve inconsistencies by amending its plan, suggesting changes to regional or statewide plans, or seeking adjustments to the requesting entity's proposal. The RRB may not approve plans where there is an inconsistency between regional and statewide plans and the requesting entity's plan.

Step 4. GET THE PLAN APPROVED BY MN/DOT

Once your plan is found to be consistent with regional and statewide plans, the RRB may approve it and submit it to MnDOT for review. MnDOT will review your plan to ensure that these requirements are met:

1. The plan accurately reflects any impacts on the ARMER system that would result from its implementation.
2. The plan is consistent with the capacity and operational constraints of the ARMER system.
3. The plan is consistent with the currently adopted plan and standards of the SRB

Step 5a. CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR PLAN IS APPROVED

If Mn/DOT determines that your plan meets these requirements, Mn/DOT approves the plan, and notifies the SRB that your plan has been approved. No SRB action is required for plans approved by MnDOT. (Note: until such time as there are Regional Plans in place, participation plans are being approved by the SRB.)

Step 5b. SORRY, YOUR PLAN DOES NOT MEET REQUIREMENTS

If MnDOT determines that your plan does not meet these requirements, Mn/DOT will communicate its objections to you, and submit the plan and its assessment to the Operations and Technical Committee. The Operations and Technical Committee shall review the plan and assessment, and make a recommendation to the SRB, who shall have final authority over acceptance of the plan.

Step 6. CONTRACT FOR PARTICIPATION

Each participant needs a three-party contract with the RRB and Mn/DOT for participation in the ARMER system. All agreements provide for accountability for technical and operational standards to MnDOT and SRB. The agreement also provides legal accountability to Mn/DOT for local use of Mn/DOT licensed frequencies.

Request an agreement template from Mn/DOT. Contracts typically fall into one of three categories.

1. Integrated Local Subsystem – Occurs when a local agency constructs local enhancements to the backbone and fully integrates those tower sites with the state’s ARMER backbone. In addition to participation, the agreement defines ownership, maintenance, and financial responsibilities for the state and local agency for the local towers and added equipment.
2. Added Capacity – Occurs when a local agency requires additional capacity to accommodate the increase in radio traffic caused by local users. In addition to participation, the agreement defines ownership, maintenance, and financial responsibilities for the state and local agency for the added channel equipment.
3. Radio User Only – Occurs when a local agency does not need to add any infrastructure for capacity or coverage, but can operate within the capacity provided on the backbone for state and regional users. The agreement will require that the local agency add capacity at its own expense if future analysis shows that local radio traffic is overtaking the system.

Step 7. COMPLETE THE AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

Complete the agreement template by filling in the blanks, adding equipment lists, and other county specific attachments to your agreement.

Step 8. RETURN THE AGREEMENT TO MN/DOT.

Mn/DOT will add its information and review your entire agreement and return it to you for signature.

Step 9. SIGN THE AGREEMENT

Have the appropriate county or city officials review the agreement. The agreement must be approved by the county board or city council and then signed by the appropriate city or county representative.

A resolution authorizing the agreement OR a copy of the approved meeting minutes are required. The resolution or minutes should be appropriately attested to or stamped with the city or county seal. A sample resolution is attached.

Forward the signed agreement and resolution or minutes to the RRB.

Step 10. RRB SIGNS THE AGREEMENT

The RRB or designated committee will review your agreement, and if acceptable, recommend its approval to the Board. The RRB chair or designated representative signs your agreement for the Region and will forward your agreement to Mn/DOT.

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A copy of a resolution authorizing the agreement OR a copy of the approved meeting minutes are required. If approved minutes are not available in a timely manner, the Board's Recording Secretary may submit the unapproved minutes.

Forward the signed agreement and the resolution and/or minutes from both the county and the RRB to Mn/DOT's Office of Electronic Communications, ATTN: Tim Lee.

Step 11. MN/DOT SIGNS THE AGREEMENT

State officials sign your agreement and return copies of the agreement to you and the Region.

Step 12. TURN THE RADIOS ON

Mn/DOT OEC system administrators and engineers will work with you to activate your radios and integrate any backbone equipment onto the system.

Step 13. KEEP YOUR PLAN UP TO DATE

Changes you make to the ARMER system may affect other participants and must be reviewed for performance or cost impacts by system administrators.

ASK QUESTIONS

Please contact the Office of Electronic Communications at Mn/DOT if you have any questions about contracting for participation or local plan approval.

- ▲ Tim Lee, Assistant Dir. and ARMER Manager, tim.lee@dot.state.mn.us
- ▲ Mark Gieseke, Electronic Comm. Dir., mark.gieseke@dot.state.mn.us
- ▲ James Mohn, Chief Engineer, james.mohn@dot.state.mn.us

ATTACHMENT 1 – SAMPLE RESOLUTION

City Of __
or
County Of _____
or

_____ **Regional Radio Board**

RESOLUTION

IT IS RESOLVED that the [City] [County] [Regional Radio Board] enter into Mn/DOT Agreement No. _____ with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation for the purpose of [designing] [procuring] [constructing] operating upon the ARMER backbone system.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Mayor, Board Chair] is authorized to execute the Agreement and any amendments to the Agreement.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 200__.

Attest:

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____