

## **Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response Standards, Protocols, Procedures**

Document Section 3	<b>Interoperability Guidelines</b>	<b>Status:</b> Complete
State Standard Number	<b>3.35.0</b>	
Standard Title	<b>National Weather Service ARMER Radio Operations</b>	
Date Established	<b>1/13/2013</b>	<b>SECB Approval:</b> 1/24/2013
Replaces Document Dated		
Date Revised		

### **1. Purpose or Objective**

The purpose of this standard is to define the ARMER talkgroups and procedures to be used by the National Weather Service (NWS) offices that serve the various ARMER regions of the state for NWS to county and local agency communications during severe weather events.

### **2. Technical Background**

#### **▪ Capabilities**

All NWS Offices that serve an area of the state, with the exception of Aberdeen, South Dakota, have been issued a minimum of one ARMER control station or portable radio.

This standard establishes talkgroups for the use of NWS offices to communicate with numerous local warning points, such as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs), or other designated locations across the state during severe weather events or other emergency incidents where the National Weather Service's aid may be requested.

The NWS offices are authorized to use statewide talkgroups created specifically for them, as well as STAC 1-4 and any of the regional ARMER interoperability talkgroups, as necessary. The statewide talkgroup, SEMTAC, is also programmed in the control stations or radios to enable communications with state and local emergency managers, as directed by Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM).

#### **▪ Constraints**

Some counties may not have the capacity available in their PSAP or EOC consoles to add NWS dedicated talkgroups that serve their counties. These counties may choose to communicate with NWS Chanhassen via an assigned state or regional talkgroup that will be assigned by the Minnesota State Patrol (MSP), as specified in Metro and Central Standard number 3.35.0.

### **3. Operational Context**

The seven ARMER regions are served by different and multiple NWS Offices and MSP Districts. The service regions of the NWS Offices do not align with the ARMER regions or with the MSP Districts. In addition, counties have differing capabilities and needs depending upon their system and equipment. As a result, the “Normal Watch/Warning Activations” procedure will be standardized across the state. However, talkgroup organization and utilization for each event will differ on an ARMER regional basis, as described under Recommended Procedures. It is important that every county understand this standard as it applies to them and their neighbors, especially if the neighboring county is in a different ARMER or NWS region and has a different procedure.

Minnesota is served by six National Weather Service offices:

- Sioux Falls, SD
- Aberdeen, SD
- Grand Forks, ND
- Duluth, MN
- Chanhassen, MN
- La Crosse, WI

Note: See maps on page 4 for counties served by NWS, MSP, and ARMER regions.

A dedicated, statewide talkgroup will be created for each NWS office. NWS offices may have dedicated talkgroups of adjacent NWS offices programmed into their ARMER control stations and/or radios to support each other in the event of a catastrophic failure of any NWS office. NWS dedicated talkgroups may be programmed in local PSAP consoles, EOC consoles, control stations, and Minnesota State Patrol consoles. NWS dedicated talkgroups are not allowed to be programmed into subscriber units utilized in the field. NWS offices will generally conduct their county communications via their dedicated talkgroup, except in the ARMER Metro Region and Central Region areas described below.

#### **National Weather Service Talkgroups**

<b>TG Requirements</b>	<b>For Whom?</b>
Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Weather Service Offices</li><li>• Minnesota State Patrol Dispatch Consoles</li></ul>
Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PSAP consoles, control stations, or backup equipment</li><li>• EOC centers (fixed or mobile)</li></ul>
Optional	N/A
Not Allowed	Field units (subscriber radios, mobiles, or portables)
Site Access	System-wide – All sites

<b>Cross-Patch Standard</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>To Talkgroups</b>
Soft Patch	Optional	As needed for the duration of the weather event
Hard Patch	No	

MSP is designated as the Warning Point for their respective Districts as follows:

- Detroit Lakes handles all the agencies within the Northwest Radio Region (14 counties)
- Duluth handles all the agencies within the Northeast Radio Region (11 counties)
- St Cloud handles all the agencies within the Central Minnesota Radio Region (19 counties)
- Roseville handles all the agencies within the Metro Radio Region (9 counties)
- Marshall handles all the agencies within the Southwest Radio Region (13 counties)
- Rochester handles all the agencies within the South Central and Southeast Radio Regions (21 counties)

Note: MSP has consolidated communications center operations into two locations, Roseville and Rochester. However, MSP will continue to serve counties in groups listed above.

#### **4. Recommended Procedures**

- A NWS office will use the National Warning System (NAWAS) to alert the MSP Warning Point of a weather watch/warning event.
  - The NWS will use NAWAS to alert MSP for all watches and warnings; however, MSP will not conduct a roll-call of local PSAPs/EOCs for watches unless the NWS specifically requests one due to unique circumstances.
- MSP will call local PSAPs/EOCs via the appropriate ARMER regional CALL or COMM talkgroups for the counties named in the watch/warning event.
  - MSP will conduct a roll call on the ARMER Regional CALL talkgroup for the counties affected.
  - MSP will contact counties that do not respond by phone.
- Depending upon the desire of the counties involved, MSP may patch the NWS office dedicated talkgroup to an ARMER regional or statewide talkgroup.
  - ARMER regions will provide MSP with the weather patching requirements for their member counties in advance.
  - MSP will reserve the ARMER regional or statewide talkgroups they choose for the patch on StatusBoard.
- The NWS office issuing the watch/warning will make announcements and conduct ongoing communications on their dedicated NWS talkgroup
- County PSAPs/EOCs will monitor either the MSP assigned ARMER regional or statewide talkgroup or the NWS office talkgroup for the duration of the weather event and communicate with the NWS as necessary.
  - The NWS talkgroup or the ARMER patch talkgroup is intended for PSAP, EOC, or local command communications with the NWS office. It is not allowed to be programmed into subscriber units for local spotters' traffic.

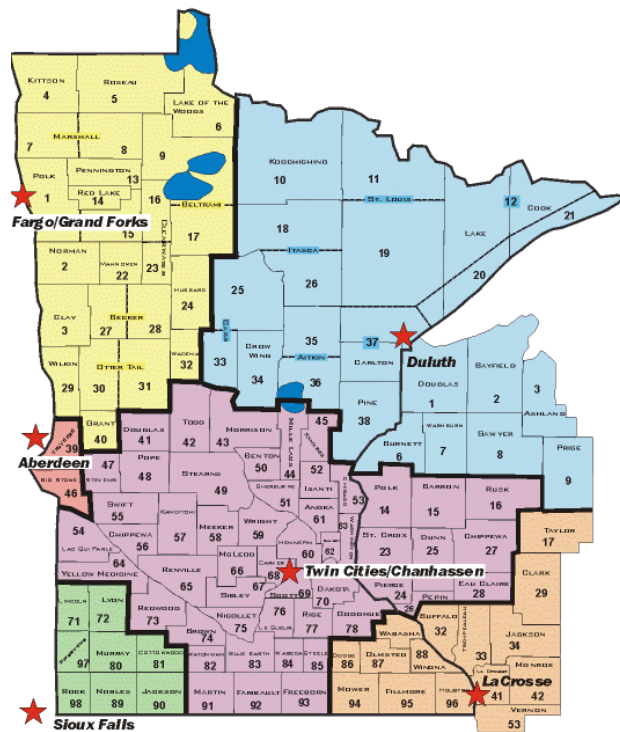
- If the NWS desires direct access to a field unit, the NWS service talkgroup may be patched to the local talkgroup in use by the spotters by the local PSAP.
- NWS will notify MSP when a given warning event has expired. Once notified, MSP will announce the talkgroups in use are clear, remove any patches, and clear the StatusBoard.
- Exception – Aberdeen, South Dakota, NWS office will operate on their South Dakota State System talkgroup.
  - Traverse County will monitor the Aberdeen NWS office talkgroup and will perform the appropriate patch, as designated by the MSP, for Big Stone County.
- In the event of a sudden onset or report of severe or near-severe weather incident occurring in the absence of a NWS office issued watch/warning, and when the MSP Warning Point Net has not yet been activated, a local PSAP or EOC may elect to initiate the warning process by contacting their NWS office and the MSP center that serves their county.

## **5. Management**

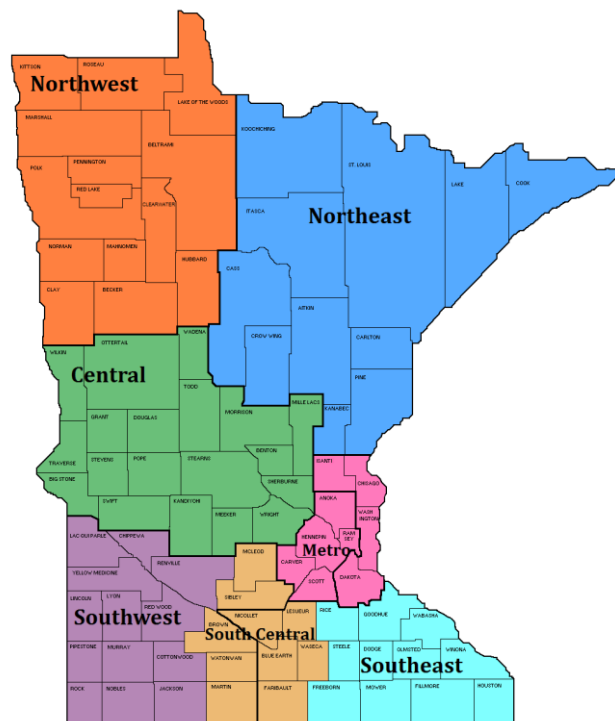
MSP shall manage assignment and usage of talkgroups and conventional channel resources for normal warning activations. Local county sheriffs, PSAP directors, or Emergency Managers shall ensure this procedure is adhered to in their respective counties. HSEM shall manage use of SEMTAC.

National Weather Service talkgroups will be given a Priority Level of 5.

## NWS OFFICES



## REGIONAL RADIO BOARDS



## STATE PATROL DISTRICTS

