

STATEWIDE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

INTEROPERABILITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 17, 2016 1:00 p.m.

Chair: Dave Thomson

By Conference Call

Call-in number: 1-888-742-5095

Conference code: 2786437892#

MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes - March

Action Items

- SOAR Change Management Request (Jim Stromberg)

New Business

Old Business

Reports

- CASM workgroup updates (Stromberg)
- Ontario – Minnesota interop project update (Stromberg)
- ECN Report (James Stromberg)

Adjourn

STATEWIDE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

INTEROPERABILITY COMMITTEE

March 15, 2016 1:00 p.m.
Chair: Dave Thomson
by conference call

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

Members/alternates:

Chair: Dave Thomson/vacant—MN Chiefs of Police Association
Vice Chair: Tim Boyer/vacant – Minnesota State Patrol
Victor Wanchena/Steve Ouradnik – MN Dept. of Corrections
Dan DeSmet/Vacant– MN Ambulance Association
Bill Schmidt/Vacant – MN Department of Health
Brian Askin/Dan Kuntz – MN DNR
Tim Lee/Mukhtar Thakur/Brad Peters – MnDOT
Bob Norlen – MN EMSRB
Ron Jansen/Chris Kummer– MESB
John Sanner/vacant – MN Sheriffs Association
Ulrie Seal/Vacant – MN Fire Chief's Association
Lance Lehman /Bill O'Donnell –MN Bureau of Crime Apprehension
Pat Coughlin/Vacant – MIFC
Mike Martin/Brian Smith – Federal Seat
B.J. Battig/Vacant – UASI
Tom Simota/vacant– MN National Guard
John Dooley/- HSEM
Michael Wisniewski - HSEM Greater MN
Terry Stoltzman/Vacant – HSEM Region 6
Rick Freshwater/Mark Darnell – SE MN RAC
John Maatz/Paul Johnson - SW MN ECB
Brett Miller/Darrin Haeder – SC MN ECB
Micah Myers/Kristen Lahr/Brandon Larson– Central MN ESB
Kerry Swenson /Bruce Hegrenes– NE MN ECB
Dave Olson/Bryan Green– NW MN ECB
Monte Fronk – Tribal Government
vacant– Association of MN Emergency Managers (AMEM)
**Members attending marked with highlight.*

Guests:

Jim Stromberg, DPS-ECN
Cathy Anderson, DPS-ECN
Carol-Linnea Salmon, DPS-ECN
Rick Juth, DPS-ECN

Mary Borst, Mayo
John Hyde, City of Duluth

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thomson calls the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

APPOVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Thomson asks for a motion to approve the agenda.

Michael Wisniewski moves to approve the agenda.
Victor Wanchena seconds.
Motion carries.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Thomson asks if there are any changes to the January meeting's minutes.

Ron Jansen makes a motion to approve the January minutes.
Wisniewski seconds the motion.

Chair Thomson notes that the title of Standard 3.40.0 is listed as Pursuit and should it be changed to CASM.

Motion carries to approve the minutes as amended.

ACTION ITEMS

STANDARD 3.46.0 (JIM STROMBERG)

Jim Stromberg introduces Standard 3.46.0, Ontario-Minnesota Interop, as presented in the meeting materials. This new standard was written to create procedures for interoperability between Minnesota and Ontario. He reviews of few high level points. Under Technical Background, it states that the radio patch detailed in the standard is for voice interoperability. Constraints are that Minnesota radio users are dependent upon their radios reaching Minnesota towers and Ontario users are dependent upon their radios reaching Ontario towers. Features such as radio identification and emergency alarms will not pass to the other radio system. As with any patch, there could be a short delay. Stromberg adds that the standard is predicated upon a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Ontario and Minnesota dated June 2015. The MOU establishes many of the responsibilities identified in the standard. It identifies the parties of the agreement to be "police" and that "radio interoperability shall be for police communications at the operational level." In drafting this standard, police communications was defined as ARMER communications. The patch will be enabled by the Minnesota State Patrol by either side, Minnesota or Ontario, contacting the Minnesota State Patrol dispatch. Tim Boyer of the Minnesota State Patrol was engaged in creating this standard and supports this process. A weekly test is required. Plain English shall be used. The Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) is responsible for supervising and managing the standard.

Chair Thomson calls for questions.

Someone asks what would the user on the Minnesota side select?

Stromberg responds that it can be whatever is in use at the time. If it is a Northeast TAC or an S-TAC or an L-TAC, those could be patched. If the event started in Minnesota, it is probably going to already have a channel assigned to it and if it starts on the Ontario side it will depend on the entity that is being engaged, such as a fire or a lost camper—different resources would be engaged depending upon who is responding.

Bill Schmidt makes a motion to approve Standard 3.46.0.

Monte Fronk seconds the motion.

Motion carries.

NEW BUSINESS

ATTENDANCE AND ROSTER (CHAIR THOMSON)

Chair Thomson calls attention to the 2015 attendance spreadsheet which was submitted in the meeting materials. He notes and thanks those who have attended the meetings regularly. He adds that there were some representatives who did not attend last year. He will contact those agencies to see if they have an interest in participation. If there is no interest, the Chair will ask for an action item to drop those members from the committee roster.

POWER POINT TEMPLATES (JIM STROMBERG)

Stromberg reports that the Steering Committee tasked its Education and Outreach workgroup to work on branding for the SECB. DPC Communications created a yellow swish with the letters SECB and that graphic has been applied to letter head and PowerPoints with the purpose of identifying communications that come from the SECB. PowerPoint templates were created for each SECB committee and are available on the SECB website. When a presentation is made on behalf of the SECB or one of its committees, those power point templates should be used.

REPORTS

ECN REPORT (JIM STROMBERG)

Stromberg will report each month on projects that have been prioritized by Chair Thomson and Director Mines. All of the projects are on track. Details are in the reports that were submitted in the meeting materials.

The projects are:

- Website updates for the ARMER Interop pages
- Review of strategic reserve equipment
- Border state interoperability
- Direction and planning for the COMU program
- COML and COMTE training and exercises

CASM and TICP

Stromberg reports that the CASM workgroup decided that the TICP should not be included in the CASM standard.

The workgroup found that the TICP was not kept current and there was little evidence of it being used and questioned its value. The only requirement for it that the workgroup could find was that it was necessary for the Metro region to be eligible for a federal grant. The CASM Standard was approved by this committee and then the SECB without any TICP requirement. The CASM workgroup started discussing the CASM TICP and drafting a new standard but questioned if it is a necessary standard. The Metro has a standard that is well written and easy to update and the region plans to keep it current. None of the other regions could think of a reason to keep TICP. Stromberg has tasked those on the CASM workgroup to come up with a reason to keep TICP.

RECCWG FEMA Region 5 Meeting

Stromberg reports that he, John Dooly and Monte Fronk are members of the Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Group (RECCWG) and they recently attended a FEMA Region 5 meeting of RECCWG. John Dooley was named Vice Chair. The workgroup discussed what it means for a COML or COMT to be deployable. Stromberg believes this is something to discuss in Minnesota as well.

FEMA Region 5 is also looking at ISSI. Motorola attended the meeting and gave a technical summary. Feedback from meeting participants was that it seems like a good tool but there were a lot of questions about whether it was worth the cost.

There are new rules being released federally which will empower state SWICs to authorize local users to use federal interop channels. This is not finalized yet.

Jim Jarvis, of Minnesota's Office of Emergency Communications, presented on the priorities for SAFECOM. The federal program wants to ensure that Statewide Communications Interoperability Plans (SCIP) align with federal plans. This summer Minnesota will review its SCIP. Another SAFECOM priority for 2016 is the COMU program. The SAFECOM will visit several urban areas in the country to evaluate the COMs capabilities beyond land mobile radio.

The RECCWG group has a training and exercise workgroup that includes Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The Region 5 group agreed that more training should be done on national interop channels and that more leadership training is necessary for COMLs. It was also determined that more work is necessary as it relates to international communications. Stromberg updated on our Ontario and Manitoba initiatives.

Chair Thomson asks if any other states are working with Ontario and Manitoba. Stromberg replied that there is a Canadian/US working group. A lot of their work seems to be centered on the Great Lakes states. Stromberg does not know what the progress has been beyond discussions. Nobody else reported on it at the meeting.

Chair Thomson asks if there are any Federal IO channels within the 800 band where we can exploit those resources on our current subscribers. Stromberg thinks that everything the feds are using now is on VHF and UHF. It might be possible to use them via patches but we couldn't make it inherent in our 800 system. States were encouraged to program in the federal VHF and UHF on their cache radios if possible.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourns at 1:29 p.m.

To: SECB Operations and Technical Committee
From: Jim Stromberg, ARMER Program Manager
Date: April 12, 2016
Subject: SOAR (Scene of Action Repeater) Change Management Request

On October 13, 2015, Kandiyohi and Stevens Counties requested of the OTC that the SECB consider changing the way one of Minnesota's Scene of Action (SOA) channels is used. The goal of the request is to enhance ARMER coverage in rural communities where in-building ARMER coverage suffers by repurposing a statewide simplex "Scene of Action" channel to be used as a repeated channel. The request has come to be known as SOAR (Scene of Action Repeater).

Because the proposed change would be both technical and operational and impacted all radios on the ARMER system, the request warrants review under the Change Management process prescribed in standards #1.5.2 and #1.8.2. During early discussions, Kandiyohi County withdrew its request. The remaining Stevens County request was conditionally approved by the OTC contingent on approval by the Interoperability Committee and that the request be considered through the Change Management process.

The SOAR request has remained idle while a call was put out for additional Change Management items and while the Change Management process was under review. This matter is now due for consideration.

The requested change would use the simplex Scene of Action channel SOA-3 as a repeated channel and would tie that channel in small geographic areas to a local ARMER talkgroup. Users in areas where ARMER coverage suffers and the SOAR solution is installed could switch to SOA3 and effectively communicate with ARMER users. The proposers reported that a BDA solution is problematic and a search for another pair of statewide-available frequencies yielded no results.

There are six 800 MHz SOA channels licensed in Minnesota and all are presently set up to be used in a simplex mode. Four of the SOAs (SOA-1 through SOA-4) are reserved for all users and should be installed in every ARMER radio. The remaining two are dedicated to the fire/EMS service, are known as FSOA-1 and FSOA-2, and should be installed in all fire/EMS service ARMER radios.

Repurposing SOA-3 to be used in a repeated mode on a local scale compromises statewide uniformity of that channel and could create confusion. The requestors have recommended that the

change be implemented statewide so that all users would have the same functionality and all areas could consider the same solution.

The use of SOAs is covered in Standard 3.15.0. The standard specifies that SOAs are to provide short-range, simplex interoperability. SOA-4 was earmarked for use at jail sally ports and was also identified as employed in the Strategic Technology Reserve SATCOW.

The Emergency Communication networks has reviewed this request and generally supports it. It appears to be a practical and cost-effective solution. The ECN recommends that the following items be considered as this matter is deliberated:

- Consider reassigning both SOA-3 and SOA-4 as repeated resources. The SOAR solution may work well in one town but may not be available in the next town because another repeater on the same frequencies may conflict with the first repeater.
- Two all-user simplex SOAs (SOA-1 and SOA-2) are probably adequate. The ECN does not know of any entities that routinely use three or more SOAs simultaneously. The SOAR solution using SOA-3 and SOA-4 would not preclude those channels from being used either repeated or simplex for an event under the guidance of a COML provided that the standard prescribed that they would be programmed both ways in all radios.
- Whether one or two SOAs are dedicated to a repeater, those channels should be renamed and dedicated to that function. Suggestions: SOAR1 & SOAR2 (repeated) and SOAR1D & SOAR2D (direct/simplex).
- Standard #3.15.0 should be updated if the SOAR suggestion is adopted.
- Action taken on SOAs may impact the Strategic Technology Reserve SATCOW. The SATCOW's technology staff and standard #3.33.3 should be consulted.
- If adopted, all ARMER radios in the state would need to be reprogrammed. Because of the limited geographical scope and infrequent use of SOAs, the ECN recommends that a very long window of time be provided for reprogramming to be completed.

Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER)

Change Proposal

1. Administrative Information:

Type of Change (Technical or Operational): **Both Technical and Operational**

Date Submitted: **01/12/16**

Submitter (e.g., Regional Radio Board or state agency): **Central Mn Regional Radio Board**

Change Sponsor (Individual) Contact Information: **Central MN RAC & Stevens County**

Summary of proposed change(s): **Local use of 8SOA3 during an emergency, training, exercises or special events.**

Weak and no coverage areas that are low traffic, multi structure with poor or no portable coverage from the ARMER system will benefit from a SOAR. These areas are small in size and with too many structures to warrant an indoor BDA, and where Outdoor BDA will not penetrate the structures, yet these areas are critical enough for indoor coverage for emergency responders.

2. Existing SRB standards impacted:

New Standard written and included.

CM- 3.15.0 How to Use Scene of Action (SOA)

State- 3.15.0 - Use of 700 MHz and 800 MHz Statewide Scene of Action (SOA) Channels effective 11/22/13

3.24 RF Control Stations?

3.25.0 - Radio to Radio Cross Band Repeaters?

3. Scope of Change:

Impact on users (e.g., majority of users, minority of users, number of counties/regions): **Potentially all**

Impact on the placement of resources in communications equipment (e.g., upgrades):

The footprint of the SOAR must be contained to address immediate poor coverage area and not over extend beyond the intended coverage area.

Impact on operational procedures (e.g., changes to operational standards): **New Standard (attached)**

Impact on user training (e.g., training required for compliance):

Users would need to be instructed on where the talkgroup is located in their radio, how to use it, and informed of any pertinent ARMER standards. SOAR procedures will need to be addressed in the training of all personnel operating within the SOAR system. Training will cover the different on scene procedures utilized by all users. It is critical that all users are aware of the rules and procedures and limitation in utilizing the SOAR channel.

Impact on reprogramming or configuration of end-user equipment:

Subscribers: Use of SOA 3 as a repeater pair 853.950/808.950 with a NAC code of 293 operating in Project 25 Phase 1 and not utilizing any Encryption.

The need or necessity for the SOAR channel to be programmed into radios will be determined by each agency. If an agency opts to not place this channel into their radios they will be responsible for any limitations on their ability to communicate within the SOAR coverage area.

Consoles: **Control Stations currently set up for Site Trunking would need to be reprogrammed (if made mandatory).**

Other equipment:

4. Existing deficiencies, problems, needs addressed by the proposed changes:

The Hancock School, Hancock Police Department, Chokio Fire Hall, Chokio School and other buildings within these cities have limited to no indoor coverage. A SOAR repeater is designed for radio to radio coverage in a poor or no coverage area of the ARMER radio system, also giving the radio one talk group on the ARMER system. With a use of a gateway the SOAR would tie to the ARMER talk group, effectively improving coverage for one talk group and also increasing the radio to radio coverage in the affected area.

Once on the ARMER system a local dispatch agency will control and direct the traffic from the SOAR repeater.

5. Expected improvements & benefits resulting from the change:

Interoperability

6. Proposed implementation & transition plan including timeline, milestones and training:

Start and End Date: Start date could begin immediately.

Description of Implementation Plan: Stevens County is in line for a 2016 Central MN grant, the Stevens County Board of Commissioners has approved this grant and the 50 % match required.

After OTC/Change Management approval: Application for a SOAR will be submitted from the agency to the CM ESB for approval. Application will include.

- Letter explaining reason for SOAR
- Intended coverage area, how they will limit coverage foot print
- Agency who will be responsible for SOAR and contact information
- FCC form 601, schedule D, schedule H showing SOAR location and coverage area will be attached with the application.
- Other SOAR's within a 30 air mile radius
- A Valid FCC License has been obtained

Local System Administrator will be responsible for ensuring that users follow the standards, protocol and procedures.

- **Training**
SOAR procedures will need to be addressed in the training of all personnel operating within the SOAR system. Training will cover the different on scene procedures utilized by all users. It is critical that all users are aware of the rules and procedures and limitation in utilizing the SOAR channel.

7. Preliminary assessments which have been completed (documentation attached):

System Tested:

We have used a Quantar 800Mhz repeater with an antenna system low enough to give us town coverage, yet contain the signal to the areas that need indoor coverage and a small radius around the town.

A gateway system, consisting of two mobile radios, one on the 8TAC94 and the other on a County ARMER talk group as the interface, this was tested in Hancock and Atwater and both operational.

Test Results:

In both cases (Atwater and Hancock) we found no internal buildings that we could not penetrate using the 8TAC94 repeater. The Dispatch centers choose to use a lower County interop talk group which dispatch would monitor, and patch when required. All users inside and outside of the structures understand what channels and “talk groups” to use.

Audio Delays:

A concern of ours was if the audio delays in our system design would cause users on the 8TAC94, ARMER subscriber radios and dispatchers too much delay and make the system unusable. We did not find this to be the case, technically there is a slight delay, but not much more than what users experienced on a VHF repeater system.

8. List of Attached proposed new or revised Standards, Plans or Best Practices Guides: Proposed Standard Included

9. Other Attachments:

Draft Standard, Letter to OTC Dated 09/23/15 & Letter Dated 05/29/15

10. Tracking and Approvals:

Submitter Approval:

Signature _____ Date _____

DECN Receipt:

Signature _____ Date _____

OTC/IOC Determination of Need:

Signature _____ Date _____

MnDOT/ECN Approval:

Signature _____ Date _____

OTC/IOC Approval of Assessments:

Signature _____ Date _____

Finance Committee Approval:
(if required)

Signature _____ Date _____

Final SRB Approval:

Signature _____ Date _____

SOAR SCENE OF ACTION REPEATER

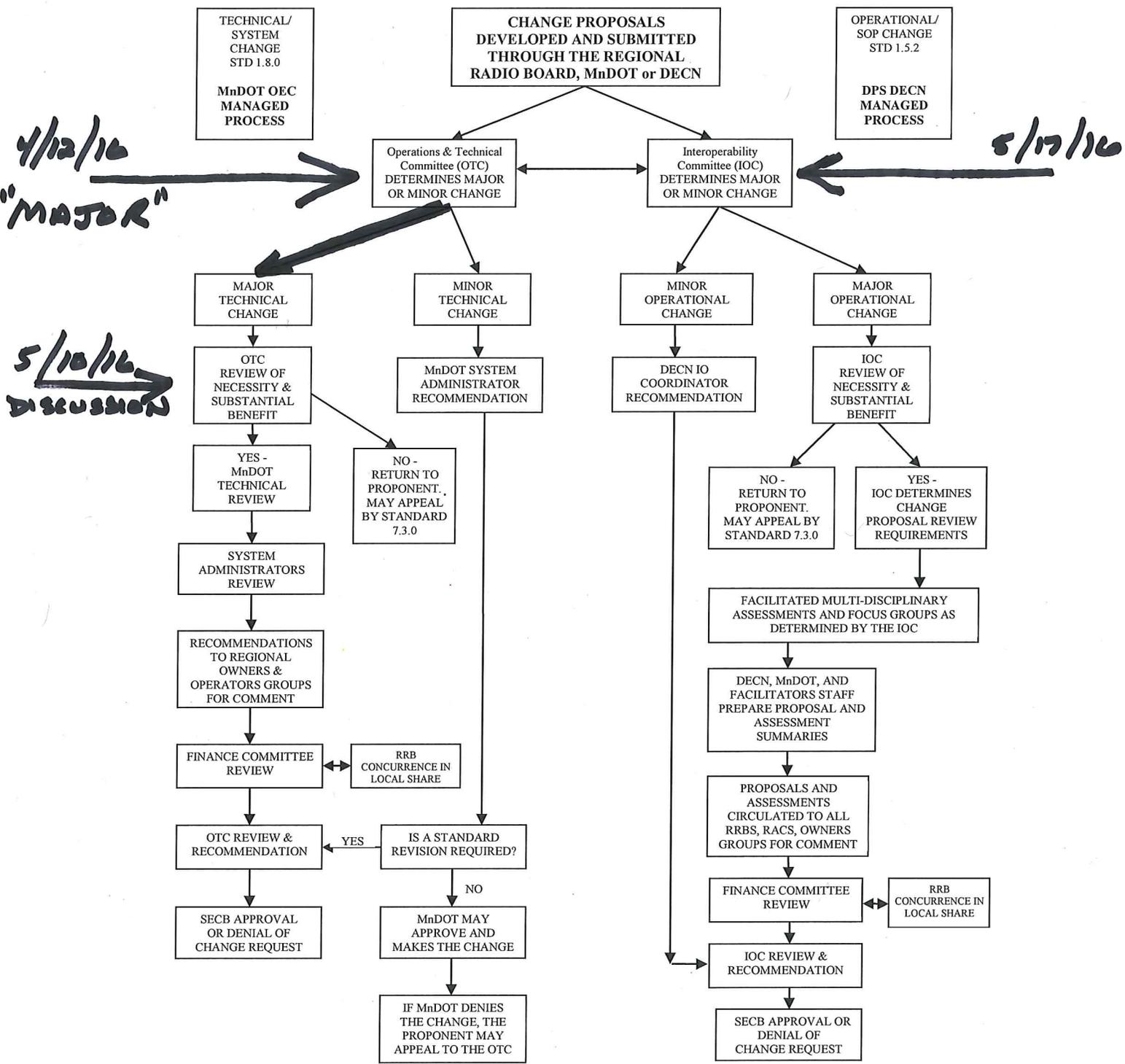


Figure 1 Change Management Process

5/3/2016



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Date	May 6, 2016		Committee Priority	IOC
Project	Border State Interoperability Assessment			
Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
	On Track	On Track		

Summary
<p>The project objective is to identify the assorted ways Minnesota public safety agencies working near state borders interoperate with the neighboring state or province. The key steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create tracking tools (spreadsheet and map) • Collect and collate the current data • Critique the data • Identify best practices • Publish best practices

Current Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spreadsheet for tracking data was created • A map for visualizing the data is was produced by the GIS office and is now being refined • Info on file for 40 of the 74 border relationships (down from last report as data was clarified) • Calls and site visits to individual entities to commence

Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific challenges are apparent



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

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Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
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Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific challenges are apparent



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Date	May 3, 2016		Committee Priority	OTC & IOC
Project	Strategic Reserve Equipment Review			
Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
	On Track	On Track		

Summary

The project objective is to review the current practices associated with the strategic reserve equipment and to explore ways to enhance the usability and availability of the equipment.

The key steps are:

- Identify and catalogue all Strategic Technology Reserve equipment
- Identify custodians of STR equipment
- Identify current practices in place to exercise and test equipment
- Evaluate current practices and explore new ways to ensure equipment is ready
- Identify working group to review Standards and to consider updates
- Encourage use of equipment through training and exercises

Current Status

- SharePoint tool developed to track all STR equipment, custodians, and reviews.
- Collection of regional standards underway
- Site visit to one region completed and two other scheduled.

Challenges

- No specific challenges are apparent



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Date	May 6, 2016		Committee Priority	IOC
Project	COMU Program Direction and Plan			
Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
	On Track	On Track		

Summary

The project objective is to consider options and identify an objective and strategic plan for Minnesota’s COMU program.

The key steps are:

- Establish a working group of key persons from all regions of the state
- To establish a timeline for this project
- For the working group to meet and agree on key, shared objectives for the COMU program
- Seek IOC’s endorsement of workgroups outcomes
- To memorialize the key, shared objectives into a state standard
- Establish a plan of action

Current Status

- Workgroup identified and first conference call was held – great enthusiasm from a diverse group
- Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications engaged in the discussion
- Three COMU discussions at the Interop Conference yielded in much feedback
- Organizing all that has been learned to date and Interop Conference feedback
- Next conference call to be scheduled for May

Challenges

- Fair representation on workgroup as some regions have very well defined COMU programs and others do not
- Finding common ground for a state standard that will encourage a COMU program in each region but not stifle the existing, mature programs



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Date	May 6, 2016		Committee Priority	IOC
Project	COMU Program Training and Exercising			
Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
	On Track	On Track		

Summary

The project objective is to consider different options to for COMU training and exercising.

The key steps are:

- Establish a working group of key persons from all regions of the state
- Contemplate and evaluate different training and exercising options
- Create models for different training and exercising options
- Seek endorsement of workgroups outcomes by IOC
- Memorialize the plan
- Create process to implement new models

Current Status

- Workgroup identified and first conference call was held – great enthusiasm from a diverse group
- Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications engaged in the discussion
- Three COMU discussions at the Interop Conference yielded in much feedback
- Organizing all that has been learned to date and Interop Conference feedback
- COMs exercise integrating COMT task book sign offs and providing public safety radio communications to a routine non-communications-focused event successfully held in April
- Next conference call to be scheduled for May

Challenges

- Fair representation on workgroup as some regions have very well defined COMU programs and others do not
- Finding common ground for a state standard that will encourage a COMU program in each region but not stifle the existing, mature programs



Monthly Project Summary

James Stromberg
 ARMER Program Manager & Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Date	May 3, 2016	Committee Priority		IOC & OTC
Project	Website Updates of ARMER and Interop Pages			
Progress	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
	On Track	Delay		

Summary
<p>The objectives of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to define a clean, efficient look and feel for the ECN website so that information is plainly presented and easy to find to provide guidelines and a roadmap for refinement of other ECN webpages to reorganize and clean up the ARMER pages of the ECN website to reorganize and clean up the Interoperability pages of the ECN website <p>The key steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take inventory of the current ECN website, in its entirety Work with DPS Communications to create a plan of action Identify and implement global site changes necessary to ensure uniformity Identify and implement changes specific to the ARMER and Interoperability pages Add content to the new ARMER and Interoperability pages and seek approval for publishing Publish the update pages

Current Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full inventory of the ECN website has been taken and outlined on a spreadsheet. DPS Communications has been engaged and supports the proposed look and feel changes DPS Communications is willing to review requested changes for policy compliance and to make the requested changes A cleaned up look and feel has been defined for the ECN website New content for several of the ARMER and Interoperability webpages is drafted but awaiting the actual page for it to be placed A request has been made of DPS Communications to make 40 different website changes that could not be made by ECN staff. The requests were prioritized with 14 of the requests identified as a first priority. DPS Communications has made some of the requested changes.

Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECN staff does not have authority to change page architecture, only content. Look and feel changes, page additions and deletions, and webparts (e.g. automatic lists) may only be done by DPS Communications staff. Defining the request via work tickets and waiting for the change to be made is a tedious and sluggish process.