

Cortland County
Department of Emergency Response and
Communications



Standardized Guide to Digital Radio Network for all Cortland County Fire and EMS Agencies

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Preface

Cortland County emergency services have long been utilizing low band (Fire Service) and VHF (Police Agencies) high band radio frequencies for emergency and day to day communications. In 2011 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it was requiring all radio users to narrow band their radio systems and lower the transmit power of their radios. This mandate, to be effective January 1, 2013 effectively meant that agencies within Cortland County would all but lose the ability to communicate. In the fall of 2011 the Fire Service, EMS Agencies, Highway Departments, and Police Agencies rallied together to encourage the Cortland County Legislature to build a new radio system. After hiring a consultant and going out to bid, the County elected to build its own, new, standalone UHF digitally trunked radio system. This system would be all-inclusive of agencies throughout the County allowing for universal interoperability amongst all county agencies as well as those from State and Federal Government.

Having the opportunity to start with a clean slate, a new standardized plan was created to govern the use and operation of the Cortland County radio system. This plan includes the terms and conditions for emergency communications use, day-to-day use, and standards of conduct for utilizing this system. These policies and procedures are contained within this document.

Glossary of Terms

On Network- On-Network identifies a talk group that is utilizing the county radio tower system. This is a non-direct system and any radio transmission made On-Network is retransmitted from all county radio towers. On-Network talk groups can only be used when the radio is capable of reaching one of the County's radio towers. Only radios subscribed to the county's radio database will be capable of receiving and transmitting on the system.

All On-Network talk groups are capable of being recorded and monitored by the Communications Center.

Talk Group- This is the term used to identify the actual "channel" the radio is transmitting on. For example Cville Ops, Sheriff, and County Highway are all talk group names.

Channel- This term is used to identify the physical location of a talk group. For example on a McGraw Fire Department radio, the McGraw Ops talk group is located in channel position 1. Example 2 is that talk group 911 Priority is located in channel 16 of every single portable radio in Cortland County (only in zone 1, other zones differ)

Dir- The term DIR (direct) identifies a talk group on the Cortland County radio system that is Off-Network. This is a line-of-site communication and can be used outside of the Cortland County Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Network. Direct (DIR) can be used in County where an Off-Network talk group is needed or out of county when in close proximity to another Cortland County radio user.

Examples: Homer Fire Department operating its Field Days, SUNY Cortland Police conducting an operation in the basement of Dragon Hall where they would otherwise be unable to hit the radio network, and the City of Cortland Fire Department operating at a structure fire on Main Street where all units are within a small area, and thus, an On-Network talk group is not needed.

Fire Dispatch- This is a fire service based On-Network talk group that is to be used by the Incident Commander of an incident to communicate with the Communications Center Dispatcher. Communications on this talk group shall be for the purpose of requesting additional resources, further activations, utilities, other specialized resources, and emergency updates. Fire-ground communications are not to be conducted on this talk group. The Communications Center radio identifier for fire and EMS providers shall be Fire Control.

Ops- The term ops (operations) identifies a talk group on the Cortland County radio network that is On-Network. Every fire department and EMS agency has their own named Ops talk group to be used for all incidents within their jurisdiction: List of Fire/EMS Ops-

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|------------|
| * CNCYFOPS | * CITYFOP1 | * CITYFOP2 |
| * CUYLRFOPS | * HARFDFOP | * HOMRFOPS |
| * MRTNHFOP | * MCGRWFOP | * PRBLFOPS |
| * TRUXFOPS | * VIRGLFOPS | * WILLTFOP |
| * CVILLFOPS | * CNCY AMB | * MAVAC |
| * TLC | * TLC OPS | * CAMPRES |

City Ops 1- This talk group is the home talk group for the Cortland Fire Department and shall be the talk group used by Cortland for all calls within the Cortland response district.

City Ops 2- Is a secondary talk group of the Cortland Fire Department. This talk group is for secondary incidents and to be used by mutual aid stand by departments in the City of Cortland. Any agency dispatched to stand by for the City of Cortland shall switch their radios to City Ops 2 upon arrival in the City of Cortland.

FP- Identifies a fire police talk group. Every fire department has their own fire police talk group to be used within their jurisdiction. This shall be the default channel for fire police operations within your own department.

County FP- This talk group shall be used at incidents where multiple fire police agencies are working together over a large area. The purpose of County FP talk group is to streamline Fire Police communications when there are multiple fire departments working together to provide fire police operations. The decision to use this talk group shall be made by the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander shall notify the Communications Center this talk group is going to be utilized for operations.

This talk group may also be used, at the discretion of the Communications Center, as an alternate talk group for major operations. County FP will be used after the resources of Fire Ops 1 and 2, Major Ops 1 and 2, and Training Ops have been exhausted.

County Med- This talk group is On-Network and to be used for all EMS Calls when an agency needs to communicate directly with an ambulance or the ambulance needs to speak with an involved agency.

Fire Ops 1- This is a fire service based On-Network talk group to be used for multi-agency operations. This shall be the default talk group when units are responding to fill in for another agency that is out on another alarm.

Example: Marathon Fire is out at a house fire and the run card dictates an engine from Cortlandville and a tanker from Willet to fill in at the Marathon Station. As Marathon is

already operating on Marathon Ops, Cortlandville and Willet SHALL go to Fire Ops 1 while covering for Marathon. Thus if Cortlandville and Willet respond to any incidents they shall be operating on Fire Ops 1. This leaves Cortlandville Ops open for any possible incidents in Cortlandville, Willet Ops open for anything in Willet, and leaves the Marathon Ops dedicated to the fire they are on. In the event a second multi-agency incident occurs, the Communications Center shall assign subsequent talk groups.

Fire Ops 2- This is a fire service based On-Network talk group to be used for multi-agency operations where a second talk group is needed or specialty incidents where the departments home talk group is not the most applicable.

Major Ops 1- The main use for this talk group will be for pre-determined and established events such as Marathon Maple Festival, Homer and Cincinnatus Field Days and the Jets Green and White scrimmage. Use of the talk group for these types of events shall be requested in writing to the Director of Emergency Response and Communications 5 days prior to the intended use. This talk group can be used for other major operations such as searches, mass casualty incidents or in the event no other talk groups are available.

Major Ops 2- The main use for this talk group will be for pre-determined and established events such as Marathon Maple Festival, Homer and Cincinnatus Field Days and the Jets Green and White scrimmage. Use of the talk group for these types of events shall be requested in writing to the Director of Emergency Response and Communications 5 days prior to the intended use. This talk group can be used for other major operations such as searches, mass casualty incidents or in the event no other talk groups are available.

Paging- This is talk group was originally for paging of alarms On-Network. It was determined this talk group cannot be utilized in that manner. This channel will eventually be renamed Water Supply, however this is the channel that will be utilized for all water supply operations on a fire scene if it is deemed that a separate talk group is necessary.

Example: Cincinnatus has a house fire and needs a second talk group for the water supply operation. The Incident Commander shall communicate with the Communications Center to advise that all water supply ops will be moving to Paging – Water Supply Ops Talk Group.

Knox- The Knox talk group is for sending tones to release Knox keys. It may also be used as a backup Off-Network paging talk group. If a department requests tones for the Knox key release they shall coordinate with the dispatcher and ask for a slight delay before the tones are sent to assure time to change channels.

Interagency- This is an On-Network talk group in all radios in the county. This is to be used for interagency communications **including communications with Helicopters for Fire / EMS events**. This talk group shall be designated for landing zone communications. When being utilized for landing zones all other non-essential communications on this talk

group shall be held until the helicopter is on the ground. Every radio has this talk group and this talk group is monitored by the Communications Center.

Agencies that do not otherwise have a direct talk group to the Communications Center may use Interagency to report emergency incidents they come across. (ie: a highway truck reporting a house fire)

911Priority- This is an On-Network talk group in all radios in the county. This is a **USER EMERGENCY** talk group for communications with the Communications Center. It is the default talk group for emergency (orange) button activations and is the talk group of last resort for Mayday calls for all agencies. Use of 911 Priority as a means for non-emergency transmissions shall be an absolute last resort and the system is able to tell what other talk groups were tried to be utilized prior to using the 911 Priority talk group.

Training Ops- This is an On-Network talk group to be used for multi-agency training events and state trainings.

CRMC ER- This is an On-Network talk group to be used to contact Cortland Regional Medical Center Emergency Room for patient radio reports and to contact medical control.

CRMC SEC- This is an On-Network talk group to be used to contact the Cortland Regional Medical Center Emergency Room with sensitive information. To use this talk group the ER must first be contacted on CRMC ER to switch to CRMC SEC. This talk group has ADP encryption.

EWide- This is an On-Network talk group that shall be used for combined / joint operations or in progress operations involving EMS agencies from different counties. This talk group is based on the Onondaga County Radio network and will not work in Cortland County. This is only used for brief communications with the 911 Centers on the Onondaga System (Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Madison) to report problems and to get directions as to where to go and talk group assignments.

FWide- This is an On-Network talk group that shall be used for combined / joint operations or in progress operations involving Fire agencies from different counties. This talk group is based on the Onondaga County Radio network and will not work in Cortland County. This is only used for brief communications with the 911 Centers on the Onondaga System (Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Madison) to report problems and to get directions as to where to go and talk group assignments.

- LWide- This is an On-Network talk group that shall be used for combined / joint operations or in progress operations involving Law agencies from different counties. This talk group is based on the Onondaga County Radio network and will not work in Cortland County. This is only used for brief communications with the 911 Centers on the Onondaga System (Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, and Madison) to report problems and to get directions as to where to go and talk group assignments.
- MMRSA/B- These are On-Network talk groups for incidents related to 9 Mile Point Nuclear Plant. This talk group will not work in Cortland County.
- NYS Watch Center- This is an On-Network talk group for Homeland Security.
- DHSES Ops 1/2- This is an On-Network talk group for Homeland Security.
- Dynamic Regrouping- This is an On-Network talk group that the Communications Center can use to redirect radios that are otherwise On-Network, but not on a specific talk group to a specific talk group. This function may be used to link agencies together that do not otherwise have each other's talk groups. It may also be used during incidents such as emergency button activations where the dispatcher decides to move the Mayday to a different talk group keeping it open for other emergency traffic; in this situation the dispatcher may capture the radios of the person calling the Mayday and the people handling the Mayday and regroup them all to a different talk group. When a radio has been dynamically regrouped the push to talk tones will be different than normal and the radio will remain on the regrouped talk group until the dispatcher releases it. The decision to regroup will be made by the dispatcher, but may also be requested by the Incident Commander.
- County Law- This is an On-Network talk group jointly used by the Cortland County Sheriff's Department, New York State Police and the Homer Police Department. This talk group shall be the dispatch talk group for all county law enforcement. This talk group is monitored by the Communications Center.
- Homer PD- This is an On-Network talk group for secondary radio transmissions within the Homer Police Department and jointly with remaining police agencies in Cortland County. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center.
- City Law- This is an On-Network talk group that shall be the dispatch talk group for the City of Cortland Police department and jointly with the remaining police agencies in Cortland County. This talk group is monitored by the 911 Center.
- UPD Cortland- This is an On-Network talk group used mainly by the SUNY Cortland Police Department. This will be the day to day communications talk group for this agency as well as the talk

group for dispatching and communications with the UPD dispatchers. This talk group may also be used for the UPD officers to communicate with City of Cortland Fire, Campus Rescue, other County Police agencies and TLC. This talk group will not be monitored by the Communications Center.

Law Tac 1- This is an On-Network talk group that can be assigned to any law enforcement agency for operations for a specific event or purpose and/or a secondary dispatch talk group. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center on a day-to-day basis.

Law Tac 2- This is an On-Network talk group that can be assigned to any law enforcement agency for operations for a specific event or purpose and/or a secondary dispatch talk group. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center on a day-to-day basis.

Law Tac3- This is an On-Network talk group that can be assigned to any law enforcement agency for operations for a specific event or purpose and/or a secondary dispatch talk group. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center on a day-to-day basis.

PoliceCar2Car- Each police agency is assigned an On-Network talk group. This is an operations talk group that is not monitored or selectable by the Communications Center. These talk groups are unique to each police agency.

CO Court- This is an On-Network talk group used by the NYS Courts officers within Cortland County. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center.

Forest Ranger- This is an On-Network talk group used by the NYS Forest Ranger assigned to Cortland County. This talk group can be used to raise the Forest Ranger after you have contacted them on County Law or communicate prior to their arrival at an emergency they have been requested to. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center. This is an agency specific or incident specific talk group.

DEC- This is an On-Network talk group used by NYS DEC officer assigned to Cortland County. This talk group can be used to raise the DEC officer to communicate after you have contacted them on County Law or prior to their arrival at an emergency they have been requested to. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center. This is an agency specific or incident specific talk group.

Probation- This is an On-Network talk group used by the Cortland County Probation officers to communicate with each other. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center. This talk group has AES encryption.

CO DSS- This is an On-Network talk group used by the Cortland County Department of Social Services workers for day to day operations to communicate with each other. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center. This talk group has AES encryption.

- CO Health- This is an On-Network talk group used by the Cortland County Health Department for day-to-day operations to communicate with each other. This can also be used by other agencies to communicate with the Health Department when requested. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center.
- Law Helo- This is an On-Network talk group to be used by any of the Cortland County Police agencies to communicate with the State Police Helicopter or Onondaga Air One. This is talk group not monitored by the Communications Center.
- CO Parole- This is an On-Network talk group to be used by NYS Parole Officers while operating within Cortland County. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center.
- Jail- This is an On-Network talk group to be used by the Cortland County Jail Control Room to assist with access in and out of the jail. This talk group is not monitored by the Communications Center.
- County Highway- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for Cortland County Highway.
- CNCY WIL TAY- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for Cincinnatus, Willet, Lincklaen, Pitcher and Taylor Town Highway departments.
- TRX CUY SOL- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for Truxton, Cuyler, and Solon Town Highway departments.
- HOMER DPW- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Village of Homer Department of Public Works and Water Department.
- HMR PRB SCO- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Homer, Preble, and Scott Town Highway departments.
- MARTHN VIL- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Village of Marathon Department of Public Works.
- MAR FR HR LP- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Marathon, Freetown, Harford, and Lapeer Town Highway departments.
- CVILLE HWY- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Town of Cortlandville Highway Department and Water Department.
- VIRGIL HWY- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the Town of Virgil Highway Department.
- CITY DPW- This is an On-Network talk group used as an operations channel for the City of Cortland Department of Public works, Water Department and Youth Bureau.

NYS DOT- This is an On-Network talk group used by the supervisors of the NYS Department of Transportation.

FLAGGER OPS- This is an on network talk group used by all highway agencies to coordinate flagging operations.

TOWN OPS- This is an On-Network talk group used by all highway agencies to coordinate joint operations.

SCHOOLS- Each school district in Cortland County has an assigned On-Network operational talk group that can be used to hail the school transportation supervisor and for bus to bus communications.

Dryden Sch	McGraw Sch	Cort Sch
Mara Sch	Cincy Sch	Homer Sch
All Schools		

National Interoperability Channels

UCALL 40 The talk group is an off network, national interoperability talk group used by public safety agencies that operate outside of Cortland County for the purpose of requesting incident related information and assistance as well as setup up tactical communications for specific events. In most cases, the calling party will be asked to move from the calling talk group to one of the UTAC talk groups identified below. This talk group will be monitored by the Communications Center. Also, Cortland County users working outside of Cortland County or the surrounding UHF based counties may be able to hail 911 Communications Centers where they are working on this talk group if assistance is needed

UTAC 41/42/43 These talk groups are off network, but are repeated from tower to tower, for national interoperability tactical operations. Where UCALL is used to contact Dispatch Centers, UTAC's are used for operational purposes. As these are direct talk groups they can be used by Cortland County users when operating outside of Cortland County and the surrounding Counties.

General Radio System Overview

Cortland County Department of Emergency Response and Communications (DOERC) has set forth the following protocols for all users to follow in order to help ensure the safety of all users on the radio network.

1. **Ensure that all system users** (both field users and Communications Center staff) **are familiar with and trained in the proper radio procedures designed for their assigned duties** when using the Cortland County Land Mobile Radio Network (LMRN) and Interoperable Communications System.
2. **All communications regardless of nature shall be restricted to the minimum practical transmission time** and employ an efficient operating procedure. Transmissions of an excessive length on a trunked radio system can have the unintended consequence of busying the system for other users. All radios are set to “time-out” after 45seconds.
3. **Assume everything you say on the Cortland County Land Mobile Radio network is recorded, admissible in a court of law and available under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).** Audit trails are generated for all network transmissions.
4. **Cortland County uses the Incident Command System** and the Emergency Services Dispatchers rely on your use of it and the practice of a unified command.
5. **Pronounce words distinctly.**
6. **Attempt to make your voice a regular monotone.** The voice should be as emotionless as possible, emotion tends to distort the voice and render it unintelligible.
7. **Emergency messages require no expression, but a high degree of intelligibility.**
8. **When utilizing the radio system, use common sense and courtesy.**
9. **The FCC forbids profanity** (this is a violation of Federal Law Title 18) and any superfluous or extraneous transmissions.
10. Information that would jeopardize emergency operations or violate a victim’s privacy **if known by non-emergency service providers** shall not be transmitted over the radio.
11. **When a unit transmits on the user’s primary talk group/channel no channel name needs to be transmitted.**

Example: “Cortland from K91”

Is a typical transmission from a County Sheriffs Officer to the 911 Dispatch Center when the Officer is communicating on County Law..

12. **When a user is not on his/her primary talk group/channel the name of the channel shall be transmitted in the calling format.**

Example: "Cortland from K91 on Law TAC 1" or "Cortland from K91 on City Law"

*Is a typical transmission from a County Sheriff's Officer to the 911 Dispatch Center when the Officer is communicating on any talkgroup **OTHER** than County Law.*

13. When calling another unit/or Dispatch the user shall use the following format: who you are calling from you calling.

Example: "Fire Control from 1301" or "Cortland from 105" .

14. **Entire unit numbers and approved call signs shall be utilized at all times by radio users.**

Correct: "Cortland this is 105"

Incorrect: "Cortland this is 5"

15. **Previously used radio station call signs will no longer be used.** The Land Mobile Radio system has built in identifiers that are done automatically.

Example: "KEE-240", "KIA-999", "WPCV-245"

16. **Primary talkgroups are used to dispatch calls for service,** contact users assigned to that talk group/channel and coordinate day-to-day activities of each agency assigned to that talk group/channel. Specific tactical /operations will be conducted on the appropriate tactical/operations talk-group as assigned.

Primary talkgroups: County Law
City Law
Fire Dispatch
Interagency
911 Priority

Tactical/Operational Cville Ops
Law Tac 1
County Med
Sheriff car to car

17. **Tactical (TAC) and/or Operations (OPS) Talk-groups** – Sometimes referred to as channels **are used for tactical/operational communications between field units** and occasionally the communications center. Tactical talk groups and OPS talk groups may be on the network (i.e. simulcast) or off the network local (i.e. low power simplex line-of-site). On larger incidents, separate and unique tactical and/or operations talk-groups may be assigned by the dispatch center for specific functions. **Assignments using county-wide talk-groups/channels are made by dispatch as requested by the Incident Commander/ Patrol Supervisor or designee.**

18. **Law enforcement and fire units that are responding to assist another agency shall be instructed to switch to that agency's primary dispatch talk group.**

Example: A sheriff patrol is responding into the city to assist a city police car on a domestic. The sheriff patrol shall change talk groups to City Law.

Example: Homer Fire is responding to assist Preble Fire, in Preble, at the scene of a house fire. Homer Fire shall change talkgroups to "Preble Ops" when arriving on the scene.

19. **Use the Interagency talkgroup/channel when calling the 911 dispatch center IF the dispatch center does not routinely monitor your primary talkgroup.**
20. **Phonetic Alphabet – A phonetic alphabet shall be used for spelling out unusual names, license plate letters and so forth.** They are always transmitted as "Adam, "Boy," or "Charles not "A as in Adam," etc. Due to the variations of phonetic alphabets, no one phonetic alphabet will be required. Any phonetic alphabet that clearly identifies a letter is acceptable.
21. **Plain language shall be used for all radio communications.** The use of codes, particularly agency specific codes have been found to be a barrier in the transmission of information. The most negative effect of codes is a reduction in communications interoperability during multi agency response. There is only one acceptable code in Cortland; "CODE-9". This code is used to acknowledge emergency button activations in both Cortland and Onondaga radios.
22. **Obtain clearance (from dispatch) prior to transmitting lengthy messages,** such as descriptions of suspects or notifications. Break every so often to allow any other unit that may have an urgent message to transmit.
23. **After pressing the Push-to-Talk (PTT) button, await the end of the "talk permit" tone before speaking.** The conclusion of the "talk permit" tone means that you have the air at that instant and can begin delivering your message. If another unit has the air, or the network is busy, you will receive a "system busy" tone. If you receive a "system busy" tone, release the PTT button and await a "talk permit" tone. The system will automatically give you the air once the air is available for your transmission. At this time you should press the PTT again and then speak. Do not continue to press the PTT button after receiving a "system busy" tone. By doing so you will lose your place in the queue and will be put to the end of the queue list.
24. **Think before your speak – DON'T** press the Push-to-Talk button until you know what you want to say in your transmission.
25. **Make all transmissions brief and concise.** If you must transmit a lot of information, break it into several shorter transmissions, the radio system will automatically end transmissions that are over thirty seconds. Extended transmissions unnecessarily consume network resources and may result in other system users receiving a system busy.
26. **Don't use unnecessary words, such as "please" and "thank you".** These words waste valuable air time.

27. **All transmissions should be impersonal and professional.** Do not use words or inflections that reflect humor, irritation, sarcasm, or disgust. Additionally, do not make “catcalls” or play music and/or sound effects over the radio. This activity violates Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and policies. Audit trails are generated for all network transmissions.
28. **Make only necessary transmissions**—you are sharing a limited number of radio frequencies with all other radio users including public safety agencies. You do not know when emergency communications are in progress on other channels talk groups and your unnecessary transmission may delay another radio user reporting or responding to an emergency event.
29. **Don't ignore a call to your radio.** If you cannot deal with the transmission immediately, ask the caller to standby and re-contact them as soon as you are able to. If you have not heard all of a transmission to you, never guess at the missing information. Ask the person to repeat or clarify the message before acknowledging you understand it.
30. **When calling into Dispatch via radio, users shall wait for acknowledgment by dispatch prior to transmitting his/her message.**
31. **Emergency buttons (orange button) should be utilized only when the user is immediate life or death danger. Once you activate your emergency button your talk group will AUTOMATICALLY change to the 911 Priority talk group giving you priority within the radio network and direct communication with a Dispatcher.** Every attempt by the user should be made to relay a location and the nature of the problem. If the activation of the button was accidental do not switch talk groups or your channel selector to another talk group/channel. The Dispatcher shall inquire on your status and location and you need to respond with your location and status is Code-9 if there is no emergency. Any response **other than Code-9** shall initiate additional and/or law enforcement units being sent to your last known location. Only reset your radio when the dispatcher tells you too. This is accomplished by holding the emergency/orange button down for 3-5 seconds. The user should hear a tone once the tone occurs key your radio on your primary talk to group to assure your radio has reset.
32. **The Communications Center assigns additional talkgroups/channels for planned or scheduled events.** Any event, known in advance, that requires additional communications resources needs to be cleared through the 911 center.
 1. Alternate talk group/channel(s) will be assigned as available for the duration of the event upon request. Talk group/channel assignment is subject to pre-emption if required for reassignment to an emergency event.
 2. Alternate talk group channels should be scheduled as far in advance as possible.

3. Agencies may be assigned On-Network tactical channels or operations talk groups or Off-Network talk groups. The use of TAC/OPS talk groups/channels must be coordinated through the Communications Center in order to prevent interference between multiple operations.
4. The Communications Center will be notified by the requesting agency or Incident Commander when the requested talk group/channel(s) will no longer be needed.
5. Agencies shall give the Director of Emergency Response and Communication no less than 5 days prior to a scheduled event in order for arrangements to be made for providing a dispatcher if the talk group is to be monitored by the Communications Center.

POLICY STATEMENT

200-001

Radio Protocol for Emergency Incidents

PREFACE: This policy was adopted December 11, 2013 by the Cortland County Fire Chiefs Association. This policy is to be adhered to by all Fire Departments operating on the Cortland County Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Network. Due to the inherent performance capability of this radio network, the need to repeat messages does not exist provided the radio is affiliated with the network and set to an on network talk group.

OBJECTIVE: This policy establishes the means that County Fire and EMS units are to utilize when communicating with the Cortland County Communications Center and other county Fire Departments during emergency incidents in order to keep radio traffic to a minimum.

POLICY:

A. Radio Programming

1. All county fire radios will be programmed to best suit each departments home operation. However, radios will have many similarities in channel setup. The base county fire radio programming shall include the following:

Zone 1

Channel 1	-	Home Department Ops Channel
Channel 2	-	Fire Dispatch
Channel 3	-	Fire Direct Channel

Channel 13	-	Paging
Channel 14	-	County Med
Channel 15	-	Interagency
Channel 16	-	911 Priority

Zone 2

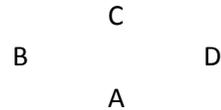
Channel 1	-	Training Ops
Channel 13	-	Fire Ops 1
Channel 14	-	Fire Ops 2
Channel 15	-	Major Ops 1
Channel 16	-	County FP

B. Emergency Incidents

1. Whenever a fire department is activated for an emergency response, all of the assigned apparatus and officers shall utilize their Status Dek Heads to show the appropriate status.
 - a) Dispatch will announce the first Chief and first apparatus that goes Enroute (status 3) over paging.
 - b) In the event a department has multiple incidents at the same time, the first responding unit or chief should contact Fire Control and advise that they are responding to the secondary, or subsequent, incident.
 - c) In the event an ambulance crew member is Enroute to the station and is unable to contact the awaiting ambulance and/or crew, on his/her ops talk group or County Med, the individual may contact Fire Control via the Fire Dispatch talk group to advise that they are Enroute.
2. Fire Apparatus that is Enroute shall state such on their home department's main operations (OPS) talk group. This notification should also include their crew size (i.e. 206 is responding with a crew of 4).
3. The first arriving fire department member should give an arrival report on the incidents home department's talk group. The first arriving Officer should give an arrival report on Fire Dispatch and make any additional requests for manpower or equipment at this same time if not already done.
 - a) Arrival reports are only necessary for fire calls and MVC's, no arrival report is necessary for house calls unless, there is safety issue and/or the call is more severe/ involved than dispatch information lead responders to believe and additional resources are needed.
 - b) After giving an arrival report and it is determined by the first arriving unit and/or the Incident Commander he/she can ask the Communications Center to retransmit the alarm with the updated information.
 - c) Arrival Reports for Fire Alarms or Structure Fires shall consist of the following:

- 1) Apparatus that is arriving
- 2) Building Size and Type
- 3) Fire Conditions
- 4) Exposures

- a. buildings sides shall be lettered with the street address being the A side and subsequently working clockwise.



- b. building height shall be numbered

Basement
Floor 1
Floor 2
Attic
Roof

- d) Arrival reports for Car Accidents shall consist of the following:

- 1) Apparatus that is arriving
- 2) Number of Vehicles
- 3) Number of Patients
- 4) Actions needed

4. In the interest of limiting communications and because departments will use their main ops talk group as the fire ground ops talk group (communications between the attack apparatus, command, and interior crews), apparatus that arrives after operations are underway should do their best to limit radio traffic. Face to face communication should be used. As the incident escalates operations such as water supply and other non-essential communications should be moved to a second talk group or be done face to face.

a) If a secondary talk group is needed, the Incident Commander shall work with the Dispatcher to get a secondary talk group assigned and coordinate its use.

5. Only the Incident Commander of any one incident should communicate with the Communications Center. This communication shall be done on Fire Dispatch talk group.

6. Prior to the designation of an Incident Commander, Dispatch is empowered to communicate with the first unit Enroute or the highest ranking officer, whichever they prefer.

7. Once Command is established, the Incident Commander shall announce the operations talk group and if there are any additional talk groups designated for the incident. The Incident Commander may ask Dispatch to re-tone via pager tones or do an alert tone and announce the assigned talk groups over the paging talk group. They may also choose to have the incoming mutual aid officers notify their departments of the appropriate radio talk groups to be on depending on their assignment.

a) In the event of a mutual aid incident, the incoming mutual aid officers should report to the Incident Commander (face to face would be ideal but communicating on the fireground ops talk group may be appropriate) to determine the needs for his/her department. The mutual aid officers shall then update their incoming apparatus on their departments home talk group. Incoming apparatus and firefighters should then switch to the host departments home talk group upon arrival at the incident unless otherwise directed.

b) If the Incident Commander has a special request for the incoming mutual aid departments, it is also acceptable for the Incident Commander to switch to the incoming mutual aid agencies' home talk group to make specific requests.

(Example: Homer is dispatched to a fire on Cosmos Hill Road, the City and Cville are automatic first alarm mutual aid. 561 arrives on scene and determines he has a working fire, asks for a 2nd alarm and advises that Homer Ops will be the fireground talk group and Fire Ops 2 will be water supply. When the dispatcher sends the 2nd alarm assignment they shall also notify the responding units of the radio talk group designations. In this case the tankers assigned to the incident shall all go to Fire Ops 2 and the manpower units shall go to Homer Ops.)

(Example 2: the same incident as above but 561 confers with the arrived Cville mutual aid officer and chooses to use Cville Ops as the water supply talk group. The dispatcher would then make that announcement.)

8. County Med shall be used for all communications between fire departments and EMS transporting agencies at EMS/medical only calls. For Motor Vehicle Crashes and other similar "rescue" incidents, the host department's ops talk group shall be used.

County Med may also be used for MCI events where triage has been established. Ambulances responding to the scene shall be coordinated on County Med while any rescue activities occur on the home agency's talk group.

9. At the conclusion of an incident, all apparatus and Chiefs shall use the appropriate status button to signal that they are in service or otherwise. No communication to the Dispatcher is necessary as they no longer record dispositions.

C. Non-Emergency

1. All county departments are encouraged to use their main ops talk groups for day to day communications and training.
2. Status Dek heads shall be used to show apparatus out of quarters for various details.
3. Training Ops shall be used for all training events at the Regional Training Center to help encourage manipulation of the mobile and portable radio controls.

D. Landing Zone

1. Interagency shall be the dedicated ground to helicopter talk group.

E. Schools

1. During major events the Incident Commander should monitor the local bus talk group and advise the appropriate Bus Supervisor of road closures and other hazards caused by the emergency.
2. If resources are needed from any of the local school bus garages, such as removing a large number of people from Route 81 who are not injured, the appropriate Bus Supervisor should be contacted on their School talk group.

Rich Roberts- County Chiefs President

Scott Roman- Director DOERC

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

300 - 003

FIREGROUND AND NON-FIREGROUND EMERGENCY MAYDAY GUIDELINE

- PREFACE:** This policy was adopted by the Cortland County Fire Chiefs Association on March 26, 2008 and updated on December 11, 2013. This policy is to be adhered to by all fire departments operating in Cortland County.
- PURPOSE:** The purpose of this guideline is to establish a method for firefighters to summon assistance at a fireground emergency.
- METHOD:** If a firefighter finds themselves trapped, missing, or in need of assistance, it is vital that the firefighter take the following steps to ensure that assistance is received immediately.

Fireground Emergency

1. If the firefighter is able to reach his Radio, he should transmit a "MAYDAY" signal across the Radio three (3) times, state his / her name, location, problem and resources that may be needed to assist. This transmission should occur on the assigned fire ground ops talk group.
2. The firefighter should then wait for the Incident Commander to acknowledge the "MAYDAY". Once a "MAYDAY" is transmitted the Incident Commander should advise all units on the fireground to maintain radio silence for a MAYDAY in progress.
3. In the event that the MAYDAY is not acknowledged the firefighter shall then press the Orange button on either the speaker mic or the top of the radio for three to five seconds. This will send an emergency alert to the Communications Center, and the Incident Commander if his/her radio is scanning, and any radio scanning the 911Priority talk group. **The Orange button press will take the firefighters radio to the 911 Priority Talk Group for direct communication with the Communications Center and the Incident Commander.**
 - a) The 911 Priority talk group is in Zone 1 Channel 16 in all Cortland County portable radios. If you are not in Zone 1 on your radio, and you are operating at a Cortland County incident, pressing the orange button will immediately turn your radio internally to the 911 Priority talk group.
 - b) If operating on Fire Direct, pressing the orange button will do nothing, the radio must be turned to an On-Network talk group to enable the orange button.

c) If operating outside of Cortland County the orange button will either do nothing or work in a different manner. That being said, orange button pushes outside of Cortland County should be a last resort at all cost.

4. After pressing the orange button the firefighter should transmit a "MAYDAY" signal across the Radio three (3) times, state his / her name, location, problem and resources that may be needed to assist.

a. Pressing the Orange button will transmit a beep to the Communications Center, and any radio scanning 911 Priority. It will also open the Mic, "Hot Mic," of the radio that pressed the Orange button for a period of 10 seconds.

1. The portable radios only have the hot mic feature. Pressing the orange button on a mobile will activate your emergency button and take the radio to 911 Priority but to transmit you must use the push to talk button on the mic.

DISPATCHER b. In the event of an emergency button activation the Communications Center Dispatcher will immediately attempt to make contact with the firefighter in distress and retrieve the following information utilizing "NUTS".

N- Name of the firefighter in distress.

U- Unit the firefighter is with.

T- Task the firefighter was assigned.

S- Situation/ Status of the firefighter and what may be needed to assist

The Dispatcher shall then immediately contact the incident commander and ensure that the Incident Commander received the MAYDAY transmission. If the Incident Commander did not hear the MAYDAY, the Dispatcher will provide them with all of the information.

Accidental c. In the event the orange button is accidentally pressed, the dispatcher will contact the firefighter and check his/her status. If the firefighter is not in a situation he/she shall reply with his/her location and status is CODE 9 to signify an accidental press or all clear situation. At that time the Dispatcher will instruct the firefighter to reset their radio, this is done by pressing and holding the orange button for three to five seconds. Resetting of the radio shall only occur after the Dispatcher advises the user to reset the radio. Users are not to turn off their radios or change talk groups until the radio has been reset.

5. The Incident Commander will advise the FAST team that a MAYDAY has been transmitted. The Incident Commander shall also notify Fire Control of the MAYDAY if Fire Control did not receive the mayday call and request a subsequent FAST team deployment.

a. Known FAST teams include:

Cortland County

Cortlandville

Marathon

Cayuga County

Moravia

Owasco

Tompkins County

Dryden

Cayuga Heights

Onondaga County

Tully

LaFayette

6. The Incident Commander in coordination with the Communications Center will then determine which talk group to conduct the MAYDAY operation on. In most cases the BEST scenario has the Incident Commander meeting the distressed firefighter(s) on 911 Priority talk group and keeping the main fire attack on the home Ops talk group. If the firefighter already has pressed the Orange button, their radio will already be on 911Priority and the Incident Commander simply needs to turn his portable radio channel select to the talk group 911 Priority.

a. 911 Priority is located as Zone 1 Channel 16 in all Cortland County radios.

b. The Dispatcher will work to get the Mayday situation off of 911 Priority in order to free it up for any other potential incidents. This may be done by having each member involved in the Mayday rescue operation switch their radio to another talk group or by having the Dispatcher dynamically regroup a selected group of radios.

7. The firefighter should then provide the Incident Commander with the following information:

a. Name of the individual or individuals who needs assistance

- b. Unit the individual or individuals responded on
 - c. Task the individual or individuals was assigned to
 - d. Status of the individual or individuals
 - 1) are you lost or trapped
8. The Incident Commander will repeat the information back to the Distressed Firefighter to ensure the message was received in full.
 9. The firefighter should then turn on their flashlight to assist the FAST Team in locating the Distressed Firefighter(s). The decision to activate the MAYDAY firefighters PASS alarm should be coordinated between the Incident Commander, the FAST Team Leader, and the FAST search team. Turning on your PASS alarm can cause excess confusion and noise; activation **MUST** be coordinated between all parties.
 10. The Incident Commander will provide the FAST Team with the information received by the Distressed Firefighter(s) and deploy the team.
 11. The Incident Commander will then request additional manpower to the scene and establish another FAST Team.
 12. It is Imperative that all firefighters stay focused on their current assignments unless directed otherwise by an officer. **A SUDDEN OUTBREAK OF FREELANCING COULD HAVE DISASTROUS RESULTS.**
 13. Upon completion of the MAYDAY situation, the Incident Commander shall advise all units operating at the incident and the Communications Center that the MAYDAY has been handled and radio traffic may resume normal operations.

Non Fireground Emergencies

PREFACE: Due to the nature of the calls we respond to the possibility of a firefighter and/or EMS provider emergency is inherent. These types of emergencies could be for example: a violent patient, an enraged spouse who has committed spousal abuse, or an active shooter situation.

METHOD: If a firefighter finds themselves trapped, missing, or in need of assistance, it is vital that the firefighter take the following steps to ensure that assistance is received immediately.

1. If possible the firefighter should attempt to contact the incident commander on the assigned fire department talk group.

- a. The Incident Commander would then determine what assistance is needed and make the subsequent requests through the Communications Center Dispatcher.
2. If the firefighter is not able to use the Push to Talk (PTT) on their radio, the firefighter shall then press and hold the Orange button for 3-5 seconds. Pressing the Orange button will transmit a beep to the Communications Center and any radio scanning 911 Priority. It will also open the Mic, "Hot Mic," of the radio that pressed the Orange button for a period of 10 seconds. During the " Hot Mic" period the Incident Commander (if scanning) and Dispatcher should listen to try and determine the extent of the situation the firefighter is in.
 3. Radio users will need to know what portable number they have. Some users will have portables with assigned alias to designate them as specific user, ie Chiefs and Captains. A majority of the radios will have a generic number based on position of the radio from which it is located in the fire apparatus. Departments should make it clear as to every portable's number and make sure all users are aware of the numbering sequence utilized by his/her department.
- A. DISPATCHER: The Dispatcher shall inquire from the user of the radio that activated the emergency button by saying: "Fire Control to unit/user ...location and status?" on the 911 Priority talk group. The unit number/user id used in the inquiry shall be designated by the radio alias displayed on the radio console.
 - B. The Dispatcher shall make two additional attempts to contact the user that activated the emergency button if no answer is received on the first attempt. Attempts shall be made via the radio on the 911 priority talk group at 20 second intervals.
 - C. The Dispatcher shall only knockdown an emergency button activation when the unit/user in question responds with the following specific phrase: "unit/user to Fire Control my location is _____ and my status is CODE-9.
 - D. When the **location** of the fire or EMS user activating the emergency button **is known**, the following steps shall be followed:
 1. Unless it is immediately determined to be a fire only related emergency, ie. mayday call, the Dispatcher shall initiate a police response when no response or an improper acknowledgment is received on the 911 priority talk group from the user that activated their emergency button.
 2. The Dispatcher shall notify the fire and/or EMS user agency's Incident Commander of the emergency button activation. It shall then become the Incident Commander's responsibility to communicate with the user in need of assistance, unless the Incident Commander is the user requesting assistance.
 3. The Dispatcher shall not cancel a police response once it is initiated regardless of who tries to cancel the response. The Dispatcher shall only inform the responding police units with updated/additional information.
 - E. When the **location** of the fire or EMS user activating the emergency button **is unknown**, the following steps shall be followed:

1. The Dispatcher shall contact the user's emergency contact person. Once contact is made with the emergency contact, the Dispatcher shall inquire about the location of the radio and/or the name of the user. If the location is known, a police response shall be initiated.
2. If the location of the user remains unknown, any further actions taken by the Communication Center shall be done in coordination with the user's agency's emergency contact person.
 - a. The emergency contact person will be the highest ranking officer active at the incident, or if no officer is "on the air" any Chief or Officer will be paged.

Non Incident Activations

1. In the event that an orange button activation occurs and there is no known active event for the radio that has been activated any Chief or Officer of the department who operates the radio will be paged for.
2. In the event the Chief or Officer that answers up is able to locate the radio, the orange button activation will follow normal reset procedures.
3. In the event the Chief or Officer that answers up is unable to locate the radio, the Communications Center and Officer will work together to either locate the radio or the Dispatcher may remotely turn the radio off.

Rich Roberts- County Chiefs President

Scott Roman- Director DOERC

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

200-002

Status Dek Head Programming and Use

PREFACE: This policy was adopted December 11, 2013 by the Cortland County Fire Chiefs Association. The Policy is to be adhered to by all Fire Departments operating on the Cortland County UHF Radio Network.

OBJECTIVE: This policy establishes the layout, emergency use and non-emergency use parameters of all Status Dek heads used in conjunction with the Cortland County UHF Radio Network. The intent of this policy is to ensure that the Status Dek Heads are programmed identically throughout the County to ensure continuity and eliminate any confusion in Unit Status' whether the radios are owned by Cortland County or by the fire department, fire company or fire district.

POLICY:

A. The programming matrix of the Status Dek Heads shall be as follows:

STATUS 1 - Available

* Status 1 indicates that a unit is available to respond to an emergency call

STATUS 2 - Awaiting Crew

* Status 2 indicates that a driver or crew member is at the station awaiting further personnel. If this status is used, the dispatcher will not automatically re-tone at the 5 minute mark. The unit that is status 2 has taken responsibility for the call and if a further activation is needed, said unit must request it.

STATUS 3 - Enroute

* Status 3 is to be used when a unit goes Enroute to an alarm. If there are multiple alarms for one agency you will have to advise Fire Control via the Fire Dispatch talk group which call the apparatus is responding to.

* For multiple calls in one department, it is more efficient to let the units contact Fire Control, than for the Incident Commander to.

STATUS 4 - On Location

* Status 4 is to be used when a unit arrives on scene

STATUS 5 - Enroute to the Hospital

* Status 5 is to be used by ambulances when they leave the scene of the incident and respond to the hospital.

STATUS 6 - At Hospital

* Status 6 is to be used by ambulances when they arrive at the hospital.

* When ambulances are complete at the hospital they can either remain STATUS 6 until they are in a position to go STATUS 1 or they can use STATUS' 7 or 8 as well.

STATUS 7 - Out of Service

* Status 7 is to be used when apparatus is not able to respond to an alarm. This should be used when apparatus is broke down, out of service, or out of district and unable to respond.

STATUS 8 - On Air

* Status 8 is to be used when apparatus is on the road, available to respond to calls. An example would be a local parade, a pool fill in district, or department training where units are available to respond.

B. Emergency Incidents

1. Upon receipt of alarm, all responding apparatus and Chiefs shall utilize the appropriate statuses.
2. If the Acknowledged Crew, Status 2, is used, the Dispatcher will not re-tone unless the apparatus or officer requests him/ her to do so.
3. At the completion of an alarm, units and Chiefs shall utilize Status 1 to show they are back in service; no radio transmission to Fire Control is needed to be done by ANY unit.

C. Non-Emergency Situations

If apparatus is going out on a detail or training and the apparatus is available to respond to an emergency incident the apparatus may use the appropriate status, on air, status 8, to notify fire control that they are out of quarters.

Upon completion of the detail or training and if the apparatus is available to respond, the status of In Service, Status 1, shall be used.

On Air, Status 8 is to be used so that Dispatchers know if apparatus is on the road and may give them the ability to contact a unit sooner should an emergency come in or should there be a problem.

D. Out of Service

The term and Status of "Out of Service," Status 7, shall be used for apparatus that is not available to respond to alarms. This status should be used for apparatus that is out for repairs, out of area for training (at the Ithaca Burn Tower), returning from an Incident not available for Emergency Response, or on a detail that makes them not able to respond.

Dispatchers will announce the apparatus that is "Out of Service" during the nightly announcements.

If a department wishes Fire Control to page that a unit is out of service prior to the nightly announcements, the Department shall contact Fire Control, preferably by radio on Fire Dispatch, and ask them to tone said unit out of service along with pressing Status 7.

F. Special Note

This policy is intended to reduce the necessity to communicate verbally with the Dispatch Center for non-Essential Communications. By utilizing the Status Dek head system, the Dispatcher does not have to respond to each individual apparatus status thus the Dispatcher is able to monitor for essential communications and dispatch other incidents or upgrade the run card assignments.

Rich Roberts- County Chiefs President

Scott Roman- Director DOERC

Policy Statement

200-012

Unique Radio Identifier

December 11, 2013

PREFACE: With the adoption of the Cortland County Land Mobile Radio (LMR) Network, all radios connected with the network are issued a unique radio identifier. This identifier allows the radio to communicate on Cortland, Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison and Oswego counties UHF radio networks.

OBJECTIVE: This policy establishes a means to coordinate the Unique Radio Identifiers (radio IDs) throughout the Cortland County Fire and EMS Departments.

POLICY:

Section 1:

A: Each Unique Radio ID is a six (6) digit identifier specific to that radio. Any radio that is normally used on Cortland County's Land Mobile Radio Network will have a first digit of the Number 6.

B: The first digit 6 in each Unique Radio ID shall then be followed by a two digit agency specific identifier. This identifier is the same as the Fire Department Identification Number for each agency. The Agency Specific identifiers are as follows:

Cincinnatus Fire and Ambulance: 01 Cortland: 02 Cuyler: 03

Harford: 04 Homer: 05 Marathon Fire and Ambulance: 06

McGraw: 07 Preble: 08 Truxton: 09 Virgil: 10 Willet: 11

Department of Emergency Response, Fire Investigation, County Instructors: 12

Cortlandville: 13

C: The next digit in the Unique Radio ID will be the unit or apparatus type. This will follow the current system used throughout the county as closely as possible. The basic ID's will consist of the following:

- Engines: 0 Brush Unit: 1 Tanker: 2 Aerial: 3 Rescue: 4
- Ambulance: 5 Chiefs: 6 Captains: 7 Lieutenants: 8 Stations: 9

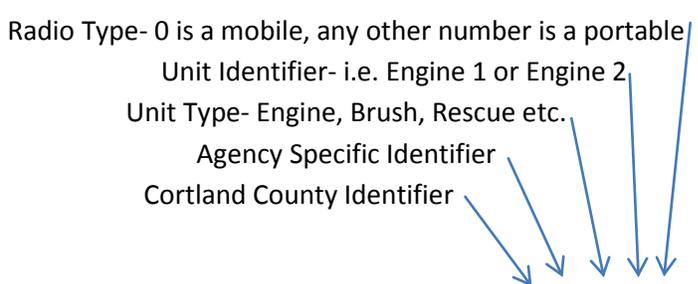
D: The second to last digit in the Unique Radio ID will consist of the specific unit or apparatus identifier.

E: The last digit in the Unique Radio ID is the actual Unique Radio ID. This number will identify which radio from which unit is being used on the radio network.

If the last digit is a zero (0) the radio transmitting is a mobile

If the last digit is one through nine (1-9) it is likely a portable

Exceptions to the 1-9 include agencies that purchased second mobile radios, the second mobile radio has an ID of 9. Also, in terms of the base station radios a 1 is used for all agencies Main Station, for those agencies that have multiple stations or multiple bases a 2 is used for Station 2 and the remaining digits are used for subsequent radios throughout the stations.



Example of a Mobile Radio in Cortland 201: The Unique Radio ID is 6 02 0 1 0

Section 2:

A: When Fire Control contacts a unit or apparatus, they will drop the County Identifier of 6 and state the Unit or Apparatus only.

Example of Fire Control contacting 861 on their mobile:

“861 from Fire Control”

B: When Fire Control contacts a portable they will drop the County Identifier but continue with the Unique Radio Identifier.

Example of Fire Control contacting 1064 on their portable:

“1064 portable 1 from Fire Control”

C: It is imperative that all Firefighters know which portable they have on each individual incident. The reason for this is during Orange Button activations, Fire Control will be calling the unique radio.

D: When Fire Control contacts a Station Radio they will drop the County Identifier and the Unique Radio Identifier and only use the Agency and Unit Identifier.

Example of Fire Control contacting Cortlandville Station 2:

“1392 from Fire Control”

The Dispatcher may also elect to use common terminology in this instance:

“Cortlandville Station 2 from Fire Control”

E: The Communications Center Dispatchers are able to monitor and see what radios are turned on and what talk group the radio is selected to.

Rich Roberts- County Chiefs President

Scott Roman- Director DOERC