



Statewide Interoperability Radio Network (SIRN) Standards, Protocols, Procedures



Document Section	1 – Interoperability Standards	Status: SIEC Sub Committee Approval Date: 6/28/2021 SIEC Approval: 6/28/2021
State Standard Number	1.4.0	
Standard Title	SIRN Regional & Statewide Interoperability Talkgroups	
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to establish policy and procedure for use of the SIRN regional and statewide interoperable talkgroups in all user radios. The regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups are resources intended to facilitate communications among and between different agencies and service branches that need to coordinate their operations during major incidents, pre-planned events, and task force operations. These resources are not intended for localized day-to-day interoperability when a more appropriate resource may be available.

This policy will provide standardized incident response radio communications capabilities for all service branches and, most importantly, will support the deployment of mutual aid resources throughout the State. This policy will provide the radio communications structure necessary to enable effective situational awareness, command and control, and resource coordination in support of the incident command and management structure specified under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This policy will also serve to facilitate coordinated use of these shared resources and to minimize usage conflicts when regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups are needed for multiple incidents.

2. Technical Background

- **Capabilities**

Advancing interoperable communications capabilities across all users within the State is an essential mission for SIRN. SIRN will foster interoperability through a set of SIRN regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups designed for multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline command, coordination, and tactical communications. Other effective interoperability resources will additionally be available including switching to shared conventional frequencies, dispatch console patches, deployable portable gateways, and radio caches (swap radios).

- **Constraints**

The availability of and the use of the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups must be easily understood and be standardized across the State. Standardization of capabilities will provide responding agencies with an assurance that they will have operational communications capabilities with any other agency they need to work with.

3. Operational Context





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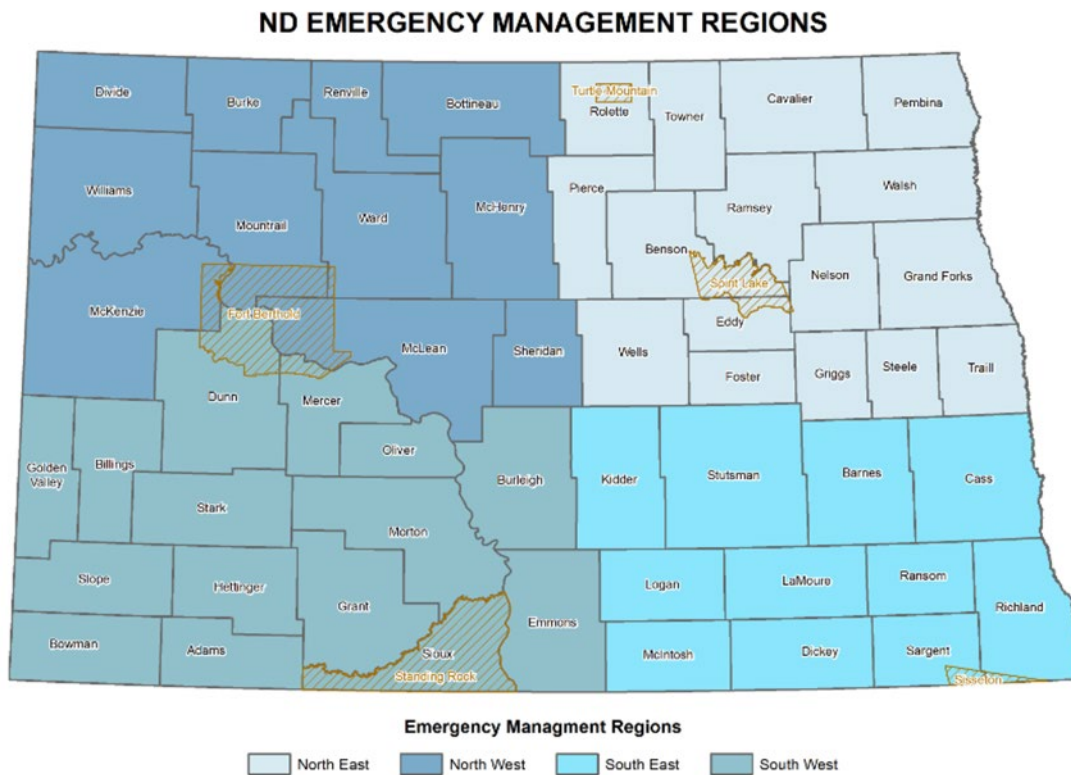
To ensure shared SIRN resources are utilized in a coordinated manner and in accordance to their intended purpose, this policy details various topics including:

- Description of the regional and statewide channels
- Radio programming requirements ensuring the resources are available to all SIRN users
- Intended use cases
- Request and Assignment process

4. Recommended Protocol/ Standard

SIRN will maintain and operate 31 statewide mutual aid talkgroups (referred to as ND MA talkgroups) designed for multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline command, coordination, and tactical communications.

SIRN will additionally maintain and operate eight (8) regional mutual aid talkgroups (Regional MA) for each of the four Emergency Management Agency regions. These Regional MA Talkgroups are designed for multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline command, coordination, and tactical communications.



Equipment Configuration Requirements

Statewide SIRN Talkgroups (ND MA Talkgroups)

All devices operating on SIRN as their primary two-way radio solution **MUST** be programmed with the



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ND MA talkgroups. While the ND MA Talkgroups are intended for universal use, the encrypted talkgroups are dedicated for law enforcement use or require prior approval.

All dispatch consoles operating on SIRN must be configured for access to the ND MA talkgroups.

Regional SIRN Talkgroups (Regional MA Talkgroups)

All devices operating on SIRN as their primary two-way radio solution **MUST** be programmed with all Regional MA talkgroups. While the Regional MA Talkgroups are intended for universal use, the encrypted talkgroups are dedicated for law enforcement use or require prior approval.

SIRN dispatch consoles shall have the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups configured in the console.

See SIRN Standard 1.8.0 Minimum Programming Standards for specific guidance on how to organize and program radios and consoles with ND MA talkgroups.

Incident Scope and Intended Use

SIRN regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, when feasible, should be considered as the primary resource for mutual aid incidents involving joint response from multiple agencies and/or service branches that operate in different service areas, jurisdictions, or levels of government. *Incidents may be pre-planned or emergent in nature.* Some small or more localized incidents may warrant the use of regional or statewide interoperability talkgroups if no other common interoperable resources are available at the time of the incident.

SIRN NA MA talkgroups are categorized and will be assigned as follows:

- ND HAIL: Statewide Hailing channel
- ND PURSUIT 1 and ND PURSUIT 2: Talkgroups for law enforcement use/coordination during pursuits
- ND MA 03E – ND MA 05E: General purpose secure talkgroups for law enforcement use per incident needs
- ND MA 6 – ND MA 30: General purpose clear talkgroups assigned per incident needs

SIRN MA talkgroups are categorized and will be assigned as follows:

- HAIL: Statewide Hailing channel
- MA PURSUIT: Encrypted talkgroups for law enforcement use/coordination during pursuits
- MA 01E: General purpose encrypted talkgroups for law enforcement use per incident needs
- MA 2 – ND MA 6: General purpose clear talkgroups assigned per incident needs

Non-Intended Use

No Daily Use: The regional or statewide talkgroups are not to be used for daily routine operations.

No Unassigned Use or Unauthorized Monitoring: Users are strictly prohibited from using, monitoring, scanning, “parking” on, or affiliating to a statewide or regional talkgroup without an assigned purpose.



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Interoperability talkgroups are intended to be used for specific duties and for designated purposes. Users must have a legitimate business need to use these talkgroups. Unauthorized monitoring is strictly prohibited; it adversely impacts system capacity and could also cause the user to miss important talkgroup transmissions pertaining to their daily duties.

Priorities for Use and Multiple Incidents

In the event that multiple interoperability incidents occur simultaneously, exhausting the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, assignment of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups in incident radio communications plans will be prioritized for: (1) mutual aid incidents, and (2) those incidents involving resources spanning multiple regions. Secondary use and localized or single region mutual aid incidents initially assigned to statewide interoperability talkgroups should be reassigned to regional talkgroups. This reassignment will be coordinated between the affected incident commanders and dispatch centers controlling the incidents.

Communications Planning

It is strongly recommended that Communications Plans for large statewide incidents incorporate in advance the use of the SIRN Interoperability Talkgroups. Use of the NIMS/SIRN Incident Radio Communications Plan format is highly recommended to assist with assignment tracking for pre-planned incidents, incidents utilizing more than one of the statewide talkgroups, and for incidents of long duration.

Regional MAs communications planning MUST consider the needs of State Radio counties within the respective quadrant.

Multi-Group Prohibition

Regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups shall not be part of any announcement or other pre-programmed multi-groups.

5. Recommended Procedure

Request, Assignment and Tracking

ND MA and Regional MA talkgroups must be reserved for pre-planned events or can be “checked out” for emergencies via the SIRN Status Board application (See SIRN Standard 1.7.0 Status Board). Agencies seeking to use SIRN Interoperability Talkgroups shall indicate, through Status Board, (i) purpose, (ii) expected duration for use, (iii) incident point of contact, and (iv) requested number of ND MAs (or Regional MAs). For planned events, requests must be submitted no later than five (5) days prior to the planned event.

ND MA Talkgroups Patching Permissions

Regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups should not be patched to other regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups.

Patching a local resource or talkgroup with an ND MA Talkgroup by a dispatch console operator without prior approval or coordination is not permitted. Exceptions are allowed for the PURSUIT talkgroups which may be patched with local law enforcement talkgroups to bridge real-time interoperable communications with other jurisdictions during these fast-paced incidents.



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Pursuant to coordination and approval, the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups may be patched to:

- Conventional radio frequency (RF) resources, such as VHF, UHF, etc.
- Local agency SIRN talkgroups, such as dispatch mains, tactical talkgroups, etc.

Notification

If the Status Board is unavailable, contact a communication center with access to the Status Board to reserve a talkgroup.

Local Coordination of MA Talkgroups

Multiple agencies supporting a single given incident must first coordinate the request and use of mutual aid talkgroups. To prevent different agencies supporting the same incident from individually requesting and obtaining multiple respective MA talkgroups, agencies must *collectively* identify their mutual aid communications needs and consolidate their request and use of MA talkgroups.

Order of Assignment

The usage of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for Preplanned Non-Emergency interoperability events should use the highest numbered talkgroup and descend.

The usage of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for Unplanned Emergency Incidents should use the lowest numbered talkgroup and ascend.

Training Exercises

Preplanned use of regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups for training should be encouraged. PSAP Managers, Local Administrators and Incident Command System (ICS) Communications Unit Leaders (COML) shall receive initial training and periodic refresher training on the use of this procedure.

Unit Identification

When operating on the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, users should initially identify using plain English.

Use of 10-Codes and Acronyms

The use of 10-codes, signals, unique acronyms, and other codes should not be used on the regional statewide interoperability talkgroups following NIMS standards. Plain language should be used in all cases.

Termination of Use

At the end of the event, the initiating dispatch center will remove any patches that were placed for the event, if any, and clear the Status Board so other communication centers will know this resource is available for use.

6. Management



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The Statewide System Administrator, conjunction with the SIEC, shall ensure that the policy and procedure herein for usage and assignment of the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups is followed.