

Essex County Fire Standard Operating Guideline

Category: Communications	SOG #	801.00
Issued by: Communications Sub-Committee	Issued on:	06.08.2011
Revised by: Communications Sub-Committee	Revised on:	03.08.2024
Page 1 of 2	Revision #	1
Cross Band Repeaters		

Scope

This Standard Operating Guideline applies to all fire departments within Essex County.

Background

Fire departments within Districts 5 and 15 operate on both UHF and VHF frequencies. Since different frequency bands are used, interoperability issues often occur when working with mutual aid partners. To address these issues, the Essex County Fire Chief's Association (ECFCA) maintains four (4) FutureComm X-Band Repeaters strategically located within Essex County. This equipment can provide interoperability across UHF and VHF radio systems when used during an incident.

Purpose

To provide guidance on implementing best practices and using the FutureComm X-Band Repeaters as a tool to aid in interoperable communications at an incident, event, or training exercise.

Standard Operating Guideline

The FutureComm X-Band VHF mobile repeater operates in conjunction with a UHF Motorola XTL5000 mobile radio. These two devices provide the communications path required to operate in the cross-band mode.

The FutureComm VHF channel is fixed on 153.8300N and cannot be changed. The UHF fireground (direct) channel being used at an incident should be selected on the other radio (i.e., EC-FIREGROUND-1). **Please refer to Essex County Crossband Repeater Field Operations Guide.**

Tactical Communication Units (TAC COM): The County has provided four (4) mobile Cross- Band Repeaters or Tactical Communication Units (TAC COM), which enable the use of both UHF and VHF mobile and portable radios on an incident scene under certain conditions. These units utilize County licensed fireground frequencies in the respective bands so that responding companies need only shift to the County fireground frequency in their radios upon arrival and are then able to communicate seamlessly with one another and the Incident Commander. At the request of Incident Command (IC), the TAC COM will be assigned by the respective District 5 or 15 Control Point to respond. NOTE: this is usually on a Second Alarm or greater incident:

When a community advises the Fire Control Point of a 1st Alarm or greater incident, the Fire Control Point should contact the assigned TAC Com by phone to place that unit on Alert; if the assigned TAC COM is

unavailable, the backup TAC COM will be alerted. Upon notification that the host community has declared a 2nd alarm, the TAC COM should be deployed by the Fire Control Point.

Upon arrival in the host community, the TAC COM will report to the Incident Commander as follows: "Command, TAC COM (number) on scene, located at _____, the cross-band repeater is activated and manned." The office in charge of the TAC COM or his authorized designee will remain with the vehicle and monitor all Fireground transmissions as a backup to the Incident Commander. If a communication appears to have been missed by the IC, the TAC COM officer will immediately alert the IC in person of the missed contact. (Future: All fireground communications will be recorded automatically in the TAC COM, and a permanent record maintained.)

Primary and secondary TAC COM assignments will be maintained on the County 10-Alarm cards to be used by the Fire Control to dispatch these units. TAC COM units will be tested, and availability maintained daily along with all community mutual aid status.

Only one (1) of these vehicles needs to be at the Incident Scene, and if more than one is present, only one (1) should activate its repeater.

The Cross-Band Repeaters are only operable with the respective County licensed fireground frequencies for VHF and UHF radios (see listing of these frequencies below). No other frequency will function with these units.

Inventory

Departments Hosting Cross-Band Repeaters

	Designator	Location
District 5	TAC COM 1	Rehab 5
District 15	TAC COM 2	Georgetown Fire Department