

RADIO COMMUNICATION POLICY

PURPOSE

To provide guidance for the use of the MERA radio system

RELATED POLICIES

Communications Failure, #7002; Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) Mutual Aid and Communications Policy

POLICY

A. Available Communications Resources

1. **MERA Policy:** Users should refer to the MERA Communications Policy for general directions for the use of the MERA system.
2. **Templates:** Users should refer to their Agency Templates or Fleetmap for the locations of specific talkgroups on their console, back-up control stations, mobile and portable radios. The Templates also contain the correct name (alias) for that talkgroup.
3. **Permissions:** Users shall only use talkgroups that have been assigned for their use. Users may use talkgroups that are assigned for temporary use by a Marin communications center or incident commander "I.C.". Before users can use any talkgroup (other than those stated above) provided by another agency they must have a written agreement with that agency.
4. **MERA Radio System:** Field units can communicate directly to the hospital using the designated talkgroups on their mobile or portable MERA radio. On all EMS/ Fire radios, Zone A contains the EMS talkgroups; "mode" channels contain the following aliases or talkgroup names:
 - a. **EMS** is to communicate with the County EMS Dispatcher
 - b. **HOSP** is the MERA "All Hospital" talkgroup for large-scale incidents
 - c. **MGH 1** is for MarinHealth Medical Center "MARIN REPORT"
 - d. **MGH 2** is for MarinHealth Medical Center "MARIN CONSULT"
 - e. **KSR 1** is for Kaiser San Rafael Hospital "KAISER REPORT"
 - f. **KSR 2** is for Kaiser San Rafael Hospital "KAISER CONSULT"
 - g. **NCH 1** is for Novato Community Hospital "NOVATO REPORT"
 - h. **NCH 2** is for Novato Community Hospital "NOVATO CONSULT"
 - i. **EMS 10** is for EMS tactical operations and shall be assigned by the IC or Comm. Center
 - j. **LG CLL** is for hailing a local government agency or units. Once contact is made, then go to LG TLK
 - k. **LG TLK** is for conversations with local government agencies
 - l. **PD CLL** is for hailing law enforcement units. Once contact is made go to PD TLK
 - m. **PD TLK** is for conversations with law enforcement
 - n. **911** is for emergency communications with a communications center

6. **Paging:** The field units will be responsible to set the Page function on their radio for initial contact with the hospitals. Other units may be using the channel at the same time, please listen for broadcast traffic before beginning your transmission. A page may not be needed if the receiving hospital radio is staffed due to other broadcast traffic.
7. **Initiating Communications:** When making initial contact with a communications center, unit or hospital you should state the name of the entity you are calling first, then your identifier followed by the “alias” of the talkgroup you are on, i.e. “Marin Comm., Medic-1 on EMS Dispatch” or “MarinHealth Medical Center, Medic-1 on Consult.”
8. **Consult:** “Consult” talkgroups shall be used for physician consults and policy required consultations.
9. **Report:** “Report” talkgroups shall be used for routine hospital reports.
10. **Hosp:** The “All Hospital” talkgroup shall be used for hospital communications during large scale incidents or other urgent communications that may require multiple hospitals to share information simultaneously and during failures of normal communications systems.
11. **Emergency Button Activations:** Emergency Button Activations are authorized when an EMS Field Unit needs urgent or emergency assistance. It is not to be used for routine assistance requests. Field Units should expect an emergency response from other public safety units following an Emergency Button Activation. Please see the MERA Communications Policy for further information. Due to the system configuration the Emergency Buttons are not active for private EMS providers or hospitals.
12. **Hospital Systems:** Marin County hospitals are equipped with three radios. Console set 1 is for hospital reports and is labeled with the initials of the hospital -1, i.e. MGH 1. Console set 2 is for hospital consults and is labeled with the initials of the hospital -2, i.e. MGH 2. Console set 3 is for the all hospital talkgroup and is labeled HOSP this consol should be left on this talkgroup at all times. Console 3 is also able to receive and transmit on other talkgroups; hospitals should review their Templates and Trouble Shooting Guide for use of other talkgroups if urgent communications are required, i.e. using the 911 channel to request law enforcement during an emergency and no other forms of communication are available.
13. **ALS / BLS Use:** ALS and BLS users should both use the system in the same manner for hospital consultations, reports and multiple casualty incident activities.
14. **Cellular telephone service:** Field units can use the cellular telephone to communicate directly with the hospital emergency department. Cell phones should be a second choice during MCI operations due to the loss of information to other units involved in the incident.
15. **Contact an alternative hospital:** If contact cannot be made with the receiving hospital field units may contact an alternative hospital via the listed methods and request the information be relayed to the appropriate hospital by telephone.
16. **If contact cannot be established:** If contact cannot be established with any hospital emergency department, the Paramedic shall rely on the EMS Policy “Communication Failure #7002”.
17. Any major system failure should be reported to the Marin Communications Center and the Marin County Radio Shop. Hospitals should consult their Trouble Shooting Guide before calling for outside assistance; requests for repairs should be made by an authorized employee of the hospital or agency.