

Title:	AWIN Interoperable Communications Policy
Areas affected:	AWIN Policy Development Workgroup, AWIN Program Director, AWIN Steering Committee
Last Revised:	
Owner:	AWIN
Document No.:	

AWIN Interoperable Communications Guidelines

1. Purpose and Scope:

To define the guidelines for using the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN) as a means to achieve Interoperable Communications.

2. Policy:

There are four types of communications events. In each of these events the responding agency/entity should have the flexibility to use the resources they need to communicate, however each agency/entity should utilize the system in the least resource intensive mode necessary.

- 1 Use of NPSPAC direct channels, if in close proximity.
- 2 The incident commander designates one of their Tactical talkgroups for use as the event talkgroup.
- 3 Use of AWIN interoperable talkgroups. (Mutual Aid Channels or MAC)

2.1 Local Event - Defined as operating within the entity's jurisdiction or close proximity of the entity. The first choice, if available, should be the use of National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee, NPSPAC, direct channels. NPSPAC channels put the radios in talk around mode. Talk around mode works similar to a walkie talkie. The Radio supports 5 separate channels. Each of these channels works within the transmission range of each unit. These channels do not use AWIN trunked repeater sites. Responders will be able to communicate effectively within radio transmission range of each other. (Typically 10 miles or less depending on use of portable or mobile radios.) This is not a requirement and each responding agency/entity has the flexibility to utilize the AWIN resources as required to adequately communicate during a local event.

2.2 Entity to Entity Interoperability - Defined as operating in a multi-jurisdictional mode, but not necessarily in close physical proximity. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) has developed a system that helps emergency managers and responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines work together more effectively to handle emergencies and disasters. Most incidents are handled on a daily basis by a single, local jurisdiction at the local level, often by fire personnel, EMS and law enforcement. But even for incidents that are relatively limited in scope, coordination and cooperation among the responding organizations makes for a more effective response. AWIN recommends all entities on the system utilize NIMS standards when dealing with multiple agency/entity events. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to coordinate Interoperable communications through the use of AWIN resources. This could range from the use of agency/entity talkgroups to

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a request to ADEM to designate a Mutual Aid Channel (MAC) for use on the event.

2.3 Multi-jurisdictional or Statewide Emergency - Defined as a statewide or regional event involving two or more agencies or entities needing coordinated action. Large Scale or Statewide Emergencies operate the same as entity to entity communications. However, in large scale multi-jurisdictional events ADEM will coordinate the required communications channels.

2.4 Hailing- Defined as one entity making contact with another entity on a designated channel for non-emergency communication. An agency/entity may contact another agency/entity which utilizes the AWIN system by utilizing the MAC-Call talkgroup. Communication between the two entities should continue after contact on MAC-5. The purpose of this ability is to facilitate agency or entity contact as needed through the radio system. For an agency/entity to effectively utilize Hailing the entity will need to monitor the MAC-Call at their dispatch or they will not hear incoming communications requests. This ability is subject to the following guidelines for usage.

- 2.4.1 Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) supports the use of MAC-Call for Entity to Entity Hailing.
- 2.4.2 ADEM, by policy, allows only two MAC talkgroups to be utilized without ADEM approval. These talkgroups are MAC-Call and MAC-5. All other MAC talkgroups require ADEM approval for use.
- 2.4.3 Extended Communication between the agency's/entities should not occur on MAC-Call. The communicating agencies/entity should move to MAC talkgroup 5 for the necessary communication. MAC Channel 5 will be designated as the "State Non-Emergency Interoperability Talkgroup". As such this talkgroup may have multiple conversations and there should be no expectation this talkgroup is private. ADEM will not permit the use of other MAC talkgroups for non-emergency communications.
- 2.4.4 If an event occurs ADEM may order MAC-Call traffic to be emergency traffic only. If this occurs, non-emergency traffic should be discontinued.

3. Responsibility/Assignment:

1. Each Local entity should utilize the system in the least resource intensive mode necessary.
2. The Local entity should provide monitoring of MAC-Call at the agency dispatch to effectively utilizing Hailing.
3. ADEM will coordinate the use of all MAC talkgroups in a large scale or statewide emergency.

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4. Definitions:

Steering Committee - Provides general oversight of the entire program including executive support, fiscal oversight, legislative and administration communications, strategy, and overall accountability.

Local Leadership Council - Provides the local perspective on the AWIN program. Additionally, this group provides advice and guidance on strategic planning, funding, program policies and procedures.

AWIN Support Staff - Manages the day-to-day operational needs of the system.

Program Management – Overall responsibility for coordinating the various projects related to the AWIN implementation as well as the development of policies and guidelines that are in support of the long term operations of AWIN.

AWIN Policy Workgroup – A workgroup working under the direction of the AWIN Steering Committee consisting of State and County personnel experienced in the operations of a trunked radio system. This workgroup is responsible for developing business strategies and procedures which promote efficient and secure operation of the Arkansas Wireless Information Network.