Minnesota Department of Corrections

Policy Number:	**301.067**
Title:	**Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) Radio System**
Effective Date:	**11/19/19**

PURPOSE: To provide procedures governing the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) participation on the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) radio system and use of ARMER radio communications equipment.

APPLICABILITY: All facilities, central office, and associated work units

DEFINITIONS:

Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) – the Minnesota statewide 800MHz digital trunked radio system.

Communications unit leader (COML) – the position within the incident command system responsible for managing communications during an expanded operation incident.

Incident command system (ICS) –a component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This system is used by DOC staff along with mutual aid agreements (see Policy 300.036, "Emergency Assistance Non-State Systems,") in the management of incidents that occur outside normal operations.

Talkgroup – a common group of users assigned to a virtual radio channel used in a trunked radio system (e.g., DOC STW 1). The setting operates in the same fashion as an individual frequency on a conventional radio system.

Trunking (or Trunked) – a sharing of communication paths to create a more efficient use of the available resources. Trunking allows for the sharing of a set quantity of frequencies among many talkgroups instead of providing fixed communication paths individually as in conventional radio systems. Trunked communications paths are controlled by a computer which assigns the available resources instead of having each channel assigned to individual repeaters as in a conventional system.

PROCEDURES:

A. The DOC uses the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) system for all radio communications. Routine operation is conducted on the DOC sub-system. Interoperable communications are conducted on the ARMER system regional and statewide resources. DOC participation on ARMER must be in keeping with all Federal Communications Commission (FCC), State Emergency Communications Board, and Regional Radio and/or Emergency Services Board standards.

B. Radio system administration

1. The DOC 800 MHz radio system is administered by the ARMER system administrator (ASA). The ASA oversees the agency wide operation through assigned facility communication lieutenants (CLts) and acts as the DOC point of contact for ARMER. The ASA duties include (but are not limited to):
    a) Managing system operations including: usage, system performance, and trouble-shooting.

(1) Monitoring system operation on a regular basis. This includes monitoring for potential problems;
(2) Acting as a liaison between the DOC and the State Emergency Communications Board (SECB), subcommittees, and groups;
(3) Ensuring that operations are consistent with SECB and Regional Radio Board (RRB) and/or Emergency Communications Network (ECN) standards;
(4) Developing and implementing contingency plans in the event of system outages and emergency communications; and
(5) Analyzing usage reports on a monthly basis, reporting any problems or potential misuse to the employee's supervisor and facility CLt.

b) Managing department-wide radio inventory on an annual basis with the assistance of the facility CLt, accounting for all ARMER radios in DOC service.
c) Coordinating ongoing system service and maintenance by acting as the point of contact for facilities, vendors, and service providers.
d) Coordinating ongoing radio and accessory purchases for facilities by acting as the point of contact for facilities and vendors.
e) Attending the SECB, subcommittee, and/or owner's group meetings as needed.
f) Representing the DOC on the SECB, the SECB interoperability committee (IOC), and the SECB interoperable data committee (IDC).
g) Completing all training required to properly manage the system as provided by Motorola, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and/or other vendors.
h) Obtaining and keeping current state recognition as an All Hazards Type III communications unit leader (COML) through the state office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM).
(1) Responding as needed to expanded operation ICS activations at all facilities;
(2) Responding, as available, to COML requests throughout the state; and
(3) Maintaining a store of all needed supplies and equipment for COML activations.
i) Establishing standards for DOC ARMER radio system use, equipment selection, and maintenance; and monitoring compliance of DOC ARMER use with DOC, SECB, and FCC standards.
j) Managing the commissioning and de-commissioning of subscriber units as they are added or removed from the ARMER system.
k) Annually updating the MIP's database upon reconciliation of the agency's inventory control report.

2. Each facility must designate a CLt. The CLt oversees system operation on a facility-specific basis. The CLt must have a working knowledge of system operation and resource use. Other CLt duties include (but are not limited to) such examples as:
a) Managing a quarterly and annual radio inventory and distributing inventory control reports to the DOC ASA;
b) Attending the RRB meetings in their region as the DOC representative and advising the ASA of any regional radio issues affecting the DOC;
c) Representing their institution on the DOC radio committee (DRC);
d) Monitoring system performance and issues;
e) Reporting any deficiencies to the ASA;
f) Advising the ASA of any procedural issues regarding radio operations;

g) Ensuring that new staff are trained by the communications liaison officer on proper radio operation to DOC standards;
h) Recruiting and facilitating training of facility radio instructors;
i) Managing subscriber unit purchasing and consulting the ASA as needed to ensure purchases are compatible and meet technical and administrative standards;
j) Forwarding serial numbers of new subscriber unit purchases to the ASA for commissioning on the ARMER system and notices of inactive radios removed from the system for decommissioning; and
k) Notifying the ASA of any intended changes to the ARMER system.

3. Each facility must designate a communications liaison officer (CLO). The CLO must have a working knowledge of system operation, resource use and should preferably be a regular control center staff person. The CLO acts as the point of contact regarding operational procedures. Other CLO duties include (but are not limited to) such examples as:
   a) Advising the CLt of any operational issues regarding the system operation; and
   b) Training staff on portable, mobile, and console operation.

4. Each facility must designate a communications electronics technician (CET) as the radio maintenance contact person. The CET acts as a facility point of contact regarding any maintenance for the ARMER system equipment; see ARMER Radio Programming and Preventative Maintenance (attached). Other CET duties include (but are not limited to) such examples as:
   a) Performing basic troubleshooting in the event of system technical problems;
   b) Facilitating the visits of contract personnel for system maintenance; and
   c) Performing basic portable radio maintenance including:
      (1) Repair/replace basic accessories (antenna, shoulder microphone, etc.);
      (2) Facilitate the repair of any portable radios through approved repair shops;
      (3) Reprogram portable radios as needed; and
      (4) Perform yearly preventative maintenance checks and calibration on radios.

C. Operational procedures; see ARMER Radio Console Operations Manual (MCC7500 and MIP 5000, attached)

1. Routine daily operations must be conducted on the six security operations talkgroups assigned to each facility. Talkgroup 1 (DOC facility name 1) is designated as each facility's main talkgroup. Talkgroup 2 (DOC facility name 2) is designated as each facility's maintenance talkgroup. Talkgroup 3 (DOC facility name 3) is designated as each facility's perimeter security talkgroup.

2. Talkgroups four through six are three additional talkgroups designated for each facility. Use of these talkgroups must be managed by each facility's CLt, watch commander or captain, or DOC COML.

3. Incident command system (ICS)/emergency operations must be initiated by staff on the facility main (DOC facility name1) talkgroup unless an operational need arises to use another talkgroup.

4. Expanded operations or mutual aid events must be conducted on the talkgroups assigned by the COML or incident commander. Prior to the arrival of a COML on scene, facilities must utilize the Standing Radio Emergency Communications Plan (attached) for talkgroup

assignments during expanded operations. Use of regional and statewide tactical talkgroups must comply with SECB and RRB and/or ECN standards.

5. Regional and statewide talkgroup use or talkgroup patching must be coordinated through Minnesota Correctional Facility – Oak Park Heights (MCF – OPH) or Minnesota Correctional Facility – Faribault (MCF – FRB) master control. To reserve or begin use of a regional or statewide resource, or to request a communications patch be established with another agency's talkgroup, the facility or work group staff must contact the following dispatch center:
   a) Minnesota Correctional Facilities – Lino Lakes (MCF – LL), Moose Lake (MCF – ML), MCF – OPH, Rush City (MCF – RC), and Stillwater (MCF – STW) must contact the MCF – OPH master control.
   b) Minnesota Correctional Facilities – Red Wing (MCF – RW), MCF – FRB, Shakopee (MCF – SHK), St. Cloud (MCF – SCL), Togo (MCF – TOGO), and Willow River (MCF – WR) must contact the MCF – FRB master control.
   c) The hospital work unit and central transport work unit must contact the MCF – OPH master control.

6. Non-DOC talkgroups must not be used without prior authorization from the ASA, CLt, COML, or incident commander. Non-DOC talkgroups may be used anytime a situation requires immediate contact with another agency and other methods of communication are unavailable.

7. All facilities with console equipment (MCF – FRB, MCF-LL, MCF – ML, MCF – OPH, MCF – RW, MCF – RC, MCF – SHK, MCF – SCL, and MCF –STW) must monitor the following talkgroups at all times at the console operator positions:
   a) DOC MAIN;
   b) DOC (facility abbreviation) 1 (e.g., DOC STW 1);
   c) DOC (facility abbreviation) 2;
   d) ICS;
   e) Emergency;
   f) Hospital Main (HSP); and
   g) DOC TRANS1.

8. All facilities must maintain logs on a shift-by-shift basis of radio assignments for emergency button activations via the console activity window utilizing the intranet based logging system.

9. All users must comply with FCC regulations as well as SECB and RRB and/or ECN standards regarding radio usage.

10. Staff misuse of facility radios, including, but not limited to, use of unauthorized talkgroups, monitoring non-DOC talkgroups, misuse of recorded audio transmissions, or modifying radio settings without prior approval, may result in discipline.

11. All facilities must provide either checklists, post orders, and/or facility-specific training for facility-specific operational procedures of the ARMER system.

D. Training

1. All radio users, prior to radio use, must participate in required ARMER initial user training. At a minimum, training consists of a one-hour academy class and the radio operation field training officer learning modules.

2. All users must participate in required refresher training on ARMER system radio procedure and use on an annual basis.

3. Employees who use additional types of radio equipment must attend additional specialized training for equipment use (e.g., mobiles and consoles).
   a) One hour of additional training is required for mobile radio users by the facility CLO.
   b) Dispatch console operators must participate in an annual online refresher module.
   c) Console operators must comply with all ARMER training updates.

4. All training must be documented in the agency-approved electronic training management system.

E. Security and inventory control
1. Each facility must develop a checklist, post order, and/or training that supports procedures for the issuance, distribution, and control of radio equipment, and includes the following:
   a) Issuance of radio equipment to employees;
   b) Inventory of radio equipment;
   c) Lost or damaged equipment;
   d) Commissioning or decommissioning of subscriber units; and
   e) Storage of radio equipment.

2. Each facility CLt must manage or conduct a quarterly inventory of all radios assigned to the facility or work group and report changes back to the ASA. Each facility CLt must provide a full inventory report of facility radios to the ASA on an annual basis due upon completion of each facility's annual subscriber unit preventive maintenance.

3. Annual DOC radio fleet inventory logs must be submitted to the ASA.

F. Audio logging
1. The DOC logs all audio radio transmissions for all DOC trunked talkgroups in ARMER zones one and three.

2. The DOC cooperatively logs all audio radio transmissions for the Minnesota Department of Human Services – Minnesota Sex Offender Program (DHS – MSOP) trunked talkgroups in ARMER zone three. DHS – MSOP cooperatively logs all audio radio transmissions for all DOC trunked talkgroups in ARMER zone five.

3. Access to the logged audio must be limited to the ASA, CLt, office of special investigations (OSI) staff, captains, and warden/designee. Exportation of logged audio is forbidden without the express consent of the warden/designee, OSI staff, or the ASA. In certain incidents the recorded data must be treated as evidence and handled according to Policy 301.035, "Evidence Management."

4. Retention

The audio of radio transmissions must be retained for a period of nine months from the date of recording. After that period of time, the logged audio radio transmissions are purged from the logging recorder.

5. Logged radio audio is retained on the DOC NICE INFORM server.

6. Audio logging with other agencies must be maintained through interagency agreements.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. Annual facility radio inventory reports are submitted to the ARMER system administrator (ASA).

B. Annual DOC radio fleet inventory logs are submitted to the ASA.

C. Logged radio audio is retained on the DOC NICE INFORM server.

D. Audio logging with other agencies is maintained through interagency agreements.

ACA STANDARDS: 4-4217

REFERENCES: Minn. Stat. §§ 403.20 to 403.40
Policy 300.036, "Emergency Assistance Non-State Systems"
Policy 301.035, "Evidence Management"

REPLACES: Policy 301.067, "Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) Radio System," 8/2/16.
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: ARMER Radio Programming and Preventative Maintenance (301.067A; secure document, no public access)
MIP 5000 ARMER Radio Console Operations Manual (301.067B; secure document, no public access)
MCC 7500 ARMER Radio Console Operations Manual (301.067C; secure document, no public access)
Standing Radio Emergency Communications Plan (301.067D; secure document, no public access)

APPROVALS:
Deputy Commissioner, Community Services
Deputy Commissioner, Facility Services
Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support
Assistant Commissioner, Facility Services

Security Instructions
301.067AllFacilities, "ARMER Radio System Procedures for All Facilities" (applicable to all facilities)
301.067-1CO, "Hospital Security Radio Emergency Alerting" (applicable to select facilities/units)