



## BCoFR Radio System Cutover Information

This document is to inform everyone about the radio system changes that will take effect with the upcoming radio system cutover, and so you will have something to refer to as needed. It is important that this information be shared with everyone who uses the radio system. All LACCs are encouraged to go over this information with their members ASAP.

While the actual cutover has been a long time coming, we will soon have a much-improved regional radio system. In Bedford County we will be going from three towers to seven, with the added benefit that all other towers on the system in Lynchburg and Amherst County will be seamlessly working with ours to provide improved coverage. Users will no longer have to manually switch to another tower – the system will automatically use the best tower for your transmission location.

Our coverage testing went much better than expected and, while it is certainly possible that there may be places where your radio will not work, overall coverage is greatly improved countywide. Please understand that this new digital system will sound different than the current analog system but that voices will also be clearer. Remember that the microphone needs to be in front of your mouth and about three inches away.

The cutover to the P-25 system is scheduled for Sunday, June 16, 2017 at about 10 am. The exact time depends on what calls are in progress then. All personnel will be alerted by radio announcement and voice pager alert before the time of the actual cutover.

- Local agencies that use Active911 should also send an administrative announcement to all of their users with the cutover announcement.
- **All local agencies should ensure that someone is present to change all of their mobile and base station radio(s) at cutover time.**

As soon as possible but before July 13<sup>th</sup> every radio should be switched over to the P-25 system to ensure that it registers on the new system, and then turn it back. It will say REGISTER on the display briefly the first time only. If any radio does not register please notify the BCoFR radio field integration manager **ASAP**.

While it was necessary for us to program the portable radios (that have the capability) with the P-25 noise cancellation feature turned on, it needs to be turned off as it can distort some radio transmissions. **Please do this now.** If you are operating in a noisy environment, such as pump operator, you should turn noise cancellation on as it will greatly reduce your background noise. If your particular radio does not support noise cancellation this process will not work.

Follow these steps to turn off/on noise cancellation:

- Unlock the radio
- Select the menu by pushing the M button one time
- Use the arrow keys to scroll to NOIS CAN
- Push the M button one time to turn it on/off
- The display will briefly tell you whether it is on or off

**At the actual time of the cutover:**

- All XG-75 and P7300 portables with an A/B switch are to be changed to the B position. They must then stay there.
- All M7300 mobile radios with the A/B/C buttons are to be changed to the B position. They must then stay there. The C button is not currently programmed for anything.
- All other portables and mobiles must be manually changed to the talk group called OPS\_P25.
  - To make this change on these portables you will first have to unlock the portable, then use the arrow keys to change to OPS\_P25.

Unless there is a specific operational need, all channels needed for most activities are located in the OPS\_P25 talk group. You may then switch to other talk groups as necessary – see below for the list.

Once you are on the OPS\_P25 talk group you will see these changes:

- There is no longer a channel called FIREDISP. This is now called BC\_CH1 or just Channel 1. All calls will be dispatched on this channel. This channel is also at position 16 on most portables.
- There are now five Operations channels that are labeled BC\_OPS2 through BC\_OPS 6.
- What used to be the EMS north and south channels are now labeled LZOPSN (for north) and LZOPSS (for south). These channels will be used for helicopter landing zone operations and communicating with Bedford Memorial Hospital.
- All radios now have the SOC operations channel. This is only to be used for SOC activities at the direction of the SOC commander or OIC.
- As discussed in the last training video, the E-911 and REG\_FIRE channels are only used for specific purposes.

The other P-25 talk groups are:

- FIRE\_P25 – the local fire agency private channels
- RESC\_P25 – the local EMS agency private channels
- INTEROP – this has our dispatch channel at positions 1 and 16 (although position 1 is mislabeled as FR-DISP on some radios), the Amherst Ops channels 1-4, and the LFD dispatch and fire ground channels 1-4.
- CONV\_P25
  - The first four positions are our tactical channels (the old talk channels plus one) and are named TAC A through D.
    - These are to be referred to as TAC Alpha, TAC Bravo, TAC Charlie and TAC Delta

- These are point to point channels that do not go through the radio system and are not monitored by our dispatch center.
- They can be used for training, traffic control or any similar use.
- You must notify dispatch on BC\_CH1 or your assigned OPS channel when you start and stop using one of these channels so they will know if one is in use.
- The remainder of the channels in this talk group are regional/national channels that we are required to have in every radio. These channels are not to be used unless specifically directed to do so.

Additional radio information:

- All portable radios default to Locked and Scan off.
  - If you manually turn scan on and then turn the radio off, scan will stay on. This is an unintended programming error. If you do this, you should turn scan off when on any call.
- All mobile radios default to Unlocked and Scan on.
  - When you take the mic out of the mic holder the scan feature is automatically disabled.
    - This will not work on mobile radios in vehicles where the mic is hanging from the rear-view mirror or similar and not in the mic holder unless the mic has been modified. These hanging devices are not recommended.
- Please keep in mind that all emergency signal buttons are active!

If you have any questions regarding the operation of our radio system, please contact your Local Agency Communications Coordinator.