

**METRO REGION**  
**800 MHz Trunked Regional Public Safety Radio System**  
**Standards, Protocols, Procedures**

Document Section:	<b>3 - Interoperability Guidelines</b>	Radio TOC Recommendation
Sub-Section:	<b>METRO 3.14.0</b>	Date: 5/24/01
Procedure Title:	<b>Use of Metro-wide 800 MHz ATACs and PTACs</b>	
Date Established:	<b>1/6/01</b>	MESB Approval - Signature:
Replaces Document Dated:	<b>12/15/01</b>	
Date Revised:	<b>12/5/07</b>	06/01/01

**1. Purpose or Objective**

To establish policy & procedures for use of the metro-wide 800 MHz ATAC and PTAC talk groups. These talkgroups are a metro-wide resource to facilitate communications between agencies that typically do not communicate with each other on a regular basis. This policy will serve to minimize usage conflicts when an interoperability talk group is needed for an event.

**2. Technical Background:**

▪ **Capabilities**

It is possible to have access to ATAC and PTAC talkgroups in radios used by agencies that share use of the metro-wide 800 MHz radio system. These common talkgroups can be used for a wide range of intercommunication when coordination of activities between personnel of different agencies is needed on an event. Patching of the talkgroups can be done to any single non-hard patched conventional resource, other common talkgroups or to private talkgroups as needed to facilitate communications for an event.

▪ **Constraints**

Some of these talk groups may be used as part of a soft patch to common VHF channels that are restricted for use by personnel of specific services such as the MINSEF VHF frequency may only be used by law enforcement and EMS personnel. The dispatch center creating the patch is responsible for checking for proper talkgroup authorizations when creating soft patches.

Because many different agencies may be communicating with one another, for purposes of safety, plain English/common terminology must be used when communicating on these regional resources. The use of ten codes is not permitted. This pertains to direct or indirect (when in soft patch) use of these regional resources.

The availability of and the use of these talkgroups should be easily understood by radio user personnel who are primarily concerned with their mission.

ATACs and PTACs are not to be used for an internal event. Private, other tactical, admin or common talkgroups are for internal agency communications. ATACs and PTACs should be used only when interoperability with external agencies is needed or is likely.

The ATAC and PTAC regional talkgroups are not capable of encryption.

Any metro-wide 800 MHz radio system talkgroup can be in only one patch whether it is a hard (technician set permanent) or soft (radio console operator set temporary) patch.

**3. Operational Context:**

These talkgroups are a metro-wide resource to facilitate communications between agencies that typically do not communicate with each other on a regular basis.

**4. Recommended Protocol/ Standard:**

**ATAC TALK GROUPS**

<b><u>TG Requirements* See ARMER Standard 3.2f for mandatory requirements</u></b>	<b><u>For Whom?</u></b>
<u>Highly Recommended</u>	<u>All public safety and public service mobiles, portables, PSAPs</u>
<u>Recommended</u>	
<u>Optional</u>	<u>None</u>
<u>Not Allowed</u>	<u>None</u>

<b><u>Cross Patch Standard</u></b>	<b><u>YES / NO</u></b>	<b><u>To TalkGroups</u></b>
<u>Soft Patch</u>	<u>Optional</u>	<u>As Needed</u>
<u>Hard Patch</u>	<u>No</u>	

**PTAC TALK GROUPS**

<b><u>TG Requirements* See ARMER Standard 3.2f for mandatory requirements</u></b>	<b><u>For Whom?</u></b>
<u>Highly Recommended</u>	<u>All public safety mobiles, portables, PSAPs</u>
<u>Recommended</u>	<u>All public safety mobiles, portables, PSAPs</u>
<u>Optional</u>	<u>None</u>
<u>Not Allowed</u>	<u>Public service</u>

<b><u>Cross Patch Standard</u></b>	<b><u>YES / NO</u></b>	<b><u>To TalkGroups</u></b>
<u>Soft Patch</u>	<u>Optional</u>	<u>As Needed</u>
<u>Hard Patch</u>	<u>No</u>	

In order to meet the communications needs for an event, the ATAC & PTAC talkgroups may be patched to:

- Conventional RF resources, such as VHF, UHF etc.
- Private agency talkgroups, such as dispatch mains, tactical talkgroups etc.
- Direct patches between the ATAC & PTAC talkgroups, although this would not be preferred as a method of resolving communications needs.

The "Status Board" application will be used to manage the talkgroup resource.

The TAC talkgroups shall only be used when there is a significant need for interagency communications and other suitable means for interagency communications are unavailable, to avoid a reduction in availability of this resource when it is needed for important events.

None of the ATAC & PTAC talkgroups shall be part of any system configured multi-group.

The ATAC, PTAC recording procedure falls under Metro Standard 3.1h – Recording Interagency Talk Groups.

It is highly recommended that the 800MHz system public safety dispatch consoles have all the PTAC and ATAC talkgroups available for patching.

It is highly recommended that public safety radio users program a sufficient quantity of PTAC & ATAC talkgroups into their subscriber radios to meet their interagency communications needs, starting with PTAC1 & ATAC1.

It is highly recommended that the 800MHz system non-public safety dispatch consoles have all the ATAC talkgroups available for patching.

It is highly recommended that non-public safety radio users program a sufficient quantity of ATAC talkgroups into their subscriber radios to meet their interagency communications needs, starting with ATAC1.

**If an agency elects to not program a sufficient quantity of these tactical talkgroups, it is the individual agency's responsibility to understand that they will be limiting their ability to communicate with other agencies during an emergency event. The agency will be responsible to resolve its interagency communications methods during an event.**

#### **5. Recommended Procedure:**

The pool talkgroups may either be used directly, or be patched to other resources to meet the communications needs of an event.

The usage of PTACs and ATACs for **EMERGENCY or INPROGRESS** interoperability events should be PTAC 1, 2, 3, 4 and ATAC 1, 2, 3, 4 in that order.

The usage of PTACs and ATACs for **PREPLANNED NON-EMERGENCY** interoperability events should be PTAC 4, 3, 2, 1 or ATAC 4, 3, 2, 1 in that order.

Public Safety based conventional resources such as, "MINSEF VLAW31, Statewide Fire VFIRE23, METTAC P" cannot be patched to any of the ATAC talkgroups.

When a resource is needed, the requesting agency will contact the appropriate 800 MHz dispatch center to have the next preferred available talkgroup granted. The dispatch center will utilize the "Status Board" application to identify the status of the resource.

At the conclusion of the event the 800MHz dispatch center will remove any patches that were used for the event, and update the status board.

Resources that are patched to these talkgroups, such as MINSEF VLAW31, Statewide Fire VFIRE23, and National EMS VMED28 VHF radio frequencies shall continue to adhere to the rules set forth by the groups that govern the use of their respective conventional radio resources.

**NOTE: Dispatch centers initiating any soft patches must announce the patch after it is set up AND prior to it being taken down.**

#### **6. Management**

Dispatch center managers & supervisors for agencies on the metro-wide 800 MHz radio system shall insure that this procedure for usage and assignment of the ATAC & PTAC talkgroups be adhered to, as well as the setting up of soft patches for which they are responsible.

The MnDOT System Administrator shall be responsible for the Status Board application.

Dispatch center operators shall receive initial and continuing training on the use of this procedure.