



## State of Wisconsin

# Recommended Public Safety Radio Channel Naming Standards

Updated 4/11/17

### Introduction

Public safety agencies in the State of Wisconsin recognize that inter-discipline, inter-agency cooperation and coordination is vital to the rapid and efficient response to critical incidents that affect our citizens. The cornerstone of any response is the ability to communicate effectively.

### Purpose

The purpose of this guidance to establish standards for channel names that is logical, understandable and consistent across jurisdictions and disciplines. These standards would bring uniformity to public safety radio systems at the agency and county shared channel levels and would be similar to the channel nomenclature that has been established at the regional, state and federal mutual aid levels.

A uniform format for channel names will promote improved understanding and usage of operable and interoperable communications pathways by enabling standardized training curriculums for first-line emergency responders; consistent tactical interoperable communication plan (TICP) development; facilitate the implementation of incident communication plans during large scale, multi-agency emergency situations; and promote the development of region-wide programming templates to inter - connect differing radio systems through various means such as patches, gateways and other emerging technologies.

### Application

This guidance is recommended for adoption by all public safety radio users in the State of Wisconsin.

### Implementation

The transition period to implement these radio channel naming standards will be an evolutionary process as agencies migrate to new radio systems or update their subscriber unit templates. It is anticipated that the vast majority of public safety agencies will implement these standards by 2020.

It is highly recommended that even if individual local agencies do not have immediate plans to implement these standards, agencies should develop future channel naming templates that would be made available to other agencies that are actively programming their radios to these standards.

### Standard Channel Naming Format

Due to the wide variation of radio display size, for purposes of this guidance, the ten (10) character channel nomenclature will be the default standard display format. The channel naming structure would be adjusted for smaller radio displays first by shortening the APCO/NPSTC purpose codes, (if applicable), and then by eliminating the two-digit county code at the agency channel naming level.

Radios that have more than the ten (10) character display may include other information in the channel name provided the information is not inconsistent with the standards established by this guidance. This standard would be applied consistently across all public safety frequencies licensed by Wisconsin agencies and jurisdictions.

**County Level Shared/Interoperable (Mutual Aid) Channel Naming Standards**

County Code	Channel Use Designator Channel number/modifier
1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> digits	3rd – 10 <sup>th</sup> digits

Characters 1 – 2: Two letter county codes derived from the TIME System

Characters 3 – 10: The channel use designators signify the primary purpose of operations on the channel as defined by APCO/NPSTC ANS 1.104.1-2010 and modified for use in Wisconsin.

Large Display	Small Display	Definition
CALL	CAL	Channel is for purpose of interoperability calling (hailing) or for use during a vehicle pursuit or other dynamic emergency incident in which there is likelihood that the incident will cross-jurisdictional boundaries.(See special note below).
CORD	CORD	Coordination
DATA	DATA	Data
DISP	DIS	Modifier used to identify the agency’s primary communications/dispatch channel(s).
FIRE	FIR	Primarily used for incident communications by fire services.
IFERN	IFRN	Primarily used for incident communications by fire services operating under the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).
GTAC	GTC	Primarily used for communications between public safety entities and eligible non-government organizations.
LAW	LAW	Primarily used for incident communications by law enforcement agencies.
MED	MED	Primarily used for incident communications by emergency medical services.
MOB	MOB	Vehicular repeater
SAR	SAR	Search and rescue
TAC	TAC	Primarily used for communications by any public safety agency. Generally incident-based and not used for wide-area communications.
COMND	CMD	Primarily used for interdisciplinary incident command level communications.
TRVL	TRV	Primarily used for communications by any public safety eligible entity to coordinate travel when responding to/from an incident outside of an agency’s own jurisdiction.

COM	COM	Primarily used as common channel for general non-incident specific communications.
PAG	PAG	Primarily used for paging system communications.

**Special Note – Call/Hailing Channel**

Every county level radio system will designate a channel/talkgroup as a dedicated Calling (hailing) channel used to establish an initial point of contact for interagency/inter-discipline communications using the following format:

County Code	Channel Use Designator
1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> digits	CALL

**Examples:**

Kenosha County would be: **KECALL**

Jackson County would be: **JACALL**

Individual agencies may also establish a distinct call/hailing channel/talkgroup due to its size, geographic location or other unique circumstances utilizing the following format:

County Code	4 digit Agency/Function Code	Channel Use Designator
1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> digits	AA/FF	CALL

**Examples:**

Milwaukee Police Department would be: **MCMWPDCALL**

Madison Police Department would be: **DAMAPDCALL**

Green Bay Police Department would be: **BRGBPDCALL**

**Agency Level Radio Channel Naming Standard**

County Code	Agency Identifier	Purpose
1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> digits	3rd – 6 <sup>th</sup> digits	7 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> digits

Characters 1 - 2: Two letter county codes derived from the TIME System.

Characters 4 – 6: Two letter agency code followed by the two letter discipline type listed below.

- SO – Sheriff’s Office
- PD – Police Department
- FD – Fire Department
- PH – Public Health
- PW –Public Works
- HY – Highway Department
- EM – Emergency Management
- DA – District Attorney
- Any other discipline types should use commonly used abbreviations.

Characters 7 -10

- All agencies will identify their agency’s primary communications/dispatch channel *either* using the modifier “**DISP**” or “**DIS**” or by adding the number “**1**” after the agency identifier. Large agencies with multiple dispatching channels should add a number after the modifier as appropriate.

- The remaining characters will be used to indicate a channel number or other appropriate modifier.
- A “D” for Direct (or talk around) on a simplex (non-repeated) channel.
- A “DG” for a digital version of a convention channel, that also analog, if applicable.
- Other channel modifiers may include the repeater name/location or other unique identifiers based on specific local needs. Agencies may incorporate the APCO/NPSTC definitions as part of their local channel naming conventions.

**Examples:**

Cedarburg Police Department Dispatch Channel would be:	<b>OZCEPDDISP</b>
Janesville Dept. of Public Works Channel 2 would be:	<b>ROJVPW2</b>
Milwaukee Police Department Dispatch Channel 2 would be:	<b>MCMWPDDIS2</b>
Wausau Fire Department Channel 3 talk-around would be:	<b>MNWSFD3D</b>

**Channel Configuration Recommendations**

With the increasing channel capacity of mobile and portable radios that contain a multitude of zones or banks, careful consideration should be given to the logical grouping of channels by function or frequency of use by the primary first line users.

Recognizing the unique regional, function/discipline and individual agency communications requirements, along with the vast array of radio makes and models, it would be impossible to establish specific standards.

The following list is general bank/zone configuration considerations (prioritized):

1. Agency channels and high priority/frequently used/scanned non-agency channels
2. County/proprietary radio system interoperable channels and additional non-agency channels.
3. State of Wisconsin mutual aid channels that do not have a national counterpart.
4. National mutual aid channels.

For additional information on usage and implementation of state and national interoperable channels, refer to the current State of Wisconsin Plan for Mutual Aid Communications Frequencies, (as referred to as “Annex K”).

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**Appendix A – Programming Quick Reference Guide**

COUNTY or STATE/FEDERAL AGENCIES	ENTITY – local agencies only – <u>omit for countywide</u>	USE/TYPE	CHANNEL NUMBER optional – use if there will be more than one	
County – 2 letters State/Federal – 3 letters	2-3 letters	2-4 letters	1-2 numbers	
Counties AD thru WO  DHS – Dept. of Health Services  DMA – Dept. of Military Affairs  DNR – Dept. of Natural Resources  DOT – Dept. of Transportation  K## - Dept. of Corrections  USM - US Marshals  WEM - WI Emergency Management  WSP - WI State Patrol	a-TIME mnemonic  b-1 <sup>st</sup> 2 letters  c-initials  d-1 <sup>st</sup> and a middle letter	AC ATG CALL/CAL COMM/COM CMD DISP/DIS  DPW EM EMS EVNT/EVT FD FG FIRE/FIR GTAC/GTC  GOVT/GVT HWY IFERN  JAIL LAW  LG MARC  MED OPS PAGE/PAG PD PH PARK/PRK SCAN SO TAC TRAN/TRS TRVL	Animal Control Announcement Talkgroup Call Common Command Countywide multi-agency dispatch Dept. of Public Works Emergency Management Emergency Medical Services Special Event Fire Department Fireground Countywide multi-agency fire Public Safety – non – government communications Government Highway Department MABAS incident communications Jail Law enforcement communications Local government Mutual Aid Radio Channel patch Medical/EMS Operations Paging Police Department Public Health Parks Department Scan radio gateway Sheriff's Office Tactical Transit Travel	1-First  2-Second  3-Third  Etc.

- Prefix with 8 for 800 if needed to differentiate between the same WISCOM talkgroup in multi band radio.
- Suffix DG for digital
- ENC for Encrypted