



## Maryland Marine Call / Marine TAC Standard Operating Procedure

### 1 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish policy for the use of MD Marine Call and MD Marine TAC talk groups on the Maryland FIRST statewide public safety land mobile radio system.

### 2 Scope

This SOP applies to both primary users and interoperability users on the Maryland FIRST Radio System. This SOP (SOP 0.04A) supersedes and replaces the MARYLAND MARINE CALL / MARINE TAC SOP that was approved by the Radio Control Board on June 21, 2017.

### 3 Authority

The Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board has the authority to establish Standard Operating Procedures, Quality of Service Standards and maintenance guidelines for the Maryland FIRST radio system in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Public Safety Article, § 1-501-1-503.

### 4 Background

Maryland public safety agencies recognize the need for interagency communication, interoperability, and cooperation. Maryland Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have well-established interoperability capabilities and mutual aid agreements in place. While these plans and agreements formally extend beyond jurisdictions, they tend to remain intra-discipline in practice. Today's public safety environments highlight the need for agencies to work together to establish communications interoperability and mutual aid across both jurisdictional and discipline boundaries.

To address the lack of interoperable communications for marine operations among the various disciplines and jurisdictions across Maryland, a group of both encrypted and unencrypted MD MARINE TAC talk groups have been established by geographic region in the MD MARINE CALL Zone. Use of these talk groups can be achieved by contacting the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Communications Center via telephone (410-260-8888) or via radio on the MD MARINE CALL talk group. The DNR Communications Center will assign available MD MARINE TAC talk groups to an eligible incident or event. The MD MARINE CALL Zone should be programmed in all P25 compliant public safety communication equipment used for marine operations.



## 5 Policy Statement

The primary objective of the MD MARINE CALL talk groups is to provide public safety agencies a means of coordination and the ability to request interoperable talk groups for direct voice communications to facilitate marine operations during a multi-jurisdictional/multi-discipline incident or event. Not only will this enhance the efficiency of a multi-agency response, it will provide a means for quickly disseminating critical information to enhance the preservation of life and property for participating emergency responder agencies anywhere in the State. Some examples of usage would be:

- Any situation where multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional communications are needed for marine operations and MD MARINE TAC talk groups are available
- Mutual Aid marine response outside of local radio system coverage
- Training and exercises to familiarize personnel with MD MARINE CALL and MD MARINE TAC operations.

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a common set of guidelines for requesting and utilizing MD MARINE TAC interoperable communications resources.

**NOTE:** MD MARINE TAC talk groups are not intended to replace the 800 MHz National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (“NPSPAC”) and 700 MHz nationwide interoperability channels. Public safety agencies that have adopted the NPSPAC 800 MHz channels (8TACs) for interoperability should continue the use of these resources for interoperability communications.

## 6 Supporting Rules

Use of the MD MARINE CALL or MD MARINE TAC talk groups should be used when a marine vessel used for public safety operations, or an incident commander (IC) or designee, identifies a need to communicate directly with other agency representatives who have access to the MD MARINE TAC talk groups. It is important to note that use of these talk groups must comply with all Federal and State Laws and must also comply with local and radio system rules and regulations. The MD MARINE TAC talk groups are not intended to replace the establishment of an on-scene communications plan among responding agencies.

The MD MARINE CALL talk group is intended for the coordination of communications until a tactical resource can be assigned.

MD MARINE TAC talk groups have been configured for use across the state by geographic region. In each region, defined encrypted and unencrypted talk groups are available for use as deemed appropriate by a marine vessel, or the IC or designee.

The DNR Communications Center will monitor MD MARINE CALL and all MD MARINE TAC talk



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groups and control assignment of all MD MARINE TAC talk groups. Once MD MARINE TAC talk group(s) are assigned, the requester (lead agency responsible for the incident/event) shall make arrangements to monitor the talk group(s) on a priority basis until its use is discontinued.

### Priority of Use

The use of MD MARINE TAC talk groups is limited to appropriate public safety use and its personnel. Any misuse of the talk group(s) shall be reported by the DNR Communications Center to the senior communications official of the agency/jurisdiction of the alleged offender(s) and appropriate MD FIRST personnel.

Use of the MD MARINE TAC talk groups will be prioritized as follows:

1. Immediate Peril - An immediate threat to human life exists
2. Disaster or Extreme Emergency - An imminent threat to human life or of large scale property destruction exists or in the event of a technology failure
3. Routine Emergency or Incident - Distinguished from the above by scale or nearness of threat
4. Pre-planned events
5. Urgent Administrative or Itinerant Training and Drills

### Plain Language

Plain language is to be used when communicating on the intra-jurisdictional MD MARINE TAC talk groups. When necessary, the phonetic alphabet may be used to communicate over the channel.

### Unit Identification

Resources from various agencies interacting in an incident/event shall announce their home agency prior to announcing its unit identifier during interoperable communication situations. This will avoid confusion if units from different involved agencies have the same or similar unit identifiers.

### Incident Command System (ICS)

Each agency will use ICS as an operational guide at incidents/events where the intra-jurisdictional MD MARINE TAC talk groups are activated.

### Activation

MD MARINE TAC talk groups are activated and assigned through a request to the DNR Communications Center (410-260-8888) by a marine vessel, or an Incident Commander (IC) or designee. Contact may be via telephone or MD MARINE CALL. Once the MD MARINE TAC talk group(s) is activated, the requester (the marine vessel used for public safety operations, or IC or designee, of the lead agency responsible for the incident/event), will notify his/her respective dispatch/radio communications center of the activation and the designated MD MARINE TAC resources assigned. Once MD MARINE TAC channels are activated, the requester (lead agency responsible for the



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incident/event) shall make arrangements to monitor the talk groups on a priority basis until its use is discontinued. The communications/dispatch centers for all agencies actively engaged in an incident/event are also encouraged to monitor these talk groups throughout its duration if such capabilities are available.

### **Emergency Activations**

In those incidents wherein personnel are operating on an MD MARINE TAC resource, the DNR shall be responsible for monitoring emergency activations and making the appropriate announcements and notifications.

### **Encryption**

MD MARINE TAC 3, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, and 15 are configured as strapped AES encryption. The key used shall be designated by the MD FiRST Operations Committee. The lead agency responsible for an incident/event shall decide whether encryption will be utilized for communications based on the capabilities of responding public safety agencies and/or operational requirements of the incident, and will notify the DNR Communications Center for the proper talk group assignment.

### **Patching**

Any patching of communications resources to an MD MARINE TAC talk group shall be approved by and/or coordinated through the DNR Communications Center.

### **Deactivation**

At such a time that communication on the MD MARINE TAC talk groups is no longer required, the requesting marine vessel, or incident commander or designee, shall be responsible for notifying his/her respective dispatch/radio communications center and the DNR Communications Center that the incident has concluded, the talk group can be released, and to resume normal operations.

### **Problem Resolution**

If problems are encountered using the MD MARINE TAC resources, they should be reported to the Communications Center immediately (410-260-8888).

### **Training**

The MD MARINE CALL and Tactical Talk group resources should be used whenever possible in training and exercises to ensure that personnel are familiar with these talk groups. Use of the MD MARINE TAC talk groups for training may be interrupted as needed for operational situations as identified in the **Priority of Use** section of this document.



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## 7 Acronyms and Definitions

<b>8TAC</b>	<b>NPSPAC 800 MHz channels for interoperability</b>
<b>BB</b>	<b>Bay Bridge, formally known as the William Preston Lane, Jr. Memorial Bridge</b>
<b>DNR</b>	<b>Maryland Department of Natural Resources</b>
<b>IC</b>	<b>Incident Commander</b>
<b>ICS</b>	<b>National Incident Command System</b>
<b>MD</b>	<b>Maryland</b>
<b>MD FiRST</b>	<b>Maryland's statewide 700 MHz radio system</b>
<b>MD MARINE CALL</b>	<b>MD FiRST State Interoperability talk group used for hailing and coordination</b>
<b>MD MARINE TAC</b>	<b>15 talk groups, both encrypted and clear configured, for specific marine operations regions of the state</b>
<b>NCR</b>	<b>National Capital Region</b>
<b>NPSPAC</b>	<b>National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee</b>
<b>Radio Channel</b>	<b>Designated frequency or frequencies</b>
<b>SOP</b>	<b>Standard Operating Procedure(s)</b>
<b>TAC</b>	<b>Tactical</b>
<b>Talk group</b>	<b>Designated talk group on a trunked radio system that is similar to a radio channel on a non-trunked system.</b>



## 8 MD MARINE TAC CHANNEL / TALK GROUP ASSIGNMENT

[Talk groups will be assigned to incidents/events only by DNR Communications Center]

Talk Group Alias	Area	Encryption
MD MARINE CALL	Statewide	Clear
MD MARINE 1	BB and North	Clear
MD MARINE 2	BB and North	Clear
MD MARINE 3	BB and North	Encrypted
MD MARINE 4	BB and North	Encrypted
MD MARINE 5	South of BB to Solomons	Clear
MD MARINE 6	South of BB to Solomons	Clear
MD MARINE 7	South of BB to Solomons	Encrypted
MD MARINE 8	South of Solomons	Clear
MD MARINE 9	South of Solomons	Encrypted
MD MARINE 10	Potomac and NCR	Clear
MD MARINE 11	Potomac and NCR	Clear
MD MARINE 12	Potomac and NCR	Encrypted
MD MARINE 13	Potomac and NCR	Encrypted
MD MARINE 14	Coastal Waterways	Clear
MD MARINE 15	Coastal Waterways	Encrypted

## 9 Responsibilities

- Agencies with primary users or interoperability users are responsible for complying with this policy.
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources will be the controlling agency to grant access to the MD MARINE CALL/TAC talk groups.
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is responsible for the development of internal controls for the protection of the MD MARINE TAC talk group(s).
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is responsible for monitoring issues related to the use of MD MARINE TAC talk group(s) and to investigate actions involving misuse of the talk group(s). Results of any investigations will be reported to the Director of the Radio Control Board.
- The Maryland FiRST Operations Committee will designate the encryption key to be used.
- The Maryland FiRST System Manager will program the talk groups into the radio system.



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- The Director of the Radio Control Board may approve temporary changes or modifications to this policy to ensure the security of the system or to accommodate an emergency condition. Any permanent changes to this policy require the approval of the Radio Control Board.

## 10 DNR Communications Center Contact Information

DNR Communications Center Phone Number: (410) 260-8888.

## 11 Approval

This SOP was reviewed by the Maryland FiRST Operations Group on November 15, 2017 and was approved by the Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board, by majority vote on: December 13, 2017.

Norman J. Farley  
Director of the Board

Michael G. Leahy  
Chairman of the Board