PSAP Specific Talk Groups

I. PURPOSE

The St. Louis County Emergency Communications Commission (ECC) recognizes that mission critical notification communication is necessary and even urgent in certain instances, and that Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) operations would benefit from having a dedicated talk groups for these communications. The ECC also recognizes the critical and often times complicated role of our emergency dispatchers. They are required to function in an environment that mandates absolute attention to radio traffic, incoming 911 calls, administrative calls, and a host of other distractions. The ECC further recognizes that noise pollution within the dispatch center can be overwhelming at times and has sought a solution by providing PSAP Specific Talk Groups.

II. DEFINITIONS

**PSAP:** Public Safety Answering Point (for the purpose of this policy, the term PSAP applies to primary and secondary Public Safety Answering Points.)

**ECC:** St. Louis County Emergency Communication Commission

**PSAP User Group Committee:** A committee established by the ECC comprised of area PSAP managers responsible for reviewing ECC policies and procedures as they may relate to the operation of the PSAPs. The committee operates under the authority of the ECC.

**SLATER:** St. Louis Area Trunked Emergency Radio.

III. POLICY
The ECC will provide a dedicated PSAP to PSAP Talk Group and configure all dispatch consoles. The PSAP to PSAP Talk Group will be labeled “PSAP to PSAP”. The PSAP to PSAP Talk Group is not configured on the SLATER radio network. Radio subscribers will not be able to affiliate to this talk group.

The ECC will provide a dedicated Fire Net talk group and configured for all dispatch consoles and consolette at the request of the PSAP Administrator. The Fire Net talk group will be labeled “Fire Net”.

A. The PSAP to PSAP Talk Group is created to provide a direct IP network communication link between PSAPs with the provision that communications be kept to a minimal; thereby limiting additional radio noise in the PSAPs. The following guidelines were created to help ensure that these goals are met and maintained.

1. Only dispatch personnel will have access to the PSAP to PSAP Talk Group.

2. All communication on the PSAP to PSAP talk group will be brief in nature and limited to non-mission critical notifications and/or request. The PSAP talk group is not to be used to initiate or transfer 911 request for service; to host extended conversations between PSAPs; or any broadcast intended for Point to Point.

   Example: Request for a K9, Open sally port for our officer.

3. The PSAP to PSAP talk Group should never be used to request “official” police/fire action.

4. After three (3) unsuccessful attempts to raise a PSAP on the PSAP Talk Group, the initiating agency will abandon furthers attempts and use alternate means to try and contact the PSAP.

B. The Fire Net Talk Group was created to provide a direct communication link between Law and Fire PSAPs with the ability to pass mission critical notification to another agency. The following guidelines were created to help ensure that these goals are met and maintained.

1. Only dispatch personnel will have access to the Fire Net talk group.

2. All communication on the Fire Net talk group will be brief in nature and limited to simple notifications. The PSAP talk group is not to be used to initiate to host extended conversations between PSAPs; or any broadcast intended for Point to Point.

   Example: Is the scene secure? County PD is requesting an ambulance at__________.
3. The Fire Net talk group should never be used to page or tone out another agency. All paging should be on VHF Fire Mutual Aid.

4. After 3 unsuccessful attempts to raise a PSAP on the Fire Net Talk Group, the initiating agency will abandon further attempts and use alternate means to try and contact the PSAP.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. PSAP to PSAP Procedure: The agency initiating any communication on the PSAP talk group will identify their PSAP name followed by the PSAP they’re attempting to contact, followed by the phrase “on PSAP”. The “on PSAP” phrase will help alert the receiving agency to identify which talk group they are being summoned on.

1. Audio traffic on the PSAP to PSAP radio talk group will be recorded only on the local recorders at each PSAP facility.

2. Each PSAP will be considered the “Custodian of Records” for their audio recordings on the PSAP to PSAP talk group.

B. FIRE NET Procedure: The agency initiating communications on Fire Net will identify the PSAP they’re attempting to contact followed by their PSAP name, followed by the phrase “on Fire Net”. The “on Fire Net” phrase will help alert the receiving agency to identify which talk group they are being summoned on.

1. Audio traffic on the Fire Net radio talk group will be recorded on the local recorders at each PSAP facility and at the ECN back up logging recorder.

2. Each PSAP will be considered the “Keeper of Records” for their audio recordings on the Fire Net talk group.

V. AMENDMENTS AND ENFORCEMENT

A. The ownership of the PSAP to PSAP and Fire Net Talk Groups remains with the ECC. The PSAP Specific Talk Group usage policy is also established and maintained by the ECC, with input for the PSAP User Group Committee. Every two years the ECC will direct the PSAP User Group Committee to review the PSAP Specific Talk Group usage policy for necessary updates and recommendations.
B. All PSAP users are encouraged to submit their suggestions or recommendations to enhance the PSAP Specific Talk Groups usage policy to the ECC PSAP Users Committee for consideration.

C. Observed violations of the PSAP Specific Talk Group usage policy should first be brought to the attention of the PSAP commander for resolution. If policy violations continue, the Operations Committee will be notified and provided detailed information surrounding the violations. In the unlikely event that the listed guidelines continued to be violated and all other avenues to obtain compliance have failed, the ECC has the authority to suspend a violator’s access to the PSAP to PSAP and/or Fire Net Talk Group for an indefinite time.

VI. MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING

This policy is covered under the MOU signed previously by each public safety user and outside agency user on the SLATER system.

Approved by the Emergency Communications Commission on April 12, 2018

[Signatures]
Director, Emergency Communications Network
Chairman, Emergency Communications Commission