
John McClellan
Freeway Operations Supervisor
Minnesota DOT
john.mcclellan@state.mn.us
(651) 234-7025



Safety Service Patrol Idea Sharing Network – Session V: TMC Dispatch and SSP Communications



F.I.R.S.T

Safety Service Patrol Stats

Name: Freeway Incident Response Safety Team

Launch Year: 1987 (under Maintenance)

Personnel: 21 (including 1 Sup, 2 Leads)

Fleet Size: 12

Patrol Size: 8-10 per shift

Coverage Area: 225 miles

Hours of Operation: 4:30am to 8:30pm M-F & 1 truck on weekends

Highlights: ¾ ton extended cab, regular box, pickups. Lightsys dynamic boards.



Communication Devices – ARMER Radio

800mhz trunked P25 - statewide system

- **FIRST drivers have access to:**
 - Portables (handhelds)
 - Speaker mic is a plus
 - Mobile (truck mounts)
- **Both radios are identically programmed**
 - Both are used and are valuable
 - TMC main & admin, MSP main & tacs. DOT mains & tacs
 - Some regional Metro interop & national ITAC's
 - DOT statewide tacs
 - **Baby steps for the MSP interop!**



Communications – Scanner Radio

- Bearcat BCD996T 800mhz scanners
- FIRST not “public safety” so TX permissions complicated
- Scanner used for monitoring local responders
- 4 in dispatch + 1 in each truck
- A lot cheaper than a full radio!



CAD & Laptops

- Integrated CAD with MN State Patrol
 - Intergraph I/Mobile & I/Dispatch
- AVL tracking & logging work done
- Events can be created by FIRST, by TMC, or by Patrol (shared events)
- Messaging with Troopers & Dispatch
- Coordinate vehicle impounds with MSP
- Watching out for “Frequent Flyers”



Laptops

- **2nd purchase round of Panasonic Toughbook**
 - 2007-2014 – CF30's
 - 2014- CF31
- **3rd gen of aircards/mobile data**
 - Sprint PCMCIA
 - Sprint & Verizon USB dongles
 - Verizon PCI-E cards
- **Netmotion VPN**



Cellular phones

- Cell phone less important for “loaning” but still used to coordinate with tows
- Nextel direct connect – critical in pre ARMER days
- Sprint direct connect – meh
- Direct-connect nice for confidential or one-on-one questions
- Future - ???



Effectiveness - Happy with tech?

- **CAD & Laptops = YES!!**
- **Embedded data modems = YES!!**
- **800mhz radio = YES!!**
- **Scanners = So so...**
- **Direct connect = decreases every day...**



Radio Terminology – Precise & Predictable

- Radio etiquette sub-comm circa 2002 – dispatcher & HH.
- Always use route numbers, not driver names
- Same 10 codes as Patrol or use plain English
 - 10-50, 10-52, code 4, 10-56, etc
 - Crash, injury crash, stall, debris
 - Blocking & not blocking
 - Left lane, right lane (no lane #'s or trying to be “cute”.)
- Common location names:
 - The “50 curve”, “35 curve”, “The long ramp”, “The Dartmouth”, etc.
- Be more like Patrol, less like Maintenance...



FIRST Communications/Interop

- **No. 1 - With TMC dispatch via FIRST main**
 - Evolution towards full time dispatchers
- **Daily interop with MSP Troopers via:**
 - CAD messaging & MSP station talkgroups
 - Troopers can talk to FIRST & TMC on FIRST main
 - FIRST will use Patrol main for custody tows
- **Occasional interop with DOT Maintenance via:**
 - Maintenance mains & truck station talkgroups
- **Other responders? - EMS E/W & 911 TG vs METCOM examples**
 - Field = face to face



Future Improvements/Challenges?

- **Interop during major events - Silos**
 - Public safety only (PTAC's)
 - Law enforcement only (LTAC's)
- **More willingness to try things like patches or assigning non-silo'ed radio talkgroups**
 - Protest marches & VIP moves
- **Future major events – Super Bowl**
 - Good opportunities to talk about interop



Suggestions to Others

- **You or someone on-board, needs to understand how your regional Public Safety radio system works!**
 - Trunked? Proprietary or P25?
 - Talkgroups? What tacs are what? Who dispatches who?
- **You need to be on common system if it exists!**
 - \$\$\$
- **PSAP managers, radio techs, hobbyists.**
 - www.radioreference.com

