WA State Interoperable Communications

Policies, Procedures, and Best Practices

*Approved by SIEC December 18, 2015*

Section VI. Initiating a radio call – Communication Order Model

There are two widely accepted methods for initiating a radio call, each having their own benefits and limitations. The first method is for the calling party to identify themselves on the radio first, followed by identifying the party they wish to communicate with. An example of such a call is “Officer 212, dispatch”. This shows that Officer 212 wants to talk to the dispatch center. The second method is for the calling party to first identify the party in which they wish to contact, followed by their own identification. This example may be something such as “Dispatch, Officer 212”. Some examples of each method’s strengths and weaknesses are listed below.

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| Method | Strengths | Weaknesses |
| Identify self first  | Tends to queue listeners on who is talking on the radio. If transmission is cut-off, the identification of the calling party is still known. | With certain radio systems, users must pause for the system to open a talk path first. If the user does not wait, the first syllables may be missed and identification may be lost. |
| Identify called party first  | Tends to queue specific listener for their attention. | If transmission is cut-off, listeners may not know who originated the message. |

Washington State fire and law enforcement agencies have differing needs relating to this issue. Fire agencies predominately use the “Receiver-Sender” communications model and fire to fire communications should use the same model especially during large mutual aid events. It is recommended that fire agencies work with their respective PSAP’s to implement the Receiver – Sender model for fire agencies. Law enforcement agencies predominately use the “Sender-Receiver” communications model and that works well for law agencies. Overall, the SIEC is committed to standardizing radio communications procedures where it makes sense to do so. In this case, standardizing the radio communications model within each discipline meets their respective needs and on-going interests related to first responder safety and interaction with mutual aid partners.