

Circular number	51-2006	Date issued	30 August 2006
This circular is	For action	By	30 November 2006
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This Circular provides information and guidance on the agreed interim solution for the provision of inter-service radio communications at Bronze Level and its subsequent implementation. (CFOA Circular 2005/1090 and 2006/1002 also refers)		

Emergency Services Radio Communications – Interoperability at Bronze Levels

Issued by:

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Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue
Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and
Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

Head of Operations & Communication Officers

Summary

Following advice from the Heads of Profession of the primary emergency services, the Ministerial Interoperability Steering group (ISG) agreed that in certain tightly defined circumstances direct bronze to bronze communications at a major incident should be made available. Ministers have asked for the three services to develop such Interoperability as soon as practical. On the direction of the ISG the Operational and Technical Sub Group of the Emergency Services Radio Liaison Group (ESRLG) developed an interim proposal which has received Ministerial approval. This Circular sets out the process for achieving and implementing this proposal.

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1.0 Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Following advice from the Heads of Profession of the primary emergency services, the Ministerial Interoperability Steering Group (ISG) agreed that in certain tightly defined circumstances direct bronze to bronze communications at a major incident should be made available.
- 1.2 Ministers have asked for the three services to have such Interoperability as soon as practical. On the direction of the ISG the Operational and Technical Sub-Group of the Emergency Services Radio Liaison Group (ESRLG) developed an interim proposal which has received Ministerial approval. This Circular provides the background information and guidance on the proposed implementation.
- 1.3 The necessity for Bronze Commanders of Ambulance, the Fire and Rescue Service and Police to be able to communicate life threatening or incident critical information between them is now established.
- 1.4 It is recognised that now all the primary Emergency Services have signed contracts with Airwave this interim solution is only the first stage of developing and improving Interoperability between the Services using a common platform.

2.0 Summary of Interim Proposal

- 2.1 To enable an interim solution for Bronze interoperability to be implemented as soon as possible it has been agreed that each Police Force will hold a quantity of Airwave terminals specifically for deployment at incidents, or pre-planned events, where Bronze interoperability is desirable.
- 2.2 The information circulated to all Police Forces is provided in appendices A – C attached.
 - Appendix A: ACPO Intranet message circulated to all Police Chief Officers and Commissioners. (*Note: The Spreadsheet Allocation Fleetmap has not been distributed due to the sensitivity of the information.*)
 - Appendix B: Police Briefing Note outlining procurement and generic guidelines for the development of operational protocols
 - Appendix C: Template for local agreements
- 2.3 In summary Airwave hand held terminals will be procured specifically (by Police Forces) for Inter-Service Bronze (operational) Command, and be identified as such. The procurement of Terminals will be funded by the Home Office, Department of Health (DoH), and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and there is no financial implication for individual fire and rescue services.
- 2.4 The agreed principal for deployment is that Bronze interoperability radios will be deployed / dispatched to any incident or pre-planned event deemed by the officer in charge / event planner to be an incident / event requiring Bronze radio communication. This definition is not designed to restrict the request by any of the services for Terminals to be distributed.
- 2.5 Individual Police Forces have been asked to procure Terminals through their existing contracts and instructed to engage with colleagues from Ambulance and fire and rescue services at the most suitable level, in order to discuss and agree the specific SLA'S and operational protocols which will be needed. These protocols should be exercised on a regular basis to ensure responders are familiar with the necessary procedures. This will ensure that they are able to respond effectively to an incident requiring bronze interoperability when such an incident arises.

3.0 Action Required

- 3.1 It is recognised that due to the advance notification provided by the CFOA Circulars 2005/1090 and 2006/1002, that some fire and rescue services have already been in dialogue with their respective Police Forces to develop Operational protocols and procedures.
- 3.2 All fire and rescue services who have yet to be invited to participate in this activity are now advised to prepare for an approach from their respective Police Force.

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