

TXSG Radio Communications

Applicability. This SOP applies to all components of the Texas State Guard

Proponent and Exception Authority. The proponent of this SOP is the J6 of the Texas State Guard. The J6 has the authority to approve exceptions to this SOP consistent with controlling law and regulation. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements to TXSG-J6, P.O. Box 5218, Austin, Texas 78763-5218.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Purpose.....	1
2. Background.....	1
3. Authority.....	1
4. Policy.....	1
5. Definitions.....	4
6. Procedure.....	4
a. Individual / Team Tasks.....	4
b. OIC Responsibility.....	4
c. Command Responsibility.....	5
7. References.....	5

Appendices

ICS-205

List of Figures

None

1. Purpose:

This SOP prescribes policies to standardize TXSG radio communications and to ensure best practices while adhering to state and federal regulations.

2. Background:

Historically, there has been a lack of guidance for radio usage in the TXSG. Units needed to improvise to fill this critical requirement. Some units turned to amateur radio, and others used commercial equipment on federal interoperability frequencies. Both of these practices are unauthorized. Methods are now available for units to use radio in fully approved, compliant ways.

3. Authority:

The Texas Department of Public Safety manages the Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan and the use of National Interoperability Field Operations Guide frequencies within the state. TXMF-J6 is frequency manager for all Texas Military Forces and is the signatory on the statewide MOU for usage of TSICP and NIFOG frequencies for TXMF. TXSG-J6 manages and allocates frequency use for Texas State Guard units, under the authority of TXMF. Nationwide, the Federal Communications Commission regulates civilian and civil government radio, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration regulates federal government and military frequencies within the international frequency management framework.

4. Policy:

The following policy for radio use is established.

- a. TXSG-J6 shall publish an ICS-217 Radio Frequency Assignment Worksheet containing the radio resources available to TXSG units. These authorized channels shall be used by components and units to create their ICS-205 forms for operations.
- b. An ICS-205 Incident Radio Communications Plan form is required to be created prior to every unit's scheduled training exercise or deployment, and must be submitted through the chain of command to TXSG-J6 in advance.
- c. Military VHF simplex frequencies assigned by TXMF-J6 and as issued by TXSG-J6 may be used for handheld and mobile operations without prior coordination on radio equipment that has been approved. These frequencies have been widely distributed, and are pre-programmed into the issued radios. Transmissions during normal drills and training at a unit's home armory does not require submission of an ICS-205. Military frequencies shall not be used for unofficial purposes.
- d. Repeaters may be used only on designated military repeater frequencies assigned by TXMF-J6, and only with prior coordination with TXSG-J6. Prior coordination is

necessary because repeaters have much greater range, and can affect other units' operations.

e. GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) frequencies shall not be used because of special FCC licensing requirements needed for each individual operator.

f. MURS (Multi-Use Radio Service) frequencies shall not be used because of incompatibility with other TXSG components.

g. Under FCC regulations, amateur radio frequencies shall not be used unless:

1) By a federally licensed amateur under direction of an Incident Commander or a Communications Unit Leader when coordinating with outside agencies such as ARES or RACES.

2) By a federally licensed amateur with prior approval of TXSG-J6 for each instance

3) In cases of immediate danger to life or property, in which case the FCC rules permit anyone to transmit on any frequency. A continuing deployment, such as for hurricane relief, does not qualify as an immediate emergency under these circumstances.

h. Interoperability frequencies such as those shown in the NIFOG (National Interoperability Field Operations Guide) or the TSCIP (Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan) shall not be used by TXSG units unless directed by an Incident Commander or Communications Unit Leader. For training use, Interoperability frequencies can be used, but must be coordinated in advance with TXSG-J6, because TXMF-J6 approval is required.

i. Public Safety, MARS and Commercial frequency use must be approved in advance by TXSG J6 prior to use in TXSG operations.

j. Applications for licenses, frequencies or communication system access for TXSG use must be coordinated and executed by TXSG J6.

k. FRS radios may be used at any time on standard FRS channels. Because of the wide availability of inexpensive radios, FRS transmissions are very likely to be intercepted, and malicious interference may occur. FRS frequencies shall not be programmed into other radios due to FCC licensing restrictions. An issue to be aware of is that many cheap consumer radios have both FRS and GMRS channels installed, with little distinction between them. Take care to use only the FRS channels as shown in the radio's operator manual. Radio equipment must meet FCC certification requirements.

l. Citizens Band radios may be used at any time on standard CB channels. Because of their wide availability, transmissions are very likely to be intercepted, and malicious interference may occur. Radio equipment must meet FCC certification requirements.

m. Radios other than FRS and CB not issued by TXSG must be certified by TXMF-J6 prior to use on either military or interoperability frequencies. Units must specify the manufacturer, model number, and quantity of the radios intended for use to TXSG-J6 for coordination and approval. This requirement is due to the statewide MOU agreed to by TXMF-J6.

n. EPIRBs. Electronic Position Indicating Rescue Beacons are part of a worldwide system of satellites that are monitored constantly for high seas and aircraft rescues. Alerts sent using an EPIRB result in an alarm in the worldwide Joint Rescue Coordination Center, and will result in a full-scale rescue effort. EPIRBs, also known as Electronic Locator Transmitters or Personal Locator Beacons, shall not be used by TXSG members in any case not related to vessels in distress, aircraft crash, or to the imminent prospect of loss of life where no other means of communication is available.

5. Definitions:

ARES - Amateur Radio Emergency Service

CB - Citizens Band Radio Service

ELT - Emergency Locator Transmitter

EPIRB - Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon

FCC - Federal Communications Commission

FRS - Family Radio Service

GMRS - General Mobile Radio Service

MARS – Military Affiliate Radio Service

MOU - Memorandum of Understanding

MURS - Multi-Use Radio Service

NIFOG - National Interoperability Frequency Operating Guide

PLB - Personal Locator Beacon

RACES - Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

TSCIP - Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

6. Procedure:

a. Individual / Team Tasks

- 1) Each guardsman shall be instructed to ensure the radio equipment they are operating is approved for use, and that the frequencies it is operating on are approved for that operation, as shown in the unit's current ICS 205 form.
- 2) Only approved radio equipment as specified in this policy shall be utilized for TXSG operations.
- 3) Ensure that there is no unofficial use of the designated military, civil, or MARS frequencies, regardless of the radio used. Amateur frequencies may be used by guardsmen who are licensed hams, but only when not on duty.

b. OIC Responsibility

- 1) Officers in charge shall ensure the radio equipment in use by their organizations is approved for use; and they shall instruct their guardsmen to operate the equipment only on frequencies authorized for that operation by their unit's current ICS 205 form, shall further caution their guardsmen not to use the military, civil, or MARS frequencies outside of official TXSG functions.
- 2) Officers are accountable through the chain of command for adherence to this policy.

c. Command Responsibility

- 1) Commanders shall ensure their units comply with the policy stated herein.
- 2) Communications briefings are recommended as part of preparation for operations.
- 3) Commanders shall ensure that their unit's G6/N6/A6/S6 completes and submits an ICS 205 form through the chain of command to TXSG-J6 for each deployment and exercise.

7. References:

NIFOG - National Interoperability Frequency Operating Guide

<http://www.dhs.gov/national-interoperability-field-operations-guide>

TSCIP - Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/LawEnforcementSupport/communications/interop/>

TXMF-J6 SOP 605 (VHF LMR Channel Plan) (FOUO)

Available on request from TXSG-J6

FCC – Part 97 rules for Amateur Radio Service

<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text->

[idx?c=ecfr&SID=336ab7469b61ecbfa15086dbf1bf2c59&rgn=div5&view=text&node=47:5.0.1.1.6&idno=47#47:5.0.1.1.6.1.157.1](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=336ab7469b61ecbfa15086dbf1bf2c59&rgn=div5&view=text&node=47:5.0.1.1.6&idno=47#47:5.0.1.1.6.1.157.1)

Computer-fillable ICS 205 form:

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/icsforms.htm>

By Order of:

Jake Betty, MG, Commanding

APPENDIX

ICS 205

Incident Radio Communications Plan

Purpose. The Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205) provides information on all radio frequency or trunked radio system talkgroup assignments for each operational period. The plan is a summary of information obtained about available radio frequencies or talkgroups and the assignments of those resources by the Communications Unit Leader for use by incident responders. Information from the Incident Radio Communications plan on frequency or talkgroup assignments is normally placed on the Assignment List (ICS 204).

Preparation. The ICS 205 is prepared by the Communications Unit Leader and given to the Planning Section Chief for inclusion in the Incident Action Plan.

Distribution. The ICS 205 is duplicated and attached to the Incident Objectives (ICS 202) and given to all recipients as part of the Incident Action Plan (IAP). All completed original forms must be given to the Documentation Unit. Information from the ICS 205 is placed on Assignment Lists.

Notes:

- The ICS 205 is used to provide, in one location information on all radio frequency assignments down to the Division/Group level for each operational period.
- The ICS 205 serves as part of the IAP.

Block Number	Block Title	Instructions
1	Incident Name	Enter the name assigned to the incident.
2	Date/Time Prepared	Enter date prepared (month/day/year and time prepared (using the 24-hour clock)
3	Operational Period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date and Time From • Date and Time To 	Enter the start date (month/day/year) and time (using the 24-hour clock) and end date and time for the operational period to which the form applies.
4	Basic Radio Channel Use	Enter the following information about radio channel use:
	Zone Group	
	Channel Number	Use at the Communication Unit Leader's discretion. Channel Number (Ch #) may equate to the channel number for incident radios that are programmed or cloned for a specific Communications Plan, or it may be used just as a reference line number on the ICS 205 document.
	Function	Enter the Net function each channel or talkgroup will be used for (Command, Tactical, Ground-to-Air, Support, Dispatch)
	Channel Name/Trunked Radio System Talkgroup	Enter the nomenclature or commonly used name for the channel or talk group such as the National Interoperability Channels which follow DHS frequency Field Operations Guide (FOG)
	Assignment	Enter the name of the ICS Branch/Division/Group/Section to which this channel/talkgroup will be assigned.
	RX (Receive) Frequency (N or W)	Enter the Receive Frequency (RX Freq) as the mobile or portable subscriber would be programmed using xxx.xxxx out to four decimal places, followed by an "N" designating

Block Number	Block Title	Instructions
		narrowband or a "W" designating wideband emissions. The name of the specific trunked radio system with which the talkgroup is associated may be entered across all fields on the ICS 205 normally used for conventional channel programming information.
	RX Tone/NAC	Enter the Receive Continuous Tone Coded Squelch System (CTCSS) subaudible tone (RX Tone) or Network Access Code (RX NAC) for the receive frequency as the mobile or portable subscriber would be programmed.
	TX (Transmit) Frequency (N or W)	Enter the Transmit Frequency (TX Freq) as the mobile or portable subscriber would be programmed using xxx.xxxx out to four decimal places, followed by an "N" designating narrowband or a "W" designating wideband emissions.
	TX Tone/NAC	Enter the Transmit Continuous Tone Coded Squelch System (CTCSS) subaudible tone (RX Tone) or Network Access Code (RX NAC) for the receive frequency as the mobile or portable subscriber would be programmed.
	Mode (A, D, or M)	Enter "A" for analog operation, "D" for digital operation, or "M" for mixed mode operation.
	Remarks	Enter miscellaneous information concerning repeater locations, information concerning patched channels or talkgroups using links or gateways, etc.
5	Special Instructions	Enter any special instructions (e.g., using cross-band repeaters, secure voice, encoders, private line (PL tones, etc.) or other emergency communications needs.) If needed, also include any special instructions for handling an incident within an incident.
6	Prepared by (Communication Unit Leader) • Name • Signature • Date/Time	Enter the name and signature of the person preparing the form, typically the Communications Unit Leader. Enter date (month/day/year) and time prepared (24-hour clock).

A computer-fillable ICS 205 form is available for units to use. See the references.

