



# Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Operations Manual

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Mike Meyer, Interim Chief

Title: **Incident Radio Communications**  
Division: 14  
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## PURPOSE

To establish a policy regarding incident radio traffic to minimize confusion, promote scene safety and increase efficient communications.

## POLICY

It shall be the policy of this department that the following guidelines be used to establish incident communications.

## SECTION I – GENERAL

Interoperable communications are a key component of the National Incident Management System and ICS, yet it is frequently one of the first aspects to fail. To improve radio communications, the following shall be the accepted procedures for any incident that Jackson Hole Fire/EMS (JHFEMS) responds to:

1. The Incident Commander (IC) shall choose a command channel (used to communicate with Dispatch and personnel), capable of reaching the jurisdictional dispatch center and responding resources not yet on scene and announce that channel during the initial arrival report. The IC may also decide to utilize one or more tactical channels (used to communicate within groups or divisions or to facilitate on-scene logistics), which will also be announced and assigned over the command channel.
2. JHFEMS utilizes both WyoLink and conventional radio frequencies. Not all JHFEMS interagency partners utilize WyoLink. A few things about WyoLink.
  - a. WyoLink is a digitally trunked system that provides for interoperability across Wyoming
  - b. WyoLink Towers are “linked” so that a user can access any WyoLink tower and still speak to home units or Dispatch
    - i. A user on a radio in Cheyenne can reach Jackson Dispatch on 22FIRE1.
  - c. WyoLink towers are located on Snow King, Signal Mountain and Teton Pass.
    - i. Additional towers outside of Teton County help to provide coverage in Teton County. Black Mountain in Idaho provides coverage into Hoback Canyon. Windy Ridge in Dubois provides coverage on Togwotee.
  - d. Additional 800 megahertz low level sights help to boost coverage. These sights include Station 1 which is in service. Teton Village, Station 3 and Grand Targhee are pending installation.
  - e. Trunked radio systems like WyoLink use “talkgroups” instead of “channels”. Talkgroups are groups of people that all want to talk to each other.

- f. WyoLink talkgroups follow a naming convention that can help identify its purpose:
  - i. Local talkgroups start with the county designator, so all local talkgroups for Teton County start with “22”.
  - ii. This is usually followed by the function: FIRE, LAW, SAR, etc. but this can vary from county to county.
  - iii. There are CAT talkgroups for every county, ours being 22CAT1, 22CAT2, etc. This stands for “County Area Talkgroup” and is a shared talkgroup for all agencies in the county to use on multi-agency responses. Typically the CAT1 talkgroups are hailing channels to reach a county dispatch center and can be useful when traveling across Wyoming.
  - iv. There are also MAT talkgroups, ours being MAT 5, MAT 5A, MAT 5B, and MAT 5C. This stands for “Multi-Agency Talkgroup” and follows old Wyoming Homeland Security regions. We share Region 5 MATs with Fremont and Sublette counties.
  - v. Maps of regions and WyoLink towers can be found at <https://dot.state.wy.us/home/administration/wyolink/maps-and-equipment.html>
- g. When on a WyoLink talkgroup, radios will not scan conventional channels. When on a conventional channel, radios will not scan WyoLink talkgroups.
- h. Important note about the Orange Emergency Button on Motorola Radios: To initiate the Emergency feature, hold orange emergency button for ¾ second. Radio will automatically go to 22Fire1 and will operate in an “open mic” for 10 seconds. Dispatch will also receive an emergency alert with ability to identify the radio/individual. Emergency notification to Dispatch terminated by the radio being turned off and back on.

Command talkgroups/channels available:

WyoLink Talkgroups	
22FIRE1	JHFEMS Primary Command Talkgroup
22CAT1	Incidents moved to 22CAT1 free up 22FIRE1 for Dispatching other incidents, Mutual Aid with SCUF in Teton County, Multi-agency incident within Teton County
22SAR1	SAR Incidents
22LAW1	Law Enforcement Incidents
Conventional Channels	
ENET SK, RR, PW	WyoLink not available, Used when responding resources do not have WyoLink
GARN	Mutual Aid with Teton Valley Fire and Rescue on west side of Teton Pass
GTP Sig Prim	Mutual Aid in Grand Teton National Park
BTF Rend	Wildland Fire Response with Teton Interagency Resources
Jac ARFF	Response to Jackson Hole Airport

Tactical talkgroups/channels available:

WyoLink Talkgroups	
22FIRE2	JHFEMS Primary Tactical Talkgroup when WyoLink Command is utilized

22FIRE3	JHFEMS Secondary Tactical Talkgroup when WyoLink Command is utilized
22CAT2	Additional Tactical Talkgroup when WyoLink Command is utilized
22CAT3	Additional Tactical Talkgroup when WyoLink Command is utilized
Conventional Channels	
FireTac3	Primary Tactical Channel when Conventional Command is utilized
FireTac4	Secondary Tactical Channel when Conventional Command is utilized
VMED28	Medical Helicopter
SAR Tac	Teton County SAR tactical
BTF Tac1	Wildland Fire with Teton Interagency Resources
BTF Tac2	Wildland Fire with Teton Interagency Resources
BTF Ag10	Wildland Fire Air to Ground
BTF Ag19	Wildland Fire Air to Ground
VTAC 12, 13, 14	Interagency/Nationwide Tactical
VFIRE21	Mutual aid with SCUF

3. Knowledge of important Zones within the JHFEMS Radio Plan is critical for all multi-agency incidents.

Important Zones:

JHFEMS Primary Zone

Teton Interoperability Zone

Wildland Fire Initial Attack Zone

4. All responding resources will establish communication with the jurisdictional dispatch center as follows:

Jackson: All Teton County and Town of Jackson responses

Teton Dispatch: NPS responses (non-wildland fire)

Teton Fire Dispatch: Wildland Fire (see Section V)

When resources are responding to mutual aid calls for another agency, responding units will “close out” with their assigned dispatch and “sign in” with the jurisdictional dispatch until they are stood down or clear from the scene.

See Section V for Wildland fire dispatch transition guidelines.

5. The choice of which talkgroup/channel to utilize as command will depend upon geographical location, other incidents in progress, and availability of frequencies on the radios of the responding units and agencies. Regardless of the talkgroup/channel chosen, the dispatch center with jurisdiction for the incident will respond on the radio. For example, an incident in Granite Creek may require utilizing USFS’s Rams Horn repeater for communications, but all traffic should be addressed to and will be answered by the dispatch center at the Teton County Sheriff’s Office by calling “Jackson, unit ID.”

6. All units shall call “en route”, “on scene”, “clear of scene” to the appropriate jurisdictional dispatch center via the command talkgroup/channel. Responding units are encouraged to keep their radio traffic to a minimum on the command talkgroup/channel to allow for command traffic. Resources arriving on scene will be assigned or should request tactical talkgroup/channel(s) to coordinate operations. Use of the tactical talkgroup/channels is critical to freeing up command talkgroup/channels in the event of other incidents or critical communications needs by the IC. Resources who have a need to contact the IC should first attempt to make contact over the tactical talkgroup/channel. If that is unsuccessful, the command talkgroup/channel may be utilized.
7. The IC shall utilize the command talkgroup/channel for pertinent actions, decisions, updates, and requests to the jurisdictional dispatch center. The use of the command talkgroup/channel will ensure that communication is documented.
8. JHFEMS will maintain a cache of field programable radios for wildland fire incidents. Radios will be compatible with Federal partners. Radios will be programmed with the Wildland Fire Initial Attack Zone and have open zones that will be programmed during fires with assigned management teams or when responding to a fire outside of our response area.

## **SECTION II – WYOLINK BACK-UP DUE TO FAILURE**

WyoLink Failure –All tones and receiving communications over Fire/EMS Repeat to pagers will work as normal. Dispatch will advise responders over Fire/EMS Repeat to go to ENET for incident communications.

IamResponding (IaR) audio will not function with either a WyoLink failure or if consolette in basement IT room at Station 1 loses power/fails.

MIR3 will be sent advising membership of the IaR outage, need to utilize conventional channels, timeframes. Etc.

Phone Lines to Dispatch Failure (Radio Systems Still Functioning) – Communication from Dispatch, including Paging will be affected. Dispatch will attempt paging via base radios from the dispatch center and/or EOC backup dispatch center on JHF Rpt or JHF Direct.

Fire/EMS Repeater Failure – WyoLink is still functioning. Dispatch transitions to All Hazards Radio on Snow King for paging on JHF Direct. Paging coverage area may be limited. Paging will continue simultaneously on 22FIRE1 for IamResponding audio alerts. USFS and NPS resources not on WyoLink will lose communications as the patch between 22Fire1 and JHFEMS Repeat will not function. If conventional channels are needed for incident communications or Federal partners are responding, consider moving command channel to E-NET or other available command channel.

## **SECTION III – PATCHING RADIO TALKGROUPS/CHANNELS**

22FIRE1 is patched to Fire/EMS Repeat. This allows for partners not on WyoLink to hear radio updates broadcast on 22FIRE1.

The responding Duty Officer or the IC once established can request the Patching of radio talkgroups/channels through Dispatch. General requirement is that Dispatch has to have the access to talkgroup/channels in an available base radio and be able to receive/transmit on both talkgroups/channels. Non-repeated channels are not advised for Patching. WyoLink talkgroups and Conventional channels

may be patched to communicate with agencies that do not utilize WyoLink, i.e. GARN to 22FIRE1 for incidents with Teton Valley Fire and Rescue on the west side of Teton Pass.

#### **SECTION IV – MUTUAL AID COMMUNICATIONS**

A common communication talkgroup/channel will generally be established by the IC and relayed through Dispatch Centers to responding units. Established Command Talkgroups/Channels will be as follows:

<b>Response with Sublette County Unified Fire</b>	
22CAT1	SCUF units responding for mutual aid requests in Teton County
23CAT1	JHFEMS units responding for mutual aid requests in Sublette County
VFIRE21	Tactical Communications (Zone N)
<b>Response with Teton Valley Fire and Rescue</b>	
GARN	Mutual Aid with Teton Valley Fire and Rescue on west side of Teton Pass
<b>Providing Mutual Aid to Grand Teton National Park</b>	
GTP Sig Prim	Mutual Aid in Grand Teton National Park
<b>Providing Mutual Aid to Jackson Hole Airport</b>	
Jac ARFF	Mutual aid at Jackson Hole Airport

#### **SECTION V – COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE**

See Division 17, Article 3.7 Medical Control Communication Failure

In the case of a mass disaster, members should take care of their families and then move to their respective stations for assignment.

Direct channels should be utilized to maintain command and control on scene.

Chief Officers will be enrolled in Department of Homeland Security's Government Emergency Telecommunications Services (GETS) and Wireless Priority Service through Teton County Emergency Management. GETS allows the user to place a priority call from a landline when all circuits are busy. WPS is attached to a mobile phone and gives the phone priority on an overloaded cell tower.

Operations should be discontinued if deemed to be unsafe by the IC or the designated Safety Officer.

#### **SECTION VI – WILDLAND FIRE INTERAGENCY DISPATCH TRANSITION GUIDELINES**

This section is intended to provide direction on when and how to transition a wildland fire incident from TCSO Dispatch to Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC). This would apply to wildland fires which have started on private property or in Teton County jurisdiction.

**TCSO Dispatch will transition the dispatch operations of a fire to TIDC when:**

- The fire has or is expected to move to federal property involving interagency jurisdictions.

**OR**

- Federal resources and/or aircraft have been requested.

**OR**

- At the request of the Incident Commander when the above situations are impending

TCSO Dispatch will confirm with TIDC the command frequency they wish to use for the incident. (Most likely BTF Rendezvous in the central Teton County areas.) TCSO Dispatch will advise the Incident Commander of the command frequency to move to with TIDC. From that point forward, the IC will send command communications including resource requests through TIDC.

TCSO Dispatch will continue to monitor (911) phone calls from the public that come in through their dispatch center in regards to the fire and any new or updated information shall be transferred or relayed to TIDC.

TCSO Dispatch will continue to track TCSO and/or JPD law enforcement resources. A law enforcement liaison should be assigned to the ICP to assist in relaying requests between fire and law enforcement operations.

After the point of transition, any additional JH Fire/EMS resources will notify TCSO Dispatch they are enroute to the incident at which time they will be advised of the appropriate incident channel then switch to TIDC to check in for assignments and tracking.

Once a JH Fire/EMS resource has cleared the incident and is returning to service with Teton County, they will notify TCSO Dispatch of their availability.