

Communications

Discussion

Basic '911' is a regional system providing dedicated trunk lines, which allow direct routing of emergency calls. Routing is based on the telephone exchange area, not municipal boundaries. Automatic Number Identification (ANI) and Automatic Location Identification (ALI) are not provided with Basic '911'. All of the '911' systems within TSA-L are enhanced '911'.

Enhanced '911' is a system, which automatically routes emergency calls to a pre-selected answering point based on geographical location from which the call originated. All '911' systems in TSA-L are enhanced with different levels of service.

This system engages when a telephone caller dials '911'. The call is routed to the local telephone company or CO where the ANI is attached to the voice and sent to the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). With ALI and selective routing, the call is set to the CO and is assigned an address to the phone number electronically and routes the call to the designated PSAP.

ANI is a system capability that enables an automatic display of the seven-digit number of the telephone used to place a '911' call. ALI is a system that enables the automatic display of the calling party's name, address and other information.

Alternate Routing is a selective routing feature which allows '911' calls to be routed to a designated alternative location if all incoming '911' lines are busy, or the central system (PSAP) closes down for a period of time.

Selective Routing (SR) is a telephone system that enables '911' calls from a defined geographic area to be answered at a pre-designated PSAP.

Emergency Care providers for accessing emergency communications use a variety of methods, such as 800 MHz, VHF, and UHF frequencies. CTRAC strives to ensure interoperable communications at all times.

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Goal

The Goal for Communications within TSA-L is to ensure communication capability between EMS providers, medical control, receiving facilities; and other First Responders entities. Rapid dispatch and notification of the need for emergency and trauma care at any location within TSA-L must be available to all persons in the region. Each agency is responsible for monitoring their own response time(s) using national established guidelines for their geographical area.

Objectives

1. To facilitate regional communications, and to work cooperatively with the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) to ensure that all EMS & First Responder Units as well as hospital emergency personnel will have a list of the communication devices & operating frequencies of the EMS and emergency care providers operating in the CTRAC region and to encourage all participating agencies to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Texas for adherence to established permissions and guidelines for use of interoperability or mutual aid radio channels.
2. To ensure that all EMS providers, First Responders, and hospital facilities in the CTRAC region have functional communications equipment in order to communicate information related to the patient's condition, the need for medical, EMS, or helicopter back-up, and to receive and communicate information related to patient care and disposition.
3. To ensure that emergency dispatch within the CTRAC region is accomplished by persons who have the knowledge, skills, and equipment necessary to rapidly mobilize the appropriate level of emergency care to persons requesting assistance throughout the region. It is recommended that dispatchers attend Emergency Medical Dispatch training or other appropriate training for consistent knowledge among dispatchers within the CTRAC region.
4. To ensure agencies are utilizing the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) Communications for Multi-agency scenes.
5. To establish communications protocol for interagency responses that serve the best interest of all agencies involved in remediating the emergency situation they are currently working on and to do this in a manner that is consistent with the utilization of the Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan when possible.

Discussion

There are numerous communication systems currently in use in the TSA-L. In time of disaster it is essential that all agencies have the ability to communicate seamlessly and that all agencies and their employees are extremely familiar with all communication capabilities that are available to their agency. Regardless of the method that may be used on a regular basis to communicate with other emergency service agencies and hospitals, in a time of disaster these normal communication mediums may be overwhelmed and or may fail. The use of multiple communications systems ensures regional communications are maintained between public and private EMS agencies, police, fire, hospital entities and other government and non-government entities, however, all personnel that may be called upon to use wireless and wired communications must be proficient in the use of those systems in worst case scenarios.

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Dispatch - Emergency dispatch in each of the six (6) CTRAC counties is accomplished through various methods (i.e., sheriff's office, local police department, or county 911 services). All 911 PSAP's in the CTRAC are equipped with a Director IP radio system or its equivalent. These Director IP or equivalent radio systems have communication capability for day to day operations on frequencies (channels) designated by each agency as well as designated VHF and 800MHz Interoperability channels. Each of these systems also have the ability to cross link (patch) multiple radios to provide users operating on different frequencies the ability to communicate with other users regardless of the frequency band that they have access to.

Pre-hospital Care Providers – EMS Providers throughout TSA-L use various frequencies and communication devices to handle day to day radio traffic, those frequencies are most typically VHF, UHF and 800 MHz Traditional UHF MED CHANNELS are still in use in many areas to contact area hospitals; however, this is not all inclusive to all hospitals as a result other communications methods are being used on a day to day basis. It is the intent of the TSA-L to support a more streamlined method for agencies communications capabilities and needs in the area and to work toward the simplest method possible that meets all of the needs of each agency.

Hospital Care Providers - All CTRAC hospital facilities maintain communications capability with pre-hospital care providers through the use of various communications means to include VHF, UHF, 800, cellular phones, or standard phone lines. CTRAC purchased each facility an Amateur (HAM) radio.

CTRAC is an active participant in the interoperability planning efforts being address by the Central Texas Council of Governments. CTRAC strives to remain at Level 4 interoperability will support all efforts to reach and maintain an interoperability Level 6.

The Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) administer the '911' communications system in Texas Trauma Service Area–L (TSA-L). All of the '911' systems within Trauma Service Area – L are enhanced '911'. Enhanced '911' is a system, which automatically routes emergency calls to a pre-selected answering point based upon geographical location from which the call originated. All '911' systems in TSA-L are enhanced with different levels of service.

Interagency Air Medical Operations – Due to the number of air medical responses that occur in the TSA-L each year, and in effort to enhance safety measures associated with air medical operations in the TSA-L region, it ESSENTIAL that units on the ground have a reliable means of communicating with responding air medical units. Air medical personnel should have the capability of tuning the aircraft radio to various departmental frequencies, but in order to avoid confusion and reduce the risks involved with helicopter operations at emergency scenes all agencies should utilize primarily one of the following channels / talk - groups VMED28, Copperas Cove Helicopter talk- group or Bell County Helicopter talk - group to communicate with air medical units whenever possible. Backup channels will be VFIRE21 and Bell County VFD main. If more than one helicopter will be responding to the same incident, the incident commander shall notify each air medical agency dispatch with the ETA of the other aircraft and the appropriate radio frequency for all to communicate. Crews are encouraged to utilize common aviation frequency 123.025 to communicate air to air during multi-aircraft scene responses if unable to establish

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communication via above listed frequencies.

Interagency Operations- When two or more agencies will be working together on an emergency scene those agencies under the direction of the established IC should communicate on frequencies (channels/talk-groups) that are designated under the Texas Statewide Interoperability Channel Plan as a first Priority. Users on 800 MHz radio communications systems primarily in Copperas Cove and Bell County will use designated MUTUAL channels as established by the Bell County Communications Center. And in situations where VHF and 800 MHz users will be working jointly, a patch, or patches may be created at the discretion of the IC.

Radio Site on Wheels (SOW) – The CTRAC has a SOW that is available for use at any emergency scene within the CTRAC. There is no cost for the use of the SOW for any recognized first responder organization that requests it. A request for deployment of the SOW may be made to the Copperas Cove Police Department at 254-547-8222, option 1.

The communication system includes the following CTRAC counties: Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, and Mills

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- Bell County has four communications Centers.
 - An 800 MHz system for the civilian population
 - A 400 MHz system for the military emergency responders including mutual aid within civilian communities.
 - 400 MHz system for Scott and White Med Comm.
 - UHF Fire Dispatch Frequency is 460.525 MHz
- Bell County Communications Center has countywide repeaters on Interop Channels 8VCALL90 and 8TAC91. The Communications Center consoles also have access to VCALL10 and VFIRE21
- Bell County utilizes a UHF paging system for VFD's
- Bell County Communications Center provides communication for the following:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartlett PD • Bartlett PD • Bell County Sheriff's Office • Belton PD • Harker Heights PD • Holland PD • Killeen PD • Little River / Academy PD • Morgan's Point PD • Nolanville PD • Rogers PD • Salado PD • Temple PD • Troy PD
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartlett VFD • Belton FD • Central Bell VFD • Harker Height's FD • Holland VFD • Killeen FD • Little River / Academy VFD • Moffat VFD • Morgan's Point VFD • Rogers VFD • Salado VFD • Southwest Bell VFD • Sparta Valley VFD • Stillhouse VFD • Temple FD • Troy VFD

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EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadian Ambulance • Belton EMS • Harker Height’s EMS • Killeen EMS • Scott and White EMS
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center • Cedar Crest RTC • Baylor Scott & White McLane Children’s Medical Center • Metroplex Behavioral Health • Metroplex Hospital • Scott & White Continuing Care • Scott & White Medical Center – Temple • Seton Medical Center • Olin E. Teague Veteran’s Medical Center
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army Corps of Engineers • Bell County Fire Marshal • Bell County OEM • Burlington Northern Santa Fe • City Public Works Departments • Community Services and Corrections • County Attorneys • CTC Police Department • District Attorneys • DTF and Constables • Justices of the Peace • Killeen Independent School District • Probation • Temple College DPS • Texas ABC • Texas A&M • Texas Department of Public Safety • Texas Parks and Wildlife • UMHB

Communications - Coryell County

- Coryell County has two enhanced '911' communication centers:
 - Copperas Cove Police Department dispatches for the City of Copperas Cove and transfers Coryell County Calls to Coryell County Sheriff's Department.
 - Copperas Cove Fire Department and EMS respond to calls in South Coryell County.
 - The City of Gatesville Dispatch Center Dispatches EMS calls within their city on 154.540 (VHF).
 - The City of Copperas has an 800 MHz EDACS radio system.
- Interoperability Communications Capabilities in accordance with the Texas Interoperability Channel Plan for the City of Copperas Cove includes:
 - VCALL 10
 - VFIRE 21
 - VMED 28
 - VLAW 31
 - 8CALL90
- Coryell County Communications includes the following:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copperas Cove PD • Coryell Sheriff's Department • Gatesville PD
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copperas Cove FD • Gatesville FD
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copperas Cove EMS • Coryell Memorial EMS
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coryell Memorial Healthcare System
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none

Communications - Hamilton County

- Hamilton County Communications includes the following:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hamilton County Sheriff's Department
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carrolton / Jonesborough VFD• Hamilton VFD• Hico / 219 VFD• Pottsville VFD• Shive / Evant VFD
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hamilton EMS
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hamilton General Hospital
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• none

Communications - Lampasas County

- Lampasas County has two enhanced '911' dispatch centers:
 - Lampasas Police Department dispatches EMS and fire department to areas within the City of Lampasas and portions of Burnet County
 - Lampasas County Sheriff's Department dispatches EMS and fire department to areas in Lampasas County
- Lampasas County Communications includes:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kempner PD • Lampasas County Sheriff's Office • Lampasas PD • Lometa PD
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adamsville VFD • Kempner VFD • Lampasas FD • Lampasas VFD • Lometa VFD
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadian Ambulance
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollins Brook Community Hospital
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none

Communications – Milam and Mills County

- Milam County Communications includes the following:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckholts PD • Cameron PD • Milam Co SO • Rockdale PD • Thorndale PD
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartlett VFD St. 2 (Davilla) • Buckholts VFD • Burlington VFD • Cameron VFD • Gause VFD • Milano VFD • Minerva VFD • Rockdale FD
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Medical Response • Thorndale EMS
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little River –Cameron • Little River - Rockdale
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milam Co Amateur Radio Emergency Services 147.020Mhz w/ PL tone 123.0Khz • Milam Co ARES Repeater

- Mills County Communications includes the following:

Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mills County Sheriff's Department
Fire Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldthwaite FD
EMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton County EMS
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none

Regional Communication Frequencies

RADIO INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS DIRECTOR IP ADDRESSES

Copperas Cove Police/Fire/EMS	
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
VHF	VMED28
VHF	VLAW31
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	
Hamilton Sherriff	
800 MHz	8CALL 90
800 MHz	8TAC 91
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
Gatesville PD	
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	8TAC92
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
Lampasas Sherriff	
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	8TAC93
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
Milam County	
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	8TAC93
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
Rockdale PD	
Channel 4	Tex Law 1

Regional Communication Frequencies

Mills County Sherriff	
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	8TAC94
VHF	VCALL10
VHF	VFIRE21
Cameron PD	
Bell County	
800 MHz	8CALL90
800 MHz	8TAC91
800 MHz	8TAC91D
800 MHz	8TAC92
800 MHz	8TAC92D
800 MHz	8TAC93
800 MHz	8TAC93D
800 MHz	8TAC94
800 MHz	8TAC94D
800 MHz	8TAC95D
800 MHz	8TAC96D
800 MHz	8TAC97D