

Bay Area Mutual Aid Communications System (BayMACS) Operational Guidelines

BACKGROUND

The Bay Area Mutual Aid Communications System (BayMACS) is a public safety radio channel that allows agencies from different disciplines (police, fire, EMS, emergency management and public works) utilizing varying frequencies (VHF, UHF, and 800 MHZ) to talk countywide to one another via an interconnected radio system. This system – engineered for mobile (and not handheld) radio coverage – is an available option for the coordination of emergency responses. BayMACS is available in all dispatch facilities and on all mobile and handheld radios normally used by public safety personnel throughout Santa Clara County.

AUTHORIZED BAYMACS SITUATIONS

These emergency responses may be multi-agency pre-planned events or emergency incidents that require interoperability between multiple agencies or across disciplines (i.e., police with fire and/or EMS). Major incidents and disasters appropriate for BayMACS utilization include but are not limited to multi-jurisdictional or multi-discipline events such as:

- Weapons of mass destruction events
- Plane crashes
- Major civil unrests
- Mass casualty incidents
- Kidnappings/Amber Alerts
- Active shooters
- Portable electronic tracking devices
- Intercity pursuits
- Bank robberies
- Felony attempt-to-locate persons or vehicles
- Major wildland fires
- Preplanned events (such as task force search warrants, protests, large public events requiring mutual aid, or training drills)

Unauthorized Use

BayMACS shall not be used as a supplemental channel for any single agency or as a chit-chat frequency.

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POLICY

Authorization to Activate BayMACS

Any Command Staff member, Incident Commander or line-level personnel involved in any of the above or similar level events have the authority to activate the BayMACS channel.

Activation Process

BayMACS must be enabled by the Santa Clara County Communications Center (COC). The primary Communications Center will make the request by contacting the COC Watch Commander at 408-294-4424.

All notifications of BayMACS restrictions will be broadcast via the LawNet channel which is monitored by all dispatch facilities including San Jose Fire and CalFire.

Monitor First

It is a requirement that all dispatch and line personnel monitor the channel prior to transmitting to minimize the possibility of interference with other communications in progress.

Channel Management for Pre-Planned Events

To ensure that BayMACS channel conflicts are avoided, the Santa Clara County Communications Center (COC) will be the notification clearing-house for BayMACS users during preplanned events (i.e., task force search warrants, protests, large public events requiring mutual aid, etc). At the start of the operation, it is the responsibility of the BayMACS user agency to pre-alert the other BayMACS communications centers regarding the channel restriction via broadcast on the LawNet channel.

Channel Management for In-Progress Events

In the event of an in progress high risk incident involving multiple agencies the primary Communications Center is responsible for broadcasting the BayMACS activation via the LawNet channel. An alternate PSAP may be contacted to broadcast the activation and/or coordinate dispatching of the event.

Upon completion of the incident or event, the primary Communications Center shall notify the COC Watch Commander at 408-294-4424 to disable BayMACS and will make an announcement on LawNet that BayMACS use is terminated.

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Dispatching Coordination

The primary Communications Center will coordinate dispatching the event. Should the jurisdiction of the event change, the primary Communications Center may relinquish this responsibility to the agency where the event has moved.

Channel Use Priorities

Traffic of a higher priority level must be given use of the channel. Agencies utilizing it for lower priority traffic must yield the frequency immediately.

- Priority 1 Disaster and extreme emergency operations for mutual aid and interagency communications.

- Priority 2 Emergency or urgent operations involving imminent danger to the safety of life or property.

- Priority 3 Special event control activities, generally of a pre-planned nature and generally involving joint participation of two or more agencies.

- Priority 4 Drills, tests, and exercises

Multiple Requests

When multiple requests occur or when an event is being conducted on BayMACS and a more serious event arises, the Incident Commander on BayMACS of the working event will be advised of the conflict. The IC must discuss co-sharing the channel or moving the working event to another channel. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level, COC will immediately notify the Sheriff of the BayMACS channel conflict, the competing incidents and agencies involved. The Sheriff, as the County's Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator, will be the final authority and shall provide direction to the necessary agencies to resolve any issues.

Radio Protocol: Clear Text and Identification

Since multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines may be using BayMACS, all transmissions shall be in plain text (no radio codes). Users shall utilize their agency's proper name and call sign during all transmissions. Following normal radio protocol, units must identify the unit or base station they wish to contact first and then identify themselves. Units must use their agency identifier in front of their designated call sign, (Sample radio call: Sheriff 71G1: San Jose Fire Engine 2). Base stations shall identify by agency name (e.g., San Jose Police 51A1: Milpitas Fire Communications).

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Point to Point Communications

The BayMACS frequency is designed for base-to-mobile and mobile-to-mobile operation. Base-to-base communication should only occur when handing off an incident, or any time officer safety or public safety is impacted.

Complaint Procedures

The Silicon Valley Radio Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) Working Committee will investigate operational and technical issues and any policy violations that are not resolved at the department level.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Identifier	Frequency		PL/CTCSS Tone
VHF	150.790 MHz	Mobile Xmit	156.7
	155.475 MHz	Mobile Recv	156.7
UHF	482.3375 MHz	Mobile Xmit	114.8
	485.3375 MHz	Mobile Recv	114.8
800	807.5125 MHz	Mobile Xmit	131.8
	852.5125 MHz	Mobile Recv	156.7