

**Erie County Fire Advisory Board
Fire Radio Communications Committee**

Declaration and Statement of Policy

Purpose:

To ensure the proper performance of the Erie County Fire Radio Communications System and publicize the established radio communications procedures, procurement of radio equipment, and service standard requirements approved by the Erie County Fire Advisory Board.

1956 Erie County Radio Agreement with Individual Fire Companies:

Pursuant to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), regulations governing Public Safety Radio Systems, it is necessary for individual fire companies of Erie County to enter into an agreement for radio service.

FCC Part 90:179, (A), (C):

It is mandatory for one copy to be filed with the FCC as part of the license issued to Erie County; one copy is to be filed with the license issued to Erie County, and the third copy to be retained by the fire company for their records.

This agreement states that anyone obtaining radio services from a license must be under the control of the licensee, Erie County, for communications purposes.

The licensee, Erie County, and its Fire Advisory Board shall be responsible for all radio transmissions and maintenance on the Erie County Fire Radio System.

Fire Advisory Board legislation procedures concerning fire radio communications to the Advisory Board are submitted to the sub-committee (Radio Communications) for study and recommendations to the full board.

All radio communications, or requests to the Fire Advisory Board shall be submitted to the board in writing. Time allowance of 30-60 days shall be permitted for a reply and/or decision.

Standardization Policy:

All radio communication procedures and two-way fire communication equipment, shall meet the standardization criteria as decreed by the Fire Advisory Board to be compatible with the Fire Radio System.

No vehicular transceivers, portables or transmitters, etc., shall be purchased by an individual or fire company to operate on the Erie County Fire Radio System unless approved by the Fire Advisory Board.

The policy of standardization of all two-way radio communication equipment is necessary to maintain the most efficient service possible to meet a standard of fire radio communications. This also enables the Erie County Department of Emergency Services, Division of Fire Safety, Radio Maintenance Shop to provide backup service for the volunteer fire companies.

All radio maintenance, installations and parts for the Erie County Fire Radio System are furnished free-of-charge with the exception of special parts such as antennas, batteries, special components or obvious abuse.

It is impossible to maintain the Fire Radio System and provide free parts and service using a wide range or variety of different model transceiver/radios from various manufacturers over a period of time.

The following steps are taken with a Standardization Program:

1. Spare transceivers are provided as replacement when a radio must be removed for service.
2. Stock replacement parts are kept on hand such as components, cables, microphones, etc., necessary to keep a radio in service.
3. Service calls are made to field locations of communications equipment for repair.
4. Next workday maintenance service on all fire service radio communication equipment is provided for minimum downtime. Fire base stations are the ONLY EXCEPTION.

Fire companies must submit a letter to the Fire Advisory Board for proposals or requests for changes to the Fire Radio System or to request a new radio not presently used on the Fire Radio System.

A fire company that wishes to purchase a replacement or additional radio transceiver or portable shall contact the Erie County Department of Emergency Services, Division of Fire Safety Radio Maintenance Shop at 662-5009 for necessary forms to expedite acquisition of the radio communication equipment, after the request has been approved by the Fire Advisory Board.

All new radio equipment will be shipped to the Radio Maintenance Shop at Chestnut Ridge for inventory control and bench testing prior to being placed in service by the fire company.

Radio transceivers and portables presently authorized by the Fire Advisory Board on the Erie County Fire Radio System are:

- Fire Vehicle Transceiver
 - Motorola Maratrac (Scan)
- Chief's Vehicle or Ambulance
 - Motorola Maratrac (Scan)
 - Motorola Maxtrac 300 (Scan)
- Fire Portable
 - Motorola MT1000 Regular or Scan
- Fire Police Portable
 - Motorola or Radius P50
- Emergency Medical Service (MERS) Radios
 - Motorola Maratrac (Scan)
 - Motorola Maxtrac 300 (Scan)

Snorkels, ladders and aerial apparatus vehicles are the only vehicles where installations are made on location of the fire company, due to the size of the vehicle.

Special installation such as extension speakers and handsets for vehicles are free-of-charge. Parts are provided by the fire company.

Handset type microphones are only permitted on fire apparatus vehicles. This is to reduce the background noise and improve listening over earpiece.

Palm microphones are permitted only on small rescue type and fire officer vehicles where external noise is not a problem.

Authorized Fire Communications:

All radio operators on the Erie County Fire Radio System must have a Radio Operators Certification Card (Blue Card).

This card is issued upon completion of three hours of training on fire radio procedures and its operation. The Radio Communications Course is taught by Erie County Fire Radio Instructors. Training can be arranged by calling the Fire Safety Office at 681-7111.

Federal Communications Commission Rules:

Part 90:21A

Only transmissions of communications essential to the official firematic activities of the licensee are permitted.

Communications relating to notice of social functions and other non-emergency announcements are not permitted.

Chief Dispatchers and Radio Coordinators are responsible to see that only authorized messages in accordance with FCC Regulations are transmitted. Refer to the "General Message Policy" for authorized communications.

Radio Coordinators are approved by the Fire Advisory Board with candidates being submitted by the local authority (Chief's Council, etc.)

FCC Communications Act of 1934 as Amended:

Title V – Penal Provisions:

Sec. 501:

Any person who willfully and knowingly does or cause or suffers to be done, any act, matter or thing, in this act prohibited or declared to be unlawful, or who willfully and knowingly omits or fails to do any act, matter or thing in this act required to be done, or willfully and knowingly causes or suffers such omission or failure, shall upon conviction therefore, be punished for such offense, for which no penalty (other than a forfeiture) is provided in this act, by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both, except that any person, having been once convicted of an offense punishable under this section, who is subsequently convicted of violating any provision of this act punishable under this section, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both.

1464:

Whoever utters any obscene, indecent, or profane language by means of radio communications shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both.

Sec. 502:

Any person who willfully and knowingly violates any Rule, Regulation, Restriction, or Condition made or imposed by the Commission under authority of this act, or any Rule Regulation, Restriction, or Condition made or imposed by any International Radio or Wire Communication Treaty or Convention or Regulations annexed thereto, to which the United States is or may hereafter become a party, shall, in addition to any other penalties provided by Law, be punished upon conviction thereof, by a fine of not more than \$500 for each and every day during which the offense occurs.

Authorized Assignment of Vehicle Transceivers for Fire Company Personnel:

Authorized assignment and installation of vehicle transceivers are limited to the following officers of fire companies:

1. Chief
2. First Assistant Chief
3. Second Assistant Chief
4. Third Assistant Chief

No transceiver shall be installed in a chief officer vehicle not holding a valid certified Radio Operators Certification Card (Blue Card).

Authorized Assignment of Portables:

Only Fire Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs are authorized permanent assignment of a portable radio. An additional portable per fire vehicle is permitted on each fire apparatus or any configuration not to exceed one portable per mobile radio.

Each fire company or department is authorized a maximum total of ten (10) single channel transmit portables on a frequency of 46.30 MHz for fire police radio communications. This portable shall not be used on any other frequency.

Erie County Fire Radio Maintenance Policy:

No two-way radio communication equipment on the Erie County Fire Radio System is to be removed, installed or serviced by anyone except Erie County Department of Emergency Services, Division of Fire Safety Radio Maintenance Shop Technicians.

No letter of request for a removal or re-installation of a vehicle transceiver is necessary.

A maximum of four (4) installations per fire company in personal cars of fire officers are permitted each year. This is necessary to control the number of installations and reduce the workload.

All fire apparatus vehicles are scheduled for installations at the Chestnut Ridge Fire Safety Radio Maintenance Shop where facilities for installations are available, so that work may be done in the least amount of time.

Original: 1991

Revised: 1992