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County Executive

ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES



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Orange County Fire Service Rep's,

After long awaited anticipation, the go-live for the new Orange County 700/800 digital trunked radio system is rapidly approaching. The 30 plus million dollar project is intended to deliver a robust 700/800 digital trunked system delivering enhanced communications capabilities county-wide for all public safety disciplines. The following is an updated regarding the current status of the project as well as expected activities for the near future.

Infrastructure Status and Testing:

- Towers: All towers have been completed and are on line, with the exception of the Arden tower. The Arden tower met with substantial difficulty in receiving appropriate approvals and ultimately resulted in proceeding without the tower being included in the new system. Impact of exclusion of Arden tower is expected to be limited to paging of 2 departments who are using Arden. A workaround will be employed for those two departments.
- Coverage Testing: Completed on 10/8/19. Results were 99.8% talk in (transmissions from OC 911) and 96.5% talk out (transmissions out to OC911).
- Final Acceptance Testing: Expected to take place on 10/31 and 11/1. This is the comprehensive final testing of the overall system and infrastructure. Successful final acceptance testing is the final step before the system is considered live and agencies can begin utilizing the system.
- Simulcast Paging: Pilot testing of several departments is expected to take place the week of 10/28. If testing is successful, departments will begin to be cutover to simulcast paging early November.

Cutover to New System:

- Law Enforcement: The first agencies that will be cut over to the new system are the law enforcement agencies who are relying on the EDAC system. This is a radio system which is currently utilizing several frequencies that are needed to fill out our new system in areas in the North end of the county. Therefore, the law enforcement agencies that are using using these frequencies will need to be cutover to the new system so those frequencies can then be freed up to complete the new Orange County System.
- Fire Department Cutover: Once the Law Enforcement agencies mentioned above have cut over, agencies in all disciplines (EMS, Fire, PD) will begin to be cut over. Fire Department cutover will occur in the following order. There will be no further pre-wiring done for agencies. All installs will be full installs moving forward:
 1. FD's who currently have radios installed and select Orange County Fire Service Teams
 2. FD's who have had pre-wiring completed
 3. FD's who require full installs

Initial Rollout – Training/Protocols:

- Initial rollout of the system will be using limited protocols. Departments will utilize the new system initially to only communicate with Orange 911 as is done today on lowband.
- When FD's are cutover to the new system, they will be given abbreviated instruction on how to use the new radio system.
- Once all FD's have cutover to the new system, full implementation of the new protocols and procedures will be done after training has been completed for all agencies. Rather than provide this training months before implementing the new protocols, training will be done closer to when the full protocol implementation time.

MOU: A memo of understanding (MOU) will be required to be signed by the AHJ (authority having jurisdiction) for each of the Fire Departments prior to radio's being provided. This MOU will be included with the Mutual Aid plan revision, which will also require signature by the AHJ's. The MOU is being finalized by OC Law Department and will be sent out shortly with the Mutual Aid plan. A quick return of this MOU will prevent any possible delays in providing equipment.

Please feel free to contact any member of the OC Radio System Fire Working group for questions or clarification of any items. Members are listed below as well as some common questions we have received:

Fire Working Group

Vini Tankasali – Orange County Fire Coordinator (36-1)

Bob Reynolds Sr. – OC Deputy Fire Coordinator (36-9)

Jim Skelly – OC Deputy Fire Coordinator (36-15)

Terry Ahlers – Chief, City of Newburgh FD

Kurt Hahn - OC EMS Coordinator, Town of Cornwall EM, Past Asst Chief. Cornwall on Hudson FD

TJ Kalin – Chief, Huguenot FD

Mike Morstatt – Past Chief, Silver Lake FD

Erik Smith – Chief, Highland Falls FD

Some common questions that we have received:

Q: Will low band be shut down immediately?

A: No, lowband will remain active for some period after cutover to ensure all departments have successfully moved over.

Q: When we switch to the new system can we still use lowband links?

A: No, when a department is cut over to the new system it will be expected that all personnel will be using the new system for communication.

Q: Do we need to contact anyone to schedule installs?

A: Vendors will contact departments directly when they are ready to install.

Sincerely,

Vini Tankasali
Fire Coordinator
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