

SE Minnesota Healthcare Coalition

Enhancing Regional Preparedness, Response and Recovery

Communications Guidelines

June 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Healthcare Coalition consists of organizations with responsibilities to mitigate the likelihood of a hazard negatively impacting the ability of a healthcare system to provide services and to prepare for, respond to, recover from consequences of a disaster to the healthcare system, the purpose of the SE MN Healthcare Coalition is to facilitate preparedness to assist communities with building a Health and Medical Services (Emergency Support Function 8/ESF8) Capability to respond to and recover from disasters.

The following groups are represented as part of the SE Healthcare Coalition:

- Hospitals
- Local Public Health
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB)
- South East Emergency Medical Services (SE EMS)
- Long Term Care Facilities
- Specialty Services such as(e.g. dialysis centers, hospice centers, American Red Cross)

This document outlines the SE Region Healthcare Coalition Communications Plan. The goal of this plan is to provide information to support interoperability and effective communication among Coalition partners during times of disaster, as appropriate.

This document was created in accordance with the [Minnesota Hospitals Communications Best Practice Guide](#) published by the EMS, Hospital & Public Health Workgroup of the [Statewide Radio Board](#), Operations & Technical Committee (SRB OTC).

HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING GROUPS

SE Region Healthcare Coalition Interoperable Communications Workgroup

This group is a secondary workgroup of the SE Region Healthcare Coalition and is comprised of representatives from each of the Coalitions primary disciplines, a representative from the Regional Radio Board and the MNTrac Regional Coordinator.

SE Region User's Group

This group is a Workgroup of the [Southeast Regional Radio Board](#) Operation and Technical Committee. Members include 800 MHz Radio User's from across the SE Region working in the areas of Public Safety and Healthcare.

[Statewide Radio Board, Interoperable Communications Committee \(SRB IOC\) EMS & Hospital Communications Sub-committee \(EMSHC\)](#)

This is a formal subcommittee of the Statewide Radio Board that deals with communication needs for EMS and Hospitals. The formal membership is made up of a representative from each of the radio regions, the EMSRB, the MAA, MDH, a representative from the Hospital Preparedness Program and a representative from Regional EMS Coordinators.

[MNTrac](#) State Workgroups

The [MN Department of Health Office of Emergency Preparedness](#) facilitates several advisory workgroups to create policy, guidance, and training around the use of MNTrac

Health Alert Network (HAN) State Coordinator Meetings

This group is comprised of Local HAN coordinators which meet on a monthly conference call.

COMMUNICATION MODES & TIERS

This section describes different modes of communication used in the SE Region and how they are used to achieve interoperability.

The **Primary** communications modes are used day-to-day and as available during emergencies and disasters.

The **Secondary** modes are used when Primary Communications are down or during times of response.

The **Tertiary** modes are used when Primary and Secondary communications are down.

Communication Matrix (Refer to [Appendix B](#))

Primary Communication Modes

- Phone
 - **TSP** - Telephone Service Priority
TSP is a program that authorizes national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) organizations to receive priority treatment for vital voice and data circuits or other telecommunications services. The TSP Program provides service vendors a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate to prioritize requests by identifying those services critical to NS/EP. A TSP assignment ensures that it will receive priority attention by the service vendor before any non-TSP service during a disaster.
<http://tsp.ncs.gov/>
 - **GETS** – Government Emergency Telecommunications Service
The Government Emergency Telecommunications Service is a White House directed emergency phone service provided by the National Communications System (NCS) in the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications Division, National Protection and Programs Directorate, Department of Homeland Security. GETS provides emergency access and priority processing in the local and long distance segments of the Public Switched Telephone network (PSTN). It is intended to be used in an emergency or crisis situation when the PSTN is congested and the probability of completing a call over normal or other alternate telecommunication means has significantly decreased.
<http://gets.ncs.gov/index.html>
 - **WPS** - Wireless Priority Services
Wireless Priority Services is a priority calling capability that greatly increases the probability of call completion during a national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP) event while using their cellular phone. To make a WPS call, the user must first have the WPS feature added to their cellular service. Once established, the caller can dial *272 plus the destination telephone number to place an emergency wireless call.

NOTE: WPS and GETS are requested through a secure on-line system. Before service can be requested, participating organizations must establish a Point of Contact (POC) account. The GETS/WPS POC serves as each organization's program administrator.

Once an organization has an established POC, they can request GETS and WPS. The NCS recommends that each WPS user also have a GETS card. <http://wps.ncs.gov/>

- Email
- Fax
- MN Health Alert Network (MNHAN) Messages located within [Workspace](#)
All of Minnesota's 91 public health agencies have built local HANs to distribute alert information rapidly to health care providers and others in their jurisdiction. Tribal governments have also developed their own health alert networks. Minnesota's Health Alert Networks are connected to a national Health Alert Network managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This decentralized development has resulted in a robust and flexible communication tool for local, state, or national emergencies.
- [MissionMode](#) Alert Notification
MissionMode is a third party application that rapidly sends notification alerts by landline phone, cellular phone both voice and text, pager, fax, and/or email. It also tracks the acknowledgement of those alerts in real-time and can send up follow-up alerts.
- [MNTrac](#)

Alert Notification - This MNTrac module is a mechanism for System Administrators, Healthcare MACC, and Mayo Clinic ECC to quickly send out alert notifications to users. Users decide which alerts they wish to receive. (Notification Settings) Although some alert types can be forced out to all users.

Bed Availability – This MNTrac module is a mechanism for the SEMN Health-MACC to electronically request and track bed availability for hospitals and skilled nursing facilities in SEMN.
- MTAT (Mayo Transport Awareness Tool)

MTAT routinely supports EMS-transported patient tracking throughout Mayo Clinic Emergency Communications Center dispatch services areas. Participating organizations are able to view MTAT data specific to their area/agency. During disasters, Mayo Clinic uses MTAT to support patient tracking for all agencies dispatched by the ECC or with patients being transported to participating MTAT sites.
- ARMER Radio
The acronym [ARMER](#) stands for Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response. The ARMER system is the network of interconnected public safety radio towers that make up the backbone of Minnesota's statewide public safety radio system. Towers are interconnected by microwave connections linking each tower to one of six zone controllers strategically located throughout the state. It is a [P25](#) Open Standard digital trunked radio system where the zone controller allows users to share radio frequencies (800 MHz range) by creating multiple virtual channels using any available frequency. This is the primary radio system used by most first responders within Minnesota.
- VHF Radio
Radio which operates in the very high frequency ([VHF](#)) range, between 156 and 162.025 MHz. Some local responders communicate over a narrow-banded frequency in this range.

Secondary Communication Modes

- MNT*rac* Coordination Center
The MNT*rac* Coordination Center provides a central location for users from around the state to communicate with one another and share resources electronically. It allows for on-line conferencing and emergency communication that is supported in real time. The Coordination Center may be used to improve collaboration and improve response times during an event or for routine administrative use for resource sharing and planning discussions on a day-to-day basis. Example: workgroup meetings and document sharing.
www.MNTrac.org

Tertiary Communications Modes

- Satellite Phone
A satellite telephone, satellite phone (SAT Phone) is a type of mobile phone that connects to orbiting satellites instead of terrestrial cell sites. They provide similar functionality to terrestrial mobile telephones; voice, [short messaging service](#) and low-bandwidth internet access are supported through most systems.
- Amateur Radio
[Amateur radio](#) (also called ham radio) is the use of designated radio frequency spectrum for purposes of private recreation, non-commercial exchange of messages, wireless experimentation, self-training, and emergency communication. The term "amateur" is used to specify persons interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest, and to differentiate it from commercial broadcasting, public safety (such as police and fire), or professional two-way radio services (such as maritime, aviation, taxis, etc.). Local amateur radio operators can be used to set up a communication network when other modes of communication are not meeting the need.

The [Amateur Radio Emergency Service](#)® (ARES) consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes. Med-ARES are volunteers that work specifically supporting healthcare response.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Workspace

A password protected portal used by MDH staff, local health departments (LHDs), and other emergency preparedness and response partners for planning and response work. The [MDH Workspace](#) is the repository for the Health Alert Network messaging tools, a public health directory of health responders to emergencies, and a document library.

MNTrac Knowledge Base

An electronic library of resource documents. These documents can be viewed and referred to at any time by a user logged in to [MNTrac](#). It is a central location to collect important documents, including training materials, reference guides or other important resource documents. Knowledge base is also equipped with a search function. Information access is permission based.

MNTRAIN (Minnesota Trainingfinder Real-time Affiliate Integrated Network)

[MNTRAIN](#) is a password-protected, web-based learning management system designed for the continuing education of professionals who protect the public's health. Minnesota course providers, local public health, hospitals, EMS, and other users will be able to track their training easily.

HEALTH MULTI AGENCY COORDINATION CENTER (MACC)

A Health Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) is a support structure that can be utilized as a conduit for communication and information flow between several organizations or jurisdictions affected by an incident and a state's response.

Health and healthcare Multi-agency coordination can occur virtually, at a MAC Center, or a combination of both. A multi-agency coordination center denotes a place or physical location where representatives from multiple agencies and facilities gather to coordinate information, regional resource needs, and response efforts on a regional level and to relay state-supported resources and information. A virtual MACC conducts the same activities, but does so using various communications tools from remote locations.

SE MN Healthcare MACC activation is requested by calling the Mayo Clinic Emergency Communications Center. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for activation pathway details.

APPENDIX A - HEALTHCARE COALITION ACTIVATION

Mayo Clinic Emergency Communications Center (ECC) is the 24/7 SE Healthcare Coalition emergency contact.

This functionality was developed for distressed healthcare facilities to:

- Notify Healthcare Coalition members of an emergency situation or incident that is, or has the potential to, stress or overwhelm the reporting facility or jurisdiction
- Activate regional healthcare response plans or compacts
- Request support in responding to an incident

Notify the Mayo Clinic ECC to report an incident that may impact Coalition partners or to request support:

- **Primary Phone: 855.606.5458**
- **Secondary Phone: 507.255.2808**
- **ARMER Radio: SE Hospital Talk Group**

Example radio script to contact Mayo Clinic ECC: “[Your Hospital/LTC facility Name] to Mayo Clinic ECC on SE Hospital.”

Prior to contacting the ECC support, identify the following information:

- Incident Location
- Incident Type
- What support you need:
 - Patient Evacuation/Transfer Support
 - Reference: Mayo Clinic Patient Intake Form
 - Supply/Equipment Support (Type and Quantity)
 - Reference: SE Region Supply/Equipment Request Form
 - Personnel/Staffing Support (Type and Quantity)

Provide this information to the ECC:

- a. “This is [Your facility name] requesting Healthcare MACC activation.”
- b. Your callback information if calling via telephone.

Join the Healthcare-MACC Conference Call, which will be immediately initiated by the ECC following the initial call:

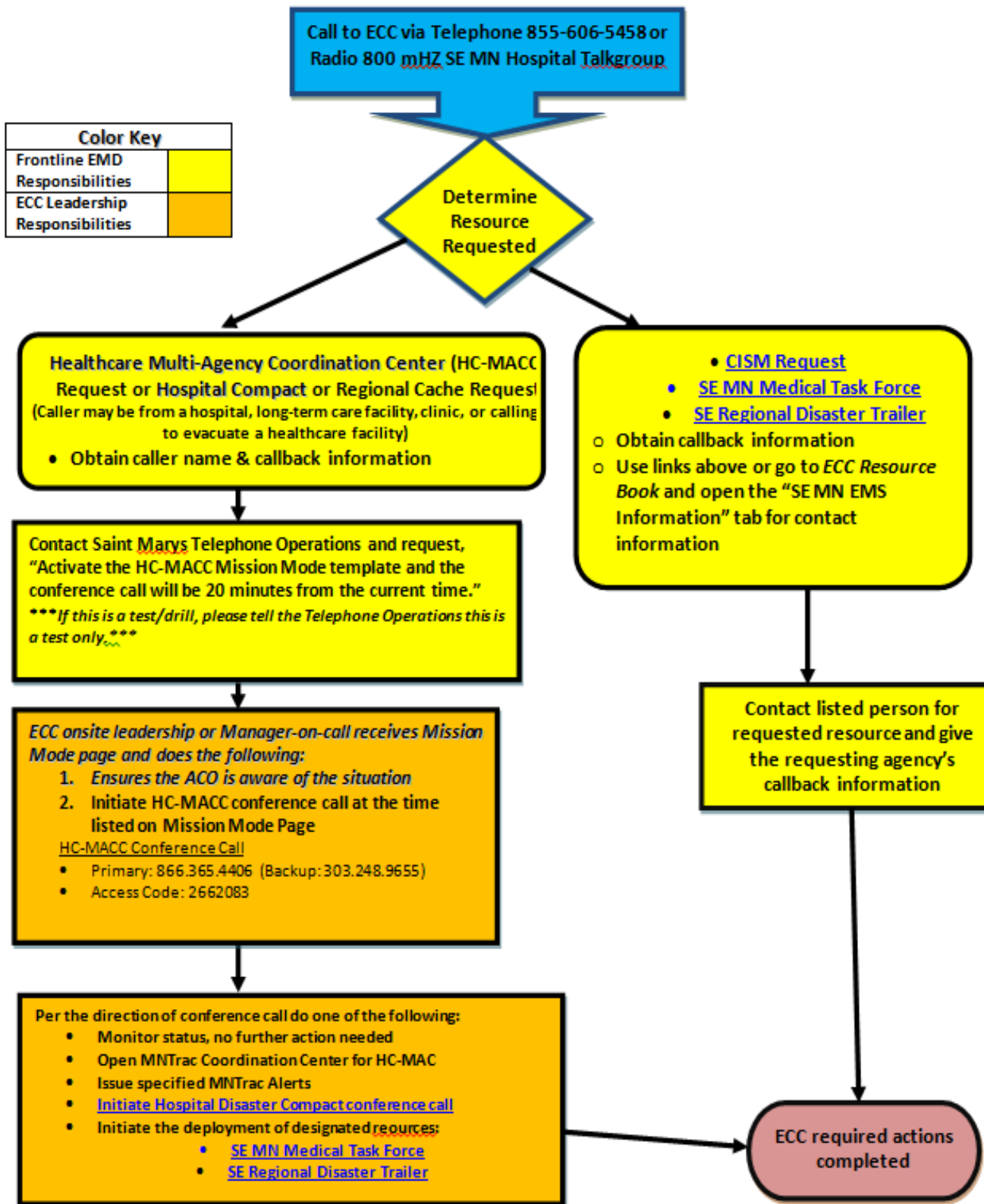
- Primary: 866.365.4406
- Backup: 303.248.9655
- Access Code: 2662083

Provide this information on the Conference Call (Primary number: 866.365.4406; Access Code: 2662083)

- a. Who, What, Where, When, Why
 - Current “external” (community) situation

- Current “internal” (facility) situation
- Anticipated or actual support needs (patient transfer/evacuation, supplies/equipment, personnel, etc.)
- A facility contact and contact information to allow for follow up during a disaster.

ECC SE MN Emergency Preparedness Services Leadership Flowchart March 2013



APPENDIX B - COMMUNICATION PLATFORM MATRIX

MNHAN = MN Hhealth Alert Network

ARMER = Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response; MN 800 MHz Radio System

ARES = Amateur Radio Emergency Services (HAM Radio Operators)

JIC = Joint Information Center

GETS = Government Emergency Telecommunications System calling card

Primary Mode
Secondary
Tertiary

	Mayo Clinic ECC	Hospital Incident Mgmt Team	Local Public Health	State Public Health	Regional Health MACC	Emergency Management	EMS
Hospital Incident Management Team	Phone	Phone/Email/Fax MissionMode Alert – receive only	Phone/Email/Fax Health Alert Network – receive only	Phone/Email/Fax MNTrac Alert MNHAN	Phone/Email/ Fax MissionMode/ MNTrac Alert – receive only	Phone/Email/ Fax	
	ARMER Phone (GETS)	MNTrac Coordination Center; Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS)	MNTrac Coordination Center; Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS)	MNTrac Coordination Center; Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS)	MNTrac Coordination Center; Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS)	MNTrac Coordination Center; MN ARMER Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS)	
		ARMER ARES/MED-ARES	ARMER ARES/MED-ARES	ARMER ARES/MED-ARES	ARMER ARES/MED-ARES	ARMER ARES/MED-ARES	ARES/MED- ARES
Hospital Emergency Department	Phone				Phone/Fax		ARMER/VHF Radio; Cell Phone
	MN ARMER; Phone (GETS)						
Hospital Public Information Officer	Phone	Phone/Email/ Fax	Phone/Email/Fax	Phone/Email/Fax	Phone/Email/Fax	Phone/Email/ Fax	Phone/Email/ Fax
	Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS Card)	Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS); In Person (JIC)	Cell Phone/Phone (GETS Card); In Person (JIC)			Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS); In Person (JIC)	Cell Phone/ Phone (GETS); In Person (JIC)
		ARMER	ARMER			ARMER	ARMER
Hospital Patient Transfer Office/ Admissions Office	Phone/Fax/	Phone/Fax			Phone/Email/Fax		
	Cell Phone Phone (GETS) ARMER				MNTrac HAvBED		

APPENDIX C - REFERENCES

[MN EMSRB Communications Plan](#) - A Radio Planning Guide for Minnesota EMS & Hospitals

[MN Hospitals Communication Best Practices Guide](#) - Hospital Disaster Preparedness & Response Compact and SE MN Healthcare Coalition Activation Drill Exercise Plan

APPENDIX D - SE MINNESOTA HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CHANNEL LAYOUT

CHANNEL	SE Hosp	SE Regional Interop (SE)	State Wide Interop (IC)	Scene of Action (SA)– Conventional
1	Hospital Specific Talkgroup	SE Call	ICF-TAC1	SAF-SOA-1
2	EMH-SED (MRCC patching)	SE 2	ICF-TAC2	SAF-SOA-2
3	open	SE-3	ICF-TAC3	SAA-SOA-1
4	open	SE-4	ICF-TAC4	SAA-SOA-2
5	open	SE-5	ICE-TAC1	SAP-SOA-1
6	open	SE-6	ICE-TAC2	SAP-SOA-2
7	open	SE 7	ICE-TAC3	SA8CALL90-D
8	open	SE 8	ICE-TAC4	SA8TAC91-D
9	open	SE 9	ICS-TAC1	SA8TAC92-D
10	open	SE 10	ICS-TAC2	SA8TAC93-D
11	open	SE 11	ICS-TAC3	SA8TAC94-D
12	open	SE 12	ICS-TAC4	SA8CALL90-R
13	open	SE 13	ICL-TAC1	SA8TAC91-R
14	open	SE 14	ICL-TAC2	SA8TAC92-R
15	open	SE 15	ICL-TAC3	SA8TAC93-R
16	open	SE Call	ICL-TAC4	SA8TAC94-R

RADIO ETIQUETTE

1. Identify who you are
2. Identify who you are calling
3. Identify what channel on which you are communicating

APPENDIX E - SE MINNESOTA HOSPITAL INCIDENT COMMAND CHANNEL LAYOUT

CHANNEL	SE Hosp	SE Regional Interop	Emergency Management (EM)	State Wide Interop (IC)	Scene of Action (SA)–Conventional
1	SE HOSP – scan	SE Call - scan	SE EOC 1	ICF-TAC1	SAF-SOA-1
2	Local ED Talkgroup	SE 2	SE EOC 2	ICF-TAC2	SAF-SOA-2
3	Local	SE-3	SE EOC 3	ICF-TAC3	SAA-SOA-1
4	Local	SE-4	SE EOC 4	ICF-TAC4	SAA-SOA-2
5	Local	SE-5	SE EOC 5	ICE-TAC1	SAP-SOA-1
6	SEMTAC	SE-6	SE EOC 6	ICE-TAC2	SAP-SOA-2
7	NWS	SE 7	SE EOC 7	ICE-TAC3	SA8CALL90-D
8	SE Call	SE 8	SE EOC 8	ICE-TAC4	SA8TAC91-D
9	SE-2	SE 9	SE EOC 9	ICS-TAC1	SA8TAC92-D
10	SE-3	SE 10	SE EOC 10	ICS-TAC2	SA8TAC93-D
11	SE-4	SE 11	SE EOC 12	ICS-TAC3	SA8TAC94-D
12	SE-5	SE 12	SE EOC 13	ICS-TAC4	SA8CALL90-R
13	SE-13	SE 13	SE EOC 14	ICL-TAC1	SA8TAC91-R
14	SE-14	SE 14	SE EOC 15	ICL-TAC2	SA8TAC92-R
15	SE-15	SE 15	SE EOC 16	ICL-TAC3	SA8TAC93-R
16	SE Hosp	SE Call	SE EOC CALL	ICL-TAC4	SA8TAC94-R

RADIO ETIQUETTE

- Identify who you are
- Identify who you are calling
- Identify what channel/talkgroup on which you are communicating

APPENDIX F – SE MINNESOTA HOSPITAL CHANNEL LAYOUT TALKGROUP DESCRIPTIONS

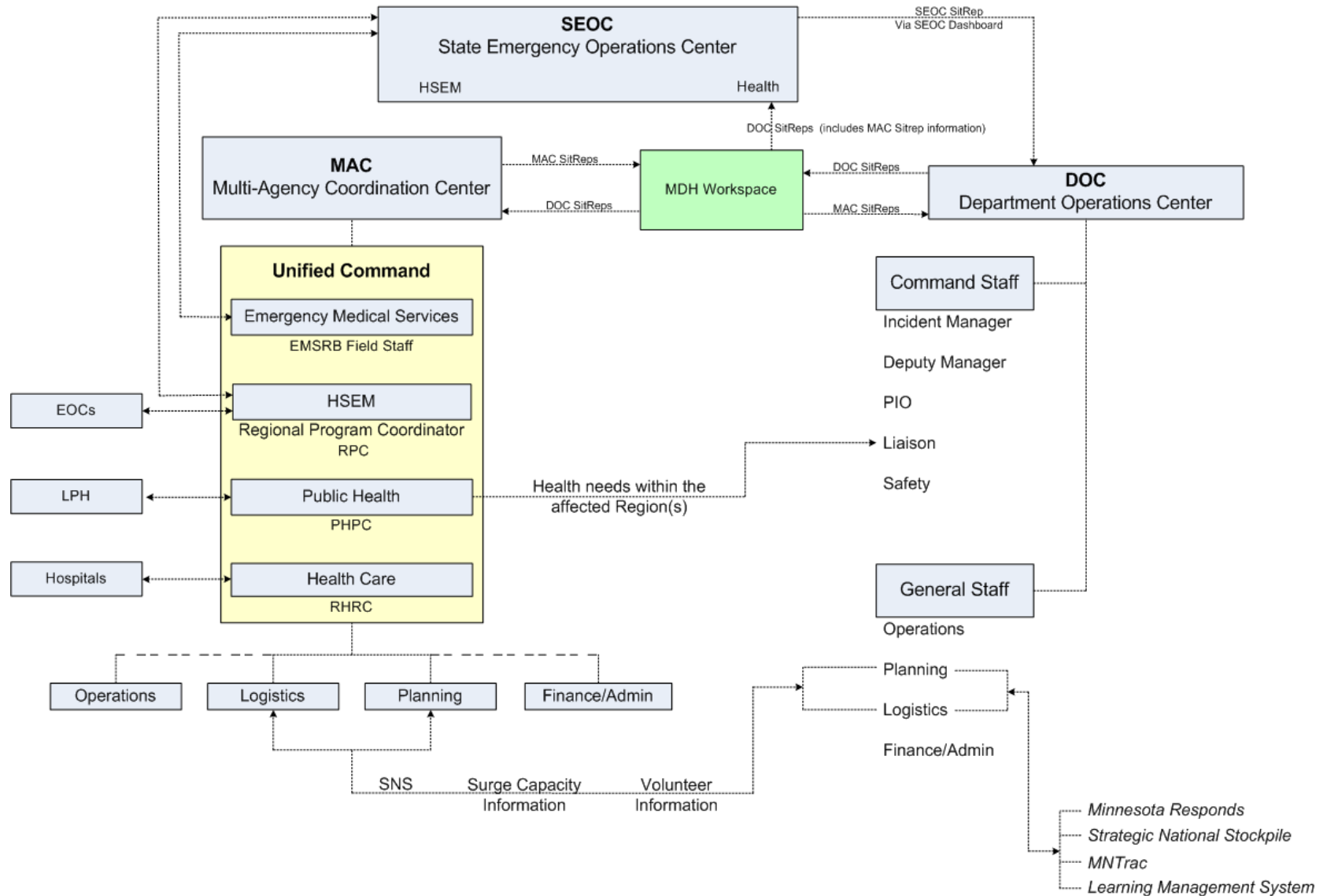
Name of Talkgroup	Description
SE HOSP	This talkgroup is dedicated for SE Hospital Incident Command. Default place to go when primary communications are down. Will communicate to other SE Region Hospital IC and SE Health MAC
Local ED Talkgroup	This is the talkgroup where EMS will go to talk directly to your ED to exchange patient information
Local	Space reserved for talkgroups that your local responders use, i.e. dispatch, emergency management.
NWS	National Weather Service for your area
SE Call	This talkgroup will be heard by all Region Dispatch Centers
SE 2 - 15	Regional interoperability talkgroup. Assigned to users through PSAP upon request or need
EMH-SED	Emergency Medical Hospital Statewide Emergency Department (EMH-SED) talkgroup. It is used by Metro Region Communication Center (MRCC) to patch an EMS unit which does not have a specific hospital talkgroup to that hospital. MRCC will contact the hospital by phone to instruct the emergency department to communicate with the hailing EMS unit on the EMH-SED.(ED use only - <i>not monitored</i>)
SE EOC 1 – 16	Emergency Managers in Southeast MN. Checked out by local EM for private conversation
SE EOC CALL	Hailing channel to communicate with all SE Region EOCs
ICF- TAC 1 – 4 ICE-TAC 1 – 4 ICS-TAC 1 -4 ICL- TAC 1 – 4	State interoperability talkgroups assigned by a PSAP for a statewide response (i.e. responders coming from outside region)
SOA	Scene of Action Channels. Used when ARMER system is not available. Essentially it turns 800 MHz radios into walkie-talkies. Function in 5 mile range. Do not need to be checked out.
8 Call 8 TAC	National Channels for conventional or walkie-talkie use

APPENDIX G - STATE, HEALTH-MACC, LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

SEOC - DOC - MAC Communication Channels

DRAFT

(v1.08)



APPENDIX H - MDH CHANNEL LAYOUT

Channel	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3	ZONE 4	ZONE 5	ZONE IC
1	MN HEALTH	MN HEALTH	MN HEALTH	MN HEALTH	MN HEALTH	MN HEALTH
2	MDH TAC 1	E-TAC 1	E-TAC 1	E-TAC 1	SOA-P1	L-TAC 1
3	MDH TAC 2	E-TAC 2	E-TAC 2	E-TAC 2	SOA-P2	L-TAC 2
4	MET-PH1	E-TAC 3	E-TAC 3	E-TAC 3	SOA-1	L-TAC 3
5	MET-PH2	E-TAC 4	E-TAC 4	E-TAC 4	SOA-2	L-TAC 4
6	MET-PH3	A-TAC 1	CMA-TAC1	SEA-TAC1	I-CALL	S-TAC 1
7	MET-PH4	A-TAC 2	CMA-TAC2	SEA-TAC2	I-TAC 1	S-TAC 2
8	E-TAC 1	A-TAC 3	CMA-TAC3	SEA-TAC3	I-TAC 2	S-TAC 3
9	E-TAC 2	A-TAC 4	CMA-TAC4	SEA-TAC4	I-TAC 3	S-TAC 4
10	E-TAC 3	P-TAC 1	CMP-TAC1	SEP-TAC1	I-TAC 4	F-TAC 1
11	E-TAC 4	P-TAC 2	CMP-TAC2	SEP-TAC2	I-CALL TA	F-TAC 2
12	MN HSEM	P-TAC 3	CMP-TAC3	SEP-TAC3	I-TAC 1 TA	F-TAC 3
13	SEMTAC	P-TAC 4	CMP-TAC4	SEP-TAC4	I-TAC 2 TA	F-TAC 4
14	MN-DO				I-TAC 3 TA	MINSEF
15	SOA-1				I-TAC 4 TA	SOA-1
16	SOA-2				DYN REGRP	SOA-P1

APPENDIX I - RHPC CHANNEL LAYOUT

CHANNEL	H	IC	SA	SE	EM
1	LOCAL HOSP	S-TAC4	A-SOA-1	SE CALL	SE EOC1
2	EMH-SED	S-TAC3	A-SOA-2	SE1	SE EOC2
3	SE HOSP	S-TAC2	P-SOA-1	SE2	SE EOC3
4	OPEN	S-TAC1	P-SOA-2	SE3	SE EOC4
5	OPEN	E-TAC1	8CALL90-D	SE4	SE EOC5
6	OPEN	E-TAC2	8TAC91-D	SE5	SE EOC6
7	OPEN	E-TAC3	8TAC92-D	SE6	SE EOC7
8	OPEN	E-TAC4	8TAC93-D	SE7	SE EOC8
9	OPEN	L-TAC1	8TAC94-D	SE8	SE EOC9
10	OPEN	L-TAC2	8CALL90-R	SE9	SE EOC10
11	OPEN	L-TAC3	8TAC91-R	SE10	SE EOC11
12	OPEN	L-TAC4	8TAC92-R	SE11	SE EOC12
13	OPEN	F-TAC1	8TAC93-R	SE12	SE EOC13
14	OPEN	F-TAC2	8TAC94-R	SE13	SE EOC14
15	OPEN	F-TAC3	OPEN LE 2	SE14	SE EOC15
16	SE HOSP	F-TAC4	OPEN LE 2	SE CALL	SE EOC CALL

APPENDIX J - DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY

Change Date	Page	Comments
6/18/13	6	Added clarifying language to indicate MNTrac as an electronic bed tracking tool. Added information about Mayo Transport Awareness Tool

Change Date	Page	Comments
		as a patient tracking support tool.