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November 2, 2010

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Dear Iowa Public Safety and Government Radio System Operators

Attn: Operators using the 150-174 and 421-512 MHz Radio Spectrum

Subject: **Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Radio Equipment  
Mandated Narrowband Deadline of 12/31/2012**

This letter is a reminder that the FCC has **mandated** that all public safety and governmental users who operate radio equipment in the 150-174 and 421-512 MHz frequency range **must meet the new FCC Narrowband Requirements, effective 1/1/2013**. This means that if you are presently operating radio equipment in the older wideband mode in these VHF and UHF bands, your equipment must be replaced or modified to operate in the narrowband mode by 12/31/2012.

In 1992, the FCC developed a plan to free up more radio channels for those operating in the VHF and UHF radio spectrum bands by using radio equipment that would operate in channels occupying one-half the space formerly used. Subsequently, they issued several orders, e.g., FCC's Third Order, 04-292, Released December 23, 2004, setting 1/1/2013 as the final date that narrowband operation in affected VHF and UHF channels **must occur**. The FCC reminded licensees, frequency coordinators, and equipment manufacturers again of this mandate and deadline in Public Notice DA 09-2589, released on December 11, 2009, affirming that **all operators be fully compliant with this narrowband mandate by 1/1/2013** or licensees could face fines up to \$10,000 per day or loss of license for illegal operations after the deadline.

Typically, radio equipment manufactured from about 2000 on is capable of being modified to operate in a narrowband mode to be compliant with the above order. Older equipment may not be able to be modified, and will have to be replaced if you still wish to operate in the above VHF and UHF bands.

The Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications Board (ISICSB) has placed several links and documents on its web site ( [www.isicsb.iowa.gov](http://www.isicsb.iowa.gov) )

as a resource for those affected by this FCC mandate. Additionally, the Iowa statewide interoperability vision and master plan is posted on our web site, and should be considered when narrowbanding to ensure future interoperability throughout Iowa, and more efficiently use tax dollars as we progress towards our goal of statewide interoperability.

So what do you need to do NOW, if you have not already started your narrowbanding conversion?

- Conduct a thorough equipment inventory and then check your manufacturer's web site or contact you're your service provider, technician, or manufacturer to determine what equipment can be modified and what must be replaced, or other solutions, preferably P25 compliant;
- If you have not done so already, identify the costs and funding for this mandate NOW as you only have 1+ budget cycles left before the deadline; the FCC has repeatedly said that with the lengthy notice issued, they will not extend the mandate deadline.
- Plan your narrowband conversion with your neighboring agencies to minimize interoperability and possible reduced coverage interruptions. The ISICSB web site contains the Iowa State Patrol's narrowbanding schedule for 2011 and 2012 as well as the Iowa statewide master plan for future interoperability.
- The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) have developed a "Standard Channel Nomenclature for the Public Safety Interoperability Channels" ( [www.apcointl.org](http://www.apcointl.org) ). It is suggested that at the time of your conversion, you consider renaming your channels consistent with this standard to avoid confusion in referencing channels from one user to the next.

The FCC has published a short Power Point presentation that reviews the general information on this narrowbanding mandate. I have included the link below for your review and information:

[http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/docs/public-safety-spectrum/General Information on VHF-UHF Narrowbanding.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/docs/public-safety-spectrum/General%20Information%20on%20VHF-UHF%20Narrowbanding.pdf) .

**REMEMBER, this FCC mandate is NOT optional.**

We hope this information from the ISICSB helps your successful migration to narrowbanding, should the FCC mandate affect your radio operations.


Sincerely,



Todd A. Misel  
Chair, ISICSB



Dina McKenna  
Vice-Chair, ISICSB



Jim Bogner  
Iowa Statewide Interoperability Coordinator