



# Northumberland County Public Safety Communications System Project



**FROM:** Bill Brown, 9-1-1 Coordinator, Northumberland County

**TO:** Northumberland County Field Users (Fire/Police/EMS)

**SUBJECT:** Frequently Asked Questions (**June, 2014 Updates**)

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## 1. What is the coverage guarantee?

Motorola is required by contract to guarantee the following coverage levels:

- Outdoors: Portables, Pagers, Mobile – 95% of Northumberland County
- Indoors: Portables – 90% of Northumberland County inside medium density buildings

## 2. How will testing be done?

Northumberland County will be divided into  $\frac{1}{4}$  by  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile grids, approximately 7,633 in all. A team will drive into each of the grids that are accessible by road and perform a voice test with a portable, mobile, and a pager on the system. The quality of the transmission to the tower and from the tower must be good quality, or the grid does not pass.

## 3. What type of system is it – portable or mobile?

The system is a mobile-based system, *it is not a “portable-only” system*. A portable-only system would be designed for a higher coverage percentage indoors (more than the current 90% level), and would include many more sites to achieve this greater coverage. Although an agency may find that portable coverage in their jurisdiction is excellent, the system has been designed for use with both portables and mobiles.

## 4. What is the timeline/schedule?

JUNE 2014: Four of the non-County owned towers did not pass their structural integrity tests. In order to support the new antennas, some additional bracing will be required for these sites. This additional work has delayed the anticipated completion of the system installation until the end of 2014. Migration of users to the new system is now expected during the first quarter of 2015.

## 5. When will subscriber equipment be installed? How long will it take?

The Motorola contractor has estimated that it will take approximately five weeks to install the 70 mobiles purchased by Northumberland County for the fire service. It is anticipated that mobile installations for the fire service equipment will be completed in December, 2014 or January, 2015.



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**6. How long will we have after the system is accepted to test/migrate?**

Migration of all users to the new system will be completed within 90 days of final system acceptance.

**7. When should we purchase radios based on schedule, testing, and migration?**

Users should have all of their equipment purchased, programmed, installed, and ready for operation no later than December 30, 2014.

**8. How many talkgroups will there be? What will they be?**

A draft "fleetmap" of channel assignments is currently being discussed.

**9. Will we be involved in the development of the talkgroup list?**

User input will be considered from any agency that wishes to provide suggestions.

**10. Will we have an opportunity to test other radios?**

Agencies that purchase equipment OTHER THAN Motorola radios are strongly encouraged to participate in the coverage testing. Users will be notified when coverage testing is scheduled for their area well ahead of the testing date. You should make every effort to have a representative of your agency accompany the test team as they test your area.

**11. Can we use vehicular repeaters? What types?**

The coverage guarantee of the new system is far superior to the coverage provided by the current network of sites and equipment. It is unlikely that vehicular repeaters of any kind will be necessary.

Because the new system will be used throughout the entire county, it is possible that the actions of one user can disrupt the communications of many others. For this reason, Cross-band repeaters will not be permitted on the new system, however Digital Vehicular Repeater Systems (DVRS) will be permitted and may be purchased by any agency.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to delay the decision to purchase vehicular repeaters until they have migrated to the new system and verified the coverage provided in their jurisdiction. Purchasing vehicular repeaters before the system is tested is strongly discouraged.

**12. Is there a smartphone interface to the new system?**

A smartphone interface was not purchased with the new system. The new system is highly configurable, and will accommodate many possible solutions for non-mission critical communications. At this time, no additional interfaces have been purchased, however.



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### 13. What will be programmed in the new radios?

As of June, 2014, the final programming of the mobile and portable radios has not been decided by the users. A series of programming meetings will be held over the summer to determine the final programming layout before it is set. With most new systems of this type, programming and channel assignments are reviewed after one year of operational use by the users. It is typical for some changes to be made at that time to make the system more functional for users.

### 14. How will patches be set up for mutual aid?

Final channel programming and talkgroup assignments will determine how patches are set up. These items will be discussed during programming meetings, and then provided in a presentation when they are finalized.

### 15. When will installations begin for vehicles?

Please refer to Question #5.

### 16. Will users be able to participate in testing?

YES. Users are strongly encouraged to participate in testing when it begins. When a final testing schedule is created, it will be distributed to all field agencies for review. At that time agency personnel may sign up to ride along with the testing team in order to test known trouble areas, or just to observe how testing is performed. The testing schedule will provide an APPROXIMATE area that will be tested, and the date.

### 17. How can I receive updates on the status of the project and the schedule?

Presentations, meeting minutes, Frequently Asked Questions, and other documents can be found on the Radio Project Website:

<http://www.publicsafety.norrycopa.net/index.php/radio-project-documentation>

In order to receive regular project updates via e-mail, send an e-mail with the subject "PROJECT UPDATES" to: [radioproject@norrycopa.net](mailto:radioproject@norrycopa.net) You will be added to the e-mail list.

### 18. Who is responsible for maintaining the mobile/portable/pager units?

Fire, EMS, and law enforcement agencies receiving equipment from the County are responsible for maintenance costs after the warranty expires, and for any costs to move/transfer the equipment after it is initially installed, or for additional programming changes. The County will not be responsible for any costs related to the equipment once it is installed, operational, and accepted. Additionally, agencies should make sure that the equipment is added to insurance policies, if necessary.



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**19. Will the County maintain spare mobile/portable/pager units?**

Project funds were maximized to provide as many radios to user agencies as the budget would support. Currently no spare radio equipment has been purchased. If agencies are willing to accept less equipment, the County may consider maintaining spare radios.