

For discussion purposes only – DO NOT CITE OR QUOTE

ISICSB County Point of Contact:

I am writing you on behalf of Iowa Statewide Interoperability Communications System Board (ISICSB) as Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC). Per Code of Iowa §80.28 and 80.29, ISICSB is mandated to create, design, and deploy a Statewide Interoperable Voice/Data Radio system. ISICSB awarded a contract for and continues to build out Iowa's state of the art land mobile radio (LMR) platform known as Iowa Statewide Interoperability Communications System (ISICS).

ISICS is a Project 25, 700 MHz, Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Phase Two platform. Phase Two means this platform is already narrow band (6.25 kHz channel spacing) so no future upgrades for frequency modifications will be required for many years. ISICS also comes with all software or hardware upgrades included for 10 years from final platform acceptance. By contract ISICS provides 95 percent radio frequency (RF) coverage of all of Iowa. Therefore, each county has significant coverage, some with more, and others less than 95 percent. ISICS platform was designed to provide interoperability at no cost to users, for all Iowa public safety providers and any interested public service agencies. Public Safety/Service agencies may choose to use ISICS for day to day operability at no cost as long as no enhancements to ISICS are necessary.

During 2015, to help Iowa counties and cities public safety/service agencies prepare for ISICS interoperability (consistent with Code of Iowa) along with Iowa's portion of FirstNet, ISICSB developed Regional Interoperability Committees (RICs) which follow Iowa's six (6) Homeland Security Regional boundaries. For several months RICs have been meeting and providing input into the Detail Design Review (DDR) process of ISICS. Building out a statewide LMR platform is a daunting task, many important decisions must be made including: platform functionality, design of talkgroups (similar to radio channels or frequencies), configuration of user unit identification (IDs), encryption, off system interoperability to local Very High Frequency (VHF) systems and how those interfaces will be handled for day to day interoperability in home locations, and how out of area users will use the platform during major events. Many decisions with operational impact are made and many more are to be completed.

By this letter first, I as SWIC, and all ISICSB Board members want to make sure each and every local agency knows there is an ISICS statewide interoperability platform being built, and use of ISICS is designed to be at no cost. Second, whether an agency is planning on remaining on VHF, paying to build out their own separate 700/800 MHz system, or is considering joining ISICS as an operational user, planning is key for effective interoperability. Programming radios can have significant costs for a local agency; I want to help ensure agencies get interoperability programming right the first time, so they do not have to pay a second time to program radios properly for interoperability.

As your county point of contact, kindly forward this letter to all public safety/service agencies in your county in the event they have any question about ISICS, interoperability or need additional information. I can be reached at 515 725 6108 or craig.allen@iowa.gov.

Best Regards

Iowa SWIC Craig Allen

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