

January 3, 2017

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Kelly Groskurth
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Jason Leonard
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Legislative Members
Senator Chris Brase
Senator Randy Feenstra
Representative Bob Kressig
Representative Steven Holt

ISICSB County Point of Contact:

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

ISICS is a Project 25, 700 MHz, Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Phase Two LMR platform. Phase Two means this platform is already narrow band (6.25 kHz channel spacing) so it avoids future frequency modifications for many years. ISICS also comes with all software or hardware upgrades included for 10 years from final platform acceptance. ISICS provides 95 percent radio frequency (RF) coverage of all of Iowa. Therefore, each county has significant LMR coverage, some with more, and others less than 95 percent. ISICS LMR 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, so long as no enhancements 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 Regions.

RICs have been meeting for several months and providing input into ISICS Detail Design Review (DDR) process. Building out a ISICS statewide LMR platform is a daunting task, many important decisions must be made including: platform functionality, design of talk groups (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 continue to be made, many more to be completed.

As your SWIC representing ISICSB Board members, I want to make sure each local agency knows Iowa has an ISICS statewide interoperability platform being built. Use of ISICS is designed at no cost. 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. My duty as SWIC is to assist you in achieving communications on ISICS for interoperability purposes.

Re-programming radios for instance, can have costs for a local agency; I want to ensure agencies get interoperability programming right the first time, so they avoid having to pay re-programming costs.

As you are designated the county point of contact (POC) for your county, kindly forward this letter to all public safety/service agencies in your county. I can be reached at 515-725-6108 or craig.allen@iowa.gov should they have any questions, need additional information about ISICS LMR platform or programming radios for interoperability.

Best Regards



Iowa SWIC Craig Allen

NOTE: This letter was sent via email to each Iowa county point of contact (POC) on file with ISICSB and Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM).