Policy Number: 10-005	Lucas County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedure Approved by Sheriff: *Michael J. Navarre* Sheriff Michael J. Navarre	
	DATE FOR REVIEW: SECTION: COUNTY WIDE COMMUNICATIONS	Pages: 3
	RULES OF OPERATION	

I.   BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, a National Response Plan was developed. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is the means to employ the National Response Plan. Use of an Incident Command System (ICS) compliant with NIMS is required for any regional interoperable resource, like the Countywide Communications System.

The Regional Council of Governments (RGOG) has a published dispatch plan that governs CCS users. It is also necessary to establish a consistent communications procedure for all users of the CCS that is NIMS compliant.

II.   POLICY

A.   TACTICAL INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (TICP)

A TICP was first published in 2006 for an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant award. That TICP document lists interoperable communications resources available within the Toledo UASI. The document was updated in 2010. A new update is currently in the works and it will include the entire 18-county Homeland Security Region 1. It will include who controls each resource, and what rules of use or operational procedures exist for the activation and deactivation of each resource. The TICP is dynamic and subject to revision as necessary.

The TICP is applicable to all jurisdictions and agencies participating as users of CCS, and serves as a template for engaging interoperable communications. Specifically, the plan is used as a guide and resource by the first response disciplines who (1) Respond to the scene of an emergency, (2) Respond or participate in a special event, or (3) That need to be coordinated during any event when interoperable communications is required.

B.   PLAIN LANGUAGE: (INFORMATION SOURCE PUBLICATION "PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE: MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM TEN CODES TO PLAIN LANGUAGE" – U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY)

NIMS does not acknowledge any coded language for mutual aid. NIMS implementation requires that all multi-jurisdictional communications shall be in plain language. The RCOG has developed a list of Law, Fire and EMS plain language codes, which complies with NIMS requirements. Plain language simplifies the communications process and reduces the chance of error during an emergency.

C.   TALKGROUP PATCHING

Talkgroup patching is a communications interconnection accomplished at RCOG Dispatch and/or at a Gateway interconnected communication device.

Patching instantly establishes interoperability. It is used to manage an evolving serious incident, where utilizing an Operational (OPS) talkgroup would be detrimental to that incident.

Patching restricts the use of a local agency's patched talkgroup for any other radio traffic. When the patch is connected to another dispatch's working talkgroup, two working talkgroups are unavailable for normal radio traffic.

A Dispatcher shall not make a patch to any talkgroup that is not exclusively under their control. Only one (1) patch shall be initiated. Patching to a patch is not permitted. **Gateway Inter-connective Communication Device:**

Gateway is a term to describe an audio bridge used in fixed and mobile configurations. Gateway devices link disparate radio systems. A Gateway device requires radios from each connected communications system. It has the capability to patch dissimilar frequencies and communications devices to CCS talkgroups.

Currently, there are five [5] Gateway devices in Lucas County: Emergency Management Agency (EMA), (1 device) (the BSSA Interoperability Vehicle, identified as Unit 8, [2 devices], CCS, [1 device]); and the Toledo Fire Department-Northwestern Ohio Urban Search and Rescue Unit (USAR), [1 device]. Gateway devices in Lucas County are comprised of both mobile and fixed units, ACU-1000s and an ACU-T.

No operator of a Gateway device shall make a patch from a communications device not assigned to the CCS or from a non-CCS frequency to a CCS controlled talkgroup without the exclusive permission of the patching entities and with supervisory approval.

An alien radio from outside CCS, when connected to a Gateway device to achieve interoperability, must be able to gain connectivity through one of that radio's local control points. Alien radios shall only maintain interoperability when able to acquire their home system coverage area. Alien radios programmed with a talk around (unit-to-unit) capability will be able to communicate through the Gateway device, regardless of the deployment location. Coverage is limited by the power of the radio.

D.   UTILIZATION OF OPERATIONAL (OPS) TALKGROUPS

OPS talkgroups have been created and assigned to provide for secondary and/or interoperable communications.   OPS talkgroups are in addition to agency-defined working talkgroups.

All agencies must request OPS talkgroups from RCOG Dispatch for incidents that require dedicated communications beyond the scope or ability of dispatch working talkgroups. Because all OPS talkgroups are common to all radios programmed for the CCS, interoperability can be readily established for inter or intra agency communication.

When necessary, OPS talkgroups are designed and expected to receive a patch from a working talkgroup if patching is an advantageous incident communications management tool. Strong consideration must be given to the continuity of service on a given talkgroup when establishing a patch, refer to Section C, Talkgroup and/or Channel patching above.

E.   ICS FORMS REQUIRED

The use of ICS forms is required when it is necessary to engage the Incident Command System. The nationally recognized ICS forms have been adopted as the standard for incidents that employ the Lucas County Countywide Communications System.