

Emergency Services Inter Control Talkgroup

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Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance in relation to the use of the Emergency Services Inter Control (ESICTRL) talkgroup. The ESICTRL talkgroup should be used during any spontaneous and pre planned situation that requires the passage of immediate safety critical information between police, fire and ambulance control rooms. This will include the initial tri-service communications during the response to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) (Operation Plato).

Emergency Services Inter Control Talk Groups

The ESICTRL talkgroup is intended to provide the 3 Emergency Services control rooms with the ability to notify each other and share information in response to a wide variety of major and/or critical incidents. Early and ongoing information sharing between the Emergency Services control rooms and their services responders is an essential requirement in delivering a coordinated response (in line with the METHANE mnemonic).

Op PLATO

The ESICTRL talkgroup provides a very specific function within an MTA response (Operation PLATO). The police initial Tactical Firearms Commander (iTFC) will be responsible for ensuring that their local Ambulance and FRS control rooms are notified as a priority, utilising the ESICTRL talkgroup. This initial notification and ongoing communication will assist with the activation of contingency plans, in minimising the risk to emergency service responders who may not be aware that an MTA is occurring in their area and delivering a coordinated tri-service response.

This ESICTRL talkgroup link between control rooms should be kept open and resourced appropriately for the duration of the incident and should not be terminated until all parties agree that it is appropriate to do so.

The tri-service MTA Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) provide further guidance in respect of the response to an MTA.

Learning and recommendations from the Manchester Arena attack and Grenfell Tower fire outline the need for immediate information sharing between the three emergency services. The ESICTRL talkgroup provides that open communication link. Further details in APPENDIX A.

Manchester Arena Attack

- Develop contingencies to enable METHANE messages to be shared directly between partner agencies' control rooms immediately upon receipt of a message from the incident scene.
- Greater Manchester Police, as lead responder during terrorist incidents and on behalf of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, should review the procedures and protocols underpinning the expectations placed on direct communications links between the Greater Manchester Police Force Duty Officer and other partners' control rooms and critical response assets.

Grenfell Tower Fire

- To establish a Joint Emergency Service Airwave Talkgroup to share information and situational awareness with partner agencies as soon as possible.



Consultation

Consultation was conducted between practitioners from the three emergency services, the Home Office, College of Policing, and CT Policing HQ. This was also discussed within the Emergency Services Airwave User Group, Emergency Services Airwave Strategy Group, the Airwave Police User Group and the MTA JOPs Working Group.

This has received endorsement from JESIP and the MTA JOPs Working Group and will be reflected within the MTA JOPs.

This guidance has been reviewed on behalf of policing by Chief Constable Hall and the NPCC Operations Co-ordination Committee Groups re its suitability and operational need.

Operational Use

The ESICTRL talk group SHOULD be constantly monitored by Police, Fire and Ambulance control rooms and will be put into the relevant services ICCS. This is a requirement to allow the talkgroup to be recorded via the organisation's bulk recording facility.

It should be noted that an ESICTRL talk group is NOT available outside the individual service control room itself and should only be programmed into the their ICCS.

Police:

In extreme circumstances the talkgroup MAY be programmed into a handheld situated in the control room. This will be by exception as this may hinder the ability to record the talkgroup. Should this talk group be on handhelds then it may lead to conflicting messaging and a lack of clarity of command. This talk group is purely intended for control room to control room communications.

Fire and Ambulance:

The talkgroup may be programmed into a handheld or desktop resilience solution where necessary and ICCS are not available.

The process of communication during the Incident can be summarised as follows:

1. Originating control room informs the relevant Police/Fire/Ambulance of the incident via the ESICTRL talkgroup (for example ANWAESICTRL for Greater Manchester Police)
2. Via this talkgroup the receiving service confirms receipt of the message and activate their own plans (if needed) in line with their own services Standard Operating Procedures
3. All of the control rooms will continue to monitor the ESICTRL talkgroup, passing information and updates as appropriate, until representatives from each of the emergency services are physically co-located in an agreed control room (this is likely to be as part of a Tactical Coordinating Group) and all control managers/commanders have agreed to terminate the use of the ESICTRL talkgroup for the incident,
4. An agreed operational talk group, accessible by responders and on-scene commanders, will be identified and needs to be one of the national interoperability talk groups within the interoperability folders in line with the standard JESIP procedures. (for example, PGMPE1/PGMPIC1 for Greater Manchester Police)



5. The ESICTRL talkgroup is not intended to be utilised to provide any operational command or tactical direction to responders on the ground. This would be done by the existing and established incident Talk Group structure.

Although the specific types of incidents that require the use of the ESICTRL talkgroup are not defined, it should be noted that there is currently a procedure utilising the Sharers Hailing Talkgroup (SHG1) and IC/ES talkgroups that don't require the immediate exchange of critical information. This procedure is tested via a weekly JESIP control room testing checklist.

ESICTRL talkgroup checks

It is imperative that control rooms regularly test and exercise the use of the ESICTRL talkgroup for coordinating the response to major/critical incidents in order to embed it as a process. This should be done on a monthly basis as a minimum.

The Emergency Services Airwave User Group (ESAUG) will periodically check ESICTRL monitoring.

They will be random checks which are designed to contact a specific service and follow a set Airwave communications process to 'live test' communications.

The process is set out below:

1. An ESAUG representative contacts a service via the ESICTRL talkgroup and announce they are conducting a test. They will reiterate that this is an exercise test only and ask permission to continue with the test.
2. Receiving Service's Control Room identifies a control room supervisor (Force Control Room Inspector or similar) who will then identify an ES/IC talkgroup for further communications in order to replicate the use of an operational talk group.
3. All relevant Services within the area of the specific ESICTRL talkgroup will confirm its use.

Conclusion

All agencies should ensure that all control room supervisors and staff, communication tactical advisors and contingency planners are made aware of the contents of this document. The guiding principles contained within this document will be included within the next version of the MTA JOPs (V2).

Whilst it is recognised that agencies may have similar measures currently in place, this consistent national solution provides clarity and addresses the issues raised out of the Kerslake Enquiry into the Manchester Arena attack and findings in communications issues in the Grenfell Enquiry.

Police Forces should ensure that their current plans, in particular their Operation PLATO response plans, are reviewed and updated in light of the guidance contained within this document.

List of Inter Control Talkgroups by Service Area

Talkgroup	Ambulance Trust	Police Force area	Fire Service areas
AEEAESICTRL	East of England	Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire & Luton
		Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire
		Essex	Essex
		Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire
		Norfolk	Norfolk
		Suffolk	Suffolk
AEMAESICTRL	East Midlands	Derbyshire	Derbyshire
		Leicestershire	Leicestershire
		Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
		Northamptonshire	Northamptonshire
		Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire
ALASESICTRL	London	Metropolitan	London
ANEAESICTRL	North East	Cleveland	Cleveland
		Durham	Durham & Darlington
		Northumbria	Tyne & Wear and Metropolitan
		Northumbria	Northumberland
ANWAESICTRL	North West	Cheshire	Cheshire
		Cumbria	Cumbria
		Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester
		Lancashire	Lancashire
		Merseyside	Merseyside
ASCAESICTRL	South Central	Hampshire	Hampshire Isle of Wight
		Thames Valley	Royal Berkshire
			Buckinghamshire
			Oxfordshire
ASECESICTRL	South East	Kent	Kent
		Surrey	Surrey
		Sussex	East Sussex
		Sussex	West Sussex
ASWAESICTRL	South West	Avon & Somerset	Avon
		Devon & Cornwall	Cornwall
		Devon & Cornwall	Devon & Somerset
		Dorset	Dorset
		Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire
		Wiltshire	Wiltshire
AWMAESICTRL	West Midlands	Staffordshire	Staffordshire
		Warwickshire	Warwickshire
		West Mercia	Hereford & Worcester
		West Mercia	Shropshire
		West Midlands	West Midlands
AYASESICTRL	Yorkshire	Humberside	Humberside
		North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire
		South Yorkshire	South Yorkshire
		West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire
ASCOTESICTRL	Scotland	Police Scotland	Scottish Fire & Rescue
AWASTESICTRL	Wales	Gwent	South Wales
		Dyfed Powys	Mid & West Wales
		South Wales	South Wales/Mid & West Wales
		North Wales	North Wales



APPENDIX A

The Kerslake Report

Emergency Services Recommendations

- A. All Fire and Rescue Services utilising North West Fire Control as their call management and resolution service should review their service level agreements and build resilient contingencies and capabilities within North West Fire Control to enhance the development of multi-agency shared situational awareness, which can most effectively inform their Fire Service command, control and coordination during no-notice major incidents (see 5.212).
- B. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service should review the procedures, protocols and expectations that underpin communications links between its Interagency Liaison Officers, the GMP Force Duty Officer and other partners' control rooms and critical response assets (e.g. Hazardous Area Response Teams) (see 5.212)
- C. Greater Manchester Police, as lead responder during terrorist incidents and on behalf of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, should review the procedures and protocols underpinning the expectations placed on direct communications links between the Greater Manchester Police Force Duty Officer and other partners' control rooms and critical response assets (e.g. Inter-Agency Liaison Officers) (see 5.212).
- D. Greater Manchester Police, as lead responder during terrorist incidents and on behalf of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, should review the technical capability and capacity of communications links between the Greater Manchester Police Force Duty Officer and other partners' control rooms and critical response assets (e.g. Inter-Agency Liaison Officers) (see 5.212).

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 Report Overview

Joint Doctrine be amended to make it clear:

- a. that each emergency service must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible;
- b. that on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services;
- c. that a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication;
- d. that a "METHANE" message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident