Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System (ISICS)
Standards, Protocols, Procedures

ISICS Standard:	**Standard #:**	1.5.0
ISICS Statewide, Regional, and Subregional Interoperability Talkgroups	Date Adopted:	03/11/2021
	Date Reviewed:	10/8/2026
	Version:	3.0

1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to establish policy and procedures for use of ISICS statewide, regional, and subregional interoperable talkgroups - henceforth (ISICS interoperability talkgroups) in all user radios. These interoperability talkgroups are a resource intended to facilitate communications among, and between, different agencies and service branches which need to coordinate their operations during major incidents, emergency or pre-planned events, and task force operations. These resources are not intended for localized day-to-day operations when a more appropriate resource may be available.

This standard will provide standardized incident response radio communications capabilities for all service branches and, most importantly, will support the redeployment of interoperable resources throughout the state. This standard will provide the radio communications structure necessary to enable effective situational awareness, command and control, and resource coordination in support of the incident command and management structure specified under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This standard will also serve to minimize usage conflicts when ISICS interoperability talkgroups are needed for multiple incidents.

2. Technical Background

- **Capabilities**

  ISICS interoperability talkgroups provide a high level of interoperability for public safety and public service users respectively. Other effective levels of interoperability include

switching to shared conventional frequencies, dispatch console patches, deployable portable gateways, and radio caches (swap radios).

- **Constraints**

  The availability of and the use of the ISICS interoperability talkgroups requires training of radio user personnel, who are primarily concerned with their mission and not with the operation of complex radios under stressful conditions. Though all public safety and public service entities may be eligible ISICS users, there are disparate communication systems in Iowa, some of these agencies may have to leave their home system to utilize the ISICS interoperability talkgroups.

3. Operational Context

Universal access to the ISICS interoperable talkgroups is authorized for all approved end-users and communication centers. Encryption used on interoperable talkgroups shall be Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256.

The most current list of ISICS talkgroups is available in the addendum of this standard. It is recommended that ISICS users get any updated talkgroups programmed into their subscriber radios as soon as possible or within 18 months of those talkgroups being added or adopted to that list.

4. Standardized Policy

ISICS INTEROPERABILITY TALKGROUPS

Standard 1.7.0-Minimum Programming Requirements lays out which interoperability talkgroups are required in which type of user resource. Statewide, Regional, and Sub-regional talkgroups should be included in all mobile and portable radios for ISICS eligible users. Public Safety Communication Centers (PSCC) shall have, at minimum, ISICS statewide talkgroups, the regional talkgroups for the particular region in which the agency is in, and the regional talkgroups for the adjacent regions. Statewide interoperable talkgroups are allowed system wide on every ISICS site. Regional and subregional interoperable talkgroups are allowed in the region for which they exist + one (one ring of sites out from that region).

A temporary/soft patch is defined as a connection a dispatcher can establish on-the-fly via the console user interface. A permanent patch is defined as a connection between resources that cannot be easily built or torn down without the assistance of a system technician or engineer.

Primary Intended Use:

ISICS interoperability talkgroups, when feasible, should be considered as the primary resource for incidents involving joint response from multiple agencies and/or service branches that operate in different service areas, jurisdictions, or levels of government. Smaller or more localized incidents may warrant the use of an ISICS interoperability talkgroup if no other common or interoperable resources are available at the time of the incident.

Incident Scope and Geographic Area:

The ISICS interoperability talkgroups are available for use in incidents anywhere ISICS provides geographic coverage, regardless of incident size or scale. Interoperability incidents may be localized or dispersed in area. Participating incident personnel and resources may be localized, regional, statewide, or national. Incidents may be pre-planned or emergent in nature.

Non-intended Use:

The ISICS interoperable talkgroups are not to be used for daily routine operations within a single agency.

Priorities for Use and Multiple Incidents:

In the event that multiple interoperability incidents occur simultaneously, exhausting all of the available ISICS interoperability talkgroups, assignment of ISICS interoperability talkgroups in incident radio communications plans will be prioritized for: (1) multi-agency incidents, and (2) those incidents involving resources spanning multiple regions. Secondary use and localized or single-region multi-agency incidents initially assigned to statewide interoperability talkgroups should be reassigned to regional talkgroups if it can be done safely. This reassignment will be coordinated between the affected incident commanders and dispatch centers controlling the incidents.

Console Resource Requirements and Patching:

Integrated ISICS dispatch consoles shall have the regional, (subregional if appropriate), and statewide interoperability talkgroups in the console configuration available for patching. ISICS interoperability talkgroups should not be patched to other ISICS interoperability talkgroups. In order to meet the communications needs for an event, the ISICS interoperability talkgroups may be patched to:

- Conventional radio frequency (RF) resources, such as VHF, UHF, etc.
- Private agency talkgroups, such as dispatch mains, tactical talkgroups, pools, etc.
- Local/locally shared tactical talkgroups (TACs) or channels.

Assignment Tracking:

Use of the NIMS/ ICS-205 Incident Radio Communications Plan format is highly recommended to assist with assignment tracking for pre-planned incidents, incidents utilizing more than one interoperable talkgroup, and for incidents of long duration. It is also highly recommended and expected that the listed resources on the ICS-205 be reserved on StatusBoard to help prevent conflicts with other agencies who may be looking to utilize interoperable resources consistent with ISICS Standard 1.17.0 - StatusBoard.

It is also highly recommended and expected that agencies utilize the StatusBoard program to assist tracking for emergent, no-notice events consistent with ISICS Standard 1.17.0 - StatusBoard.

ISICS Standard 1.17.0 - StatusBoard allows for agencies to request that agencies make requests on StatusBoard on their behalf. It is recommended that public safety communications centers that are unable for any reason to make any reservations of interoperable resources on StatusBoard request that another agency makes it on their behalf.

NOTE: Coordination of interoperable resources is essential to prevent another agency's personnel from interrupting vital communications on that interoperable resource.

Multi-Group Prohibition:

Statewide, regional, and subregional, interoperability talkgroups shall not be part of any announcement or other pre-programmed multi-group. This prohibition does not apply to preset Multi/Simul-Select functions which are set up at dispatch consoles.

NOTE: Multi/Simul-Selects that include the regional calling (CALL) talkgroups should be limited to broadcasts and/or announcements only.

5. Standardized Procedure

Notification:

If the StatusBoard is unavailable, contact a communication center with access to the StatusBoard to reserve a talkgroup.

Any patches built or created during an event should be announced as soon as possible on the resources being patched together once it is established, as well as which agency is making the patch.

Order of Use:

When assigning statewide, regional, and subregional interoperability talkgroups for preplanned non- emergency interoperability events use the highest numbered talkgroup and descend (e.g. IATAC9E encrypted, or IATAC6 non-encrypted).
When assigning statewide, regional, and subregional interoperability talkgroups for unplanned emergency incidents use the lowest numbered talkgroup and ascend (e.g. IATAC2).

The assignment of the interoperable talkgroups should be noted on StatusBoard.

Training Exercises:

Preplanned use of ISICS interoperability talkgroups for training is encouraged. Any use of an interoperable talkgroup for training purposes should be noted on StatusBoard. Users shall announce "this is an exercise."

Unit Identification:

When operating on the regional and statewide interoperability talkgroups, users should identify by utilizing their agency name and unit ID or call sign.

Use of 10-Codes and Acronyms:

For Clarity 10-codes, signals, unique acronyms, and other codes should not be used on the ISICS interoperability talkgroups, or when local channels/talkgroups are patched into interoperable talkgroups, because there is no standardized set of codes. Plain language should be used in all cases as described in ISICS Standard 1.3.0 – Plain Language.

Termination of Use:

At the end of the event, the initiating dispatch center will remove any patches that were placed for the event and clear the StatusBoard so other communications centers will know this resource is available for use. Any patches that are removed should be announced on the talkgroup being used for that patch prior to breaking down the patch in order to allow an opportunity for objection from in-field personnel who may still be utilizing the patched resources.

6. Management

Communications center managers and supervisors for agencies on the ISICS platform, Incident Commanders, telecommunicators, and communications unit leaders (COML) shall ensure that the standard for usage and assignment of the ISICS interoperability talkgroups is followed. Initial training and periodic refresher training on the use of this procedure is highly encouraged. Training resources are available online at https://dps.iowa.gov/education-training or by contacting the statewide interoperability coordinator or ISICSB Training and Exercise Committee Chair/Vice Chair.

The ISICSB, its committees, and ISICS System Administrator are responsible for the maintenance of ISICS interoperable talkgroups. Any changes to those talkgroups will be done in accordance with ISICS Standard 2.15.0 – Change Management and disseminated to stakeholders consistent with ISICS Standard 4.8.0 – Notification for System Changes and Outages.

ISICS Interoperability Talkgroups

Statewide	Region 1	Subregion 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6
IA CALL1	R1 CALL11	SR1 CALL111	R2 CALL21	R3CALL31	R4 CALL41	R5 CALL51	R6 CALL61
IA TAC2	R1 TAC12	SR1 TAC112	R2 TAC22	R3TAC32	R4 TAC42	R5 TAC52	R6 TAC62
IA TAC3	R1 TAC13	SR1 TAC113	R2 TAC23	R3TAC33	R4 TAC43	R5 TAC53	R6 TAC63
IA TAC4	R1 TAC14	SR1 TAC114	R2 TAC24	R3TAC34	R4 TAC44	R5 TAC54	R6 TAC64
IA TAC5	R1 TAC15	SR1 TAC115	R2 TAC25	R3TAC35	R4 TAC45	R5 TAC55	R6 TAC65
IA TAC6	R1 TAC16	SR1 TAC116	R2 TAC26	R3TAC36	R4 TAC46	R5 TAC56	R6 TAC66
IA TAC7E	R1 TAC17E	SR1 TAC117E	R2 TAC27E	R3TAC37E	R4 TAC47E	R5 TAC57E	R6 TAC67E
IA TAC8E	R1 TAC18E	SR1 TAC118E	R2 TAC28E	R3TAC38E	R4 TAC48E	R5 TAC58E	R6 TAC68E
IA TAC9E	R1 TAC19E	SR1 TAC119E	R2 TAC29E	R3TAC39E	R4 TAC49E	R5 TAC59E	R6 TAC69E