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

| ISICS Standard: | Standard #: | 1.12.1 |
|---|---|---|
| Audible Alert Tones | Date Adopted: | 10/08/2020 |
| | Date Reviewed: | 4/10/2025 |
| | Version: | 2.0 |

## 1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to designate specific alert tones to types of transmissions and specify appropriate use of alert tones on ISICS interoperability resources.

## 2. Technical Background

- **Capabilities**

  The ISICS Platform can support various tones that can be associated with types of information being shared via announcements from public safety answering points (PSAP) consistent with ISICS Standard 1.12.0 - Announcements.

- **Constraints**

  There are a limited number of unique tones available for use on the ISICS Platform. PSAPs may not have an integrated dispatch console to attach a tone to the transmission.

## 3. Operational Context

Alert tones can alert users of pertinent or vital information that is about to be passed from PSAPs to them.  Telecommunicators are often left with decisions to make regarding broadcasts and alert tones with limited information.  If alert tones are over-used, they may lose their meaning with public safety personnel.  However, vital information could be missed if alert tones are not used when appropriate.

Alert tones should be used judiciously and reserved for the communication of the most critical life safety situations.

## 4. Recommended Protocol/Standard

Routinely adding an alert tone to all broadcasts is discouraged.

Some types of broadcasts should be preceded with a steady alert tone of approximately 1,000 Hz lasting 2-3 seconds include but are not limited to:

- Amber alert
- Hazard to in-field personnel or Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) such as:
  - Evacuation alert
  - Tornado Safety alerts as issued by the National Weather Service
  - Wrong way driver
  - Responder in need of assistance
- Active assailant
- Pursuit
- Final radio call for line of duty death

Except under extreme circumstances, the type of broadcast that should not be preceded with an alert tone include:

- Informational
- "Make your own case" broadcasts
- Distracted driver
- Routine driving complaint

## 5. Recommended Procedure

At the time of the announcement, the telecommunicator should ensure the appropriate tone precedes the transmission. The telecommunicator shall ensure the tone has finished before speaking.

## 6. Management

The Operations Committee is responsible for reviewing this standard as needed for efficacy. The Training and Outreach Committee shall create a training module for telecommunicators and in-field personnel.