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

ISICS Standard:	**Standard #:**	3.9.0
Sharing of Agency-groups and Multigroups	Date Adopted:	06/12/2018
	Date Reviewed:	02/04/2026
	Version:	1.1

1. Purpose or Objective

The purpose of this standard is to set forth requirements for multigroups or agency-groups that are directly shared among agencies and for talkgroups within the multigroups that are shared between agencies. This documentation will further provide the user agencies with information on the intent, purpose, operation, and behavior of the individual multigroup.

Multigroup communications have a large impact on the talkgroups that are contained within, especially if the affected talkgroups are shared among separate agencies.

2. Technical Background

- **Capabilities**

  An agency-group contains multigroups within it, and a multigroup contains talkgroups within it. The purpose is to provide a way to make announcements to more than one multigroup or talkgroup at the same time; and can be referred to as an "Announcement Group."

  A multigroup looks and behaves, for the most part, like a talkgroup. It can be programmed into console positions or subscriber radios and is activated the same as a talkgroup, by selecting a multigroup and transmitting.

  After a multigroup call ends, there is a short period of "hang time" when a radio user can reply to the entire multigroup, even though the radio user has a single talkgroup selected within the multigroup.

- **Constraints**

A talkgroup does not have to belong to a multigroup. If the talkgroup is in a multigroup, the talkgroup can only belong to that **one** multigroup.

If a subscriber selects the agency-group or multigroup mode on the radio, the radio can monitor talkgroup activity for all of the talkgroups associated with the selected multigroup(s) only if the monitored talkgroup has an affiliated member in the same zone as the monitoring subscriber.

Talkgroups within an agency-group or multigroup may be engaged in an active call at the time an agency-group or multigroup call is initiated. The multigroups can be individually programmed to handle this in different ways:

- The talkgroup calls can be interrupted, and then the multigroup call begins. This is called "Ruthless Preemption," and anyone whose "push-to-talk" (PTT) is still active for the talkgroup calls will be unaware their call has been interrupted.
- The multigroup call can be set up to wait until all of the contained talkgroup calls are complete before the multigroup call is initiated; however, this may cause delays in initiating the multigroup call.

Delays may also be caused by talkgroup calls initiated before the multigroup call is allowed to start.

3. Operational Context

The agency-group/multigroup function is an available user option feature of the system.

4. Recommended Protocol/Standard

If an agency does not "own" the talkgroup it wishes to place within a multigroup, the agency must first obtain the permission of the owning agency.

Agencies must share multigroup information while fleetmaps are being planned and programmed into the system and subscriber radios. In addition to operational planning, this information is necessary to ensure that users are aware of the multigroup resource.

If an agency shares the agency-group/multigroup or the associated talkgroups contained within a multigroup with other agencies, the owning agency shall be responsible for informing the sharing agency of the operational properties and guidelines for use of the agency-group/multigroup. In the event the central radio monitoring point is not the same agency as the radio user, an agreement on policy, monitoring, use, and response must be in place among the agencies.

- Information must be shared about the purpose and guidelines for use of the agency-group/multigroup and interrupt mode, if active talkgroup calls will be terminated (ruthless preemption), if the multigroup will wait until the talkgroup calls conclude, and any other operational information as needed.
- Agency-groups and multigroups may only be used for owned or shared talkgroups. Agency-groups and multigroups may not be used with regional interoperability resources (i.e., talkgroups/channels) as detailed in ISICS Interoperability Standards.

5. Recommended Procedure

Recommended procedures will be handled by the individual agencies as part of their fleetmap process.

6. Management

The System Administrators shall be responsible for managing the agency-groups and multigroups which must be approved by the Subsystem Administrator.