

Your Portable Police Radio Can Talk With Other Police and Fire Agencies

Los Angeles Regional Tactical Communication System (LARTCS)

The Past: The 9-11 Commission Report details the radio communication travesty of September 11, 2001. Once officers knew that the towers were beginning to fall, they attempted to notify other public safety personnel inside the buildings. Tragically, the officers were unable to warn firefighters and others because they could not access the other agencies' radio channels. They stood by helplessly and watched in horror as the World Trade Center Towers collapsed.

The Future: It would certainly be advantageous to take command of an incident by communicating with other public safety agencies "on the fly" while using your portable or land mobile radio. During a pursuit, it would be beneficial to be patched with CHP or neighboring police departments. Furthermore, while conducting search warrants with multiple agencies or working a multi-agency containment, it would be ideal to have real time communication.

The Present: The Los Angeles Regional Tactical Communication System (LARTCS) was established by the collective efforts of Los Angeles Public Safety Agencies, including Fire Departments, FBI, Coast Guard, Secret Service, the Army National Guard and local Police Agencies. Their mission is to provide inter-agency communication (interoperability) with local, state, federal and military agencies in the furtherance of public safety goals. The federal government encourages public safety agencies to take maximum advantage of the latest radio interoperability technologies. This trend is evidenced by the fact that the National Incident Management System (NIMS) allows for a full time position which is designated "Communications Unit Leader."

LARTCS currently provides interoperability to the six counties surrounding Los Angeles, including Orange, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino and Kern. LARTCS can be used when two or more public safety agencies have a need to communicate during an event that is planned, such as the Rose Parade, or unplanned, such as deputy involved shootings, containments or pursuits. LARTCS is not a difficult or complex system to use. To access LARTCS, one simply contacts the L.A. County Sheriff's Department Communications Center (SCC) by radio or telephone and notifies them of the incident and the agency you would like to be patched with.

The ICU: In Los Angeles County, there are areas where communications equipment does not receive or transmit radio signals. These areas are often called "dead zones." LARTCS maintains a sophisticated communications vehicle called the Interoperability Communications Unit (ICU). This \$500,000.00 Suburban can do more than just connect disparate frequencies. It can also act as a repeater (signal booster) in dead zones, and provide wireless video surveillance. The goal is to provide a tactical communication advantage to all public safety personnel operating in the field.

For further questions or information about radio interoperability, contact LARTCS LASD Lieutenant Stephen Webb or Sergeant Sven Crongeyer at (562) 345-4330. (10/02/06)