

Narrowbanding - Steps You Should Take Today

While moving to narrowband channels will provide more capacity for the growing volume of voice and data communications by public safety agencies, the change-over requires coordinated planning, scheduling and implementation among local and state officials. To ensure continued emergency radio communications in your area, we strongly recommend the following actions:

1. *Meet with local public safety administrators* to ensure they are aware of state and federal timelines for narrowband migration and determine what local plans have been developed to ensure compliance. Additional details and background information about the federal narrowbanding requirement can be found on the FCC website at <http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/>. Include your Regional Interoperability Coordinator (see the Wisconsin Interoperability Initiative website at <http://interop.wi.gov> for coordinator contact information in your area).
2. *Assess public safety radio equipment* to determine what can be converted to 12.5 KHz and what will need to be replaced. Equipment that can be operated on both wideband and narrowband frequencies must be programmed to operate in the narrowband mode. Equipment that is not capable of narrowband operation must be replaced.

When conducting an audit, include base stations, repeaters, mobile radios and handheld radios. (These units may be affected by Wisconsin's 2011 mutual aid channel conversion schedule.) Local officials should also assess pager transmitters and personal pagers (often used by volunteer fire departments) to ensure compliance by the December 2012 federal deadline. (Please note: **paging-only channels** (152.0075 MHz and 157.450 MHz) **are NOT subject to the FCC's narrowbanding requirements**. If your agency is conducting paging operations on channels outside this range your paging equipment must be narrowbanded.

For your convenience, a list of narrowband compliant radios compiled by APCO can be found on the Wisconsin Interoperability Initiative website at <http://www.interop.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=19886&locid=166>.

3. *Set aside funds* for changing to narrowband operations and watch for OJA grant opportunities.
4. *Review your FCC licenses* to ensure they contain a narrowband emission designator (11K2F3E, 8K or other 11K designator). Agencies without proper designations must apply for new frequencies or modify existing licenses before narrowbanding. License modification applications can be submitted to frequency coordinators or to the FCC through the Universal Licensing System.

We encourage you to take action now to meet narrowband deadlines and avoid fines and/or cancellation of your FCC licenses. If you need more information or would like to be more actively involved in the statewide interoperability effort, please contact the State Interoperability Manager, David Spenner, at david.spenner@wi.gov or call (608) 261-7535.