National Ambulance Service (NAS)

Operational Communications Procedure

Security and Use of Digital Radio Terminals

Document reference number	**NASOC025**	Document developed by	Pat McCreanor – Control & Performance Manager Paddy Watters - NEOC
Revision number	4	Document approved by	NAS Leadership Team
Approval date	5th June 2014	Responsibility for implementation	Pat McCreanor Control & Performance Mgr
Revision date	31st December 2019	Responsibility for review and audit	NEOC Managers

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1.0 POLICY

1.1 It is the policy of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) to introduce a modern, secure and effective communications system to meet service needs for the foreseeable future.

1.2 NAS, supported by the HSE, has agreed to collaborate with other Government agencies to maximise on the State's investment in Digital Radio Technology.

1.3 NAS Managers, Supervisors and Staff must ensure that the full potential of such a system is brought to bear in the best interests of patients.

2.0 PURPOSE

2.1 To outline the use of and security arrangements for Digital Radio known as TETRA, (Terrestrial Trunk radio) for the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), NAS Management and NAS Operational staff.

2.2 To improve clarity of call information and improve activation times.

2.3 To improve workplace and scene safety and provide emergency assistance communications.

2.4 To provide on-site communications at the scene of a Major Emergency.

3.0 SCOPE

3.1 This procedure applies to all NAS Managers, Supervisors and Staff using Digital Radio Terminals.

3.2 This procedure is not a definitive guide on the use of the system: therefore NAS System Users must have completed the approved training provided by the Education and Competency Assurance Team.

4.0 LEGISLATION/ RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES

- HSE Code of Standards and Behaviour 2009
- Data Protection Acts
- Policy - NASWS011 - Protection of Lone Workers
- Policy- NASWS020 - Managing Violence and Aggression towards Staff

5.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- National Emergency Operations Centre - NEOC
- TETRA Terminals - Any Hand, Vehicle or desk Mounted Radio operating on the Digital Network
- TETRA Ireland - TI
- Integrated Command and Control System - ICCS
- Emergency Ambulance - EA
- Rapid Response Vehicle - RRV
- Specialist Transport Vehicles – STV
- Intermediate Care Vehicle - ICV
- Emergency Motorcycle Response Unit - EMRU
- Trunk Mode Operation - TMO
- Direct Mode operations - DMO
- Terminal PIN (4 digit specific code to log to TI Network)
- Talk Groups - A radio channel dedicated to a group of resources
- Stun - The reversible action of temporarily deactivating a terminal from unauthorised use
- Kill - The reversible action (by manufacturer) to completely disable a terminal
- PTT – Press to talk, the button when pressed causes the terminal to transmit.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Control and Performance Manager has oversight responsibility for the application of this procedure.

6.2 NEOC Managers are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this Procedure and addressing corrective actions.

6.3 All Line Managers are responsible for addressing any non compliance with this procedure and in particular, any lapse in security arrangements.

6.4 Paramedic Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Operational staff compliance with this procedure.

6.5 Each NAS Member is fully responsible for each personally issued hand terminal. For security reasons, the call sign of the hand terminal will be the same as a user's PHECC Registration PIN Number.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 SECURITY

7.1.1 When you come "on duty" switch the TETRA Hand Terminal and the Gateway Terminal in the vehicle "on" and leave both terminals "switched on" for the duration of your shift. Please ensure that your vehicle is connected to shoreline charging system or ensure the vehicle is switcher to ECO mode. This will ensure fully charged batteries. Switch the hand held and Gateway Terminal "off" at the end of your duty period.

7.1.2 NAS Members issued with a TETRA Terminal are required to sign for the unit for security reasons prior to usage.

7.1.3 NAS Members can only use the TETRA Terminal which has been assigned to him/her whilst on duty.

7.1.4 NAS Members are required to carry their personally issued TETRA Terminal on their person at all times while on duty

7.1.5 The TETRA communications platform is shared with other emergency service providers. Partitioning and encryption is provided so that each Emergency Service can operate securely.

7.1.6 NAS Members will be assigned a secure locker with a charging unit provided at their nearest work location where the TETRA terminal can be charged and securely stored when off duty.

7.1.7 This secure locker must be maintained in working order at all times and cannot be used for any other purposes

7.1.8 Specific arrangements can be agreed locally with the Line Manager where it is certified and recorded that the NAS Member is participating in the NAS Off Duty Responder Scheme.

7.1.9 Tetra Hand Terminals must never be left/housed in unlocked Ambulance Vehicles at any time including times when the vehicles are brought to Garages, or other maintenance support workshops for servicing or repair. Tetra Hand Terminals must always be kept, on your person, or in view of the operator at all times or, in the safe, secure lockers provided.

7.2 AUTHORISED USE

7.2.1 Authorised NAS Users must use TETRA Terminals in strict compliance with the training provided.

7.2.2 TETRA Terminals must be physically and operationally checked at the commencement of tour of duty and at regular intervals throughout, to monitor battery usage.

7.2.3 Staff must log on their own NDRS Terminal.

7.2.4 Any faults must be reported immediately to the National Emergency Operations Centre and the relevant Line Supervisor or Line Manager (as appropriate to grade)

7.2.5 TETRA Terminals are not readily interchangeable and cannot be swapped with different NAS Users as the call sign provided identifies and logs the authorised NAS User with the NEOC and with TETRA Ireland.

7.2.6 When NAS Users and other Emergency Service Users need to communicate, the National Emergency Operations Centre can advise on the appropriate Talk Group to select.

7.3 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

7.3.1 The "Orange Emergency" is used to alert the National Emergency Operations Centre of an emergency assistance request. The National Emergency Operations Centre will answer any such request immediately.

7.3.2 Where a staff member does not respond following an emergency assistance request, the National Emergency Operations Centre will assume that the staff member(s) is/are in urgent need of assistance using their location data.

7.3.3 As this may result in the activation of additional resources including the An Garda Siochana, the button should only be used where an emergency warrants it.

7.4 ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF LOSS OR THEFT

7.4.1 Each NAS User is responsible and accountable for reporting any stolen, lost, or mislaid radio equipment immediately to the National Emergency Operations Centre and the relevant Line Supervisor or Line Manager (as appropriate to grade)

7.4.2 Each NAS User is responsible and accountable for cooperating with any subsequent enquiry and any corrective actions to prevent a re-occurrence

7.4.3 Each NAS User is responsible and accountable for reporting any security breach regarding TETRA Terminals immediately to and the relevant Line Supervisor or Line Manager (as appropriate to grade)

7.4.4 The National Emergency Operations Centre will notify An Garda Siochana in the case of loss or theft

7.4.5 In the case of loss or theft, the National Emergency Operations Centre will arrange for the relevant Handheld Radio to be "stunned or killed".

7.4.6 An Incident/Near Miss Report Form must be completed at the earliest opportunity. The form must be completed prior to ending the shift in which the incident occurs.

7.5 MAINTENANCE, SUPPORT AND BATTERY MANAGEMENT

    7.5.1 Should the need arise to rotate a TETRA Terminal for service and maintenance support, notify a NEOC Supervisor whom will ensure the authorised company are duly contacted and arrangements made.

    7.5.2 TETRA Terminals should be charged at the end of every 12 hour period for maximum operation.

    7.5.3 It is imperative to secure the safe operation and maximum availability of this safety measure that the user ensures a fully TETRA Terminal is available at the commencement of the shift.

    7.5.4 NAS Vehicles must be plugged into the trickle charge system at the end of each tour of duty to ensure vehicle batteries are fully charged and the TETRA Terminal is fully optimised

    7.5.5 NAS Vehicles should also be plugged into the trickle charge system between calls or dynamic deployment, wherever possible.

7.6 VOICE AND DATA RECORDING

    7.6.1 All communication on TETRA Terminals operated through the National Emergency Operations Centre will be recorded at NAS NEOC.

7.7 MISUSE AND/OR MISCONDUCT

    7.7.1 Logging on another staff member's NDRS Terminal may be viewed as serious misconduct

    7.7.2 Any wilful or deliberate act or omission that jeopardises the integrity and/or security of the TETRA Network, the safety of staff or the availability of the Emergency Assistance function will be viewed as serious misconduct

    7.7.3 Using or attempting to use the TETRA Network for non NAS activities will be viewed as serious misconduct

    7.7.4 Any wilful or deliberate act or omission that undermines the ability of NAS to respond to a patient or jeopardises public confidence in the ability of NAS to respond to a patient will be viewed as serious misconduct

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

8.1 This Procedure will be circulated electronically to all Managers, all Supervisors and Staff

8.2 This Procedure will be available in electronic format in each Ambulance Station and the National Emergency Operations Centre for ease of retrieval and reference

8.3 Each Operational Support and Resilience Manager will ensure that the Manager/Supervisor responsible for updating Policies and Procedures will return the Confirmation Form to NAS Headquarters to confirm document circulation to all staff

9.0 REFERENCES

- TETRA Staff Familiarisation Presentation

10. 0 Revision History: (This captures any changes that are made to a SOP when it has been revised. This may be placed at the back or close to the front of the document according to local preference.)

No	Revision No	Date	Section Amended	Approved by
		04/02/2017	EOC changed to NEOC.	

11.0 Appendices

- o Acknowledgement Forms

12.0 Signatures of Approval:

Sean Brady.
National Control Operations Manager
On Behalf of the National Ambulance Service

Date: 3rd **January 2017**

Martin Dunne

National Ambulance Service Director
On Behalf of the National Ambulance Service

Date: 3rd **January 2017**

Document Control No. 1 (to be attached to Master Copy)

NASOC025 Security and Use of Digital Radio Terminals

Reviewer: The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to a peer reviewer (internal or external), in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have reviewed and agreed the content and recommend the approval of the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

NASOC025 Security and Use of Digital Radio Terminals

I acknowledge the following:
- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

_____   _____   _____

Name   Signature (Block Capitals)   Date

Please return this completed form to:
Name: **Niamh Murphy**
Contact Details: **Corporate Office**
                        National Ambulance Service
                        Rivers Building
                        Tallaght Cross
                        Dublin 24
                        email niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie

Document Control No. 2 (to be attached to Master Copy)

Key Stakeholders Review of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guidance Reviewer Statement

Reviewer: The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to Managers of Employees who have a stake in the PPPG, in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have seen and agree to the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

NASOC025 Security and Use of Digital Radio Terminals

I acknowledge the following:
- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

_____   _____   _____

Name   Signature (Block Capitals)   Date

Please return this completed form to:
Name: **Niamh Murphy**
Contact Details: **Corporate Office**
                     National Ambulance Service
                     Rivers Building
                     Tallaght Cross
                     Dublin 24
                     email niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie

Document Control No. 3 Signature Sheet:
(to be attached to Master Copy)

Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

NASOC025 Security and Use of Digital Radio Terminals

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the attached Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

Print Name	Signature	Area of Work	Date