

# California On-Scene Emergency Coordination (CALCORD) Radio Plan

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California Governor's Office of  
Emergency Services

Mark Ghilarducci, Director



<b>Revision History</b>			
<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date of Release</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
Initial Release	January 1990	OES Telecomm	
Major Update	May 2004	OES Telecomm (D.Root)	Major update to January 1990 publication
Major Update	July 2011	Interoperability /CalSIEC	Major Update to May 2004 publication. Changed formatting and state frequency coordination and licensing request process for fixed & mobile units.  Added guideline checklist/complaint procedures/acronym list
Minor Update	January 2014	OES Telecomm/Interoperability	Revised State Frequency Coordination and Licensing Section. Renamed to 1.4 Request Process and simplified process.  Changed all reference of CalEMA to Cal OES  CTCSS tone protection added

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# OVERVIEW

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The California On-Scene Emergency Coordination (CALCORD) system provides a common radio frequency to be used statewide by State and Local public safety and special emergency agencies during periods of man-made or natural disasters or other **on-scene** emergencies where interagency coordination is required. CALCORD facilitates communications when the Incident Command System (ICS) is used. All CALCORD users operate within the limitations of the CALCORD plan. Violations can result in loss of authorization to use CALCORD channels.

## 1.1. System Management:

- CALCORD operates under appropriate FCC Rules and Regulations. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) manages CALCORD and enforces strict adherence to its plan. The California Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (CALSIEC) exercises general supervision and disciplinary control over CALCORD.

## 1.2. Eligibility:

- Participation in CALCORD is open to all California Local Government Agencies who are eligible to operate on radio frequencies authorized by the FCC for the Public Safety Radio Services. Private ambulances, operating under the authority of a city or county authorized to use CALCORD, may also program the CALCORD channels into their radios.

## 1.3. Authorization Procedures:

- The state of California is the designated authorized licensee of all state designate mutual-aid and non-Federal National Interoperability Channels. In order to operate these frequencies, the licensee (*State of California*) must designate your organization as authorized unit of the system, in accordance with FCC rule 90.421. Public Safety Organizations that desire to program these frequencies must request authorization from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. <sup>1</sup>In cases where use is necessary for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Safety of Life* provision under FCC rules 90.417(a)

imminent protection of human life and property, authority to transmit is automatically granted and will be temporary until the emergency has ended.

#### 1.4. Request Process

- Requests to participate in CALCORD may be sent via postal mail to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Telecommunications Branch, 3650 Schriever Ave., Mather CA 95655. The requesting agency must include a formal request letter on organizational letterhead, completed CALCORD Application and a signed CALCORD Agreement (Appendix C). If preferred, request may also be submitted via email to [interop@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:interop@caloes.ca.gov) with all required documents as attachments.

#### 1.5. Licensing

- As stated above in section 1.3 Authorization Procedures, the State of California is the licensee of CALCORD and in accordance with FCC rule 90.421, the license must reflect all authorized units of the system. The Cal OES Public Safety Communications Office FCC Unit is responsible for administering license modifications with the FCC. Therefore, charges may be levied on all applicant organizations when seeking new frequencies or license modifications.

## OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

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### 2.1 Permissible Communications

- *CALCORD is for official use only and usage is in strict accordance with the FCC Rules and Regulations and the policies laid out in this plan. CALCORD is used for non-repeated, point to point communications only. It is used in mobile and/or portable units at the scene of incidents requiring coordinated action by more than one agency and/or discipline.*
- **BASE STATIONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM OPERATING ON CALCORD**
- Only the Standard California Channel Identifiers are used for CALCORD. It is strictly prohibited to assign a local identifier to a mutual aid channel.

## 2.2 Channel Use

- CALCORD is governed by a system of priorities that must be respected at all times. Use is limited to emergency operations (**Priority 1 and 2**), with the exception of tests and drills (Priority 4). When a higher priority or use is required, all lower priority use must cease in any area where interference could occur.

Priority	Use
1	Disaster and extreme emergency operations for mutual aid and interagency communications
2	Emergency or urgent operations involving imminent safety of life or protection of property
3	Special event control activities, such as a planned event involving the participation of two or more agencies
4	Drills, tests and exercises
5	Agency to agency secondary communications.

*The priority level is determined by the ICS.*

### **Notification of Priority Traffic (Priority 1, 2, 4)**

- Plain language must be used when “clearing” CALCORD for use in high priority situations.
- For extended use, agencies must inform other area user agencies when they are involved in high priority usage of CALCORD by phone or email.
- Notify the Cal OES Warning Center of high priority usage via phone (916-845-8911) or email [warning.center@ops.caloes.ca.gov](mailto:warning.center@ops.caloes.ca.gov).
- If two or more agencies in close proximity request a similar priority level clearance for simultaneous operations, contact the Cal OES TDO (916-845-8911) or [warning.center@ops.caloes.ca.gov](mailto:warning.center@ops.caloes.ca.gov) for guidance.

## 2.3 Message Precedence

Message Precedence is a classification system that establishes the priority of message content while a channel is in use – i.e., it helps determine which message has precedence over another on a channel. It is used for both verbal and written message traffic. The order of precedence of messages is:

- **New Incident:** Messages pertaining to a new incident. Once the new incident is addressed, it no longer has precedence unless it has a higher priority.

- **Emergency:** Messages involving the imminent safety of life or protection of property, including messages to request supplies, materials or instructions vital to relief of emergency operations.
- **Priority:** Messages that are official and time-bound, but are not covered in the emergency category. Priority messages may include notice of deaths or injury in a disaster area.
- **Welfare:** Messages involving the health and welfare of an individual in a disaster area.
- **Routine:** Messages pertaining to routine operations.

## 2.4 Monitoring and Identification

Personnel must monitor the CALCORD channel prior to transmitting to minimize the possibility of interference with communications in-progress.

### Call Sign

- Common Statewide Identification – “**KB82490**”

### Mobile Units

- Mobile units identify the unit or station with whom they wish to contact and identify themselves by using their agency-assigned unit designator. These are not shortened and include the entire set of letters and/or numbers.
  - **For example: “AMR 34, this is CalStar 12.”**
- During interagency operations, mobile units identify their agency in addition to their agency-assigned unit designator.
  - **For example: “Sacramento Engine 35, this is CalStar 12.”**

### Plain Language

*Plain Language, according to NIMS, is the use of common terms and definitions that can be understood by individuals from all responder disciplines.*

**All communications on CALCORD are in plain language.** Radio codes, acronyms, and abbreviations are to be avoided as they may cause confusion between agencies and disciplines and jeopardize officer safety.

### Voice Privacy

All forms of voice privacy (speech scrambling, digital voice privacy [DVP], digital and analog encryption [DES/AES], inversion, etc.) are prohibited on CALCORD.

## Signaling or Paging

Tone or digital signaling, paging and/or alerting is prohibited on CALCORD

## Interoperability Operations

In the event of a public safety Priority 1 or 2 emergencies, and in keeping with appropriate FCC Rules, CALCORD may be *temporarily* cross-banded through automatic or manual equipment with another channel. A cross-band or use of a gateway switch must be discontinued when the operation requiring its use is finished. Refer to Cal EMA's Statewide Gateway Units Standard Operating Procedure for more information on gateway procedures.

## Supervisory Responsibility

Each agency manager and supervisor bears the responsibility for the compliance of operations on CALCORD to the CALCORD Plan. Violations are reported to Cal EMA who works with each agency's executives to correct reported problems. See Appendix B for the complaint procedure.

# TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

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VHF High Band				
ID	Rx Freq	CTCSS	Tx Freq	CTCSS
CALCORD	156.0750 N	156.7 (Tone 6)	156.0750 N	156.7 (Tone 6)

### 3.1 Power Limitations and Equipment

- Transmit power may not exceed 110 watts for mobile (except aircraft) and portable use. When use for airborne operations, the maximum output is 10 watts.
- Only two types of equipment may be used on CALCORD
  - Mobile: Installed semi-permanently in a vehicle, boat, aircraft, or other device commonly used for transportation of a human being
  - Portable: A hand-held unit, also known as a walkie-talkie or handie-talkie
  - **Base Stations are prohibited**

### 3.2 Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System (CTCSS)

- Tone Protection shall be used for both transmit and receive on 156.7 (Tone 6)



## **APPENDIX A: ESSENTIAL OPERATING GUIDELINES**

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- **OBEY PRIORITIES:** When a higher priority use is required, all lower priority traffic yields the frequency immediately.
- **USE PLAIN LANGUAGE AT ALL TIMES**
- **IDENTIFY WITH FULL AGENCY UNIT DESIGNATOR AND FCC CALL-SIGNS (BASE STATIONS AND MOBILES).**
- **MONITOR THE CHANNEL PRIOR TO TRANSMITTING**
- **USE THE CHANNEL'S STANDARD ID:** Program the standard California channel ID into your radio's display
- **DO NOT SCRAMBLE OR ENCRYPT MESSAGES**
- **DO NOT PERMANENTLY OR SEMI-PERMANENTLY LINK MUTUAL AID CHANNELS TO EACH OTHER OR TO LOCAL AGENCY CHANNELS**

## APPENDIX B: COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

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Report all operations on mutual aid channels that are detrimental to first responder safety or to the management of an incident, that fails to follow the procedures outlined in this mutual aid plan, which causes interference to other users, or that violates FCC Regulations 90.20 and 90.405.

To report flagrant violations that endanger first responder safety, immediately contact the TDO via the California State Warning Center (CSWC) (Telephone: 916-845-8911).

To report interference issues from outside sources and other misuses of mutual aid channels:

To report interference issues from outside sources and other misuses of CESRS:

1. Attempt to identify the offending station.
2. Contact the chief executive of that department.
3. If the problem persists, contact the Cal OES TDO via the CSWC (916-845-8911 or [warning.center@ops.calema.ca.gov](mailto:warning.center@ops.calema.ca.gov)) and relay:
  - The date and time of the problem
  - The circumstances regarding the interference or misuse
  - Information detailing how the misuse interfered with operations or safety
  - Information (identification, call signs, etc.) that would help locate the offending agency.
4. Keep audio logging tapes, tape cassettes, or digital files recording the misuse to send to Cal OES. [If requested, Cal OES will return the tape after its investigation.] On receipt of a complaint, Cal OES will conduct an investigation.

# APPENDIX C: CALCORD APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT

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## CALCORD APPLICATION California On-Scene Emergency Coordination



Department/Jurisdiction/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(If different)

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number \_\_\_\_\_

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Enter the name and contact information of the person who is authorized to sign on behalf of the Jurisdiction.

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number \_\_\_\_\_



# **CALCORD AGREEMENT**

## **California On-Scene Emergency Coordination Radio Plan**



This Agreement is entered into on \_\_\_\_\_ at Mather, California, between the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, hereinafter called Cal OES, and \_\_\_\_\_ hereinafter called Jurisdiction.

1. Jurisdiction is a city, county, state agency, or special district that is a signatory to the California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement. Participation in CALCORD is open to all California Local Government Agencies who are eligible to operate on radio frequencies authorized by the FCC for the Public Safety Radio Services. Private ambulances, operating under the authority of a city or county participating in CALCORD may also program the CALCORD channel into their radios.
2. Jurisdiction agrees to acquire at its own expense radio communications equipment meeting specifications established by State to operate on Frequency 156.075 MHz, and to operate and maintain such equipment as provided in the CALCORD Plan and in Paragraphs 3 and 4 following.
3. The equipment referred to in Paragraph 2 shall be and remain the property of Jurisdiction, but State shall be the licensee thereof, pursuant to the Federal Communications Commission. All applicants to the Federal Communications Commission for construction permits and licenses or for authority to add to or modify station licenses shall be made by and in the name of State.
4. State hereby authorizes Jurisdiction to operate said equipment by its officer in charge of emergency response matters or such regularly employed and salaried assistants as such officer may designate.
5. Jurisdiction agrees to operate and maintain said equipment in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission and operating procedures established by State, including performance, without cost to state of an annual frequency-deviation check. In the event of any violation by Jurisdiction of such Rules and Regulations, or of any other law respecting the operation of said equipment, State may terminate this Agreement at any time.
6. Pursuant to Section 895.4 of the Government Code, and in recognition of the fact that Jurisdiction is to have the actual operating control of said equipment, Jurisdiction agrees to indemnify State and its officers and employees against any and all liability arising out of the performance of this Agreement which may be imposed on State by any law, including Section 895.2 of the Government Code.
7. The term of this Agreement shall be concurrent with that of the FCC license to be issued to the State of California in respect to said equipment and frequencies and remain in effect until the FCC license expiration, unless terminated by either party with 30 days written notice. Cal OES may terminate this agreement immediately for any violation of the terms and conditions of this agreement.
8. All notices herein provided to be given or which may be given by either party to the other shall be deemed to have been fully given when made in writing and deposited in the United States Mail, registered and postage prepaid and addressed as follows: Governor's Office of Emergency Services, 3650 Schriever Avenue, Mather, California 95655, and to Jurisdiction at:

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The address to which notices shall or may be mailed as aforesaid to either party shall or may be changed by written notice given by such party to the other, as hereinabove provided; but nothing herein contained shall preclude the giving of any such notice by personal services.

9. It is mutually agreed and understood that no alteration or variation of the terms of this Agreement will be valid unless made in writing and signed by the parties hereto, and that no oral understandings or agreements not incorporated herein will be binding on any of the parties hereto.

10. The term of this Agreement shall be concurrent with that of the FCC license to be issued to the State of California in respect to said equipment and frequencies, unless terminated by either party with 30 days written notice. Cal OES may terminate this agreement immediately for any violation of the terms and conditions of this agreement.
11. This Agreement is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable by third parties at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

By my signature below, I am indicating that I fully understand the terms and conditions of this agreement, and that I am authorized to sign such agreements for my jurisdictions.

Governor's Office of Emergency Services, By:

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Signature

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Name

Jurisdiction, By

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Signature

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Name