

Alabama Fire Department Memo

Alabama Fire Departments operating on the Alabama State Forestry UHF repeater system are under a mandate to comply with 12.5 kHz narrow band standards by January 1, 2009. Here's our take on the situation!

As you may know.....

The Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) is switching from 25 kHz to 12.5 kHz narrow band operation with mandatory compliance for this new operational standard by the end of this year. This means that all Alabama fire departments operating on AFC repeaters will be required to upgrade to this standard.

In plain language, that means that many of your favorite radios such as the Motorola P1225, GP300, HT1000 portables as well as the M1225 mobiles as well as most GE radios are not capable of operating on the new AFC repeaters. To make matters worse, the 12.5 kHz operating standard is an interim requirement. The regulatory agency for communications operating standards is the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In 2011, just a few years from now, the FCC will require all manufacturers to provide equipment that will operate at 6.25 kHz, so any planning that you do now should be for equipment that is planned to meet both AFC and FCC standards.

To compound the problem, SAFECOM, the advisory agency to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has established a requirement that all federal agencies including the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Park Service can no longer purchase any communications equipment unless it is APCO-25 (P25) compliant. P25 is a digital standard that meets both the AFC and FCC 12.5 kHz standards, plus it is compatible with all federal agency standards as well as being based on a technology that allows future upgrades to 6.25 kHz. Additionally, P25 has the ability to operate in both analog and digital modes.

So – we said all that to say this. Any purchase of communications equipment at this time should focus only on equipment capable of operating on 25 or 12.5 kHz in either analog or digital mode, with the capability of operating at 6.25 kHz when required. You may have been led to believe that such equipment is beyond your financial constraints. We can assure you that it is NOT! You may have also been led to believe that proprietary systems, such as the Motorola MotoTRBO system meets these requirements – it does NOT!

We know that there is a lot of confusion, misinformation, opinions, and resistance to change. Be that as it may – change is coming, and we would like to help you make the right decision in upgrading your communications system to current and future standards. We have prepared additional information at www.icomfuture.com. We hope you find it useful. Obviously, if you have any questions, we are as near as your telephone (Call us at 1.800.489.2611) or your PC (Email us at sales@falcondirect.com). Better yet - invite us to your next meeting. We'll be glad to meet with you, demonstrate the different technologies, and answer any questions you may have.

We've been serving Alabama Fire Departments since 1959! Now we look forward to serving YOU!

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