



Just the facts.....

You've heard all the rumors about the changes to narrow band and digital applicable to public safety radios. To set the record straight, we offer the following:

Rumor: The Federal Communications Commission will require all existing users to convert to 12.5 kHz in 2013.

Fact: Not as we read the rules. If we understand the ruling correctly, existing licensees will have until the end of the current licensing term to continue operating at 25 kHz. If your license is approved for 25 kHz operation in 2008, your authorization will extend through 2018!

Rumor: All radios manufactured or sold in the USA after January 1, 2011 will have to be digital.

Fact: TRUE! Current FCC rules state that all radios sold after January 1, 2011 will have to be capable of operating at 6.25 kHz, sometimes referred to as super narrow band. The current 25 kHz standard is known as wide band. 12.5 kHz is known as narrow band. Each reduction of bandwidth reduces audio/range. This is partly compensated for in current radios capable of operating at 12.5 kHz by a process called companding. Most radios sold since 2000 have this capability. When the bandwidth is reduced to 6.25 kHz, analog technology doesn't work. It is necessary to use digital technology. It should be noted that this ruling applies to the manufacturers of radios – NOT users!

Rumor: The FCC will only approve 12.5 or 6.25 kHz for new license authorizations.

Fact: Apparently not true since there are no allocations for either 12.5 kHz or 6.25 kHz frequencies in the public safety bands at this time. However, new applicants, or applicants requesting a change of a current license may be restricted to 12.5 kHz.

Rumor: My vendor says I should buy 100 watt stations for maximum performance

Fact: That might be true if you could also get 100 watt portables for equal talkback range, but the fact is that your chances are slim to none that you can get a new license approval for more than 50 watts. In virtually every case, power levels will not be authorized above 50 watts. Those applying for a new or modified license expecting a 100 watt authorization will be wasting their money if they purchase a 100 watt station before approval of a new FCC license.

Rumor: My vendor says that I can use Homeland Security grant money to purchase any type of radio I choose as long as it can operate on both 25 and 12.5 kHz frequencies.

Fact: Not as we read the Homeland Security guidelines which are base on SafeCom standards. It appears to us than ONLY radios either initially capable or upgradeable to ACPO-25 (also known as P25) technology can be purchased using grant money. Analog radios such as the Motorola PR400 & HT1250 do NOT meet these requirements.

Rumor: My vendor says that as long as radios purchased using Homeland Security grant money are "digital", they will be compliant with federal guidelines.

Fact: Your vendor is WRONG! There is only ONE federal approved standard and that is P25 digital. This is the technology used by ALL federal agencies including the US Forest Service, the US Postal Service, FBI, etc. etc. It is the ONLY technology approved by SafeCom and the Department of Homeland Security. P25 is the ONLY technology with a migration plan for federal agency approved to 6.25 kHz. There are other digital technologies such as FDMA 6.25 offered by ICOM and Kenwood as well as the MotoTRBO TDMA digital system. Neither of these systems is approved by SafeCom and/or Homeland Security.

Rumor: I've been told that I should purchase only radios with MDC-1200 ID capability.

Fact: MDC-1200 is a 1200 baud ID code that identifies each radio with a unique 4 digit numeric code of alpha tag alias with the name of the user. Only top quality radios have this feature. Some radios, such as the Motorola CP200 or HYT TC-700 can only send unit ID. Others with display capability, such as the ICOM F33/43G can both send their unit ID as well as display the ID of other units on an LCD display. This can be an extremely effective administrative tool and is highly recommended.

So how do you choose the best radio for your individual requirement based on the preceding information? Using the F33/43G as a benchmark, you can see on a special comparison chart at www.info4u.us/adchart.pdf that a full featured radio (even with trunking capability) is only a few dollars more than lower priced models such as the Motorola CP200.

If you only need a good radio with built in 2-tone paging, scan, and digital ID; the HYT TC-700 is your best choice at the unbelievably low price of just \$349. (Even less with law enforcement discounts) You can literally buy TWO TC-700's for the price of that you may now be paying for radios such as the Motorola HT750 with no sacrifice in quality. In addition, you get a built in scrambler, twice the audio output, and a unique feature called Whisper Mode that allows a whispered transmission to be received at full audio by other radios!

If you are using federal grant money, we strongly encourage you to consider the P25 compliant ICOM F70/80 at \$995. An optional upgradeable model priced at just \$695 should meet the federal guidelines if budget is an issue. The main point to remember is that federal funding can be taken as easily as it can be given. If you purchase a non-compliant P25 radio and federal auditors determine that you are not in compliance with grant guidelines, they can take their money back by a direct draft on your bank account!

If you are using your own money, and don't need paging, we would recommend the Motorola XPR6550. This is the best analog radio money can buy. You have to use it and hear the difference to see what we mean. When you are ready to go digital, the XPR6550 is ready to operate on the TDMA 12.5 kHz format with all the features you might expect including GPS location, text messaging, and more. You'll like this radio. We guarantee it! If you have any questions or if we can be of service in any way, please give us a call.

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At your service!