

FEMA AFG – The last word from Falcon Direct!

As our fire department readers know, the 2012 Assistance to Firefighter grant application period will end on July 6, 2012 at 5 PM EDT. In several recent Blogs, we have pointed out the necessity to apply only for P25 radios. This INCLUDES base stations and repeaters as well as mobiles and portables. For clarification, click [here](#).

In a recent [eNewsletter](#) we noted an increasing trend by FEMA communications grant applicants, prompted by certain sales representatives, to violate FCC licensing rules and AFG Guidelines. A copy of a portion of our newsletter was submitted as a new thread entitled [Communications Vendor Trying to Stick it to FD's](#) to the popular Firehouse Forum. As usual, good intentions are rarely understood. The fact is that we are trying to help fire departments that might be misled by those who have a private agenda, or by applicants who are not fully versed on the many conditions relating to federal grant money. There are a couple of other Blog comments on the subject available by clicking [here](#) and [here](#).

Suffice it to say, that those who choose to violate the rules will ultimately pay for their error, regardless of the intent or the misinformation provided by others who are either misinformed or who are purposefully misleading those who have placed their trust with them. But, the bottom line is that the one who signs their name on the grant application and/or the FCC license application will be the one required to give an answer for their actions – not the local communications supplier or the “expert” on an Internet Forum.

How serious can this be? For FCC violations, fines can be levied for up to \$4,000 per illegal transmission, forfeiture of license, and even imprisonment. So what if you apply for an AFG communications grant and don't purchase P25 radios? Let me explain how things work. FEMA is a part of Homeland Security. FEMA uses outside contractors for specialized technical services. The two main ones are McKing Consulting Corporation who provides guidance to AFG Helpline customer service representatives (Craig Allen is the go to guy for communications related questions). The second contractor is The Cabazon Group which is involved with grant administration. Dale Stover is the go to guy for questions regarding high level grant guidance.

According to Mr. Stover, if you purchase non-P25 communications equipment, regardless of what you say (or said) in your narrative, and regardless of who made the approval (normally assumed to be the FEMA peer review group followed by approval for your local State Homeland Security office), the result will always be the same. You will be given the opportunity to (a) upgrade or replace what you purchased with P25 DIGITAL radios AT YOUR EXPENSE or (b) give the FEMA grant money back. Seems simple enough to me! Do yourself a favor. If you are still working on your grant application, and have not specified P25 radios, we strongly encourage you to amend your application or at least call FEMA for further guidance. And, always remember; you can shoot the messenger, but you can't change the message!