PREMISE: It is essential to standardize the operation and usage of the Pennington County volunteer fire department radio system.

PURPOSE: To establish procedures and to explain methods to be used when using the Pennington County volunteer fire department radio system.

SCOPE: These procedures will apply to all agencies and/or persons using the Pennington County volunteer fire department radio system.

NOTE: The geography of the Black Hills will not allow for use of digital frequencies or alpha numeric paging systems in all areas and the use of analog Zone’s (Rapid, East, and West) may still be utilized.

HISTORY: Original June 13, 1991
Revised December 9, 1993
Revised May 8, 1996
Revised October 9, 2013

OPERATING PRACTICE:

1. Network Control
   A. The Pennington Area Emergency Service Communications Center (Fire Dispatch) shall serve as the Network Control Station for the Pennington County volunteer fire department radio system.
   B. As Network Control, Fire Dispatch shall have authority to control and/or direct all radio communications as deemed necessary. This authority may include, but is not limited to:
      1. Directing agencies to use other frequencies / talk groups when a Fire Dispatcher deems necessary;
      2. Paging agencies based on the information received at the time;
      3. Refusal to page individuals if, in the dispatcher’s opinion, an emergency does not exist;
      4. Dispatch other agencies if directed by other SOP’s, SOG’s, BOP or in the dispatcher’s opinion it is deemed necessary; or
      5. Dispatch neighboring agencies when the emergency is close to boundaries lines, or the exact location cannot be determined.
   C. The Pennington County Fire Administrator or Fire Service Board Chair acting in the absence of the Fire Administrator shall have the authority to direct radio communications in accordance with policy, as he/she deems necessary.
D. The radio call sign for Network Control shall be "Fire Dispatch".
   1. The above call sign shall be used at all times when communicating with Fire Dispatch.
   2. Typical radio transmission would be, "Fire Dispatch this is Chief 1 on, County Digital 1 or 2 I am IN SERVICE", etc.

2. Pennington County Fire Radio System Configuration
   A. SYSTEMS -- to be used primarily for dispatching agencies.
      1. System West -- Seth Bullock repeater
      2. System East -- Wall (KELO TV) repeater
      3. System Rapid -- Skyline KIQK radio tower repeater
   B. ZONES -- to be used primarily for communication between the Incident Commander and Fire Dispatch or a control station.
      1. Zone West -- Seth Bullock repeater /County Digital 1
      2. Zone East -- Wall (KELO TV) repeater /County Digital 2
      3. Zone Rapid -- Skyline KIQK radio tower repeater
   C. FIREGROUND FREQUENCIES -- to be used for Fireground operations
      1. Fireground 1
      2. Fireground 2
      3. Fireground 3
      4. Fireground 4
      5. Mutual Aid 1/ VFire 22
      6. Mutual Aid 2/ VFire 23
      7. National Fire / VFire 21

3. Fire Incident Procedures
   A. Agencies which are dispatched on the “systems” by Fire Dispatch shall be dispatched on Alpha Numeric Systems. Agencies which are dispatched on the county radio frequencies may be utilized.
   B. All agencies shall use plain language, not "10 codes".
      1. Units shall report to Fire Dispatch they are "IN SERVICE" or "ON SCENE", not 10-8 or 10-97, etc.
   C. One, and only one, individual or unit from the agency needs to acknowledge the page from Fire Dispatch.
      1. This acknowledgement shall be on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone as soon as possible.
      2. It is unnecessary for Chief's, Asst. Chief's, Captain's and all others to acknowledge the page except the original individual or unit.
3. If individual responders and/or units need to communicate with one another they should first try to establish contact on a Fireground frequency.

D. Individuals and/or units shall report to Fire Dispatch they are "IN SERVICE" and "ON SCENE" on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone.

E. The first person or unit arriving on scene shall report to Fire Dispatch the following information on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone:
   1. On scene size up report--what they observe--short & concise
   2. Identify who is the Incident Commander and command name
   3. Inform Fire Dispatch which Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone command will be on and Fireground frequency this operation will be conducted on.
   4. All further communication between Incident Command and Fire Dispatch will be on a Digital Frequency.
   5. The Incident Commander may assign as many fire ground or mutual aid / VFIRE frequencies as necessary.

F. As additional units arrive on scene they will inform Fire Dispatch they are ON SCENE on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone.
   1. After reporting to Fire Dispatch, the units shall switch to the Fireground frequency as assigned by the Incident Commander.
   2. If the Incident Commander needs to communicate with incoming units, then he/she shall communicate with them on the assigned Fireground frequency first.
   3. If for whatever reason, the Incident Commander cannot establish radio communications with the unit, he/she may use a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone.
   4. The Incident Commander should make every attempt to handle the entire operation on the Fireground frequencies.

4. Control Station Operations for Agencies
   A. Any agency with a "control station" shall announce on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone they are IN SERVICE and OUT OF SERVICE.
   B. Regardless of the status of any agencies control station Fire Dispatch shall retain Network Control.
   C. All communications from Fire Dispatch shall have priority over portable, handheld, mobiles or control stations, and all such units shall yield to Fire Dispatch.
   D. Radio communication between the control station and the Incident Commander shall be on a Digital Frequency / Talk Group / Zone.
E. The agency control station shall make phone calls to individual firefighters, employers, and other non-emergency related calls. Fire Dispatch may make calls to utility companies, law enforcement, and property owners, if time permits, or other agencies directly involved in the operation.

F. No agency control station shall have transmit capabilities on the eight Fireground frequencies as per the FCC license.

5. 1st Responder Procedures
A. The policy and procedures that will apply to 1st responders shall be addressed in a separate BOP.

6. Pager Tests – Announcements – Special Tests
A. The Pennington County FSB reserves the right to modify the pager test request to provide for a more uniform number of tests.
B. The only information that will be broadcast by Fire Dispatch during the regular test will be:
   1. Announcement of training meeting.
   2. Announcement of regular business meeting.
C. Non-regularly scheduled tests maybe requested by:
   1. Radio maintenance personnel;
   2. Pennington County Fire Administrator;
   3. Fire Dispatch; or
   4. The Agency head, to notify members of special training classes, meetings or to confirm a paging problem.

7. Special Announcements or Pages
A. Paging of individuals will NOT be allowed unless related to official agency business, and then only as a last effort to contact the individual.
B. Fire Dispatch has the authority to determine if a special announcement, page or test is warranted and will make the announcement, page or test when time permits.
C. Special announcements, pages or tests will be allowed for county wide training sessions or drills, or conditions that may affect the level of county fire protection.
   1. Special conditions may include: weather watches or warnings, tornado watches or warning, high fire danger, flood watches or warnings.
   2. Any disagreement over special announcements, pages or tests shall be resolved by the FSB or Fire Administrator. In no case shall any agency become argumentative with Fire Dispatch, such action may result in a loss of dispatch privileges.
D. Any concerns or disagreements with a dispatch will be directed to the Fire Administrator or FSB, in writing, for their follow-up. The request shall contain, date and time of dispatch, dispatcher, if known the concern or disagreement.

8. Joint Dispatching or Automatic Mutual Aid
   A. Any agency using the Pennington County Fire Radio system that desires automatic mutual aid, joint dispatching, and automatic call up or similar action will first obtain permission from the FSB.
   B. The FSB will review the request for overall county compatibility, standardization and coordinate with Fire Dispatch to insure that the dispatching is not "special" that may cause confusion to Fire Dispatch.

9. Out of Country or Non-Fire Agency
   A. Any out of county or non-fire agency which wishes to become radio dispatched on the Pennington County Fire Radio System shall make a written request to the FSB first.
   B. Any out of county or non-fire agency which is radio dispatched on the Pennington County Fire System may share in the expense of the system and shall be bound by the practices established by the FSB.
      1. Expense to be shared may include, but not limited to system improvements, normal operating costs, cost share of any maintenance agreement, etc.
      2. These costs shall be calculated by totaling the annual fire radio system expenses, dividing by the number of agencies using the Pennington County Fire Radio System and assessing such agency for one (1) share of the total.

10. Amendments
    A. This policy may be amended by majority vote of the FSB after all members have received at least a 20 day notice of the proposed changes.

11. Review
    A. This Communications Practice shall be reviewed annually on the anniversary date of its adoption.