A. PURPOSE

To establish Department policies and procedures for the proper allocation and use of radio frequencies / channels.

B. STANDARD

All fire and EMS radio users shall follow this standard.

Channel one (154.385 MHz) has been designated as the Department’s primary channel. All incidents shall be dispatched on the primary channel and routine, nonemergency traffic will be conducted on this channel unless otherwise instructed by Communications.

Emergency operations shall be conducted on our tactical frequency / channel if available. The assignment will be made at the time of dispatch or as the event escalates, and the responding units will be advised to move their traffic to the appropriate frequency / channel.

C. AVAILABLE RADIO FREQUENCIES

The following radio channels / frequencies are available from Communications for tactical use in Caroline Fire and Rescue radios:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Receive Frequency</th>
<th>Dispatch Monitor / Transmittable</th>
<th>Repeated Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caroline F&amp;R</td>
<td>154.3850</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Caroline Gvt3</td>
<td>154.9650</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. UTILIZATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures outline the utilization of available radio frequencies. As a general rule, channel one will be utilized for the dispatch of all calls and the operational radio traffic for single, non-complex, responses. Multiple unit (3 or more units) or complex incidents will attempt to utilize an alternative tactical channel. The overall goal is to reduce the primary radio channel usage to allow for more effective dispatch and improve the safety and efficiency of responders.

The responding officer or incident commander shall make request to the emergency communications center for an available tactical channel. This recommendation shall be evaluated by the 911 center and approved/denied based on available radio frequencies and communications personnel. The center will advise Command and the responding units of the channel assignment. Units will then switch to this frequency for the incident. Communications shall announce, whenever transmit capable, over the tactical channel that it is being utilized for an incident. This will help minimize cross talk with shared frequency users.

By default, channel three (Caroline County Govt. channel) will be the main tactical channel utilized for large scale events. This channel is both a repeated and voted frequency and offers the best coverage for emergency responders. The communications center shall consider geography, use of mutual aid resources, etc. when assigning a tactical channel. Here is an example of the suggested traffic:

**EXAMPLE:**

(ENGINE 1) "ENGINE 1 ON SCENE, WE HAVE FIRE SHOWING FROM SIDE A IN THE A-B CORNER, THIS WILL BE A ‘WORKING INCIDENT’, CAPT. JONES ESTABLISHING MAIN STREET COMMAND, WE WILL BE IN AN ATTACK MODE AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE SECOND ENGINE BEFORE MAKING ENTRY WITH A CREW OF TWO. I AM REQUESTING AN AVAILABLE TACTICAL CHANNEL."

(COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER) "ENGINE 1 YOU ARE ASSIGNED CHANNEL 3 FOR THIS WORKING INCIDENT." "ALL UNITS RESPONDING ON THE CALL AT 133 MAIN STREET CAPT. JONES HAS ESTABLISHED MAIN STREET COMMAND ADVISING FIRE SHOWING FROM SIDE A IN THE A-B CORNER HIS CREW IS IN AN ATTACK MODE AND IS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE SECOND IN ENGINE TO ENTER THE STRUCTURE WITH A CREW OF TWO, ALL UNITS SWITCH TO CHANNEL 3 AND GO DIRECT TO MAIN STREET COMMAND FOR ALL FUTHER TRAFFIC”. NO NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE"

(CHIEF 1) "I’M DIRECT AND SWITCHING TO CHANNEL 3"

1. Utilization of non-dispatch monitored channels / frequencies

A number of our non-repeated channels are not programmed into 911 center radio system consoles. As a result, the communications center is unable to monitor or transmit on these channels. When utilizing these any of these non-monitored channels it will be necessary for Command to continue to monitor the assigned event radio frequency. Commanders should use caution when utilizing these additional on-scene channels.

2. Mutual Aid considerations

Commanders should consider the availability of Caroline tactical channels by mutual aid responders when utilizing tactical channels. The programming of Caroline frequencies varies greatly among outside agencies.
Commanders of long term incidents should consider the utilization of radio bridging devices such as our Incident Commander Radio Interfaces (ICRI) [portable device capable of patching portable radios together on the incident scene] or the 911 Center’s “Motobridge” comm-link technologies [allows patching via 911 Centers utilizing internet technology] to enhance communication with mutual aid units. Additionally, requests may be made through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for unitization of one of the Commonwealth’s strategic radio caches.

E. RESPONSIBILITY

All personnel are responsible for utilizing this established policy.

These guidelines apply equally to all radios users, both career and volunteer.

The only time personnel may deviate from this guideline is when it is superseded by another, more stringent guideline.