



North Carolina Emergency Management Communications Branch



Informational Bulletin

Date: July 12, 2019

To: Public Safety Partners

From: Greg Hauser – Communications Branch Manager/Statewide Interoperability Coordinator

Re: VIPER TDMA Memo follow up and FAQ's

Following the release of the VIPER TDMA memorandum from the North Carolina Highway Patrol's Technical Services Unit (TSU), a number of questions have arisen. This informational bulletin (IB) will serve as a guide and a means to answer some commonly asked questions moving forward. This IB is not meant to circumvent nor replace an official response from TSU.

Simply put, the TDMA upgrade is a natural progression in the advancement of technology. This upgrade puts VIPER users in a great position to leverage the network for the use of data and radio.

Q: "Will my radio stop working after this January 1st?"

A: No. The January 1st, 2020 deadline is to let you know that you can no longer add the radios that are listed in the TSU memo. Therefore, if you are looking at purchasing radios via surplus, you will NOT be able use them on VIPER after this January 1st.

Q: "I'm not a primary user of VIPER. Will I still be able to use my radio on my local system?"

A: Yes. Dependent upon the capabilities of your local system, you will be just fine. If you want to use the VIPER network after the 2025 deadline, you need to make sure your radios are ready.

Q: "How do I know if my radio is ready?"

A: If it is an XTS1500, 2500, 5000 (these are portables), XTL1500, 2500, 5000 (these are mobiles), EF Johnson 51SL/51ES (these are portables), or 53SL/53ES (these are mobiles) it is not. Be aware that even if you have a newer radio it still may not be capable of TDMA. Make sure you reach out to your radio shop or vendor to find out.

If you are an agency that has almost all XTS and XTL model radios (Motorola) and are a primary VIPER user, you need to immediately start planning for replacement. Make sure your plan takes into account your PSAP (911 Center). PSAPs may use XTL model radios for consoles, consolettes, or backup radios. Also, did you know that in order to record radio traffic you need to have a radio that feeds a recorder? Check that radio too.

When asking your radio vendor for quotes, please make sure you are planning for the future. Yes, you absolutely will need the TDMA capability in your radio, but take this time to ensure that you set your agency up for success. Think about getting the encryption capabilities, the GPS capability and anything else that you think may put you ahead of a radio system's capability. A



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common pitfall that public safety agencies make is saying “We don’t use encryption,” or “We don’t need GPS.” You may not need those things now, but you may want them in the future! If you don’t purchase that feature now, you may be charged a greater fee to upgrade the radio.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

If you have questions about public safety broadband, including FirstNet, feel free to reach out to the North Carolina First Responder Emerging Technologies (FirstTech) program at:

firsttech@nc.gov

If you have any questions about the VIPER TDMA update, feel free to reach out to NCSHP TSU at:

Viper-tdma@ncshp.org

If you have any process questions or issues with interoperability, feel free to reach out to me at:

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