



**700 MHz Nationwide Deployable
Trunked Solutions:
A Report by NPSTC and the NRPC
Revised August 25, 2021**

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Executive Summary

When major incidents or large planned events occur, public safety entities may need additional personnel at the incident scene beyond those in use on a day-to-day basis. Additional public safety personnel translate to the need for additional communications resources at the scene of a major incident or large planned event as well. Utilizing additional communications resources in turn can require additional radio channels, as well as technical and logistical solutions for ease of deployment.

In 2008, NPSTC petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to designate spectrum from the unassigned 700 MHz reserve channels for deployable trunked radio systems. In April 2015, following a multi-step rulemaking process involving numerous 700 MHz issues, the FCC approved six specific 12.5 kHz channel pairs from the 700 MHz reserve spectrum for deployable trunked system use outside T-Band areas.¹ The six specific 12.5 kHz channel pairs are consistent with recommendations NPSTC and the National Regional Planning Council (NRPC) jointly proposed in February 2015, as part of the rulemaking process following the original NPSTC request from 2010. The body of this report provides additional detail regarding the multiple steps required to reach the final decision.

Note: The National Regional Planning Council (NRPC) is an advocacy body formed in 2007 that supports public safety communications spectrum management by Regional Planning Committees (RPC) in the 700 MHz and 800 MHz NPSPAC public safety spectrum as required by the Federal Communications Commission. APCO International Automated Frequency Coordination (AFC) division acts as an advocate for the NRPC as well as 700 and 800 MHz regional planning in its creation and continued support of the NRPC Support Office.

NPSTC and the NRPC believe that local/regional incidents are likely to comprise the majority of deployable system use rather than incidents requiring long distance mutual aid units from outside the region or state. Following the FCC decision in April 2015 that designated the six specific 12.5 kHz channels for deployable trunked systems, NPSTC and the NRPC developed recommended technical and logistical solutions necessary to implement the new deployable trunked systems. These solutions were developed with assistance from the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), which provided necessary information on the technical aspects of trunked radio systems, including issues surrounding System IDs that needed to be resolved for deployable systems to enable interoperability. After extensive study of the technical and operational issues, NPSTC and the NRPC recommend the overall approach set forth in Section 2 of this report and the specific ID assignment approach described in Section 3. Together, these recommended approaches enable interoperability and help simplify the steps agencies will need to take before placing a deployable trunked system in operation. This report strives to set forth helpful recommendations. Public safety entities that field deployable trunked systems on these channels also will need to work with their respective radio equipment suppliers and regional planning bodies to ensure proper equipment setup and operation.

¹ See Section 1 of this Report for additional details regarding the T-Band area restriction.

NRPC, TIA, and others followed up to implement the recommended solutions so deployable trunked systems utilizing the six designated 12.5 kHz channel pairs can be placed into actual operation. TIA and NRPC selected the necessary Wide Area Communications Network (WACN) ID for nationwide use and the Computer Assisted Pre-coordination and Resource Database System (CAPRAD) and upgrades were completed. If a region requires a System ID, it should contact NRPC for assistance.

In late 2019, It was discovered that Intra -WACN auto roaming is implemented through a combination of WACN-ID, System-ID, and SU-ID (Subscriber Unit – ID). In addition, Intra-WACN auto roaming SUs will perform talkgroup (TG) affiliation through a combination of WACN-ID, System-ID and TG-ID for each talkgroup. This creates a problem with teams from out of a given area auto roaming onto a deployable system when the system ID programmed into the auto roaming subscriber units does not match the System-ID of the target deployable system. The roaming units are unable to use talkgroups common to the local non-roaming subscriber units. This would hamper response to large incidents that require out-of-area mutual aid response.

In response to this discovery, NRPC/NPSTC reviewed the deployable issue. NRPC and NPSTC representatives worked with the equipment manufacturers to understand the technical factors underlying this issue, and then to recommend the best alternative to address the issue.² Section 2 is revised as of October 2020 to incorporate the recommended solution. Additional revisions have been made throughout the report in August 2021 to reflect experience gained and the need to include the option for encryption to protect public safety communications at some incidents.

² Appendix A was created to document the issue more fully and discuss the alternative solutions to address the issue. This Appendix should now be considered part of the report as reference for those who implement deployable systems and/or program subscriber units to be capable of operating on deployable systems.

1. Dedication of Channels for Deployable Trunked Systems

In 2008, NPSTC petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules that would support the nationwide utilization of deployable trunked radio systems.³ In its petition, NPSTC proposed that all of the 24 Reserve Channels in the 700 MHz band be designated for temporary deployable mobile trunked infrastructure that could be transported into an incident area to assist with emergency response and recovery. NPSTC asserted that such designation would allow 700 MHz licensees to pre-program these channels into their subscriber radios, eliminating the need to reprogram radios in the field or distribute cached radios during a disaster.

On October 24, 2014, the FCC issued a Report and Order that released 24 narrowband reserve channels to the General Use category under the administration of the 700 MHz Regional Planning Committees (RPCs). The decision set aside up to eight 12.5 KHz channels from the 24 channels in the 700 MHz reserve spectrum outside of the T-Band areas to support these deployable systems.⁴ In the T-Band markets, FCC stated in 90.531 of the rules that all 24 reserve channels will be available for General Use with priority given to relocating T-Band incumbents that commit to return an equal amount of T-Band channels, for a five year period. The reservation of 700 MHz reserve channels for T-Band incumbents has expired.⁵ Also, the T-Band auction and relocation mandate was repealed on December 27, 2020.

³ Petition for Rulemaking, submitted February 8, 2008. <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=5514991544>

⁴ Report and Order, PS Docket No. 13-87, released October 24, 2014.

⁵ The Report and Order at paragraph 40 stated that the five-year period was to start upon Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau issuance of a Public Notice announcing the availability of the reserve channels for licensing. On April 23, 2015, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau issued a Public Notice which approved specific channels for deployable trunked systems. That Public Notice stated that RPCs could incorporate the channels into their plans, with the caveat of priority for T-Band incumbents relocating from the T-Band. Five years from issuance of this Public Notice would be April 23, 2020. Therefore, the T-Band priority for the reserve channels has expired.

The FCC encouraged the NRPC and NPSTC to identify specific Reserve Channels to support deployable trunked systems on a nationwide basis. Those channels could then be incorporated into regional plans within 3 months from the publication of the 700 MHz Report and Order in the Federal Register. In response to the FCC decision, NPSTC established a joint Task Group with the NRPC to identify these channels and to develop a set of recommended operational strategies that would allow these channels and deployable trunked systems to be used to the fullest extent possible. NPSTC and the NRPC also studied a series of other challenges which would need to be addressed, including the requirement to standardize System IDs and provide for the management of Subscriber IDs.

On February 13, 2015, NPSTC and the NRPC filed a joint letter with the FCC recommending the designation of six channels for nationwide operation of deployable trunked radio systems. This letter also requested an extension of the deadline for the adoption of these channels into regional plans. In selecting the channels for recommendation to the FCC, NPSTC and the NRPC reviewed several sets of channels to determine the best channel spacing (to minimize interference) and to provide coverage at the U.S./Canada and U.S./Mexico border. Only six channels were found to be the most appropriate for assignment to a nationwide channel plan. NPSTC and the NRPC recognized that individual RPCs could add additional channels to this group to create a full complement of frequencies. The U.S./Canada Sharing Sector 2 was the most problematic. Only four of the six channels are available for use by U.S. licensees in this region which impacts areas above Line A in the states of Pennsylvania, New York, and Vermont.⁶

On March 3, 2015, the FCC published a Public Notice seeking comments on the NPSTC/NRPC channel proposal.⁷ On April 23, 2015, the FCC approved the six proposed channels.⁸ In taking this action, the FCC stated “RPCs may now incorporate these channels into their plans for deployable trunked systems provided any region with a T-Band market must give priority to these channels, in that market, to any public safety T-Band incumbent seeking to relocate from the T-Band.”⁹

In a related action, on April 20, 2015, the FCC also extended the date by which amended regional plans must be filed with the Commission to October 30, 2015, to include channels for deployable trunked systems.¹⁰ In that decision, FCC treated an NRPC request for an extension as a waiver request and granted a portion of the additional time NRPC requested.

Table 1 shows the set of six channels that NPSTC and the NRPC recommended for nationwide use. These channels were approved by the FCC.

⁶ Line A defines the southern-most border of a zone within which the U.S. and Canada divide spectrum between the two countries based on treaties and specific spectrum agreements.

⁷ Public Notice, DA 15-278, PS Docket No. 13-87 and WT Docket No. 02-378, released March 3, 2015.

⁸ Public Notice, DA 15-483, PS Docket No. 13-87 and WT Docket No. 02-378, released April 23, 2015.

⁹ Public Notice, DA 15-483 at page 2.

¹⁰ Order, DA 15-476, PS Docket No. 13-87, released April 20, 2015.

Table 1:
FCC Approved Channels for Interoperable/Deployable Trunked Radio Systems

NPSTC/NRPC Recommended Channel Allocation Deployable 700 MHz Trunked Systems			
700 MHz CH#	FCC Channel Numbers	12.5 kHz Center Frequency	Channel Spacing (kHz)
1	37-38	769.23125	N/A
2	61-62	769.38125	150
3	117-118	769.73125	350
4	141-142	769.88125	150
5	883-884	774.51875 CC-P	4500
6	939-940	774.86875 CC-A	350

CC-P: control channel-primary
CC-A: control channel-alternate

Table 2 shows the geographic and border availability of channels near the Mexico and Canada.

Table 2

NPSTC/NRPC Proposal #1 RECOMMENDED	Common channel selections for each area			
	Mexico Border Zone	Canada Sharing Zone	Canada Sector 1	Canada Sector 2
37-38	Y	Y	Y	Y
61-62	Y	Y	Y	Y
117-118	Y	Y	Y	N
141-142	Y	Y	Y	N
883-884	Y	Y	Y	Y
939-940	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total usable	6	6	6	4

2. 700 MHz Transportable Trunked Radio System Operations

Once the channels were allocated by the FCC for nationwide use, NPSTC and the NRPC sought to develop technical and operational solutions that would be required to implement deployable trunked radio networks. While only six channels were identified by NPSTC and the NRPC and subsequently approved by the FCC, public safety agencies can add additional channels through coordination with their respective RPC. It is important to note that when adding additional channels to a local system beyond the six specifically designated nationwide for deployable trunked use, control channels must be selected from the nationwide channel set, specifically channel numbers 5 and 6 in Table 1 designated for control channel use. This is necessary to support interoperability of subscriber devices to all designated deployable systems.

NPSTC and the NRPC, with assistance from TIA, reviewed a number of logistical and technical issues. These included two major components, management of System IDs and management of Subscriber IDs. There were many factors to consider, including the total number of Subscriber IDs that can be supported per System ID, how Project 25 (P25) devices in a deployable network can connect to other systems, and to what extent manual reprogramming of radios might occur.

Single vs. Multiple System IDs

Early discussion in the Task Group centered on the simplicity of assigning a single System ID for all deployable trunked systems that were designed to be fully interoperable. However, an incorrect assumption was made that only 128,000 subscriber IDs can be supported per System ID.¹¹ If a subset of Subscriber IDs were assigned to each state in the U.S. it would provide only about 2,560 IDs for each state. Such a limited number of IDs would not allow for broad adoption of the program throughout the state and would greatly limit the number of radios that could participate. Because of this incorrect assumption, the single nationwide system ID approach was rejected in favor of assigning individual system IDs to each agency request.

Over time in discussions with equipment manufacture representatives familiar with the TIA standard it was found that the individual subscriber limit is only for a single trunked system total and can be made up of any combination of subscriber ID numbers. Further, it was assumed that automatic roaming could be used for out of area units responding to an incident.

Automatic roaming cannot be used by out of area units. Manual roaming, where the user selects a zone and talkgroup, must be used. The radio will then affiliate and connect to a deployable trunked system that uses the common WACN and System ID.

Common WACN and System ID

NRPC worked with TIA to be assigned a WACN ID of BF7CC HEX. NRPC then worked with the manufacturers to designate system ID 101 HEX as the common system ID nationwide. Agencies can use

¹¹ The 128,000 subscriber ID limit is not an inherent limitation of the P25 standard, but it is an upper bound supportable in some equipment.

a different system ID for strictly local operations if needed, but we strongly recommend using the nationwide system ID of 101 HEX. NRPC through the CAPRAD system is tracking local use system ID under the 700 MHz menu item. In all cases WACN BF7CC must be used. If an agency plans to use a local system ID, it is requested they register it through CAPRAD. Again, use of WACN system ID 101 is recommended for normal use so roaming mutual aid is supported.

3. Deployable Interoperable Trunked System Talk Group Names

NPSTC and the NRPC Support Office created a set of trunked talkgroups to support interoperable systems. This provides the final element to a standardized implementation and should increase operational efficiency at the scene of a major incident.¹²

It is recommended that at least one zone (and preferably two zones) of 16 ‘channels’ be allocated in subscriber equipment. Each zone would be designated by an alpha character at the end of the alphabet (“ZZ”, “YY”). This would minimize confusion over local agency assigned zone letters. Each zone will include the following standardized talkgroup names. Tactical talkgroup names were designed to correspond with the channel position in the radio (Tactical talkgroup “ZZ3” is in channel position #3). Agencies that can support encrypted operation are encouraged to use the “YY zone”.

Zone “ZZ”: Primary

Knob Position	Talk Group Decimal ID	Displayed TG ID	Usage
1	101	CALL ZZ	Calling / Initial Contact TG
2	102	CMD ZZ	Pre-designated Command TG
3	103	TAC ZZ3	General / tactical use TG
4	104	TAC ZZ4	General / tactical use TG
5	105	TAC ZZ5	General / tactical use TG
6	106	TAC ZZ6	General / tactical use TG
7	107	TAC ZZ7	General / tactical use TG
8	108	TAC ZZ8	General / tactical use TG
9	109	TAC ZZ9	General / tactical use TG
10	110	TAC ZZ10	General / tactical use TG
11	111	TAC ZZ11	General / tactical use TG
12	112	TAC ZZ12	General / tactical use TG
13	113	TAC ZZ13	General / tactical use TG
14	114	TAC ZZ14	General / tactical use TG
15	115	TAC ZZ15	General / tactical use TG
16	116	EMER ZZ	EMERGENCY use TG

¹² TIA advises that the full talkgroup ID should be coordinated among deployable system owners to help enable interoperability.

Zone “YY”: Secondary and encrypted use (SLN12) for all YY talkgroups.

Knob Position	Talk Group Decimal ID	Displayed TG ID	Usage
1	201	CALL YY	Calling / Initial Contact TG
2	202	CMD YY	Pre-designated Command TG
3	203	TAC YY3	General / tactical use TG
4	204	TAC YY4	General / tactical use TG
5	205	TAC YY5	General / tactical use TG
6	206	TAC YY6	General / tactical use TG
7	207	TAC YY7	General / tactical use TG
8	208	TAC YY8	General / tactical use TG
9	209	TAC YY9	General / tactical use TG
10	210	TAC YY10	General / tactical use TG
11	211	TAC YY11	General / tactical use TG
12	212	TAC YY12	General / tactical use TG
13	213	TAC YY13	General / tactical use TG
14	214	TAC YY14	General / tactical use TG
15	215	TAC YY15	General / tactical use TG
16	216	EMER YY	EMERGENCY use TG

The talkgroups become a communications resource that must be managed. The COML should designate what functions would take place on each talkgroup. Talkgroup names are designed to provide the most flexibility. A COML must be aware of possibility of duplicate unit IDs with this usage. COML’s should request programming resources to mitigate this problem if found.

It is recognized that there is no nationwide designated authority to mandate the use of talkgroup names, just as there is no mandate to use standardized names for nationwide interoperability channels. However, NPSTC and the NRPC Support Office and APCO recommend the RPCs encourage the use of these naming practices and expect local agencies will see the benefit from adopting a standardized approach.

On Scene Operations Use Cases

There are several operational use cases which demonstrate the ability for deployable trunked radio systems to support public safety. These include the ability to provide additional system capacity to support a large event, the ability to activate radio infrastructure in an area that does not have coverage (or which lost coverage due to a disaster event), and the ability to provide supplemental radio coverage at the scene of a major incident. It is important for first responders to be able to access these trunked

resources quickly without lengthy or complex radio programming at the scene. The following use cases provide examples of the need for interoperable deployable trunked radio systems.

Use Case #1

Local agency using deployable system to provide coverage at stadium event involving multiple agencies (Planned Event)

A deployable trunked radio system is activated at the university football stadium to provide enhanced radio coverage and support specialized talkgroups for the law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel working the event. The public safety response to the football game includes multiple agencies to provide sufficient staffing for the crowd. All public safety agencies in the region have previously received appropriate radio programming to allow them to access the deployable system. The Communications Unit Leader (COML) reviews the operational plan for the event and assigns the talkgroups for specific functions.

Use Case #2

Local agency using a deployable system following a tornado to support mutual aid units (Unplanned Incident)

A tornado has struck a rural community causing wide-spread destruction and disabling a local public safety radio tower. A deployable trunked radio system has been activated to restore local public safety radio service and to support incoming mutual aid units. All public safety agencies in the region have previously programmed their radios to communicate on the deployable trunked system. Local law enforcement, fire, and EMS units can easily switch over to the deployable system and communicate. Incoming mutual aid units are also able to easily access the deployable system.

Use Case #3

Local agency transporting its deployable system to another region to aid at the scene of a major incident (Unplanned Incident).

The local emergency agency has ordered the evacuation of an entire city due to severe flooding and the expected rise of a nearby river. Multiple agencies from the surrounding area are responding to assist as well as agencies from outside the region. A deployable trunked radio system has been placed on elevated terrain near the city to provide coverage to support ambulances which are evacuating a local hospital and two nursing homes. The COML has worked with the Incident Command System (ICS) team and has coordinated with other fixed and deployable systems that are operating in the area. Because all the deployable systems using the FCC-designated interoperable channels share the same WACN code and system ID 101, mobile and portable devices will be able to roam onto the radio network without additional programming.

Power Levels

It is incumbent upon all agencies to deploy systems with the power level that provides the coverage, reliability, and spectrum efficiency needed. NPSTC and the NRPC recommend RPCs and agencies

planning and utilizing 700 MHz deployable trunked systems limit the 700 MHz deployable trunked system power to no more than 200 watts effective radiated power (ERP). Based on experience, we believe this maximum power level is appropriate. An agency that has unique needs which cannot be met within this power level can work with its respective RPC to request a viable alternative maximum power level.

Encryption Use

Real world use and testing show the need for encryption for some use cases. The incorporation of encryption adds a layer of complexity to deployable trunking. However, as learned in recent events, encryption is now considered a must have essential item. To minimize complexity to the extent practical, the United States Department of Homeland Security has adopted nationwide public safety encryption keys which support consistent use throughout the country. It is recommended to use U.S. Department of Homeland Security encryption key in storage location number (“SLN”) 12.

Encryption is an important public safety communications tool at National Security Events (“NSC”) and other incidents where the protection of first responder radio traffic is essential. In this Plan, use of the YY zone is designated for encryption. All talkgroups in zone YY should be encrypted using SLN 12.

P25 Phase II use

The Plan supports the use of P25 Phase II with dual mode reversion to P25 Phase I capability. Not all agencies support P25 phase II currently. It is recommended if an agency does support Phase II modulation, that the agency use this more efficient technology but set up to revert to Phase I if a roaming unit is not capable of Phase II for any talkgroup upon which that unit is operating.

Radio Firmware

The successful use of deployable trunking can be affected when there are multiple firmware versions in mobile and portable radios using these systems. Multiple firmware versions may result in some radios operating inconsistently and receiving system affiliation denials (bonks) or requiring the manipulation of devices to achieve affiliation with a deployable system.

Summary

On April 23, 2015, the FCC designated six 12.5 kHz channel pairs for deployable trunked system use on a nationwide basis outside the T-Band areas, with the exception of U.S./Canada border zone 2, where only 4 of the channel pairs are available. In taking this action, the FCC stated “RPCs may now incorporate these channels into their plans for deployable trunked systems provided any region with a T-Band market must give priority to these channels, in that market, to any public safety T-Band incumbent seeking to relocate from the T-Band.”¹³ The priority for T-Band areas has since expired.

¹³ Public Notice, DA 15-483, PS Docket No. 13-87 and WT Docket No. 02-378, released April 23, 2015, at page 2.

The six channels designated by the FCC for trunked deployable use, as recommended by NPSTC and NRPC, are a valuable resource for public safety communications. While these channels are not intended to be solely for interoperability use, they can be a valuable interoperability resource. The uses are many and varied for these trunked channels in support of temporary uses of all types.

This report is intended to guide agencies in setting up and programming both the fixed equipment and the subscriber units to easily roam and support operations outside of their home areas. Both NPSTC and NRPC highly recommend all agencies that will own and deploy a trunked deployable system, follow the recommendations in this report. Even agencies that do not own a deployable system but have subscriber units capable of operating in the 700 MHz band should seriously consider programming those units per the report guidance.

Finally, NPSTC and the NRPC would like to thank the members of the public safety community and industry who contributed to the development of this report.

APPENDIX A

Deployable Trunked Systems Intra WACN Roaming Issue

One of the major goals of public safety communications organizations was to develop temporary and portable trunking systems that could be deployed to the field for an emergency or pre-planned event. A key part of the goal was to enable the deployable trunking system to operate with technical protocols that would support use anywhere in the country by pre-programming subscriber devices. The goal was supported by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) and in 2015, the National Regional Planning Council (“NRPC”) and National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (“NPSTC”) jointly issued a national plan for deployable trunking. In the implementation of the national Plan in one of the Regional Planning Committee areas, a technical problem was discovered that impaired the goal of interoperable deployable trunking.

It was discovered that when programming subscriber units, the units operate as follows when using manual “Intra-WACN Roaming”:

Current radios utilizing “Intra-WACN Roaming” require programmers to define a talkgroup by a combination of a WACN ID, System ID, and talk group (TG) ID for each talkgroup. If subscribers from different areas are programmed to use different System IDs in their programming (as called out by the original NRPC/NPSTC plan), even with all other factors being equal (WACN and TG ID), a problem occurs. The subscribers that are out-of-area radios which auto roam to the deployable system would, upon registration, be assigned a temporary Working TG ID that is different than the Working TG ID used by the radios that have not auto roamed (i.e., have manually roamed) to the deployable system. Because of this, a subscriber (let’s call it Subscriber A1) programmed to use TG ID 101 on Deployable Trunked System 00A would not be able to communicate with a subscriber (Subscriber B1) programmed to use TG ID 101 on Deployable Trunked System

00B, even if they both roamed onto the same deployable trunked site, as they would be operating on 2 different talkgroups. The system ID of the deployable system that Subscriber A1 and Subscriber B1 need to operate on should be the same as that for the deployable system on which both units are operating.

To achieve the goal of universal interoperability throughout the United States, consistent universal radio programming is required. One strategy to accomplish the task is to program subscriber devices with the same WACN and System ID in addition to the same TG ID for each talkgroup.

The situation that highlighted this issue would be similar to Use Case 2 from the body of the report. Therefore, the work to develop the 2020 revision included discussion on Use Case 2. The following documents additional information from that discussion.

Assumptions from use case 2, with additional information included from 2020 revision discussions:

1. No ISSI interface is available to any other trunked system.
2. Subscriber units are manually switched to one of the two personality/zones (ZZ or YY) specified in the NPSTC/NRPC report and allocated in (i.e., programmed into) subscriber equipment that is intended to operate on a deployable system.

The COML will assign a talk group to each user to operate on from the pre-programmed pool per the report. The COML of the deployable system will assign each deployable system user to one or more of the 16 ZZ or YY talkgroups described in section 3 of the report.

3. Roaming and home subscriber users need to talk to each other on the common talk groups. A roaming radio refers to a radio that is ordinarily used on some system other than the deployable system, but has manually selected a personality for the deployable system. A home radio is a radio configured for deployable system operation only. A home unit would also manually select the deployable system personality. The home unit is part of the same overall system that owns the deployable system. Because all units have selected the same WACN ID/System ID combination, common Working TG IDs on the deployable system are ensured.
4. See Section 2 of the report – discussion of single vs. multiple system ID. Operationally, it would be best that out-of-area subscribers do not require reprogramming in order to operate on the common talk groups. To ensure common Working TG IDs are used on the deployable system, out-of-area subscribers will need to manually select a personality in their radio associated with that deployable system. This results in local and out-of-area radios all using the WACN ID/System ID combination that matches the deployable system.
5. Subscriber units from different manufacturers may be deployed.