

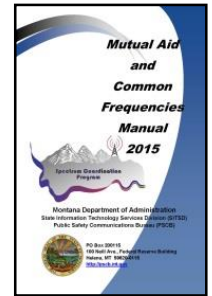


FACTSHEET: Mutual Aid Frequencies for EMS and Hospitals



Introduction: Most hospitals and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers in Montana use two-way Land Mobile Radios (LMR) for day-to-day and emergency communications. Radio frequencies are an essential—but limited—resource for LMR communications. The State of Montana holds statewide licenses with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for more than 20 mutual aid frequencies. These licenses are held to allow other eligible public safety users access to these shared frequencies. Mutual aid frequencies can enhance your communications and help ensure an effective public-safety response. It is essential, however, that responders communicate using Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outlined for Montana’s mutual aid frequencies. This factsheet outlines a few key SOPs and policies for the use of Montana’s mutual aid radio frequencies for EMS providers and hospitals.

Authorization to Use Mutual Aid Frequencies: Medical and other public safety entities must have a valid permit from Montana’s Dept. of Administration (DOA) giving them permission to use specific mutual aid frequencies. BEFORE mutual aid frequencies are programmed in your radios or base stations, you should have a permit. Fortunately, applying for one is easy. Simply visit this site, <https://app.mt.gov/mutualaid/>, and follow the three steps. Permits are issued electronically and are valid for five years. All users are subject to FCC regulations and SOPs as outlined in the *Mutual Aid and Common Frequency Manual*, 2021 Edition. The latest version of the Manual is available at this website: <https://dojmt.gov/mutual-aid-manual/>. All VHF mutual aid frequencies are narrowband.



EMS & General Use Mutual Aid Frequencies and Usage: The Montana EMS mutual aid frequencies are established for EMS interagency emergency and itinerant communications. Three EMS mutual aid frequencies are listed in the table below along with two General Use frequencies—**GOLD** and **NEON**—and the Border Interoperability Channel. The color designations presented here are used as a simple naming convention in place of the actual frequency or descriptive name. However, agencies are now being encouraged to use both the color name and the National Interoperability Designator (VFIRE, VLAW, VMED).

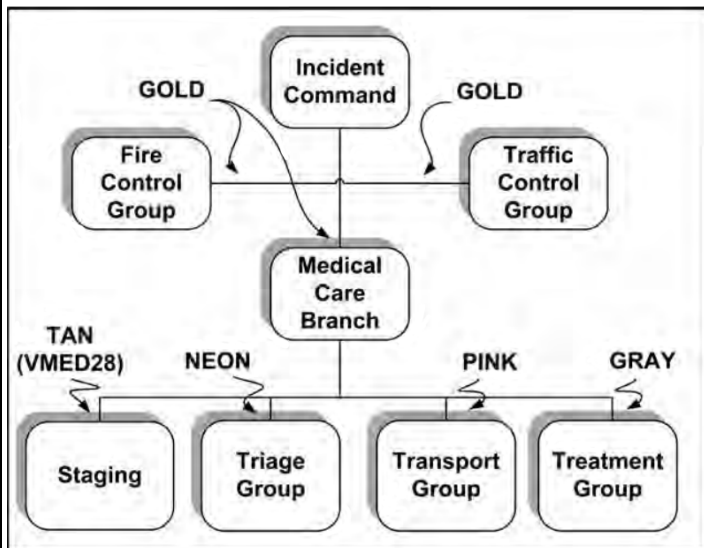
Montana Mutual Aid EMS & General Use Frequencies

Frequency (MHz)	Color Name & National Designator	Usage/Restrictions/Notes
EMS Frequencies		
155.2800	WHITE	Hospital-to-Ambulance and Hospital-to-Hospital Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHITE may be used by licensed EMS services for communication with local, area or regional hospitals. Paging is not allowed on this frequency. Digital and encrypted are allowed if documented in the local communications plan. The ambulance must first contact the hospital unencrypted and move to the encrypted mode as appropriate. Radios should be monitored in the unencrypted mode.
155.3400	TAN (VMED28)	Primary Use: Statewide Air-to-Ground Coordination by EMS and other Emergency Responders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserved for rotary wing (helicopter) or fixed wing (airplane) aircraft with ground response units at emergency scenes. Uses include landing assistance and emergency coordination. Secondary Use: Hospital-to-Ambulance or EMS interagency communications at incident scenes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be used for EMS interagency communications and medical staging of air and ground units at an incident scene. Authorized for ground ambulance services and non-transporting medical units for mutual aid communications between units at a major incident. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>All airborne use is restricted to under 5280 feet AGL altitude and 10-watt ERP</i></p>
155.3250	GRAY	Primary Use: Central Region Dispatch & Paging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used in the central region (2A & 2B) for EMS paging and dispatch for communication between an ambulance service or other EMS responding agency and dispatch. In Montana, the FCC has issued a waiver allowing alerting of EMS personnel on this frequency. ONLY EMS personnel may be alerted on this frequency. Secondary Use: For communications within the Treatment Group of the Medical Branch at a major incident per SOP. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>May not be used within 75 mi of Fort MacLeod, Alberta</i></p>
155.3850	PINK	Primary Use: Western/Eastern Region Dispatch & Paging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used in the western and eastern region (1A, 1B, 3A, & 3B) for EMS paging and dispatch for communication between an ambulance service or other EMS responding agency and dispatch. In Montana, the FCC has issued a waiver allowing alerting of EMS personnel on this frequency. ONLY EMS personnel may be alerted on this frequency. Secondary Use: For communications within the Transport Group of the Medical Branch at a major incident per SOP.

Frequency (MHz)	Color Name & National Designator	Usage/Restrictions/Notes
155.4750	BLUE (VLAW31)	<p>Border Interoperability Channel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Uses the 155.4750 MHz law enforcement frequency as a common resource for border incidents in Alberta, British Columbia, Montana and Saskatchewan. •For all law enforcement, fire, EMS and public safety agencies including local, state, tribal, federal and Canadian users within 16 km (10 mi) of the US-Canadian border.
General Use Frequencies		
153.9050	GOLD	<p>General Mutual Aid and Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Available to all Montana public safety and emergency responders. •Designated for inter-discipline communications. •Used for both emergency and administrative (non-emergency) traffic; however, administrative traffic can be preempted by a higher priority need.
157.4250	NEON	<p>Primary Use: General Mutual Aid and Coordination Secondary Use: EMS Priority during Mass-Casualty Incidents. For communications within the Triage Group of the Medical Branch per SOP. Restrictions: Blackfeet Reservation and Glacier, Liberty, Pondera and Toole Counties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •40-Watt mobile limit • Not available within 120 Km of Couatts, AB •Not available in: Daniels, McCone, Richland, Roosevelt and Valley Counties or on the Fort Peck Reservation due to co-channel use.

All mutual aid frequencies should use CTCSS tone control of 156.7 Hz on the transmit side.

Figure 41: Mass-Casualty Incident from an EMS Perspective



Basic Interagency Operations

1. When communicating with members of law enforcement or fire services, the GOLD frequency or channel (State Common Mutual Aid) is the frequency to choose. This primary public safety interagency channel is available to any agency, organization, or individual with a legitimate public safety responsibility.
2. EMS providers should communicate with hospitals, medical clinics and other ambulances using the **WHITE** mutual aid channel. The **WHITE** channel is for Ambulance-to-Hospital and Ambulance-to-Ambulance communications and retains that use from routine emergencies to large incidents. Only licensed EMS providers and hospitals may be authorized for a mutual aid permit to use the **WHITE** channel.
3. The **TAN (VMED28)** channel is designated for Statewide Air-to-Ground Coordination reserved for communications between rotary or fixed wing aircraft and ground response units at emergency scenes. Uses include landing assistance and emergency coordination. Secondary use of the **TAN (VMED28)** channel is for EMS interagency communications (Ambulance-to-Ambulance, Quick Response Unit [QRU], etc.) during larger incidents.

Radio Programming Requirements

According to the Administrative Rules of Montana:

1. All ground ambulances and rotor wing ambulances are required to have a VHF *mobile* radio programmed with EMS frequencies and the State Common Mutual Aid **GOLD** channel.
2. Non-transporting units must have the capability of providing at least one radio at every emergency medical scene programmed with a minimum of the following frequencies: **WHITE** (155.2800 MHz), **TAN-VMED28** (155.3400 MHz), **NEON** (157.4250 MHz) and **GOLD** (153.9050 MHz).
3. A printed or electronic copy of the required frequencies and their uses must be available for use on all EMS calls.