



Alaska Land Mobile Radio Communications System

High Level Communications Strategy

Version 5

NOTE: For State FY2011 & 12 optional training services were not funded (grayed out) and are not provided at this time.

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Document Revision History

Name	Date	Reason for Changes	Version
Shafer, Sherry	6/5/2008	Final - Approved by User Council	2
Shafer, Sherry	6/23/2009	Annual review/update. Approved by the User Council – Final.	3
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Acronyms and Definitions

Alaska Federal Executive Association (AFEA): federal government entities, agencies and organizations, other than the Department of Defense, that operate on the shared ALMR system infrastructure.

Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communications System: the ALMR Communications System, which uses but is separate from the State of Alaska Telecommunications System (SATS), as established in the Cooperative Agreement.

Alaska Municipal League: a voluntary non-profit organization in Alaska that represents member local governments.

Department of Defense – Alaska: Alaskan Command, US Air Force and US Army component services operating under United States Pacific Command.

Executive Council: the ALMR Executive Council which is made up of three voting members and two associate members representing the original four constituency groups: the State of Alaska, the Department of Defense, Non-DOD Federal agencies (represented by the Alaska Federal Executive Association), and local municipal/government (represented by the Alaska Municipal League and the Municipality of Anchorage).

Local Governments: those Alaska political subdivisions defined as municipalities in AS 29.71.800(13).

Member: a public safety agency including, but not limited to, a general government agency (local, state or federal), its authorized employees and personnel (paid or volunteer), and its service provider, participating in and using the System under a Membership Agreement.

Municipality of Anchorage (MOA): the MOA covers 1,951 square miles with a population of approximately 278,000. The MOA stretches from Portage, at the southern border, to the Knik River at the northern border, and encompasses the communities of Girdwood, Indian, Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak/Birchwood, and the native village of Eklutna.

Operations Manager: the Operations Manager represents the User Council interests and makes decisions on issues related to the day-to-day operation of the system and any urgent or emergency system operational or repair decisions. In coordination with the User Council, the Operations Manager establishes policies, procedures, contracts, organizations, and agreements that provide the service levels as defined in the ALMR Service Level Agreement.



Operations Management Office (OMO): develops recommendations for policies, procedures, and guidelines; identifies technologies and standards; and coordinates intergovernmental resources to facilitate communications interoperability with emphasis on improving public safety and emergency response communications.

Protocol: a standard that governs network communications by providing a set of rules for its operation.

State of Alaska (SOA): the primary maintainer of the SATS (the State's microwave system), and shared owner of the System.

State of Alaska Telecommunications Systems (SATS): The State of Alaska statewide telecommunications system microwave network.

System Management Office (SMO): the team of specialists responsible for management of maintenance and operations of the System.

User/Member: an agency, person, group, organization or other entity which has an existing written Membership Agreement to operate on ALMR with one of the Parties to the Cooperative Agreement. The terms user and member are synonymous and interchangeable.

User Council: the User Council is responsible for recommending all operational and maintenance decisions affecting the System. Under the direction and supervision of the Executive Council, the User Council has the responsibility for management oversight and operations of the System. The User Council oversees the development of System operations plans, procedures and policies under the direction and guidance of the Executive Council.



1.0 Introduction

The High-Level Communications Strategy is an embedded part of the Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communications System Operations Management Office (OMO). The standard working practices are to make information available so stakeholders understand and conform to the ALMR policies, processes, protocols, and procedures.

In order to effectively reach, inform, educate, advise, and support all of the stakeholders and others with an interest in ALMR, we must solicit comments, listen to input, and react appropriately to the given circumstance. Succinct communications are an essential part of the process to explain to the stakeholders, and others, how they have helped shape the way we work.

This strategy is one part of the on-going communications process. It will be reviewed and revised each year, as needed, and as we adapt and reshape our communications methodology to meet the challenges in the coming years.

Communications strategy:

- Build structure and internal awareness
- Increase recognition and differentiation from other organizations
- Ensure that information we deliver is widely available and accessible
- Ensure that communication is genuinely two-way
- Continue to do all this consistently, despite challenges

2.0 Communications Strategy Goals

All internal and external stakeholders must recognize their role in on-going communications. The OMO and System Management Office (SMO) are responsible for raising awareness of ALMR at all levels of State and local government, as well as providing input to the national interoperability profile. This will be accomplished by developing external relationships with states owning or implementing similar systems and improving the culture of the organization through a considered communications approach.

A communications strategy describes the processes in meeting communications goals. The following define those processes:

- Defining the types of information that need to be communicated within and outside the organization
- Identifying the individuals that will do the communicating
- Identifying the tools available to communicate this information

- Developing a communications matrix that identifies, for each type of information, the responsible person, the intended audience, the media, and the frequency

2.1 Methodology

The methodology for implementing the strategy consists of five steps:

2.1.1 Identification of the audience. For ALMR, the audience consists of all stakeholders, potential stakeholders, and other agencies that interoperate with ALMR stakeholders and governmental executive and legislative branch entities.

2.1.2 Analysis of the needs of each of the stakeholders. The information needs of each targeted audience is identified and analyzed in relation to ALMR.

2.1.3 Identification of the information dissemination channels. In light of the stakeholders identified needs and the content of information to be made available, the methods available for information dissemination are reviewed and an appropriate means of communications will be determined.

2.1.4 Determination of the information to be provided. The information requirements of the stakeholders are assessed in conjunction with available communications media and resources. The goal is that information to be disseminated exceeds the minimum requirements.

2.1.5 Determination of the strategy. Using the prior factors, a strategy is developed for ongoing dissemination of information to the stakeholders.

3.0 External Communications

The focus of external communications is to highlight ALMR and the OMO/SMO by using appropriate communications mechanisms.

3.1 Goals

- Ensure a high level of awareness of the vision, roles, and missions of the OMO/SMO and their place in ALMR
- Effectively communicate ALMR achievements, activities, status, updates, system performance, operation, processes, policies, and procedures
- Communicate current ALMR System status and forward planning
- Promote dialogue at all stakeholder levels on issues related to ALMR to help ensure involvement and support

- Make available all information required for stakeholders to understand ALMR, and to encourage input to derive the maximum benefits of its implementation

3.2 Objectives

- Effectively communicate ALMR and OMO/SMO achievements and performance to stakeholders and the wider public safety audience. Announce successes and reaffirm the vision of providing interoperable statewide communications
- Reinforce the ALMR position as Alaska's communications solution for public safety first responders
- Communicate appropriate information in sufficient detail to target audiences, using appropriate language
- Communicate regularly and openly to stakeholders
- Raise awareness of the System and its capabilities to the stakeholders, potential stakeholders, and the Alaska public
- Encourage stakeholders, potential stakeholders, and the general public to provide feedback on ALMR activities and services
- Provide relevant, clear, and concise written materials
- Improve access to information and services
- Ensure communications consider security and follow procedural guidelines

3.3 Mechanisms Employed

A basic function of any organization is to ensure and maintain clear and open channels and information sharing between and within the organization and the stakeholder community. This strategy compliments other more familiar and more structured communications practices, as indicated below:

- Person to person
- User Council
- Executive Council
- Web site (www.alaskalandmobileradio.org)
- Workshops
- ALMR informational handouts
- Direct contact (letter, phone, email)
- ALMR quarterly *Insider* newsletter
- Service Repair Notices
- Media
- Training opportunities
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Conferences, briefings, seminars, workgroups

3.4 OMO/SMO Points of Contact

See Appendix A.

4.0 Internal Communications

The focus of internal communications is to maintain open channels of communication and information sharing, and clear, concise, and open dialogue between the Operations Manager and his/her staff, and within the ALMR organization.

4.1 Goals

Contribute toward the development of ALMR by having strong two-way internal communications, ensuring a well-informed and involved workforce.

- Ensure staff feel valued in their roles and become natural ambassadors for ALMR
- Involve and engage staff in decision making processes and in the development of procedures and policies
- Encourage staff to share ownership of ALMR and OMO objectives
- Ensure staff has access to the necessary information to communicate effectively and to carry out their responsibilities
- Foster open communication between staff members

4.2 Objectives

- Encourage communication with colleagues, and contributions to staff planning and development activities
- Consult with staff to develop a coordinated internal communications framework to manage effective circulation of achievements, activities, status, updates, system performance, operation, processes, policies, and procedures
- In consultation with staff members, develop relevant and accessible communications methods for senders and receivers of communications
- Prioritize and clarify effective routes of communication
- Ensure staff have the information available, in a relevant format, to accomplish their work in an effective manner
- Implement policy guidelines and protocols that enhance quality of communications, consistency, and effectiveness
- Specify with staff clear ownership/responsibility for communications
- Include user-friendly response mechanisms with all communications to encourage feedback

- Comply with confidentiality, privacy, and data protection requirements, as appropriate
- Contribute to organizational and policy changes that improve communications
- Ensure communications effectiveness is regularly monitored in consultation with the staff; review regularly and update, as needed, to maintain the highest standards

4.3 Support Services – Communications Subject Matter Experts

- Supplement the OMO staff on an as-needed basis
- Maintain availability for consultation services
- Offer diversity in the technology field

5.0 Key Principles

As a representative of ALMR and the OMO/SMO, personnel must have a commitment to providing exceptional communications to all audiences. Representatives must embrace the following key principals:

- Provide honest and open two-way communication
- Provide strong, accurate, and easily accessible communications
- Ensure all communication, spoken and written (whether presented on paper or electronically) are concise, easily understood, timely, and kept up to date
- Ensure published materials adhere to the ALMR organizational style and are easily and instantly identifiable
- Ensure communications are readily accessible, appealing, and demonstrate inclusion to those who would benefit, including those agencies difficult to engage
- Ensure all parties are in concurrence with communications plans and the message, tools, and timing are agreed upon in advance

6.0 Implementing the Strategy

It is essential that both external and internal ALMR stakeholders and peer group audiences understand the structured approach to communications the OMO is responsible for, and their roles in making it happen.

Key communications priorities should be identified, organizationally supported, and used as the cornerstones for strategy implementation plans.

Examples of priority communications are:

- Service Repair Notices
- ALMR Updates
- Repair/maintenance notices
- Policy, processes, protocols, and procedural notices

7.0 Request/Complaint Resolution Procedures

All information requests or complaints will be tracked/coordinated through the following:

- Via telephone, email, other written correspondence, or in person
- Logged into the tracking database by the SMO and a Service Request is generated
- Operations Manager reviews the information request/complaint and determines the responsible agency/group to address the issue
- Email or letter is sent to the initiating individual/agency notifying them of the status of their request/complaint
- Operations Manager reviews the status of outstanding request(s)/complaint(s) at the weekly OMO/SMO staff meeting
- The initiating individual/agency is updated via email/letter
- When the information request/complaint is resolved, the Service Request is closed
- Operations Manager, or staff, sends an email/letter to the initiating individual/agency informing them of the issue closure and requesting confirmation of the resolution
- Copy of the agency email/letter and their response is filed

Requests for general ALMR information will be received and addressed immediately by the Operations Manager, Technical Advisor, or Document Specialist. The requesting party will be referred to the web site for general information and sent any additional information via email or US Postal Service.



Help Desk contacts and hours of operation.

Normal Operations		
Contact Type	Hours of Operations	Contact Detail
In Alaska - Telephone	24/7 Coverage	907-334-ALMR (2567) in Anchorage or 1-888-334-ALMR (2567) for calls within Alaska, but outside of Anchorage
Outside Alaska – Telephone (including mobile phones)	24/7 Coverage	Out-of-State callers (personnel or agencies not residing in Alaska must dial 907-334-ALMR (2567)
E-mail	E-mail responses are sent Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. AST (except federal holidays)	ALMR-helpdesk@inuitservices.com
In Person	Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. AST (except federal holidays)	Visit the Help Desk at 5900 E. Tudor Road, Suite 121, Anchorage, AK during normal business hours

Complaints are submitted using the Customer Complaint Record, Attachment C to the SMO Customer Support Plan.

8.0 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

The goals and objectives rely upon efficient and consistent use of a number of communications media. The OMO will annually survey the stakeholders to measure the success of the strategy. An analysis of the information regarding the OMO reputation and level of stakeholder satisfaction will be provided to the User Council and the stakeholder community.

Data concerning the monitoring, evaluation, and review of the strategy will be provided through:

- Stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- OMO/SMO staff feedback
- User surveys

The strategy will be reviewed annually and updated, as needed.

9.0 Communications Strategy Responsibility

The Operations Manager is responsible for driving the communications strategy by actively demonstrating and applying his/her principles to all aspects of his/her



work. The Operations Manager will take responsibility for ensuring the successful implementation of the communications strategy by ensuring timely contribution of relevant information through all ALMR communications avenues identified in this strategy.

Full implementation of the goals and objectives contained in this High Level Communications Strategy are dependent upon adequate funding from the cooperative partners.

10.0 OMO/SMO Staff Communications Responsibilities

OMO communications responsibilities are located in the OMO Customer Support Plan, Section 5.3. SMO communications responsibilities are located in the SMO Customer Support Plan, Section 3.0.



Appendix A Operations/System Management Office Personnel

Operations Manager – Del Smith	907-334-2636 delsmith@5starteam.net
Technical Advisor – Rich Leber	907-269-5607 richleber@5starteam.net
Document Specialist – Sherry Shafer	907-269-8408 sherryshafer@5starteam.net
System Manager – Casey Borg	907-269-5062 cborg@inuitservices.com
System Technologist – James Jones	907-269-5750 jjones@inuitservices.com
System Security Manager – Andreas Bohman	907-269-6702 abohman@inuitservices.com
Asset Manager – Julie Pannone	907-269-5748 jpannone@inuitservices.com
Service Desk Specialist – - Andrea Deveau	907-334-2567 adeveau@inuitservices.com
Help Desk – 1-888-334-2567 (outside the Anchorage area, but within Alaska) or 907-334-2567 (within the Anchorage area and outside Alaska) or almr-helpdesk@inuitservices.com .	