

# Paging on the CoMIRS 800MHz System Q&A

## How will breaking the FCECS and CoMIRS patches effect paging?

Dispatching by pagers will continue to occur, as it has been, over the FCECS 450MHz channels. What will change is that traffic on the the Fire 1 and Police 2 CoMIRS 800MHz channels will no longer be broadcast out over FCECS and those listening to their FCECS 450MHz pagers will not hear any of the 800MHz system radio traffic.

This means that pagers will not be picking up radio traffic when units sign on the air as responding or any communication that happens between responding units and Shelburne Control. By request, Shelburne Control can relay messages out over the FCECS system that will be heard by FCECS pagers and they will send out call-cancellation pages and other important updates as needed and dictated by the incident.

## When will paging migrate to CoMIRS?

CoMIRS infrastructure does not currently allow for full countywide digital paging coverage. The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) is engaged in a large and comprehensive CoMIRS infrastructure improvement project and has prioritized Franklin County as one of the first recipients of these system upgrades. When the Franklin County portion of the project is complete, which EOTSS estimates will be over the summer of 2023, the entire county will be covered and able to receive 800MHz system digital pages.

That time frame is not set in stone and is subject to change. Until this project is complete, paging will continue to occur over FCECS and the FCECS Oversight Committee will continue to operate and maintain that system. However, maintaining FCECS is costly and the radio equipment used to transmit 450MHz system pages throughout the county is outdated and is now difficult to replace. **Agencies using pagers as part of their communication system must be prepared to transition to 800MHz pagers soon after EOTSS completes their CoMIRS infrastructure project.** Departments should begin planning now to be prepared for this final phase of the county's CoMIRS migration.

## What pagers will your department need?

The Franklin County CoMIRS Advisory Group, the committee made up of representatives from Franklin County emergency service agencies that advise the FRCOG on use of CoMIRS, identified 800MHz pagers compatible with CoMIRS that should meet the needs of Franklin County agencies. The Unication G4 single band (700/800MHz) and the G5 dual band (450/520MHz and 700/800MHz) pagers both allow for paging over CoMIRS and have been tested by Advisory Group member and South County EMS Chief Zachary Smith. You can [read his report on the G5 pager](#) and find other helpful technical guides on the FRCOG's [CoMIRS webpage](#).

At the time of this writing, the G4 single band pager has price point of \$516.00, the G5 of \$596.00, and the desktop charger is \$90.00. These prices reflect the current ITT57 MA state contract and may change. The Unication G4 pager looks to be the best match for the needs of Franklin County agencies and the CoMIRS Advisory Group is currently recommending that departments prepare to purchase this model. If

we identify other options over the next year, or there is another significant new development, we will let you know in a future update.

### **Will the FRCOG assist the county with funding, purchasing, and programming pagers?**

The FRCOG is exploring grant funding options and identifying what level of regional coordination and involvement it could feasibly provide around procurement, programming, and funding support to purchase pagers for Franklin County municipalities. **At this time, the FRCOG cannot guarantee any involvement in securing funding assistance or in any regional purchasing or programming support for pagers.** We expect to know more over the next year and will continue to keep you updated on our progress.

### **What are your department's next steps and when should you plan to purchase pagers?**

All Franklin County departments who plan to continue using pagers should be prepared to purchase, program, deploy, and train with the new 800MHz system pagers within six months of the completion of CoMIRS infrastructure development project in Franklin County. The current estimate is that this project will be completed by the end of summer 2023. Our estimated time line for migrating all paging to CoMIRS will be by January, 2024. If that estimate changes, we will let you know as soon as possible.

Departments should prepare to purchase pagers from fiscal year 2024 budgets. We recommend that departments get an accurate count of how many pagers they will need as soon as possible and consider adjusting fiscal year 2023 budgets to allow for purchasing these pagers sooner. Budget approximately \$600.00 per Unication G4 pager (this includes the price of one G4 pager and its desktop charger).

There are several sources of grant funding that MA municipalities are eligible for which may help offset costs of purchasing pagers. The American Rescue Plan Act, Emergency Management Performance Grants, and the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant (not currently being offered but may return in 2023) are a few options that departments can begin exploring. At this time, the FRCOG cannot guarantee that these sources will be available for purchasing pagers.