

BULLETIN

15-2023

x-ref 29-2022

September 21, 2023

To all Authorized Employers of Community Peace Officers with RCMP as Police Service of Jurisdiction:

Re: AFRRCS Access to RCMP Encrypted Channels

In December 2022, the Peace Officer Program (Program) announced the details of the plan for the implementation of Community Peace Officer Level 1s (CPOs) to have access to encrypted RCMP talk groups through the Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRCCS).

Following this announcement, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services requested the plan be revisited. With assistance from the RCMP, the following changes have been approved and the implementation process (onboarding) will proceed once the required information, identified on the second page, is provided to the Program.

There will be no fees for service delivery associated with programming, key loading, and access to the RCMP's encrypted AFRRCS channels. Authorized employers will only be responsible for the costs associated with the purchase, maintenance, and upgrade of radio equipment.

Please note that the following are the required technical radio specification are as follows:

- Radios must be registered on AFRRCS;
- Project 25 Phase I capable with multi-zone;
- Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256 Encryption capable;
- Trunking data;
- OTAR with Multikey; and
- Advanced System Key configured by AFRRCS with the Participants shared talk groups.

If your current radios do not meet these standards, new radios will have to be purchased by the authorized employer and be registered on AFRRCS.

The requirement for Enhanced Security Clearances has also been removed. Instead, participating CPOs will be required to undergo verified criminal record checks through fingerprints. These clearances generally cost under \$100 and have faster processing times (varies by police service) and is the same requirement for CPOs to have access to the Program's CPIC ORI.

Please note: Those CPOs who already have a valid RCMP Security Screening Certificate or a verified criminal record check (through fingerprints) will not be required to submit to further clearances.

Next Steps

With the announcement of no costs (other than verified criminal record checks and costs associated with purchase, maintenance, and upgrade of radio equipment), it is anticipated that this decision may present an opportunity for other authorized employers who may have initially decided against joining this initiative and now want to have access to the RCMP encrypted channel for their CPOs.

Therefore, the Program is requesting that **all** authorized employers wanting their CPOs to have access to the RCMP encrypted channel to please email the Program at peaceofficerinfo@gov.ab.ca. **Please ensure that the email contains the following:**

1. A specific contact for your agency.
2. Confirm current radios are registered with AFRRCS.
 - a. If registered, make and model of your radio as well as the number of radios requiring encrypted access and
 - b. Do they meet the technical specifications identified above (page 1).
3. Number of CPOs.
4. Any technical questions you may have.

Please submit your emails, with the required information, no later than October 20, 2023.

Although emails received after this date will be accepted, those received prior to the deadline will have priority over those emails received after the deadline.

Once the requested information has been provided to the Program, the Program will forward this information to the RCMP, and they will commence direct communication with interested authorized employers to collaborate on the exchange of technical information to facilitate the onboarding process.

During the onboarding process, authorized employers will be expected to sign a new RCMP memorandum of understanding (MOU) that contains new Articles dedicated to the use of the RCMP encrypted channel. Therefore, any current MOU between the authorized employer and the RCMP will be replaced by the new MOU.

In addition, authorized employers will be required to complete the following:

- Amend existing privacy and communication policies for CPOs to reflect the use of the RCMP's encrypted channel (to be provided to the Program upon request);
- Have individual CPOs sign the required acknowledgement form (attached) related to the protection of information shared over the encrypted RCMP channel; and
- Authorized employers submit a copy of their CPOs verified criminal record check (verified by fingerprints) or valid RCMP Security Screening Certificate.

The last two bullets must be provided to the Program, at the email address provided above, once the authorized employer has been contacted by the RCMP to commence onboarding.

The Program will assist the RCMP by providing updates regarding the onboarding process when available.

Sincerely,

Sean Bonneteau, CD
Director
Law Enforcement Standards and Audits

Attachment.

Reminder, Bulletins are no longer posted on the Government of Alberta website.