

## A Practical Guide to Narrowbanding

US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Emergency Communications

### Appendix A: Customizable Letter to Local Officials with Budget Authority

Please customize this letter to local officials with budget authority explaining the Federal Communications Commission's mandate and why it is critical that funds are allocated to local emergency response efforts to ensure compliance and continued emergency response service. Many thanks to the Communications Interoperability Subcommittee, whose narrowbanding memo to the Metro Boston Homeland Security Region served as the template for this letter.

TO: [Public Officials]

FROM: [Insert name of agency]

DATE:----- --, 2011

SUBJECT: Federally Mandated Narrowband Migration

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The purpose of this memo is to spread awareness of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate regarding radio communication system narrowband compliance, and to provide an overview of the mandate and impact **[insert local jurisdiction]** emergency response agencies.

### Overview of FCC Narrowband Mandate and Deadlines

The FCC has mandated that all ~~non~~ federal public safety licensees operating 25 kHz (wideband) radio systems in the VHF and UHF ~~bands~~ must migrate to more efficient 12.5 kHz (narrowband) channels on or before December 31, 2012. The result is a more efficient use of radio spectrum (or bandwidth), allowing the FCC to expand the number of available channels. Unfortunately, many ~~all~~ public safety radio systems used locally still operate on 25 ~~wide~~ radio channels.

This upcoming deadline affects all FCC licensed State and local public safety radio systems. Wideband radio operation will be a violation of FCC regulations beginning in 2013, and agencies not meeting that deadline face the loss ~~of~~ communication capabilities and fines.

### Understanding the Scope and Planning Needs of Narrowband Migration

Local officials should be aware that this mandate affects law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical services, as well as other public agencies communicating on wideband ~~licensees~~. These include the Department of Public Works, Department of Public Health, and others. It is likely that **[insert jurisdiction]** equipment will need to be replaced to comply with the narrowband requirements; this includes **[insert local requirements, e.g. repeaters, radios, and/or transmitters .]** Preparing for narrowbanding will require a commitment of time, resources, and funds. ~~Securing~~ Securing the funds to comply with the mandate is difficult, as narrowbanding grants are difficult to obtain and there are limited budget cycles remaining. With less than **[insert timeframe]** until the deadline, we must start planning now to support **[insert local jurisdiction]**

The FCC has stated that ~~non~~ compliant licenses will be canceled after the 2012 deadline. ~~In~~ In the opinion of

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the FCC, organizations have had sufficient time to prepare for this migration. Failure to address your community's narrowband migration requirements in advance of the deadline may result in service shop scheduling issues, limited availability of replacement equipment, communications interference, and loss of coverage. It is unlikely that the FCC will grant an extension **December 31, 2012 deadline**

Please keep the operational needs of your local emergency response agencies in mind when allocating this year's budget funds. **[insert agency name]** is currently facing a shortfall of **[insert amount]** needed to comply with the narrowbanding mandate and keep our emergency responders communicating.

Respectfully yours,

**[Insert Name]**