



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Corrections, Public
Safety and Policing

Saskatchewan Protection &
Emergency Services

Provincial Public Safety
Telecommunications Network

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Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network (PPSTN) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Radio System:

Q. What is a Public Safety radio system?

A. A Public Safety radio system is one that is specifically designed and operated for the public safety community. Such systems are constructed to address the demanding requirements of public safety communications such as coverage, interoperability, capacity, availability and reliability.

Q. Who are the users of a Public Safety Radio System?

A. Some of the users of Saskatchewan's new public safety radio communications system will include: municipal Fire and Police, Emergency Medical Services, volunteer Search and Rescue chapters, Environment, Corrections, Highways and other government agencies. These organizations represent approximately 4,700 users from public safety agencies and government organizations.

Q. Why do we need a Provincial Public Safety Radio System?

A. The SaskTel FleetNet system will be discontinued in December, 2010. In order to ensure that agencies responding to emergencies have a reliable means of communicating with Sask911 Public Safety Answering Points, dispatch services and other responding agencies, the Government of Saskatchewan decided to invest in a sustainable, long-term radio communications solution.

Q. What does the system offer its users?

A. The system is based on a public safety grade, Project 25 (P25) network, specifically designed and operated to serve the public safety community in the province. Such public safety systems are inherently costly to construct and to operate; however, they provide reliable emergency communications that address requirements such as interoperability, coverage, capacity and availability, allowing more efficient and coordinated responses to emergencies.

Q. How much will Saskatchewan's public safety radio system cost?

A. The overall investment in the system will be approximately \$130 million.

Q. Will this new system operate everywhere responders will need it?

A. The system will provide coverage for emergency responses involving 99 per cent of Saskatchewan residents.

Governance of the PPSTN:

Q. Why isn't a Crown agency like SaskTel responsible for operating and maintaining the network?

A. The PPSTN is a public safety network, not a commercial network. The PPSTN provides negligible profit-generating potential for commercial Crown Corporations because of the expense of operating it.

Crown Investments Corporation supports the PPSTN's proposed governance structure.

Q. What is SaskTel's role in the new network?

A. During the PPSTN's planning stages, CPSP committed to co-location of facilities with SaskTel, as well using their services and other facilities.

In the future, a significant portion of PPSTN operating costs will be co-location and telecommunications services purchased from SaskTel.

Q. Will the users have any say in the ongoing operation of the network?

A. Yes. The Ministry has established a Public Safety User Committee to consult on issues of affordability and system serviceability.

A Single Monthly Provincial Rate

Q. How did the Province arrive at the \$40/radio/month to operate on the PPSTN?

A. A monthly charge of \$40 per radio was established for the following reasons:

SaskTel FleetNet "protective services" subsidized user fees ranged from \$28 to \$35 per month; Government has indicated that a new telecommunication network will not cost appreciably more than what users were paying on FleetNet; therefore, subscribers will pay \$40/radio/month.

Q. What are SaskPower and RCMP paying for user fees?

A. Each party is responsible for its own funding sources and for any expenses of their users.

Radio Purchase Plan

Q. What do you mean by “based on basic operational needs”?

A. “Basic operational needs” refers to sufficient radio communications capacity to meet the basic requirements for primary frontline emergency response units to provide:

- communication capacity with dispatch services;
- communication capacity with other primary frontline emergency response units; and,
- basic on-scene tactical command and control capacity.

Q. What if I need more radios than are provided?

A. Each agency can purchase additional radios, at their cost, using their normal procurement practices or the established standing offers. These standing offers were established to provide the opportunity for bulk purchase pricing and are available to all user agencies until Dec. 31, 2010.

Q. Do Government ministries qualify to receive radios under this plan?

A. No. Government radios will not qualify under this purchase plan. Each Ministry will go through the normal Government budget process to purchase their radios.

Q. When will radios be available and how will we get the best price?

A. Motorola has been selected to provide radio equipment through an established standing offer process. This standing offer is in effect until December 31st, 2010. The PPSTN office can provide full details.

Q. My municipality contracts policing services from the RCMP; will I need to pay additional costs for policing services (radios)?

A. No. The RCMP will continue to manage the radios for those municipalities that contract policing services with them.

General Questions:

Q. Why is it important for government to provide financial support to the public safety users in fire and emergency response?

A. It is important because:

- the success of the PPSTN depends on broad-based user participation;
- public-safety-grade radio systems are costly to build and operate as they must meet higher performance and reliability standards; and,
- municipalities and fire departments in rural Saskatchewan have advised Government that the cost of signing onto the network must be affordable in order for them to participate.

Q. When can we get onto the system?

A. The primary migration period for existing FleetNet users has now begun. Migration priority is being given to those users currently operating on the FleetNet system, in order to mitigate any risks to communication services in the event of a major FleetNet system failure.

Q. Is it mandatory that our municipality participate in the PPSTN?

A. No. Participation is voluntary, but encouraged. Broad participation provides for the highest levels of interoperability, resulting in better public safety communications and response.

Q. Will commercial users be allowed on the PPSTN?

A. No. The network is designed solely for public safety and public service agencies.

Q. How do I enquire about applying to get onto the system?

A. Contact: Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network office at 1-888-953-3693 or email - ppstn@gov.sk.ca

Q. How do we order the radios?

A. You must apply as a qualifying agency through your jurisdictional authority to order the radio equipment supplied as part of this program. Please contact us to learn more about ordering additional radios.

Q. Who pays for shipping of equipment to my agency?

A. The program will cover the costs of shipping the initial order of radios to your agency. All subsequent shipping costs for maintenance and repair will be the responsibility of the agency.

Q. Do I have to buy radio accessories?

A. Program allocated mobile radios come with basic mounting apparatus. Portable radios come with antenna, battery and one charger per agency. All additional accessories such as vehicle antennas, cabling, microphones, etc. are the responsibility of the agency.

Q. Who pays for mobile installation?

A. The user agency is responsible for all installation, maintenance and repair costs.

Q. Will there be an installation guide for radios?

A. A video and written installation guide will be provided with the radios.

Q. Does installation have to be done by specific dealers?

A. No, but it is recommended that experienced installers be utilized to ensure proper equipment operation.

Q. Who do I call for help with the application process and later with the radios?

A. Contact PPSTN at 1-888-953-3693 or e-mail ppstn@gov.sk.ca

Q. When will I get my radios?

A. After your agency has successfully completed the application process, you will be allocated radios on a first-come, first-served basis. Radios are now being shipped via Canada Post to agencies that have applied and are ready to migrate.

Q. What kind, type and quantity of radios will be supplied to my agency?

A. CPSP has completed a standing offer process and Motorola was the successful bidder. Radios will be allocated in accordance with guidelines established by the Office of the Fire Commissioner – contact us for details.

Q. Can I purchase additional radios, and if so, what type and make?

A. You may purchase additional radios, at your own cost, through CPSP’s standing offer process. Any equipment purchased must be on the approved manufacturer list and programmed by PPSTN staff.

Q. Will different makes of radios on this system “talk” to each other?

A. Users will be able to communicate with each other utilizing PPSTN approved radio equipment.

Q. When will we switch over to the new system?

A. Transition or migration is dependent on:

- network readiness in your area;
- dispatch center readiness for your agency; and
- successful application and readiness process by your agency.

Agencies are now migrating onto the system.

Q. If I am not a FleetNet user, can I come onto the new system?

A. Although migration priority will be given to existing FleetNet users, qualifying non-FleetNet users are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Q. What do I have to do to get ready?

A. Contact CPSP for more information.

Q. Who owns the radio equipment allocated under this program?

A. The Government of Saskatchewan retains ownership of supplied equipment. However, the user agency is responsible for all damage, maintenance and repair costs.

Q. Is there a deadline for applications?

A. In applying, please adhere to the following application guidelines:

- Current FleetNet users who have not applied and wish to do so should apply immediately to ensure uninterrupted service.
- If you are a current FleetNet user and do not wish to participate in the PPSTN program, you must provide written documentation of the decision your Council or other decision-making body.

If you do not presently use Fleetnet and wish to move to the PPSTN program, you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible in order to take advantage of the Standing Offer, should your agency require additional radios.

Q. What happens when our radios are shipped to us?

- A. PPSTN staff will contact you and advise you when the radios are being shipped.
- If you have not received your radios within 7 days, contact the PPSTN through the toll free number.
 - Once you receive your radios, contact PPSTN staff.
 - Each shipment includes: - a packing slip – an installation guide for mobile radios – a user orientation guide and DVD – a step by step migration check list.

Q. How do I migrate my agency onto the PPSTN?

- A. Once you have received your radios:
- Review the user information with your front line responders.
 - Arrange for installation of mobile radios (portables do not require installation).
 - Once mobiles are installed, contact PPSTN staff via telephone to arrange for a live test.
 - Upon completion of that test, contact your Dispatch Center via telephone to arrange for a radio test and check.
 - Upon completion of that step, contact PPSTN staff to advise them of the results of the test. If it was successful, you are considered migrated.
 - Each agency is responsible to decommission Fleetnet radios once they have migrated, however, consideration should be given to maintaining some Fleetnet Communication capacity until mutual aid response agencies using Fleetnet have migrated.

Q. How will I be billed the monthly per radio service charge?

- A. The billing process is still under development.
- The start of the billing period will commence on the date that you migrate successfully onto the PPSTN.
 - Further information regarding the billing process will be forthcoming.

Q. What if I have trouble with equipment?

- A. You can call our toll free number 1-888-953-3695 – 24 hrs/day; 7 days per week to report your issue and receive assistance.

Q. Who do I call with questions about radio coverage?

- A. The P25 is a mobile-based system, designed to provide the best coverage for mobile radios. In some areas, portables will not have coverage.
- If you have a concern about coverage, contact the toll free PPSTN number to report your concerns.
 - As we move forward, the PPSTN is committed to address coverage issues affecting our Users.

Basic Operational Needs Guidelines:

Scope: The terms and definitions of “Basic Operational Need(s)” refers to the provision of radio communications equipment to qualifying frontline emergency response agencies participating in the PPSTN.

1. Qualifying frontline agencies for this program include:

- Municipal fire and rescue services,
- Municipal police
- EMS
- Provincial ministries and agencies
- Volunteer Search and Rescue chapters

2. Basic Operational Need(s) refers to radio communications capacity to meet the basic requirements for frontline emergency response units:

- To provide communication capacity with dispatch services.
- To provide communication capacity with other frontline emergency response units.
- To provide basic on-scene tactical command and control capacity.

3. Radio communication equipment to address the “Basic Operational Needs” will be allocated as follows:

- a) Mobile radio including basic dash or trunk mounting hardware.
- b) Portable radios including portable antenna, single battery and single charger.
- c) Associated costs to be borne by the user agency include:
 - i. Accessories such as antennas, cabling, harnesses, microphones, portable carrying cases.
 - ii. Installation costs of any kind.
 - iii. Delivery/freight costs of equipment.
 - iv. All maintenance and repair costs.
 - v. All additional VHF frequency licensing costs.

4. Frontline emergency response agencies will be allocated equipment as follows per agency:

- a) Municipal fire and rescue: one mobile or portable radio for each front line approved response apparatus; one mobile or portable for regional rescue response apparatus; one additional portable for command and control purposes per agency.
- b) Municipal Police: two point two-five (2.25) radios per front line patrol response vehicles in any combination of mobile or portable radios.
- c) EMS services: equipment will be allocated following guidelines established by the Ministry of Health to address their basic operational needs.
- d) Provincial Ministries and agencies: equipment will be allocated following guidelines established by the respective Ministries and agencies.
- e) Volunteer Search and Rescue chapters: two portable radios per chapter.
- f) Additional or alternative allocations will be at the discretion of the Office of the Fire Commissioner.
- g) Agencies may purchase additional radios for deployment along with the radios allocated through this program.

The Government of Saskatchewan will retain ownership of all equipment it has purchased and distributed through the program and allocated to User Agencies.