



# National Operational Guidance



**NFCC**  
Fire Central  
Programme Office

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## Introduction

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This guidance is intended to support fire and rescue services in specifying and managing fireground voice communication radio equipment for use at incidents. The guidance sets out the regulatory and operational requirements for using equipment and frequencies.

Effective fireground communications are crucial to the work of fire and rescue services in resolving incidents and ensuring firefighter safety, particularly between sectors and when breathing apparatus (BA) crews are deployed. The intraoperability of communications between services at cross-border and major incidents can also be critical to effective operations.

Frequency assignments and a channel plan for fire and rescue services based on FM analogue radio technology was agreed by the Home Office in 1993. The introduction of new technology has led to fire and rescue services now procuring and using digital radio equipment for incident ground purposes; the channel plan was reviewed and updated in 2017.

The channels are primarily intended for communications between land-based resources. As they are United Kingdom wide and are not geographically assigned to any service, their use must be coordinated between fire and rescue services. During incidents, fireground radio use should be managed to minimise interference between simultaneous incidents in the same service area or across borders.

Manufacturers producing radios to a set standard must adhere to certain criteria to ensure the main functions are compatible, though some manufacturers choose to add additional features. Proprietary features are not guaranteed to be compatible between different manufacturers, so fire and rescue services are advised to consider intraoperability of handsets prior to procurement. This guidance will assist in that process.