



Transition  
Administrator

The Official Reconfiguration Manager

## **800 MHz Reconfiguration Program: Mutual Aid and Interoperability**

The FCC's 800 MHz Band Reconfiguration Program affects many 800 MHz systems, including public safety, critical infrastructure, private businesses, and commercial systems. Many systems are shared or have interdependencies with other systems. **Licensees are responsible for planning for the continuity of mutual aid operations during the reconfiguration of their systems.** The TA will work with licensees and with Sprint Nextel to help coordinate interoperability solutions to preserve public safety communications during reconfiguration. Pursuant to the FCC's 800 MHz Report and Order, all costs related to reconfiguration, including those related to Mutual Aid and Interoperability, must be agreed to by Sprint Nextel.

All agencies utilizing the National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) or other region specific mutual aid channels should participate in reconfiguration activities related to interoperability, even if their systems are not otherwise impacted by 800 MHz Reconfiguration.

### **Coordination between Agencies**

Agencies that share communications should work together to preserve the integrity of communications through the reconfiguration process. In some areas, these agencies have formed an interoperability group and have chosen a "Lead Agency" to address the regional coordination, planning, and implementation activities associated with the interoperability system. Other individual licensees may elect to coordinate on their own for interoperability and mutual aid continuity through reconfiguration. Whether incurred by a "Lead Agency" or an individual licensee, reasonable and prudent expenses associated with these efforts should be agreed to with Sprint Nextel. The TA recommends each interoperability group designate one "Lead Agency" to lead the effort to plan for mutual aid and interoperability continuity during reconfiguration. The "Lead Agency" will be the focus of and will be responsible for the coordination of mutual aid continuity for the group during reconfiguration.

One of the key issues to coordinate with Sprint Nextel is the timing for availability of the five nationwide NPSPAC Mutual Aid channels. Agencies should determine when the new channels at 806-809 MHz/851-854 MHz need to be ready for their use and be prepared to discuss these requirements with Sprint Nextel. Among the items to consider is whether all new mutual aid channels need to be available at the point the first NPSPAC agency moves down from the 821-824 MHz/866-869 MHz band in the region. A related point of discussion is how long Sprint Nextel may need to keep the old mutual aid channels clear given the timing of the whole region completing reconfiguration. Additionally, because these channels are used for coordination in events where agencies may be involved from parts of the country that have not yet started reconfiguration, consider whether it is necessary to keep the old mutual aid channels on air in a given region until all agencies nationwide have reconfigured.

### **Funding**

- In situations requiring funding for interoperability planning and implementation, individual licensees and/or a Lead Agency should negotiate and reach an agreement with Sprint Nextel regarding these costs. All costs must be included in a Planning Funding Agreement or a Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement and must be approved by both Sprint Nextel and the TA.
- Given the variety of legal structures and arrangements that apply to interoperability groups, funding vehicles need to be flexible. At a minimum, expenses for regional coordination need to be identified by an individual licensee and/or a Lead Agency as separate line-items in a Planning Funding Agreement or a Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement.

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**If you are a licensee with mutual aid and/or interoperability issues, it is essential that you identify all such interdependencies and notify Sprint Nextel.**

To successfully define your proper system environment and prepare for reconfiguration, the TA recommends completing the following steps as part of the planning process. This will help ensure that no organizations or groups of users are missed during reconfiguration, and help to generate specific interoperability requirements. More details are available on the TA website at [www.800TA.org](http://www.800TA.org).

1. **Determine all agencies operating on your licensed system.** Determine all channels, systems, devices, and processes impacted by your relocation. Include unlicensed agencies operating under user agreements on your systems. Determine contact information for affected entities to keep them informed and coordinated during reconfiguration planning and implementation.
2. **Determine other systems programmed into your subscriber equipment.** Evaluate your subscribers' equipment to determine other 800 MHz systems programmed into your units and inform Sprint Nextel accordingly. This is especially important if the licensee that operates the other systems has not already contacted subscribers.
3. **Determine NPSPAC mutual aid channels.** Evaluate your subscribers' equipment for any NPSPAC mutual aid channels used in your radios and networks. Identify licensee information and agency relationships. Notify the agencies and include them in the subscriber equipment inventory and Statement of Work preparation (if one is to be prepared) to provide to Sprint Nextel.
4. **Define communications approach for affected user communities.** Document all interoperability requirements for your systems, devices, and NPSPAC mutual aid channels. Establish a well-defined reconfiguration communication plan for affected system users and communicate with them throughout the reconfiguration process.
5. **Define your requirements for minimum disruption and document the optimal solution.** There are a number of potential solutions, including, but not limited to maintaining back-to-back repeaters on the old and new mutual aid channels for each channel and site or keeping both sets of mutual aid channels programmed into the subscriber equipment for the duration of the reconfiguration process. Since these are only a few possible techniques, discuss this matter with your equipment vendor, related agencies and Sprint Nextel as there are a number of innovative ideas available. Additional information and sample solutions will be published on the TA website ([www.800TA.org](http://www.800TA.org)) as they become available.
6. **Communicate and agree upon the solution with Sprint Nextel.** In the course of working with Sprint Nextel it will be necessary to gather and provide additional information to finalize Frequency Reconfiguration Agreements and plans to maintain the integrity of communications through the reconfiguration process. To facilitate overall Reconfiguration program management, the TA may also request additional information from licensees and Sprint Nextel.



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#### **About the 800 MHz Transition Administrator**

800 MHz Transition Administrator, LLC ("TA LLC") is the Transition Administrator ("TA") for the reconfiguration of the 800 MHz band mandated by the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC"). TA, LLC has contracted with Deloitte Consulting L.L.P., Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., and Baseline Telecom, Inc. to perform the duties of the TA. Among its duties, the TA establishes reconfiguration guidelines, specifies replacement channels, reviews reconfiguration cost estimates, monitors payment of reconfiguration costs, manages the relocation schedule, facilitates issue resolution and administers the alternative dispute resolution process. TA LLC uses information it receives solely for the purposes of administering the 800 MHz reconfiguration process and may disclose such information to the FCC or other authorized parties pursuant to the requirements of the 800 MHz Order or other applicable law.