

Eclipse 2024 Communication Planning Guide



On April 8th, 2024 a total solar eclipse will arc across the State of Indiana. This meteorological event is expected to draw spectators that could exceed 500,000 across its path of totality. Because many towns, cities, parks and other venues are hosting “watch parties” we realize this creates challenges for first responders, especially those in the counties most effected by the path of totality. While IPSC cannot possibly make a communication plan for each individual county we are providing some best practices that can assist you in making a plan of your own that will not over-stress the statewide 700/800 MHz system and ensure mission critical radio communications can take place as normal.

Step

1

The first step in making a Eclipse Communication Plan is deciding some of the basic W's.

- **Who** will be the lead communication planner?
- **What** agencies are involved in the plan and **who** represents each agency during the planning process?
- **Where** will plan documents be stored during the planning process. **Who** will be responsible for distributing plans?
- Counties should also have knowledge of **what** type of response they will need based on community planned eclipse events in their area.
- These items should be discussed at initial planning meetings. Those meetings could be held as early as **Nov 8, 2023, Dec 8 2023** or at the very latest **Jan 8, 2024**.

Begin your communication plan development using the following considerations:

- Interoperability means those who need to talk can, not everyone can talk to everyone.
- Reduce your daily use of SAFE-T talkgroups by 1 or 2 (any non-emergency or Mission Critical TG) or for every talkgroup on SAFE-T you plan to use for your Eclipse 205 Plan reduce your daily use SAFE-T talkgroups. Combine Police/Fire/EMS by event rather than discipline.
- Statewide mutual aid and regional mutual aid talkgroups are shared resources and should **not** be relied upon for Eclipse 205 Plans. They should remain available for Mission Critical day to day events and used as normal.
- Use 700/800 Interoperability Direct talkgroups for items like localized traffic direction, crowd control, localized EMS/law/fire patrols (confined to a small 1-1 ½ mile area) for Eclipse related activities.
- Use as many alternate means of communication as possible for non-Mission Critical communication – MDT's, Cell Phones, Broadband talkgroups, internal 1- or 2-way messaging systems.
- **Make a PACE plan specifically for the Eclipse.**
- Involve your local RACES and ARES amateur radio groups. They will be a critical piece to your PACE plan if traditional communication methods fail.

Step

2

Step 3

Add Telephone Priority Service for your First Responders, EOC and 911 Center. GETS, WPS and TSP.

How to Enroll in Priority Telecommunications

The Priority Telecommunications Service Center (Service Center) is comprised of a team of dedicated specialists who assist organizations with the enrollment process for Government Emergency Telecommunications Service (GETS), Wireless Priority Service (WPS), and Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP). In addition, the Service Center assists with all other aspects of managing an organization's Priority Services accounts. The Service Center is the first resource for assistance with Priority Services. The Service Center team is available Monday-Friday, from 8:00 AM ET until 6:00 PM ET, at 866-627-2255 or email support@gwids.cisa.gov.

24-hour technical support and emergency assistance is also available from the User Assistance team at 800-818-4387.

You're Ready to Practice Your Plan

STEP 1

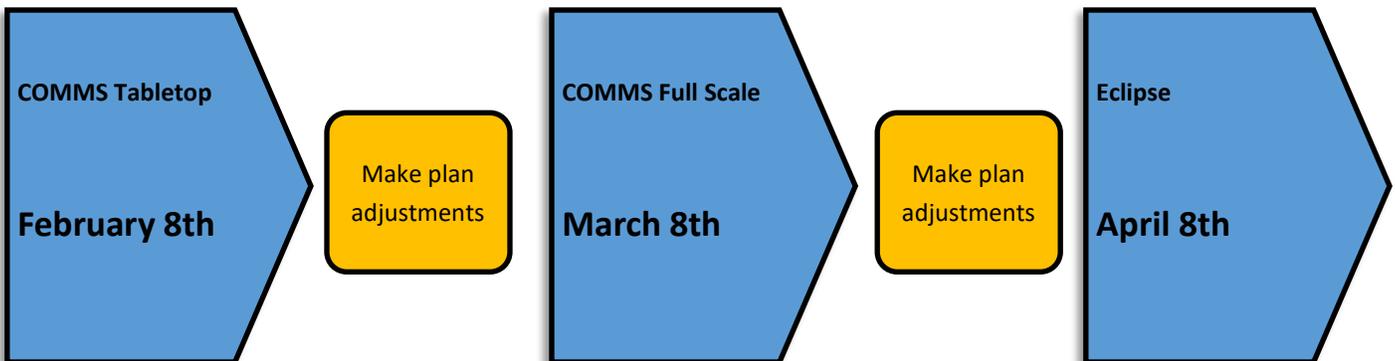
NOV-JAN—Discuss your Comms Plan and identify needs

STEP 2

JAN—FEB —Create your Comms Plan

STEP 3

Add WPS, GETS to phone lines and TSP to critical circuits



REMINDERS

The IPSC System is a shared trunked radio system—how you use the system can negatively impact other users. The resources for talkpaths at tower sites vary and although your county may have adequate resources a neighboring county could be struggling. Radio “snooping” (listening to a talkgroup not in your area) takes up a resource at your tower site and is subtracting from the resources first responders in your area have available to them to use. Adding talkgroups when busies start occurring just adds more busies (waterfall effect). These two radio “pitfalls” have been problematic in recent large scale weather events. Communication Plan makers should address this with responders when exercising the plans.