



Governance Sub-Committee

National Weather Service Starcom21 Zone Guidance

Chris Miller
Chairman

Matthew Miller
SWIC

SIEC Approved: 4/25/2025

Description

The Illinois Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) has adopted the Statewide Interoperability Template (SWIT) for use. The date for implementation is December 31st, 2025. Contained in the SWIT is a STARCOM21 Zone assigned to the National Weather Service (NWS). The NWS Zone is required to be programed into all public safety radios. The SIEC Governance Sub-Committee is tasked with issuing guidance on the proper usage of the STARCOM21 NWS Zone.

Purpose

This guidance provides information on the procedures necessary to effectively operate on the STARCOM21 NWS Zone. The individual NWS offices are encouraged to implement their own Standard Operating Guideline (SOG) that provide procedures on the proper usage of equipment and the STARCOM21 system. This guidance does not preclude any organization from adopting additional guidance for their jurisdiction.

Eligibility

The STARCOM21 NWS Zone is to be used for the following:

- Incident notification / important information to and from State, counties, and accredited city emergency management agencies within the NWS Office's warning area.
- Weather information to support planning, recovery, or incident command of high impact weather events and/or non-weather related emergencies.
 - Tornadoes, Funnel Clouds and Wall Clouds
 - Damaging Straight-line Winds
 - Large Hail greater than or equal to 1.00 inch in diameter (the size of a quarter or larger)
 - Flash flooding or any flooding that is life threatening. (e.g. evacuations, water rescues, etc.)



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- Blizzard conditions which reduce visibility to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less
 - Any information to assist emergency managers with decision support regarding potentially life-threatening weather.
 - Any weather information in support of non-weather related incidents (e.g. hazmat incident, earthquakes, etc.)
- Regional Directed Nets
 - Damage Assessment Teams
 - Communication between NWS Offices

The NWS Office will not disseminate severe weather advisories, watches, and warnings over the STARCOM21 NWS talkgroup. Please have other means to receive these notifications from NWS (e.g... weather radio, local news station) The NWS talkgroups are for tactical communications.

The NWS office will handle net control for their assigned STARCOM21 NWS talkgroup during high impact weather events and/or non-weather-related incidents.

The NWS Office will monitor their assigned STARCOM21 NWS talkgroup 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Authorization

If a Damage Assessment Team is deployed to an affected area, contact the local EMA for specific talkgroup requirements. The STARCOM21 NWS Talkgroup assigned to the deployed NWS Damage Assessment Team's Office can be used to communicate between the office and the team in the field. The NWS Damage Assessment Team can also use the IL-Call talkgroup to communicate with IEMA-OHS Operations Center. The IL-Call talkgroup is monitored 7 days a week, 24 hours a day by IEMA-OHS Operations Center.

Additional STARCOM21 talkgroups can be requested by contacting the IEMA-OHS Operations Center at 217-782-7860.



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Below are the NWS Offices and their assigned STARCOM21 talkgroups:

- NWS Quad Cities – NWS-QUAD
- NWS Chicago – NWS-CHI
- NWS Central Illinois – NWS-LINC
- NWS St. Louis – NWS-STL
- NWS Paducah – NWS-PDK
- NWS Milwaukee – NWS-MKE
- NWS Office to NWS Office – NWS-SW

Directed Nets are conducted in each of the eight IEMA-OHS regions at 10:30 AM on the first Tuesday of each month. Each NWS Office should participate in their regions Directed Net located on the STARCOM21 Calling Zone under their respective regional talkgroup listed below:

- NWS Quad Cities – IL-RGN 2
- NWS Chicago – IL-RGN 3
- NWS Central Illinois – IL - RGN 7/Secondary IL-RGN 6
- NWS St. Louis – IL-RGN 8
- NWS Paducah – IL-RGN 11



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Cache Radios

Each NWS Office providing warning coverage for Illinois counties will be provided six cache radios and related accessories. The XTS1500 radios will be transferred from ILEAS to NWS ownership. The STARCOM21 radio IDs will be managed by the STR. The STARCOM21 radio IDs will be submitted to the SIEC for cache status by ILEAS. Radio usage will abide by the cache status rules. Modifications of the radio template is not authorized.

At the initial distribution of the cache radios ILEAS will offer STARCOM21 Hands-on radio training.

3 Zone Template

Zone			
Channel	SWIT NWS	SWIT INCIDENT A	SWIT-BC
1	IL-CALL	IL-INC A1	8CALL90D
2	NWS-CHI	IL-INC A2	8TAC91D
3	NWS-QUAD	IL-INC A3	8TAC92D
4	NWS-LINC	IL-INC A4	8TAC93D
5	NWS-STL	IL-INC A5	8TAC94D
6	NWS-PDK	IL-INC A6	8CALL90
7	NWS-MKE	IL-INC A7	8TAC91
8	NWS-SW	IL-INC A8	8TAC92
9	IL-RGN 2	IL-INC A9	8TAC93
10	IL-RGN 3	IL-INC A10	8TAC94
11	IL-RGN 4	IL-INC A11	7GTAC5
12	IL-RGN 6	IL-INC A12	7TAC55
13	IL-RGN 7	IL-INC A13	7TAC51D
14	IL-RGN 8	IL-INC A14	7TAC52D
15	IL-RGN 9	IL-INC A15	7TAC71D
16	IL-RGN11	IL-INC A16	7TAC72D