Boston Area Ambulance Mutual Aid (BAMA) Network

Supersedes:
Effective: 03-15-09

The Boston Ambulance Mutual Aid (BAMA) Network is engineered to provide voice communications between Boston Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) and its mutual aid EMS providers. The BAMA network may be used to request mutual aid assistance and coordinate the response of additional medical resources. Operational and tactical communications are primarily accomplished via two-way land mobile radio, which operate on the ultra high frequency (UHF) band.

Phase I will initiate transmission of road closures, hazards, and hospital diversions and other special announcements pertinent to EMS providers. Phase II implementation will add dispatch center to dispatch center communications via the BAMA network.

Future phases will add mobile/field unit communication to BAMA control ("Boston") and eventually, direct communications between mobile units, portable units, and dispatch centers via the controlled network.

"BOSTON"- NETWORK CONTROL
"Boston" is the BAMA Network Control and responsible for coordinating interoperable EMS communications among participating agencies within the Metropolitan Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR). The Center is staffed 24 hours a day with specifically trained EMT-Telecommunicators. "Boston" oversees UASI EMS traffic, resource coordination, incident management, mitigation and recovery, complimenting the EMS Region IV role and responsibility of Metro-Boston CMED in coordinating medical communication and patient deployment to area hospitals.   Listed below are a few of the functions of "Boston":

- Coordinate and manage BAMA channel usage within the region, assisting interoperable EMS communication with other public safety agencies and resources.
- Support coordinated deployment of EMS resources.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for EMS operational and logistical resource requests (non CMED) for agencies participating on the BAMA network.
- Monitor the radio traffic to determine the quantity and quality of transmissions; detect and resolve communications resource issues and outages.
- Provide general assistance as requested by any agency in accordance with system procedures.

CHANNEL PLAN
The Metro-Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) uses a Tactical Interoperable Communication Plan (TICP) to coordinate shared channels used according to the principles of real-time sharing. Unlike BAPERN or Metro-Fire, the BAMA network is

currently designed for mobile and "in street" portable coverage within the City of Boston on a single frequency.

RULES OF USE

"Boston" Responsibility: Radio communications which concern any of the BAMA network transmissions should be coordinated by the designated network control station, and "Boston" will receive and process all requests for Medical Group radio communications support from any of the participating MBHSR EMS agencies. Any authorized MBHSR Incident Command or designee shall contact "Boston" and detail the communication need; "Boston" will attempt to provide the most appropriate resource based on the type of incident, extent of involvement and projected operation period, location and coverage area, units/resources involved, and current channel availability. Boston will also provide day-to-day "cross talk" ability for provider-to-provider interoperable communication; see also TICP Talk path process flow analysis.

All UHF communications between field units and bases shall be directed to "Boston" for the particular coordination, and/or agency being called upon. Open cross-talk between providers is permitted except when a significant incident, requiring multiple providers, occurs. "Boston" will then become the control point and all BAMA radio traffic will be directed through "Boston". "Boston" is responsible for continually monitoring and expediting radio traffic to keep the network operating efficiently – transmissions should be as complete and brief as necessary. "Boston" will regularly test BAMA to ensure network reliability and radio consolette operation. Preservation of incident communications shall be prioritized over individual use; any user issue identified by "Boston" shall be immediately addressed by the responsible agency.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

BAMA is designed for dispatch and deployment of EMS resources within MBHSR, as well as EMS incident interoperable communication including operations, logistics, and recovery purposes. **BAMA *does not* supplant the role and responsibility of Metro-Boston CMED to coordinate EMS resources for EMS Region IV, communicate with the Loading/Transportation officer and direct patient hospital deployment during an MCI, or support other regional EMS and Hospital functions.**

DISPATCH

Boston EMS: Under the State Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) approved Service Zone Plan, Boston EMS is charged with provision of EMS for the City of Boston. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are in place with back-up EMS providers and Boston will use BAMA to poll participating back-up providers for unit availability and dispatch purposes.

"Boston" will call the provider by landline (phase II), based on area they typically cover in the city, to request a back-up response and determine unit availability (BLS or ALS); information transmitted will include the address, the type, and priority of incident. The back-up provider shall advise their unit availability, including call sign and Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA), or "Not Available". If not available, "Boston" will continue to poll

providers based on their area of coverage looking for the closest, most appropriate unit type. When the back-up provider assigns a unit to the incident, the dispatch center will notify "Boston" via BAMA to advise that the unit is enroute with the unit number and nature of the call.

Example:
"Boston, this is Armstrong calling on BAMA."

"Armstrong, this is Boston answering on BAMA."

"Boston, Armstrong ambulance 21 is responding to 40 Wallingford Rd. in Brighton for the Illness 2, that's Armstrong ambulance 21 to four - zero Wallingford Rd. Brighton, ETA 3 minutes.

"Armstrong, Boston, roger, Armstrong 21 responding to 40 Wallingford Rd, Brighton, ETA 3."

<div align="center">or</div>

"Boston" will confirm unit dispatch, and the back-up provider dispatcher will contact Boston via BAMA if they experience any response delay, when their unit arrives on scene, and when enroute hospital noting their destination or, in the case of a non-transport incident, the reason for clearing (no visible incident, patient refusal, etc).. Should a closer unit become available, "Boston" may reconfirm the ETA of the back-up provider to ensure the closest, most appropriate unit is sent. Requests for response support (location, directions, etc.) or additional information may eventually be transmitted on BAMA; currently, Boston EMS directs those requests be made via telephone to the Dispatch Operations Division @ 617-343-1400.

OTHER PROVIDERS
Other providers may request assistance from Boston EMS by telephoning the EMS Emergency Administrative Number, 617-343-4510. Boston EMS call-takers will process the request and enter the information into the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system. In an emergency, when the safety of EMS providers or the public may be at risk, BAMA can be used to expedite a call for assistance. "Boston" allows other providers "open cross talk" between dispatch centers to call each other directly, requesting a back up response; providers should follow the radio procedures and examples as outline above.

SPECIAL INCIDENTS- PLANNED / UNPLANNED MCI
Participating agencies may use BAMA Dispatch when additional response units are required. Providers may contact adjacent providers directly to request assistance. Should the projected number of patients warrants a regional response, providers shall then contact "Boston", noting the address of the incident, projected number of patients needing treatment or possible transport and types of resources required, staging location for units and contact (e.g. STAGING Officer), and any HAZARDS or special response instructions. "Boston" will poll MBHSR providers to determine unit availability by type (BLS, ALS, Chair Car, Bus, etc.) and inform the

requesting agency of the unit(s) responding and ETA (when possible). NOTE: Metro-Boston CMED provides Medical communication including, but not limited to, hospital ED Care Capability and direction of patient deployment to hospital.

TRAINING AND TESTING
BAMA Members, in conjunction with the MBHSR Training Subcommittee, will establish training materials and course curriculum for providers to use with their personnel. "Boston", or designee, will conduct regular (daily or eventually shift-by-shift) testing of BAMA, using a roll call procedure, to ensure network reliability and operation of discrete radio equipment. "Boston" will monitor BAMA use and work with providers to ensure any user issue that is identified can be immediately addressed by the responsible agency. Boston EMS will work with other providers to establish test schedules to ensure that personnel on all shifts understand use of the equipment and proper procedures for BAMA. (See also BAMA Test Form.)