



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Department of Administrative Services

Matt Whatley, Interim Director



June 9, 2021

Subject: Radio Authentication Update, June 2021

Dear MARCS Subscriber,

As part of efforts by the Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) Steering Committee to upgrade technology, improve reliability of the MARCS system, and protect the safety of Ohio first responders, all radios using the system will be required to have Radio Authentication (RA) by July 2025.

The RA standard, approved by the Steering Committee during its December meeting as part of updates to MARCS policy [MPP 31.1; Minimum Requirements for P25 Compliance on the MARCS Statewide Public Safety Communication System](#) (<https://tinyurl.com/yymvv6ub>), will protect Ohio first responders by eliminating unauthorized radios from accessing the system.

The requirement for all new radio purchases after July 1, 2019 to include the P25 authentication feature was first addressed during the April 2019 MARCS radio shop meeting attended by nearly 70 members of the radio manufacturing, vendor, and support communities. At the time, we noted that any radios purchased after July 1, 2019 may have RA without your knowledge. While the deadline for P25 Radio Authentication is July 1, 2025, radios purchased after July 1, 2019 may already have authentication that can be enabled now.

MARCS will share the cost of RA with your agency to ensure security and communications reliability by funding all system core licenses, including recurring costs for providing a dedicated circuit enabling approved keyloaders to update the system remotely via a VPN over this dedicated circuit. However, subscriber device licenses are the responsibility of the owning agency/department.

MARCS is actively managing system license requirements with vendors to remain informed of radio counts for agencies purchasing the licenses or new radios with RA to ensure enough licenses are in the system. With several years until RA becomes mandatory, it is our hope that subscribers will be able to spread costs over budgeting periods while allowing MARCS to do the same as radios with RA come on to the system.

MARCS has been working with its vendors and making clear the need for consistent and best pricing. The discussions were well received, and all understand the economies of scale at play due to the number of radios on the system.



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As with any technical environment, security is critical, and MARCS is working with its approved manufacturers to provide a secure environment that ensures your agency the communications capabilities you need to serve and protect your community.

For more information, please contact the MARCS Program Office by sending an e-mail to DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Schmahl".

Rick Schmahl
MARCS Program Director