

MARCS IT Policy MARCS System Key Security, Distribution and Utilization	No: MPP-14
	Effective: 01/17/2005 Revised: 12/22/2020
	Issued By: OIT MARCS Published By: MARCS Program Office

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the rules and regulations concerning the security, distribution and utilization of system keys for the MARCS Statewide Public Safety Communication Network.

2.0 Scope

This policy, and the rules and regulations set forth herein, apply universally for all MARCS System Key security, distribution and utilization.

3.0 Background

The Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) is a Project 25 compliant public safety communication system. Project 25 (P25 or APCO-25) is a suite of standards for digital radio communications used by federal, state/province and local public safety agencies in North America, enabling radio devices from various manufacturers to communicate with each, both for operability and interoperability. The underlying frequencies MARCS utilizes have been licensed through the Federal Communications Commission. MARCS is required to comply with all FCC requirements for a public safety wireless communications system. Due to the nature of the system, a hardware-based "System Key" controls all access to the system, including activating/deactivating individual radios, and controlling the entire system.

Consequently, the MARCS System Keys shall be closely held to ensure its security. Distribution will be tightly limited. Utilization shall be strictly controlled.

4.0 Types of Keys

1. Master Key - can create full or clone keys. MARCS will always maintain possession and control of the System Master Keys.

2. Full Key - can program a radio, create radio templates and program radio features. Programming experience for the type of radio covered by the key is required. The key will likely be limited to the County's ID range only.
3. Clone Key - Allows taking a previously written code plug and program it into a radio. This type of key cannot modify most of the settings in the code plug file. This is the most common type of key. The key will likely be limited to the County's ID range only.

5.0 Minimum Requirements

1. Requesters must be a publicly funded, public safety agency.
2. Requesters must possess a legitimate need to have a system key.
3. Requesters must possess valid software licenses and programming cables applicable to the type of radio they are requesting a key for.
4. MARCS Administration reserves the right to issue keys based on circumstantial needs.

6.0 Key Agreement Process

A county Key Administrator is a single point of contact for interaction with MARCS. The Key Administrator will have a key agreement with MARCS for all entities within the county.

Key agreements will periodically expire. Before the agreement expires, MARCS will send the agency a reminder and ask if any information has changed.

7.0 Key Request Process

1. Contact MARCS Admin at DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov to be vetted for a key. In the e-mail, state the make and models of the radios, number of keys and type of keys (full or clone) that are being requested. All requests will be analyzed by MARCS management.
2. MARCS Admin will notify the requester as to the decision of MARCS management.
3. The requester must contact the County's Point of Contact for MARCS System Keys for authorization to add their keys to the existing key agreement between MARCS and the County. The key agreement signatory must e-mail DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov with their approval before keys will be programmed.
4. If approved by the County's key agreement holder, the requester will order the keys for the type of radio through their preferred radio vendor.
5. Once the requester receives the keys from the manufacturer, the requester will send the keys for programming and a return address to:

MARCS
Attn: System Key Programming
4200 Surface Road
Columbus, OH 43228

6. Once programmed, keys will be returned to the County key agreement holder's physical address with the requesting agency's information in an ATTN: line in the address. MARCS Admin will also e-mail both the requester and the key agreement holder tracking information on the key package. MARCS will not send keys to a PO Box or personal mailbox.
7. MARCS will send the County Key Agreement Holder a new Addendum A to the key agreement listing all the MARCS keys in the county with the new keys added. The agreement holder will verify the inventory, sign and date, scan and e-mail Addendum A back to DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov.

8.0 Prohibitions

Any unauthorized sharing or copying of the System Key and/or related documentation, publicizing of the System Key, or other use of the MARCS System Key is expressly prohibited. MARCS has the right to random audits of key use and review information at any time.

9.0 Enforcement of Violations

Violation of above rules will result in thorough administrative and/or criminal investigation by agents of MARCS and/or authorized criminal justice representatives.

Violation of above rules may result in MARCS administrative disciplinary actions, up to and including restriction or termination of MARCS participation, and/or prosecution of applicable criminal violations.

10.0 Effective Date

Approved by MARCS Steering Committee on

11.0 Revision History

DATE	Reason of Change
4/1/2019	Major Revision of entire document
12/20/2020	Revisions and review by MARCS Steering Committee