Radio Communication and Service Frequently Asked Questions

This document addresses the top 25 most asked radio questions/concerns from the 2016-2019 USACE Park Ranger Safety Surveys. These questions have been answered by the national ACE-IT Radio Group, and includes specific instructions on how to solve the 25 issues. Virtually all the radio issues and concerns identified in the surveys have solutions under the existing ACE-IT Radio Program.

1. **Who pays for radio equipment and service?**
    A: Project sites are responsible for covering the cost of radio equipment, and should be budgeted accordingly based on requirements. The ACE-IT Chief in the District can advise on budgetary requirements and how to fund surge orders. To assist the IT Chiefs, Radio Systems will always provide a Government Cost Estimate to assist in budgeting. Projects should open an ESD Ticket as specified in Question 2 and request a budgetary estimate be provided.

2. **Can I add additional frequencies to the ACE-IT list?**
    A: Yes, additional frequencies can be added by submitting an ESD Work Order Ticket to Radio Communications, Radio Engineering either by calling 1-866-562-2348 or from ACE-IT Online. To submit a Work Order Ticket online, visit the frequency management website (https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx), click on the details order tab, and select from the applicable choices. Or, visit the Self Help Menu, ASP Service Catalog at https://itsm.usace.army.mil/ASP, select Radio Communication, and click on the applicable selection.

3. **Do I need documentation from other agencies to add their frequencies to my radio?**
    A: Yes, a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement is absolutely required in order for ACE-IT to program the other state and local government agencies' frequencies. This agreement exists between the project and the other agencies, so it cannot be coordinated by the ACE-IT Radio Systems Branch. ACE-IT can advise the project on the requirements and provide an example agreement to use, but the leg work would fall upon the project to provide information such as points of contact and the other agency frequency requirements.

4. **How do I manage my radio frequencies?**
    A: ACE-IT conducts frequency allocation and management using certified Spectrum Managers. A project site should maintain a copy of their radio frequency allocations and fleet map programming template. ACE-IT can provide a project's radio frequency allocation upon request by submitting an ESD Work Order Ticket requesting the project's RFA and frequency mapping template to Radio Communications, Radio Engineering, as specified in Question 2 above.

5. **How do I figure out what equipment I need for proper radio coverage in my area?**
    A: Projects should visit the ACE-IT frequency management webpage (https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx), select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert. Any member of the SME team will advise accordingly and assist in opening up the necessary ticket. Projects can improve coverage by determining the locations that lack coverage, running coverage plots, and searching for potential new antenna or Digital Repeaters (DVRS) Installation sites. Running additional plots

can help determine if a recommended site would fulfill a project's needs. Alternatively, a project could fund a site survey to determine optimal installation locations. However, cost estimates are not available for surveys, and since all surveys are different, cost will vary based off the agreed upon requirements.

6. **Can I add more repeaters to help my coverage?**
   A: Yes, projects can add additional repeaters to the site, replace the vehicle radio with a higher-powered mobile unit, or install a vehicle repeater. Projects would ultimately need a ticket to determine requirements. Projects should open an ESD Ticket as specified in Question 2 and ask for coverage recommendations.

7. **What can I do to improve coverage?**
   A: Projects should capture the location from their local site where coverage improvement is necessary by noting the actual GPS Coordinates where better coverage is needed. Then, projects should open an ESD Ticket as specified in Question 2, providing specific locations where improvement is necessary by providing a boundary map in Google Earth format to be used in the coverage plots.

8. **Does ACE-IT service maintain radio repeater towers?**
   A: ACE-IT will coordinate the maintenance inspection and provide a recommendation on repairs needed based off inspection findings. Since towers are considered physical property, the district is ultimately responsible for maintenance of the tower. ACE-IT will support the antenna installed on the tower, the antenna mast, cables, and the associated installation materials. ACE-IT can also address the ICE Dams and site grounding requirements. The District would hold responsibility for all other repairs. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

9. **Can I get a handheld radio setup to use the vehicle mobile as a repeater?**
   A: Yes, that feature is possible with newer model radios within the APX series. This would require the project to make a new acquisition. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

10. **Can I get a dual band radio so I can talk to Law Enforcement in my area?**
    A: Yes, a multi-band radio can be acquired, ACE-IT has multiple varieties of the APX8000 portable and APX8500 mobile radios on their radio catalog and will advise a project on which radio best suits its needs. The ACE-IT radio team will coordinate the programming requirements with states that use Complex 7/800 MHz truncating networks. ACE-IT will even attempt to add the states' truncated network fees and cost of services to the Task Order Contract for the purchase.

11. **Can we get our radios truncated with local dispatch?**
    A: Yes, but a project would have to make a new acquisition, with the truncating feature and a dispatch console added as a requirement. However, this will necessitate a site survey and will add to the cost of any acquisition for the project. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

12. **Can I get an emergency call button programmed into my handheld?**

    A: Yes, however programming an emergency button is only possible with a new APX series portable radio. The XTS radio in service at this time did not come with that feature integrated into the radio, and since the XTS 's is at end of life and manufacturer support ended December 31st 2019, the feature can only be added to a new radio acquisition. When discussing the requirements with the SME assigned the ticket, the project must request in advance that the "man down" emergency alert be added to a radio build. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket to Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

13. **Can I order radios other than the ACE-IT Standard?**

    A: The ACE-IT Standard, the USACE approved business model to support simple surges and repairs, keeps cost down and standardizes equipment across the Corps. If a Project needs a radio device outside of the business model, Radio Systems Design will strive to find a suitable solution and ensure a proposed solution meets requirements and complies with DoD, DA and USACE policies, such as being P25 Complaint/Capable. Any radio would also need to have completed a DD 1494 Stage 4 Application and received a J/F-12 certification because USACE is a DOD entity. It is the responsibility of ACE-IT to assist in making the proper determination and finding a solution to working around the J/F-12 requirements for frequency allocations.

14. **How do I get my radio equipment serviced?**

    A: Projects should submit an ESD Incident Ticket as specified in Question 2 above.

15. **How do I switch a radio from one vehicle to another?**

    A: Projects should open an ESD Incident Ticket to Radio Communication, Radio Repair in the manner identified in Question 2. The vendor will provide a proposal, which a government lead will then validate. The government lead will provide funding instructions.

16. **Does ACE-IT provide lighting for vehicles?**

    A: ACE-IT does not provide lights, however, if a project completes the leg work in advance, ACE-IT would be able to add the lights to a surge order. A project would need to provide ACE-IT with the vehicle make, model, and recommended light package from any reputable industry service provider. ACE-IT has also implemented a new design for a Whelen - Motorola siren light combination unit. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

17. **Does ACE-IT handle siren equipment that works with my radio?**

    A: Yes, as answered in Question 14, ACE-IT carries the Whelen – Motorola Siren Light Combo unit. To make this acquisition, open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

18. **Can we get radios with memory replay capability?**

    A: Yes, projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket to Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

19. **What accessories can we get?**
    A: Projects are not limited to just basic accessories like spare batteries, antennas, and speaker-microphone packages listed in the catalogue. ACE-IT will work with the client to identify any accessories needed and advise on the best suitable option and path to procurement. Projects do not have to go through ACE-IT to acquire an accessory.

20. **Can I submit radio specs to ACE-IT for equipment other than what is listed/recommended by ACE-IT?**
    A: Yes, if it meets the applicable regulations from DoD, DA and USACE, ACE-IT will investigate the device based off the requirements and make a suitable recommendation. ACE-IT has in the past made recommendations outside the standard business model in order to meet a project's needs, and will continue to do so. Projects should open an ESD Work Order Ticket with Radio Communications, Radio Engineering as specified in Question 2 above.

21. **Can I purchase items like batteries for my handhelds directly from a vendor or do I have to go through ACE-IT?**
    A: Projects can purchase spare batteries, antennas, belt clips and other accessories outside of ACE-IT. Projects should call a SME to confirm a suitable part number based off requirements and coordinate the local credit card purchase. To contact a SME, projects should visit the ACE-IT frequency management webpage (https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx), select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert. Any member of the team will advise accordingly and assist in opening the necessary ticket.

22. **If my radio service ticket is over XX amount of days old can I get a waiver to go somewhere else for service?**
    A: The contract has set time line requirements, so projects should contact one of the SMEs for a determination. To contact a SME, visit ACE-IT frequency management webpage (https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx), select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert.

23. **Do I have to enter a ticket to get a question answered?**
    A: Not necessarily, projects can call a SME at any time. The SME will advise if a ticket is needed and assist in opening the necessary ticket. Projects should visit the frequency management webpage https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx, select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert.

24. **What are the links to get to ACE-IT for radio questions and service?**
    A: To contact a SME, visit ACE-IT frequency management webpage (https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx), select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert.

25. **How do I get in touch with ACE-IT radio folks?**
    A: Visit https://aceit.usace.army.mil/Support/Communications/Pages/Frequency_Mgmt.aspx, select the points of contact tab, and call a Subject Matter Expert