



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REFERENCE GUIDE

TITLE: Inter-Campus/Districtwide Safety Communications Test

NUMBER: REF-6537.2

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ROUTING

All Schools and Offices
Local District Superintendents
Administrators of Operations
Operations Coordinators
Principals
Central Office Administrators
School Administrative Assistants

DATE: February 14, 2022

MAJOR CHANGES: This Reference Guide updates REF-6537.1 of the same subject dated August 16, 2021, issued jointly by the Chief Information Officer and the Administrator of Emergency Management and reflects current District organization and changes the spring semester radio test date to the third Tuesday of March each year.

PURPOSE: The primary function of testing the District’s communications systems is to ensure that the District can collect timely and accurate status information from school sites in an emergency or disaster. This critical information will be used to coordinate and dispatch appropriate support personnel and equipment in an emergency. In an emergency or disaster, the emergency radio is used to report the extent of damages and injuries across the District. During the radio test, schools are expected to report the disaster condition (significant damages and significant injuries) of their school.

In addition to testing the emergency radio system, the semi-annual communications test may include the following communication systems and essential services:

- Superintendent’s Emergency Notification System for notifying school principals
- Essential services on main fax lines at schools
- Coordination of communications using the Bus Operations radio frequency
- Floor warden radio testing at the Beaudry building
- Radio operations of the Maintenance & Operations Branch

BACKGROUND: Districtwide emergency preparedness exercises and drills are conducted twice a year under the direction of the Office of Emergency Management. The inter-campus/Districtwide communications test also takes place twice a year, on the third



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Tuesday in October and the third Tuesday in March. Specific Districtwide drill dates are available at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/drills>. The communications test follows the same procedures that will be used in an actual emergency. Therefore, each school's participation in this exercise is critical and all schools are expected to participate. In an emergency when phone lines are inoperable, the Districtwide radio network is used to compile information about significant damages and injuries at each site. Using this information, the District can properly assess the impact of an emergency, request help from other agencies, and properly assign resources and assistance to those sites with the greatest needs.

Throughout the District, inter-campus radio communications are grouped geographically and for optimal radio transmission. As a result, some sites are assigned to reporting units outside their feeder schools or Local District/Community of Schools for better radio reception. Sites have also been grouped to avoid obstacles that may inhibit radio reception. The radio communications test is designed to ensure that the radio equipment and communications systems are working properly. The ITD Radio Unit is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the radio communications system. If a site experiences problems during the test, this will be reported through the online evaluation drill platform (<http://emergencydrills.lausd.net/>) to the ITD Radio Unit to analyze and resolve radio issues.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- I. PREPARING FOR THE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEST (BASE REPORTING AND DIRECT CONTACT SCHOOLS)
 - A. Calendar the emergency communications tests, using the dates from the Office of Emergency Management website and other official notifications to schools, such as through the Blackboard Connect system or District communications to principals.
 - B. Designate at least one staff member to facilitate the radio test for your school.
 - C. Identify which category applies to your school:
 - Base Schools have a plug-in base station radio and contact their assigned Reporting Schools by radio to gather disaster information. Base Schools then are contacted by the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) to report the conditions for all of their assigned schools.
 - Reporting Schools have a handheld emergency radio and an assigned Base School that will contact them by radio to report the condition of their school.
 - Direct Contact Schools have a plug-in base station radio and are contacted directly by the LASPD to report the condition of their school but are not responsible for reporting the conditions of other schools.
 - D. Identify which phase(s) applies to your school:
 - Phase I: Base Schools contact their assigned Reporting Schools by



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- radio to gather condition information.
 - Phase II: LASPD contacts each Base School and Direct Contact School generally in alphabetical order to gather school condition data.
- E. Identify the radio to be used for the test.
 - F. Review radio operation procedures, including switching channels, and ensure the radio functions well.
 - G. Find your school and any assigned Reporting Schools, if applicable, on the current Emergency Radio Communications Reporting Tree available on the Radio Unit website at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/radiounit>. The tree includes early education centers, adult education sites, and other non-traditional sites. (Check for updates one week before the test date.)
 - H. Review the procedures specific to your reporting category in the next section.
 - I. If you are a Base School, print out the Communications Test Worksheet (Attachment A), and fill in the names of your Reporting Schools.
 - J. If a school is not open at the designated radio test time, it is advised to have one staff member report early to participate in the test.

REF-6343.1 School-Based Radio Systems and BUL-6357 Emergency Broadcast on the School Police Radio Frequency provide details on proper use of school radios. For additional assistance with radio operations, access “Radio Training” on the Radio Unit’s website at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/radiounit>.

II. CONDUCTING THE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEST (BASE, REPORTING, AND DIRECT CONTACT SCHOOLS)

A. PHASE I (10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.): BASE AND REPORTING SCHOOLS

1. Base Schools (Typically Middle and High Schools)

Base Schools are responsible for initiating contact with their assigned Reporting Schools (typically elementary and other smaller schools/sites) and collecting information from their assigned reporting sites. This process occurs between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on the day of the test.

At 10:00 a.m., each Base School uses the base station to initiate individual radio contact on the campus channel (Channel 1 of the base station radio) with each of its Reporting Schools.

It is critical that each Reporting School waits to be contacted to prevent channel overload. The Base School will call each Reporting School individually by name.

For example, if the Base School is Banning HS and the Reporting



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School is Hawaiian ES, then the following communication might take place:

- *Base School:* Banning High School to Hawaiian Elementary. This is your radio test. What is your report?
- *Reporting School:* Hawaiian Elementary to Banning High School, we report no significant injuries and no significant damages.
- *Base School:* Thank you, Hawaiian Elementary.

2. Reporting Schools (typically elementary and smaller schools/sites)

Use the emergency handheld radio located in the main office for the radio test. Use the emergency channel for this test. To change channels, rotate the channel selector knob until the display screen on the front reads “emergency.” The Reporting School should try transmitting outside if reception is unclear, as buildings can block radio waves.

If by 10:30 a.m., no radio call is received from the assigned Base School, the Reporting School must initiate a radio call to its assigned Base School. The reporting structure is available on the Radio Unit website at: <https://achieve.lausd.net/radiounit>.

If no radio contact can be made after 10:30 a.m., Base and Reporting Schools should contact each other by telephone to make sure all radios are on the correct channel and operating properly. Schools should then attempt the radio test again. This practice also helps ensure that equipment is being used properly and assists in diagnosing equipment problems.

Upon completion of Phase I of the exercise, Base Schools should switch the base station radio to Channel 2, which is the Los Angeles School Police Department (“School Police”) frequency and wait to be contacted by the School Police. This will be Phase II of the radio test and will involve Base Schools and Direct Contact Schools and the School Police Communications Center. (See below.)

B. PHASE II (11:00 a.m. – APPROX. 12:30 p.m.): BASE AND DIRECT CONTACT SCHOOLS

1. Prior to 11:00 a.m., Base Schools and Direct Contact Schools switch their base station radio to Channel 2 (Police Digital), which is the School Police frequency and wait to be contacted by the School Police Communications Center. Schools will be contacted in alphabetical



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order unless the School Police directs a different format. To change channels on the base station, schools should switch to the emergency police channel using the channel selector knob on the right-hand side of the base station.

2. The School Police Communications Center will call each Base and Direct Contact School via radio between 11:00 a.m. and approximately 12:30 p.m. Base Schools should be prepared with the proper status information about each of their Reporting Schools. Direct Contact Schools will only report the status of their school directly to the School Police as they have no assigned Reporting Schools.

NOTE: DO NOT USE THE RADIO ON THE EMERGENCY CHANNEL IF THERE IS A POLICE EMERGENCY DURING THE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEST.

3. If a Base School has not had successful contact with all of its assigned Reporting Schools, the Base School reports the number of assigned schools it contacted via radio and identifies by name the schools it was unable to contact by radio. Base Schools also provide the significant damages and injuries reported by its Reporting Schools.

A sample script for Base Schools (regarding radio, not telephone, contact with Reporting Schools) when contacted by the School Police follows:

- *Police Dispatch:* School Police Dispatch to Banning High School. This is your radio test. What is your report?
- *Base School:* This is Banning High School. We contacted six of our Reporting Schools via radio. No school reports significant injuries or significant damages. We were unable to contact Avalon High School.
- *Police Dispatch:* Thank you, Banning High School.

A sample script for Direct Contact Schools when contacted by the School Police follows:

- *Police Dispatch:* School Police Dispatch to King Drew High School. This is your radio test. What is your report?
 - *Base School:* This is King Drew High School. We report one significant injury and significant damages to two buildings.
 - *Police Dispatch:* Thank you, King Drew High School.
4. After a school completes its report to the School Police, the school should switch back to the school campus frequency (which is Channel 1 and generally shows the campus name). Schools should terminate the radio test within approximately two and one-half hours after the



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test start time and return their radio to the campus frequency, even if radio contact could not be made with the School Police.

5. If there is any reason that the base station cannot be used or monitored during the radio communications test, schools are to participate in the test using their emergency handheld radio that is capable of contacting the School Police.

III. POST-RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEST PROCEDURES (BASE, REPORTING, AND DIRECT CONTACT SCHOOLS)

- A. Document your school's participation using the District's radio test evaluation at: <http://emergencydrills.lausd.net/> and selecting the "RadioTest Evaluation" option. Through this process, any radio equipment or transmission issue will be reported to the Radio Unit for support. Evaluations should be submitted within five business days of the radio test.
- B. As necessary, follow-up with the Radio Unit regarding any equipment or transmission issues. Visit <https://achieve.lausd.net/radiounit> to access the *Equipment Repair Form* which can be submitted at any time to request support needs.
- C. Consider conducting additional testing among your Reporting Schools. Arrange a mutually convenient time for the Base School and Reporting Schools to make sure that you can communicate with one another. Please note that any additional testing does not include the School Police Communications Center or the School Police frequency unless the testing is at their request.

IV. MAIN FAX LINE FOR EMERGENCY USE

The main fax telephone number at each school site address is designated by the telephone company as an "essential service priority." This ensures that after a loss of service, such as a power failure or natural disaster, these lines will be the first to return to service. This line can be used as an emergency phone line.

The fax line is a direct outside line that does not go through the school's phone system and is expected to be restored first after a power failure. (Note: It is recommended that this fax line be labeled for more immediate access and that schools ensure they have an analog phone for use during emergencies.) When service is restored, plug in a single phone line (the phone cannot be cordless or service multiple lines) to the fax machine jack and use the direct phone to communicate. This ensures that sites have the ability to call 911 or the School Police for assistance.

The Telecommunications Branch arranged for this service for each school site and is responsible for maintaining the dial tone. For repair of this dial tone, call (213) 241-5200. All fax machine repair is the responsibility of the individual site.



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V. SUPERINTENDENT'S EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Superintendent's Emergency Notification System is designed to ensure that emergency notification is available directly to school principals and critical support individuals. Refer to [REF-5483.1 Superintendent's Emergency Notification System](#) for more information.

VI. BUS OPERATIONS FREQUENCY

In the event of a major emergency, Local District Superintendents will communicate with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Superintendent, using Bus Channel 5 as a command and control radio network if phone lines are not operational. Local District offices have an 800 MHz radio for this purpose. The EOC tests this system as part of the communications test by calling each Local District via radio twice a year, at a pre-arranged time.

VII. BEAUDRY FLOOR WARDENS

The LA Unified Administrative Headquarters (Beaudry) building has floor wardens on each floor who are issued a radio to be used during an emergency to communicate with the building Command Center. Any deficiencies are to be reported to the Radio Unit at (323) 224-2410.

RELATED RESOURCES:

REF-6343.1 School-Based Radio Systems, September 5, 2017
REF-5483.1 Superintendent's Emergency Notification System, August 15, 2014
BUL-6357 Emergency Broadcast on School Police Radio Frequency, June 26, 2014

ASSISTANCE:

For assistance or further information, contact the assigned Operations Coordinator, the Office of Emergency Management at (213) 241-5337, or the ITD Radio Unit at (323) 224-2410.



This worksheet is provided for Base Schools to record notes as they attempt radio contact with each of their assigned Reporting Schools. Upon completing the radio test, all schools should submit a radio test evaluation at: <http://emergencydrills.lausd.net/>.

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS TEST WORKSHEET

DATE: _____

BASE SCHOOL: _____

PERSON FACILITATING RADIO TEST: _____

REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			
REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			
REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			
REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			
REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			
REPORTING SCHOOL		SUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>	UNSUCCESSFUL <input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS			

If you require assistance, please contact the Radio Unit at (323) 224-2410.