

Transcript – ALMR Governance Structure

Welcome to this Alaska Land Mobile Radio training presentation on the ALMR governance structure.

The Alaska Land Mobile radio system is managed and governed by several different agencies and entities. These agencies all have separate but very important roles that make up the whole of the ALMR system. For day-to-day operations, the system management, operations, management office and Department of Public Safeties all have a role in operations where oversight and decision making is made by the User Council and Executive Councils. This training presentation will discuss the specific role of each of these entities.

The Executive Council meets on a quarterly basis and is made up of representatives from the original groups that formed the ALMR system. These groups include the Federal Department of Defense, State of Alaska, Alaska Municipal League, the Alaska Federal Executive Association, which represents federal agencies that are not affiliated with the Department of Defense, and the Municipality of Anchorage. The Council is responsible for high level system oversight and management. The Executive Council may approve actions from the user Council and make high level strategic changes and decisions as warranted.

The User Council meets more frequently than the Executive Council and will make recommendations to the executive leadership of the AMR system. The User Council is critical in that its makeup represents the different types of users and constituencies that exist across the state and across the system users. Among the user Council representatives are the Department of Public Safety from the state of Alaska, as well as Department of Transportation and another seat for all other agencies are represented. The Department of Defense is also represented, as well as federal non DoD agencies have a seat on the Council. Finally, the municipalities in the north, central and southeast regions of the state have representation. The goal for each representative for each seat on the user Council is to have a backup or alternate seat that can exist in case the primary member is unavailable.

The primary mission of the User Council is to make strategic decisions for more focused on day-to-day operations of the system. User Council members often vote on policy and procedure changes they may be involved with documents and other types of reviews from the system management and operation management offices and are informed about day-to-day important and significant operations of the system. During the user Council meetings, which are held each month, representatives from the different constituencies are given the opportunity to speak and share information from their users. This includes any potential input on issues, ideas for improvement or expansion, requests for certain needs from certain user groups and other similar items.

The user council is the voice of the users. You are encouraged to know who your user council representative is and to communicate with them frequently based on issues that you may have from the ALMR system. This User Council communication line is important for the larger scale system management issues. The help desk and daily staff are always available to help with technical support and other troubleshooting, but policy changes and other system direction issues should be communicated to your user council representative so they can be shared with the entire Council and with staff. Keep in mind that the primary way for improving and updating the system starts with the user council and communication with the ALMR staff. If we are not aware of potential issues or other problems that certain users may be having, we are not able to fix and serve those users.

User Council meetings as well as Executive Council meetings are available for anyone to attend. Typically they are held in Anchorage with a Teams option. You may request the information for teams dial in from your user Council representative or an ALMAR staff member. Recordings and minutes from these meetings are also published on the ALMR website.

The System Management Office is responsible for the day-to-day technical operation of ALMR. The System Management Office has staff that are in the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas and their main role is daily technical operations. The System Management Office operates the ALMR Helpdesk, which is available to all users for assistance throughout business hours and 24/7 for emergencies. They are also responsible for conducting maintenance and upgrades to the system. Each year, a preventative maintenance schedule for each site is conducted, and there may be necessity for repair and replacement of components that are affected due to weather or other issues.

The technologists in the system management office are responsible for all of these technical operations and you will often find them in the field, especially during summer months performing on site maintenance for sites that can only be accessed during this time, the best way to contact the system management office is to contact the help desk and they will route you to the appropriate staff member based on your question or need.

The Operations Management Office consists of an operations manager and documentation specialist. This office provides several key functions related to daily operations of the system. Among these roles, the OMO ensures that contracts are followed and various provisions are fulfilled as the scopes of work are written. Additionally, they provide the daily day-to-day operations support for all of the governance structure of ALMR, including the user, Council and Executive councils. The OMO is primarily responsible for representing the interests of all users in the system and ensuring that we are able to serve the widest cross section of users with varying needs. For example, Department of Defense agencies may have different needs than local municipal agencies, therefore. The needs of all system users and the best policy procedure and practice for all users are formed and maintained through this office. In addition, the OMO performs several other duties, including training, user relations and other functions.

The final piece of the governance structure for ALR is the Department of Public Safety, Alaska Public Safety Communications services. As far as governance, the State of Alaska through this division administers the joint agreements that occur with federal agencies, Department of Defense and other major contributors to the ALMR system. Department of Defense and some agencies are billed and have a financial responsibility to participate in ALMR. Municipal and state agencies generally are not billed and their costs are covered by the state. This division is responsible for all of those operations.

In addition, they administer and manage the contracts for the operations management. Office and System management office through the state of Alaska. The Department of Public Safety, Alaska Public Safety Communications Services, maintains the State of Alaska Telecommunication System, or SATS. The SAT system is the network that ALR relies on for communication. In addition, they cover the responsibility for non-ALMR components at the various sites. These can include items like generators, towers, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and others. The Almar system is truly a cooperative system with different governance structures and different organizations all contributing to make the system successful for all users.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of the ALMR staff should you need assistance or have questions. We are here to serve you throughout the business day. The Almar help desk can also be accessed 24 hours a day for emergencies using the contact information that's shown on the screen.