

- State Emergency Operations Center Uses Digital IR

## Emergency Management Agency Gets Clear, Secure Sound with Digital IR System

Wireless Infrared (IR) has changed the face of emergency management for command and control centers across the country, thanks to a revolutionary system available exclusively from Listen Technologies Corporation. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Massachusetts is using one such system.

The first fully digital system of its kind, the IR system delivers exceptionally clear sound, and thanks to a higher-frequency band (2 to 8 MHz), is immune to distortion from ambient lighting - a critical component for an agency needing to be ready at any moment, should a public emergency arise.

Chaos is a natural byproduct of emergency situations. So imagine a room full of personnel, other state agency representatives and, at times, reporters. Add in three 12-foot projection screens displaying up to 14 images and their related audio/visual feed of real-time news and weather from local, national, cable and satellite broadcasts simultaneously, 24 hours a day. The noise alone breeds chaos. But with the Listen IR system, audio feed is sent directly to the personal receivers, which deliver the sound into earpieces worn by personnel. Suddenly you have changed what John Tommaney, the agency's response and recovery branch chief, refers to as a virtual "Tower of Babble" into an efficient center able to immediately access and address need.

Installed by local Listen dealer GroupComm, the system allows users to tune their receivers to any one of the



16 channels, enabling them to "surf" through the various media sources for the information they need. Prior to acquisition of the Listen system the agency relied on six large monitors with full audio feed, some of which did not offer mute or closed caption capability.

The new system proved its mettle during the January '05 blizzard. According to Tommaney, it took users a whopping 30 seconds to learn how to operate their systems. The ability to monitor audio sources without audio disruption and its related confusion was profound. Another plus is the system's increased signal security; no small thing for an agency housed in an underground bunker. The system is also flexible enough to be linked to individual computers or used for video/DVD teleconferencing.

The agency started out with a dozen units. Once the system's exceptional, problem-free sound quality and its flexibility to grow with agency needs and emerging technology became clear, plans to acquire an additional 24 units began.