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P25 Digital Radios... Got Yours Yet?

P25 radios have been a coming technology to the DOA, USFS and DOI for over ten years. The original implementation date of Jan. 1, 2005 was delayed for five years due to technical issues and lack of infrastructure on the ground to support the shift to digital radios. Now, with less than a year to go, government agencies are reminding contractors that the Jan. 1, 2010 date is a hard reality.

To support this effort, the USFS published an Interagency Bulletin (copy enclosed), specific to the mandate. It identifies vendors with radios known to meet the Fire P25 digital radio requirements - NAT's NPX136D-070 and Technisonic's TDFM-136. Both radios are designed to meet the same USFS/NIFC specification, so perform the same functions. Here are a few of the differences:

- Comparing current list prices, NPX136D is the lower cost solution.
- Based on customer feedback, NPX136D has a better user interface.
- NPX136D clearly displays sub-audible tone assignments with the channel frequency.

With the tendency of many to 'stay with what they know', Technisonic analog radio operators should know that the NPX136D-070 will fit into the same panel space (it is slightly smaller) as the TFM138 series radio. Changing over to the NPX136D-070 is easy, using the FC45-002 adapter cable supplied at no charge to existing TFM138 users... no wiring or mechanical changes, negligible weight change.

With only two radios that meet the Fire P25 digital radio requirement, neither NAT nor Technisonic will have a warehouse full of radios waiting to be shipped to last minute buyers. We ask that you evaluate your need for P25 radios and decide if you can continue to work for DOI or DOA with the expense of these radios factored into your costs. If the answer is 'yes', we strongly encourage you to place your orders now. Deliveries will be phased according to your needs, but will be balanced against supply and demand. NAT has committed to building more radios through the second half of 2009 in an effort to increase the available supply of NPX136D's, but there is no guarantee anyone will have radios if you wait too long.

Like you, NAT is also very much aware of the economic state of our industry. Large outlays of capital for new radios may not be possible, putting you at risk of being non-compliant with USFS contract requirements. To provide an alternative financial solution, NAT has been working with an agency to set up a leasing program that could help you get the radios you need without a huge, one-time capital investment. Details on the leasing arrangement will be finalized shortly, with information on the program available from the factory or from our Dealers.

We understand the impact the P25 requirement is having on the DOI/DOA aviation community and will do our best to help with the transition. Please let us know if we can help you.

Sincerely,



Ray Lewis
Director of Business Development



The DOI Interagency Fire Community is committed to the aviation P25 radio implementation policy, requiring P25 digital radios in all fire aircraft by Jan. 1, 2010.

HAVE YOU GOT YOURS YET?



NPX136D Digital P25 Transceiver

- Multi-mode analog and P25 digital
- Wideband/Narrowband operation
- 2 channel synthesized guard
- Multiple scan modes
- Agile operation
- Modular construction
- Backward compatible with analog radios
- Plug compatible with NPX138N
- Encryption capable
- DTMF signalling
- USFS approved
- Now listed on GSA Schedule



COBHAM

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Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



February 21, 2008

NUMBER: IA 08-01
DISTRIBUTION: All Aviation Users
SUBJECT: P25 Radio Implementation

The interagency fire community is committed to the aviation P25 radio implementation policy which requires P25 digital radios in all fire aircraft by January 1, 2010.

Rumors exist that waivers to this policy will be forthcoming. Such rumors are untrue. This policy was created to implement the Department of the Interior's P25 digital radio policy, which the USDA Forest Service has embraced. P25 digital radios are designed to operate in three modes: analog wideband (the old system); analog narrowband (the current system); and digital narrowband (the future system).

An additional unintended positive effect of this policy is the mitigation of problems associated with the implementation of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recent narrowbanding plan, which applies to all non-Federal parties. This FCC plan differs from the recent narrowbanding plan required by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), which applies to all Federal Government agencies. The FCC plan has negatively impacted fire operations due to the fact that certain new FCC frequencies are incompatible with some existing analog aviation FM radios. P25 digital aviation FM radios are capable of operating on all frequencies assigned by the FCC and the NTIA.

There are currently only two radios known to meet the fire P25 digital radio requirement: Northern Airborne Technology's (NAT) NPX136D and Technisonic Industries' TDFM-136. It is anticipated that a majority of operators will delay purchasing P25 digital compliant radios until the January 1, 2010, deadline. NAT and Technisonic rely on third party manufacturers for radio components, and these components may take several months to acquire. NAT and Technisonic have assured us that they will not be able to manufacture a large quantity of P25 radios in a short timeframe. Accordingly, it is highly suggested that all aviation operators place their orders for P25 digital radios as soon as possible to avoid delays in aircraft approval.

Effective January 1, 2010, all aircraft requiring an FM radio must be equipped with P25 digital equipment. After this date, any analog-only radio, including mobile and portable radios, will not be acceptable for fire use.

"Aviation P25 Radio Implementation" (policy letter):

http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/niiid/docs/p25_aviation_radio_memo.pdf

Acceptable VHF-FM Aeronautical Radios: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/niiid/documents.html>

/s/ Allen P. Rice

Chief, Division of Technical Services
Aviation Management Directorate
National Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior

/s/ Ron Hanks

National Aviation Safety and Training Officer
Fire and Aviation Management
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Advantages of Leasing

Less initial cash investment required

- From as little as a first monthly payment to a 10% initial deposit, payment schedules and initial investment will meet your company's needs (initial payment amounts/deposits are subject to credit approval and collateral)

Lower monthly payments

- For fair market value equipment leases and other equipment with end term residual value, you pay only for the portion that you use (subject to credit and collateral approval)

Tax Benefits

- Depending on the lease structure chosen, the payment may be expensed rather than capitalized and depreciated. Prior to making any decisions concerning tax benefits, a company should consult an accountant, CPA or attorney.

Fast Turnaround Time

- Allows for earlier equipment acquisition without utilizing company cash flow or bank lines today

Conserve your capital

- For alternative uses including investments, improvements, more inventory, and preservation of bank lines-of-credit

Avoid technological obsolescence

- Lease equipment requiring replacement in three to five years

Assist corporate growth

- Build additional trade references and commercial funding resource

Let the equipment pay for itself

- Use a portion of the income produced from the equipment to make the lease payment

Fixed rate lease financing

- No worry about rising interest rates or variable rate bank loans. Level monthly payments assist in cash flow and budgeting

Master Lease Line-of-Credit

- Incorporate future equipment requirements into a Master Lease Line-of-Credit with multiple take down lease schedules (subject to credit and equipment approval).

To learn more about the advantages of the NPX136D Leasing Services Program, contact us at npxleasing@anfolutions.com

Dealer Information:

Dealer relationships are an important part of our business. The ability to offer alternative leasing and financing options makes good sense for all distributors, manufacturers and dealers. In addition, dealers also are in need of alternative financing solutions to assist their customers with large ticket purchases.

anfSolutions[™] and the NPX136D Leasing Services Program allows dealers to offer its customers flexible leasing and financing terms. Leasing is an option that can quickly solve customer financing issues and increase sales for the dealer.

Dealer - Customer Benefits:

Better satisfy customer needs

- Allows the customer easy access to immediate and convenient financing for their equipment acquisition

Increased dealer sales

- Expand the dealer's customer base by providing an easy payment solution
- Obtain a larger average sale per customer by financing additional cost over a set term

Improve the dealer's financial position

- Using the *anfSolutions*[™] leasing and financing programs requires no additional financial obligation on the dealer's part
- Enhances the dealer's cash flow since *anfSolutions*[™] pays immediately upon equipment delivery and customer acceptance

Selling Benefits

- Helps close the sale!
- Avoids delayed decisions until cash or budget dollars are available
- Provides a response to price and credit extension objections
- Sell a monthly payment instead of cash price to overcome "sticker shock"
- Facilitates repeat business and customer referrals
- Control the sale – *anfSolutions*[™] keeps the dealer (and distributor) informed every step of the way
- Keeps the dealer competitive. If the dealer is not offering third party leasing and financing programs other than private label credit cards, in-house financing or customer generated financing.....chances are that competitors are offering financing solution alternatives.

Getting Started

Contact *anfSolutions*[™] at npxleasing@anf solutions.com and begin offering lease financing for the NPX136D Transceiver.