

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Friday, January 2, 2026 12:22 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2026006

Recommendation # 2026006

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2026006 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name	Seth D McCollum
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Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID	2026006
Recommendation Title	Encryption of radio channels
Areas Affected	County and local
Department Affected	Community Services
Current problem	An encryption of scanners and radio channels have provided some like myself out of a job and education opportunities by not being able to respond with emergency crews in a non disruptive manner to be able to document the work they do.
Recommendation	Allow public use scanners or radio channels or adjust the censorship of private information so reporters can still respond to a scene.
Attachments	No Documents were attached.

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TO: Jim Liesenfelt, County Manager

THRU: Matt Wallace, Public Safety Director

FROM: John Scott, Emergency Management Director

SUBJ: Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation #2026006

CEER #2026006, titled Encryption of radio channels, was received by the County from Seth D McCollum.

Citizen Statement:

I argue that full encryption undermines public trust, hinders accountability, and reduces situational awareness for residents, while viable alternatives exist to address legitimate concerns without complete secrecy.

Being a single female I need to know WHY 10 police cars are running around my neighborhood! (Which has happened a few time.)

Also, a police chopper was looking for a person, he was 2 doors on a bike hiding under a tree! I called it in.

Police scanners have been accessible to the public for decades, fostering a sense of shared information in communities. Historically, open radio channels allowed citizens to hear firsthand about emergencies, enabling them to avoid dangerous areas, prepare for disruptions, or even assist in crises.

Open transmissions also promote accountability. Real-time public oversight discourages misconduct and ensures police actions align with community expectations.

For everyday citizens, the loss is VERY personal. Many use scanners to stay informed about neighborhood incidents—burglaries, fires, or accidents—affecting daily life. Encryption creates an information vacuum, eroding the sense of community connection to local law enforcement.

Citizen Recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION: Have a way for the officers to cut off damaging/super private transmissions that should not be known. A lot of groups do it.

BENEFITS: It would provide a way of keeping certain information off the air.



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Staff Analysis:

While Emergency Management's 800MHz Division provides and manages the backbone equipment for the Brevard Public Safety Radio system, it is each Law Enforcement and Fire Agency that makes the decision to encrypt or not.

What is encryption:

The conversion of radio transmissions into secure signals using digital keys to ensure only authorized radios can receive protected information.

Why implement encryption:

Advances in technology have made it easier for criminals and potential terrorist to gain immediate access to sensitive public safety communications, putting the first responder community at greater risk

Examples of sensitive/protected information include:

- Tactical information that could jeopardize law enforcement operations
- Details of ongoing investigations and surveillance
- Protected health information and Personally Identifiable Information (PII); crucial for reducing response times when transporting patients to medical centers
- Disaster incident response information

Federal requirement for encryption:

The FBI CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Services) Security Policy mandates strict encryption standards for Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems that transmit Criminal Justice Information (CJI)

- **Risk of non-compliance:** Agencies can lose access to CJIS systems if standards are not met
- **Mandatory Encryption:** Dissemination of CJI over LMR systems must be encrypted to protect sensitive data from interception. This requirement is outlined in Section 5.10.1.2.1 - Encryption for CJI in Transit, and Section 5.13.1 - Wireless Communications Technologies of the CJIS Security Policy
- **Advanced Encryption Standards (AES):** Required for public safety agencies using CJIS data for activities such as conducting records checks, verifying criminal histories, and tracking criminal activity

Which channels are encrypted:

- Only law enforcement, fire, and EMS channels
- Non-sensitive channels such as Public Works and Space Coast Area Transit remain unencrypted

What about partial encryption?



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Emergency response is simply too dynamic of an environment for certain law enforcement, fire, or EMS channels to be encrypted, while others are not

- **Fast-moving operations:** Law enforcement, fire, and EMS often need to share information instantly, making it hard to predict which calls will require protection
- **Time-critical switching:** Expecting first responders to toggle between encrypted and unencrypted channels is neither effective nor efficient
- **Interoperability limits:** When an unencrypted channel patches with an encrypted one, the secure data becomes exposed, defeating the value of encryption

Regional Perspective:

- Encryption of law enforcement, fire, and EMS channels enables secure, seamless interoperability across agencies, improving emergency response
- Majority of Brevard's neighboring counties have already implemented encryption for their Public Safety Radio systems

Alternative methods for residents to stay informed:

- **PulsePoint** – Free public safety app providing real-time visibility into active incidents (fires, medical calls, traffic crashes), residents can download and follow local agencies
- **AlertBrevard** – Location-based notifications for severe weather, missing persons, boil water notices, etc., residents can sign up at <https://www.brevardfl.gov/EmergencyManagement/AlertSignup>
- **Brevard EOC Texts** – Text service for countywide notifications on evacuations, sheltering, prescribed burns, launches, etc., residents can sign up by texting "BrevardEOC" to 888777
- **Social media** (Facebook, X, Nextdoor) – Agencies share real-time updates, preparedness information, community notices, residents can join the platform and follow official accounts

Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER #2026006 because Brevard County has limited authority and the recommendation does not enhance the effectiveness or efficiency of County government as required by Home Rule Charter.