

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2026 1:55 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2026033

Recommendation # 2026033

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2026033 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name	Robert D Sullivan
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Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID	2026033
Recommendation Title	Un-encryption of BCSO and BCFR radio channels
Areas Affected	Public Safety
Department Affected	FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT
Current problem	A recent upgrade to the law enforcement and fire radio systems included 24/7 encryption of the transmissions. As ex-leo myself, I understand there is absolutely a need to prevent non-law enforcement ears to intercept radio traffic under certain circumstances (surveillance, warrant executions, etc). However, the ability for the general public to listen in to "normal" activities around them in real-time should still be allowed as it has been in the past.
Recommendation	Return to the previous standard operating procedures of the main channels being unencrypted with a "Tac" channel for secure communications that is encrypted. I was an avid scanner listener prior to the new system coming on line. My current job has me driving all over the county and I listen in as I do so. Numerous times this assisted me on avoiding areas of police activity, traffic accidents, etc. Over the years it led to 2 instances that because I was aware of active searches I was able to report the location of a 7 year old autistic child that had wandered off from home that I saw walking around a neighborhood pond and the location of a dementia patient that also had wandered and happened to walk into the same convenience store I was in. No

telling if there would have been a negative outcome in either case had i not been casually listening in. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to express this concern!

Attachments

SpeakUpBrevardSubmission2026.pdf

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as it will go to an unmonitored mailbox.



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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 #2026033

CEER #2026033, titled Un-encryption of BCSO and BCFR radio channels, was received by the County from Robert D Sullivan.

Citizen Statement:

A recent upgrade to the law enforcement and fire radio systems included 24/7 encryption of the transmissions. As ex-leo myself, I understand there is absolutely a need to prevent non-law enforcement ears to intercept radio traffic under certain circumstances (surveillance, warrant executions, etc). However, the ability for the general public to listen in to "normal" activities around them in real-time should still be allowed as it has been in the past.

Citizen Recommendation:

Return to the previous standard operating procedures of the main channels being unencrypted with a "Tac" channel for secure communications that is encrypted. I was an avid scanner listener prior to the new system coming on line. My current job has me driving all over the county and I listen in as I do so. Numerous times this assisted me on avoiding areas of police activity, traffic accidents, etc. Over the years it led to 2 instances that because I was aware of active searches I was able to report the location of a 7 year old autistic child that had wandered off from home that I saw walking around a neighborhood pond and the location of a dementia patient that also had wandered and happened to walk into the same convenience store I was in. No telling if there would have been a negative outcome in either case had i not been casually listening in.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to express this concern!

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.



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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?

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



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- **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 #2026033 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.