

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Monday, January 19, 2026 2:03 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2026027

Recommendation # 2026027

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2026027 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization

Name Amy Ketchum
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Alternate Email

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID 2026027
Recommendation Title Removal of first responder radio traffic encryption
Areas Affected Countywide
Department Affected SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Current problem I, as well as a large number of Brevard County residents, have utilized a police scanner for many years to stay informed in real time about situations that could affect the safety of my loved ones and myself. It's been the most accurate source of information available, and is most certainly more helpful than anything on social media sites. The recent encryption of first responder radio communication has removed access to valuable information that could be used to prepare and protect ourselves. Considering the steady increase in violent crimes, along with traffic accidents, hazards such as flooding and fires, and any other matters that would require the presence of law enforcement and/or fire/medic personnel, communication transparency is key. Whether it's used to avoid a specific area of travel or warn a family member to take precautions because of potential threat in their vicinity, the information provided via first responder radio is crucial in helping our community stay safe.
Recommendation Removing encryption from first responder radio would enable people to better prepare for, and quite possibly avoid, potentially dangerous situations. Relying on information

found on the internet is not a viable alternative. The residents of Brevard County should be able to hear it from the source.

Attachments

No Documents were attached.

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 #2026027

CEER #2026027, titled Removal of first responder radio traffic encryption, was received by the County from Amy Ketchum.

Citizen Statement:

I, as well as a large number of Brevard County residents, have utilized a police scanner for many years to stay informed in real time about situations that could affect the safety of my loved ones and myself. It's been the most accurate source of information available, and is most certainly more helpful than anything on social media sites.

The recent encryption of first responder radio communication has removed access to valuable information that could be used to prepare and protect ourselves. Considering the steady increase in violent crimes, along with traffic accidents, hazards such as flooding and fires, and any other matters that would require the presence of law enforcement and/or fire/medic personnel, communication transparency is key. Whether it's used to avoid a specific area of travel or warn a family member to take precautions because of potential threat in their vicinity, the information provided via first responder radio is crucial in helping our community stay safe.

Citizen Recommendation:

Removing encryption from first responder radio would enable people to better prepare for, and quite possibly avoid, potentially dangerous situations. Relying on information found on the internet is not a viable alternative. The residents of Brevard County should be able to hear it from the source. - Protects responders' sensitive data (e.g., officer safety, personal info) while allowing monitoring of non-sensitive routine calls—preventing unnecessary secrecy that benefits criminals more than citizens.

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
- **Time-critical switching:** Expecting first responders to toggle between encrypted and unencrypted channels is neither effective nor efficient



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- **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 #2026027 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.