



## MHSAA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS WIRELESS CREW COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

With continued changes in technology, communication devices worn by officials are becoming more and more common place. While most understand that these devices can benefit the communication between members of an officiating crew, officials must be prepared to deal with the responsibility for using such device.

### DEFINITIONS

- For MHSAA varsity football contests, a Wireless Communication Device is defined as a two-way radio with an attached earpiece and push-to-talk microphone.
- Other types of communication devices are prohibited and may not be carried by an official during competition.

### GENERAL USE

- Crew communication devices MAY be used during all games if used in accordance with these guidelines.
- Officials should be ever mindful that the vast majority of radio systems are NOT secure from the public.
- Careful attention must be paid to what is said when speaking into the headsets and the safest axiom is "if you don't want it on the public address system, don't say it on the radio".
- The use of crew communication devices is voluntary and not mandatory.
- The decision on whether to implement the use of a crew communication device is solely the decision of the officials in a given contest.
- The lead official must facilitate clear communications and expectations with regard to the use of the devices.
- All communication devices must use a "push-to-talk" setting/mechanism. They may not be left in an "always-on" mode.
- When used, the lead official shall be responsible for ensuring that each official on the crew has been provided a charged and working device.

### PREGAME COMMUNICATION:

- Crews must ensure that the channel or frequency of the communication devices DOES NOT interfere with any communication devices of the coaching staffs and/or game administration.
- It is the crew's responsibility to avoid channel or frequency conflicts with any other party.
- The lead official shall coordinate a testing of the crew communication devices to ensure proper operation and connectivity to all devices used by the officiating crew.

### DURING THE GAME

- The use of these crew communication devices SHALL NOT replace any MHSAA approved mechanics, crew communication signals or other signals designated by any NFHS publication or MHSAA adopted mechanics from another source.
- The crew communication devices are not a substitute for the desired verbal communication that is necessary at times during the game between head coaches and the Referee.
- Crew communication devices are intended solely to ensure timely communication between officials and coaches, as well as between the officials.



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- All communication on the devices must be directly related to the contest using only appropriate and professional language.
- Communication may not be advisory in nature, i.e. “watch #66 or that’s twice #32 has done that”, but must solely relate to the application of the playing rules.
- Do not use any inappropriate language, derogatory statements or comments in reference to any player, coach, fan, etc.
- Increased attention to detail and consistency is a product of crew communication devices when used appropriately and professionally.
- Crew communication devices may be used during dead ball periods only. Refrain from using these devices during a live ball period, or when the snap or free kick is imminent.
- Refrain from using crew communication devices when the Referee is communicating or signaling to the press box, with a head coach or game administration.
- Crew members must keep communication short and to the point. Keep chatter and unnecessary comments off the devices.
- The following are examples of appropriate times and situations to use crew communication devices:
  - Preparation and securing of both teams and/or captains for the coin toss.
  - Ball placement
  - Play clock/game clock/time management/timeouts
  - Goal line reminders
  - Positioning on Try
  - Line-to-gain confirmations
  - Player foul reporting
  - Sideline control and communication issues
  - Player conduct concerns
  - Confirmation of rulings
  - Penalty enforcement options
  - Kickoffs or scrimmage kicks that go out of bounds
  - Unusual play situations
  - Specific information needing to be communicated to either team (or both team) sideline