MABAS-Wisconsin
Getting Started Checklist

As areas of the State of Wisconsin realize the benefits of becoming part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, the interest will grow into action. The necessary steps of becoming a division will require effort and leadership, however the end goal of becoming a division providing a greater level of fire and emergency medical services to your community will be realized. This "Getting Started Checklist" was developed from the planning, development, and implementing efforts of current MABAS divisions into a "best practices" list for newly forming divisions. The "Getting Started Checklist" will make the process more organized and the transition successful.

Yes / No   What is the Interest?

Many of the MABAS divisions are formed within a county, however this is not a mandatory requirement. We recommend having at least 4 communities with contiguous borders or in close proximity for a division to function best. Many areas have fire and EMS organizations associations, i.e. a county fire chiefs association, where the interest will start.

We strongly recommend that divisions form a steering committee or workgroup to address this question. If the interest exists, the committee will provide the management and support that will be necessary for the process. The steering committee will prove to be a valuable asset for the member agencies and will directly impact the amount of time the implementation process will take.

Yes / No   Contact MABAS-Wisconsin

The official journey begins with contacting MABAS-Wisconsin to inform us of the interest in forming a division. We can provide an overview of the process and discuss the resources available, i.e. "Getting Started" presentation, fire and dispatch personnel training, and box card development. Visit MABAS-Wisconsin website,www.mabaswisconsin.org, the "Officers" section for the MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Board officers.

Yes / No   Communications

Invariably interoperable communications becomes the most discussed and widely misunderstood step in the planning and implementing process. We strongly recommend discussing communications at the very beginning of the process since the purchase of radio equipment may be necessary. If purchases are necessary, budget planning may take a period of time.

All MABAS communications occur on simplex, VHF high band frequencies. All MABAS members must be able to communicate on VHF high band.

Communications in MABAS occur on 2 separate, but necessary levels. The first level is dispatching – the primary dispatch radio frequency is IFERN (Interagency Fire Emergency Radio Network). Dispatch communications include alerting of member agencies, communications with resources reporting their responding and in-staging status, and where initial assignments are given by the incident commander; the second level of communication is at the incident operations level (on MABAS Red, White, and Blue simplex frequencies) where all tactical communications occur. Only the incident command communicates on both of these communication levels. There are two communications questions that should be answered very soon in the process:

1.   What agencies will provide MABAS dispatching?

        Each division must have a primary and a back up dispatch center for MABAS dispatching. If there is only one dispatch center for the entire area, then consider the neighboring dispatch center as the backup – adequate radio coverage on IFERN is necessary for the primary area. Providing the funding for adequate radio coverage and obtaining the necessary radio equipment will be the greatest financial challenge at this step of the process.   Early determination of these communication needs and budget planning will shorten the implementation process.

2.   How will we communicate in MABAS?

        The planning process for MABAS communications must consider how everyday business is accomplished (on which frequency band) and how agencies will communicate in MABAS (on VHF high band). The minimum communications needs in MABAS are IFERN at the dispatching level and Red, White, and Blue on the fireground level. Visit the State of Wisconsin Mutual Aid Frequency Plan 2006, at http://siec.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=6715 for the complete mutual aid frequency list. These frequencies have been licensed by the State for public safety agencies for mutual aid mobile and portable use. Public safety agencies need only notify the State Frequency Coordinator, Carl Guse, utilizing the "State Frequency Authorization Request" form found on the above website. Base stations, used for dispatch center communication, must be licensed by Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

rule. Application for base station can be found on the FCC website at http://wireless.fcc.gov/uls/index.htm?job=home .

Yes / No   Adoption by Local Municipality

Member agencies are required to have a local resolution or ordinance by the local governing body for inclusion in MABAS. The State of Wisconsin has adopted MABAS as the official mutual aid plan through Senate Bill 642, signed by Governor James Doyle in April 2006. Visit MABAS-Wisconsin website, at www.mabaswisconsin.org, "Getting Started" section for the *Sample MABAS Resolution-WI version* document. The completed resolutions are sent to the MABAS-Wisconsin Secretary/Treasurer and then will be forwarded to the MABAS Executive Committee in Illinois. Contact the MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Board for assistance with the resolution and location that documents will be sent.

Yes / No   The MABAS Contract

Member agencies are required to have a contract signed by the member agencies. The contract gives written authority to provide and receive mutual aid throughout the State and across State lines to and from the entire MABAS system. It further spells out State requirements, protects municipalities against liability and indemnification as it relates to providing protective services within the State. The completed division contract is submitted to the MABAS-Wisconsin Secretary/Treasurer and then will be forwarded to the MABAS Executive Committee in Illinois. Visit MABAS-Wisconsin website, at www.mabaswisconsin.org, "Getting Started" section for a sample of the *MABAS Contract-WI version* document. Contact the MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Board for any assistance with the contract.

Yes / No   General Operating Procedures

From the MABAS-Wisconsin website, at www.mabaswisconsin.org, "Getting Started" section, download the *General Operating Procedures* document. The procedure has been adopted by MABAS-Wisconsin and is a starting point for the division – local issues may have to be address within the division and spelled out in the procedures. For example, staffing levels within the division on engines and trucks is a division decision, however, if there is an interdivisional response, local resources must comply with the staffing level of the division that is requesting mutual aid. Much of this document is "boiler plate" operational procedures in the MABAS system in the State. Each division must agree collectively on the procedures. The completed division Operating Procedures are submitted

to the MABAS-Wisconsin Secretary/Treasurer and are approved by MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Committee.

Yes / No   Box Card Development

Each division member will need to develop box cards; the box cards identify the required MABAS resources that are necessary for a given emergency event in a given response area. There are numerous box card types, however individual members must evaluate their response area risks and identify the box cards that address that risk. Visit MABAS-Wisconsin website, at www.mabaswisconsin.org, the "Getting Started" section for the *Box Card Design* document. Contact MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Board for questions and assistance with box card development. The complete and latest version of the division box cards will be entered in Wisconsin Emergency Management website, E-sponder, at http://www.wiesponder.com/ . Each Emergency Management Region and divisions within will have their box cards available to all MABAS agencies and Wisconsin Emergency Management. The website is password protected and an application process is necessary for access to E-sponder – visit the website for registration information at http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=8660 .

Yes / No   Training

Fire, EMS, Special Resources, and Dispatching personnel will require training on MABAS policies and procedures. The steering committee will be the key to the success of MABAS implementation and therefore it is strongly suggested to have at least one training officer be part of the steering committee. Visit MABAS-Wisconsin website, at www.mabaswisconsin.org, the "Training" section for training materials that are available. Also contact MABAS-Wisconsin Executive Board for member services training programs that are available.