

State of Ohio MARCS Program Office Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) Policy

This policy outlines requirements and procedures to be followed to install and use a BDA to amplify frequencies used on the State of Ohio MARCS system. It refers to FCC rules, and the Ohio Fire Code. Any customer or vendor installing a BDA on the MARCS system should also refer to the FCC rules, Fire Codes, and local building codes to ensure compliance.

Licensee Consent is Required – Rule 90.219

- The FCC Rule 90.219 requires that non-licensees who seek to operate signal boosters must obtain the consent of the licensee[s] whose signals they intend to amplify. Consent will be provided as a Retransmission Authorization, which the FCC requires be kept on file for presentation upon request of the FCC or licensees.

FCC Signal Booster Classifications

- Class A: Designed to retransmit signals on one or more specific channels. Also known as a “channelized” BDA.
- Class B: Designed to retransmit any signals within a wide frequency band. Also known as a “wideband” BDA.

Class B Signal Booster Registration

- The FCC requires that both new and existing Class B signal boosters (wideband BDA’s) be registered through the FCC Signal Booster Registration website at: www.fcc.gov/signal-boosters/registration. Any Class B signal boosters not registered after Nov. 1, 2014 will be subject to FCC enforcement action.

Signal Booster Technical Requirements

- The Signal boosters must be capable of amplifying APCO Project 25 signals.
- Signal boosters must be capable of amplifying 700 MHz Public Safety Narrowband frequencies (763-775 MHz / 793-805 MHz).
- Signal boosters must be capable of amplifying 800 MHz NPSPAC Band, 800 MHz non-NPSPAC Public Safety/BILT/Non-Cellular SMR Band, 800 MHz Expansion Band, and 800 MHz Guard Band frequencies (806-817 MHz / 851-862 MHz).
- Signal boosters must comply with all applicable fire and electrical codes.

- For all BDAs that are operating on the MARCS system, Fire Code Officials are not permitted to waive the hardening requirements or the battery backup requirements of the Fire Code.
- It is recommended to keep the number of BDAs in a close area to a minimum, to mitigate the possibility of interference.

MARCS BDA Recommendation

- MARCS recommends Class B BDAs that cover the 700 & 800 MHz frequency bands listed above under Technical Requirements. Once installed, a Class B BDA does not have to be re-programmed or re-configured whenever frequencies are added or changed on the Public Safety radio system on which it operates.

Section 510 of the Ohio Fire Code requires fire code officials to be capable of providing, upon request, specific technical information and requirements pertaining to their emergency responder communications system. The MARCS Program Office is the repository for this information for all members of MARCS. Local fire authorities may request this technical information by emailing to: DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov

Additionally, following are the Five Steps to obtain licensee consent and meet FCC regulations for use of signal boosters amplifying MARCS frequencies:

1. You may submit the Retransmission Authorization form to request MARCS consent to use of the proposed signal booster.
2. MARCS will review the submitted form and reserves the right to request additional information regarding the proposed signal booster.
3. Upon approval of the proposed signal booster, MARCS will send the approved Retransmission Authorization form back to the applicant. Per FCC regulations, this Retransmission Authorization is required to be maintained by the signal booster operator, to be presented to an FCC representative or a licensee investigating interference.
4. For Class B signal boosters, the requestor is required to comply with FCC regulation 47CFR90.219 by registering the approved device through the FCC signal booster registration website: www.fcc.gov/signal-boosters/registration.
5. Upon successful registration, the requestor must provide the FCC Booster ID of this device to MARCS as proof of registration. This information can be emailed to DAS-MARCS.Admin@das.ohio.gov
6. All BDA's that are connected to MARCS are required to meet all of the standards including hardening and battery backup.