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# Opensky Radio System Doesn't Work

**Aaron Diamant**  
**Katie DeLong**

MILWAUKEE - It was supposed to help emergency officials communicate.

Now, it doesn't work.

TODAY'S TMJ4's I-Team's Aaron Diamant investigated the Opensky System.

The city of Milwaukee has sunk millions of tax dollars into a state-of-the-art communications system for first responders.

Over the last two years the I-Team has tracked a series of setbacks. The latest one may be the biggest one yet.

MPD's first live test of its new Opensky digital radio system didn't exactly go like they drew it up in the locker room.

"After about a week or so, it became clear that we were having problems with dead spots and some operator problems that were certainly distressing our police officers and creating an environment where they felt unsafe," Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn told us.

So, the department pulled the radios off the road and will spend at least the next few weeks working with the manufacturer to get this thing up and running.

"Certainly they have an obligation to get the system right, so we can use it," Chief Flynn said.

MPD is quick to point out that in no way will these setbacks put anybody's safety at risk, the officers or the public. They can still use the old system until the bugs get worked out.

For now, MPD and Chief Flynn are stuck with a \$15 million radio system they can't use.

"He's got something that the city should have never purchased, because of the problems it keeps having and having and having," police union President John Balcerzak said.

City records show the project's deadline has been pushed back over and over again: to November 2005, then for another two months, then to June 2006, again to August 2007.

Despite this latest delay, for now MPD has no plans to pull the plug on the problem plagued communication system.

"I think we have an obligation to do our best to make this system work and give it an honest try," Chief Flynn said.

MPD isn't the only one banking on Opensky. The Milwaukee Fire Department, Health Department, and DPW are all supposed to hook up to Opensky so they can all communicate with each other on the same channels.

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