

Traffic | Weather: YORK, PA | Now: 61°F | High: 59°F | Low: 44°F | 5-Day Forecast

Edition | Mobile Apps

What would you like to know?

[Home](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Subscribe](#)

[Obituaries](#) [News](#) [Your Town](#) [Entertainment](#) [Marketplace](#) [Customer Care](#)

[Jobs](#) [Homes](#) [Cars](#) [Classifieds](#) [Place Ads](#)

[Print](#) [Email](#) [Font Resize](#)

### Digital radio system has more reception glitches

Some York County fire chiefs are worried about the safety of firefighters who can't call for help.

By REBECCA LeFEVER  
Daily Record/Sunday News  
Posted: 04/16/2011 04:09:18 PM EDT

York, PA - Firefighters with Nashville Volunteer Fire Company were trying to put out a fire in the basement of a home in Jackson Township earlier this month when their radios stopped working. Without the radios, they had no way to call for help or hear commands.

"It's one of the worst situations to be in," said Fire Chief Bryan Flemmens.

Nashville and other departments have been dealing with communication glitches since York County 911 switched from an antiquated analog system to a digital system. Police departments made the switch in 2008, and fire departments cut over in 2009.

Early equipment challenges with the digital system included problems with batteries and software -- causing county officials to conduct tests and make upgrades. York County 911 said they had identified some of the errors that caused communication problems last year, but not everything has been fixed.

For some departments, communication problems have made safety a major concern.

The areas where radios stop working tend to be where there is bad cell phone reception, said York County spokesman Carl Lindquist.

There are about 23 towers in the county that transmit a radio signal, Lindquist said, and there are no plans for additional towers.

Some departments, such as Goodwill Fire Company in York Township, already know the areas where they might lose a signal.

Earlier this week, Deputy Chief Brian Bastinello said, the department lost radio connection with 911 dispatchers while rescuing a bicyclist near Lake Redman. High wires in the area have proved to be a problem, he said.

Advertisement



But sometimes departments don't know an area is a dead zone until they get out there, which was the case for Flemmens earlier this month.

The county has been suggesting fire departments use an analog radio to communicate with firefighters in a house, while an outside commander uses both a digital and analog radio.

The analog system keeps the signal from going to a tower, Lindquist said, and gives firefighters a one-mile radius to communicate.

"That's like telling a firefighter that if his oxygen doesn't work he needs to carry a second one," Bastinello said. "If something doesn't work, you get something different. You don't double up."

But even with some problems, the county says, the digital system has some positive aspects. The old system covered about 70 percent of the county, Lindquist said, but the digital system covers about 95 percent.

"No vendor provides 100 percent coverage everywhere," he said. "Despite that it's as good as it gets, it isn't perfect."

Chief Steve Buffington with York Fire/Rescue Services said being able to talk with a department from one end of the county to another has been a huge help in larger incidents where backup is needed.



#1 in Entrepreneurship



The E-Cigarette Exposed



Strange Fruit Burns Fat '5 Diet Pills that Work'



Most Viewed Most E-Mailed

(From the last 12 hours)

1. Find an Easter egg hunt
2. Ex-bank teller charged with theft
3. Police: York man delivered Ecstasy to officer in Lancaster
4. Easter Egg hunt among events planned for West Manheim park
5. Newspaper says Johnstown shootings murder-suicide
6. Help rebuild carousel building
7. Have you ever seen a chicken egg this big?
8. Wage freeze approved in Southern schools' budget
9. Gas drilling's promise, perils rile townfolk
10. Penn State York partners with businesses, community to make a...

But because of heavy tower saturation in the city, he said, they haven't come across dead spots.

"What everybody needs to remember is it was never designed to operate below grade," Buffington said, addressing how some problems are related to terrain. "It's leaps and bounds different from what we had previously used."

Even with some radio improvements, Flemmens is worried nothing will be done to fix the dead zones. He reported the latest incident to the county, but hasn't heard from them since.

"We are at the mercy of the county's decisions," Flemmens said. "Unfortunately, they don't always have the best ideas."

### Previous radio problems

Testing began in March to fix a patching problem that surfaced for York County 911 last year. County spokesman Carl Lindquist said Harris -- the equipment and software provider -- has given the county a new code to use for patching departments together on the same radio channel.

Patching is rare, Lindquist said Friday afternoon, and tends to be software based. It's unrelated to the problems firefighters have when the radios lose a signal.

[rlefever@ydr.com](mailto:rlefever@ydr.com); 771-2088

[Return to Top](#)

#### POST YOUR COMMENTS:

Type in your comments below

Name  
(appears on your post)  
Comments

Characters left: 4000

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator.

[high school diploma](#)  
Pass our free online test and receive your graduation  
[JeffersonHighSchoolOnline.com](http://JeffersonHighSchoolOnline.com)

[Why Take the GED Test?](#)  
Finish high school online. Only \$99.  
[www.franklinvirtualschools.com](http://www.franklinvirtualschools.com)

[Refinance Rates at 2.65%](#)  
\$160,000 mortgage \$659/mo. No Obligation. Get a Free Quote  
[LendGo.com/Mortgage](http://LendGo.com/Mortgage)

Ads by Yahoo

#### Home

- Contact Us
- Ask Joan
- Media Kit
- Mobile Apps

#### Obituaries

#### News

- York Daily Record/Sunday News
- York Dispatch
- State News
- GameTimePA

#### Your Town

- YorkBlog
- YDTalk
- The Exchange

#### Entertainment News

- FlipSide
- York Weekend
- Games
- TV Listings

#### Marketplace

- Find a Job
- Find a Home
- Find a Car
- Classifieds
- Ads from our Print Edition
- Place an Ad

#### Customer Care

- Home Delivery
- Delivery Notices
- Pay my Bill

#### e-Editions

Copyright © 2011 InYork.com. [Privacy Policy](#) and [Copyright](#) are applicable to you. All rights reserved.



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#) | [Copyright](#)

A MediaNews Group WEBSITE

**TERMINIX**  
Power over pests.™

**STOP PESTS TODAY!**

**▶ GUARANTEED 24 hour solution**

**▶ 100% satisfaction or your money back**

**▶ \$50 Off**

**NO OBLIGATION HOME TREATMENT**

**Contact Terminix**