



FIRESCOPE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST GROUP

OCTOBER 25-26, 2005
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE CAMP #2
MINUTES (Approved)

Welcome and Introductions

Los Angeles County Fire Captain Frank McCarthy welcomed the group to LA County Camp #2. Chair Tim McClelland called the meeting to order. Chief Praytor, Chief Stone, and Chief Drake were in attendance representing the FIRESCOPE Task Force.

Members In Attendance:

Michael Dickerson	Comm. Supervisor	Ventura County Fire (<i>Alternate to Sidlinger</i>)
Frank Ealand	Radio Program Mgr.	United States Forest Service
Brent Finster	Telecom. Manager	Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Association
Tim Henry	Battalion Chief	Fresno City Fire
Chris Hinshaw	Manager	San Diego Co. Sheriff/Imperial Valley Fire Chiefs Assoc.
Steve Hobbs	Captain	Santa Barbara County Fire
Craig Kinoshita	Battalion Chief	Orange County Fire (<i>2nd day only</i>)
Peter Lawrence	Battalion Chief	Oceanside Fire
Frank McCarthy	Captain	Los Angeles County Fire
Eric Martinez	SA Lead	United States Forest Service (<i>alternate to Ealand</i>)
Tim McClelland	Assistant Chief	State of CA - CDF South Ops
Rick McClung	Comm. Liaison	Fresno Fire (<i>alternate to Henry</i>)
Denny Neville	Administrator	Rancho Santa Fe Fire
Kevin Nida	Battalion Chief	Los Angeles City Fire
Geoff Pemberton	Engineer/COML	Riverside County Fire (<i>alternate to Ashbaugh</i>)
Rick Robinson	Battalion Chief	Orange County Fire (<i>alternate to Kinoshita</i>)
Sal Santangelo	SGM	State of CA - Army National Guard
Glen Savage	Telecom. Manager	State of CA - CDF Telecommunications
Rick Smith	Captain	Santa Maria Fire (<i>alternate to Hobbs</i>)
Don Stabler	Sr. Dispatcher/Chair	CA Fire Chiefs Assoc. Communications - North Section

Guests in Attendance:

John Davis	Radio Supervisor	State of CA - DGS Telecommunications
Paul Clay	Technical Trainer	State of CA - DGS Telecommunications
Don Stevens	Administrator	North County Fire
John Finnerty	Pilot	Los Angeles County Fire
Truman Van Dyke	Firefighter/COML	Los Angeles City Fire
Stan Horst	Firefighter/COML	Los Angeles City Fire

Members Absent:

Chet Ashbaugh	Telecom. Manager	Riverside County Fire (<i>alternate present</i>)
David Bail	Telecom. Mtce. Sup.	State of CA-DGS Telecom (<i>alternate present</i>)
Don Butz	Deputy Chief	Rancho Santa Fe Fire (<i>alternate to Neville</i>)
Gary Fisher	Fire Chief	Vista Fire (<i>alternate absent</i>)
Kevin Harper	Captain	Kern County Fire Department (<i>no alternate designated</i>)
John Hudson	Asst. Chief	State of CA - OES Telecom. (<i>alternate to Root</i>)

Kody Kerwin	Telecom. Spec,	Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Assoc. (<i>alt. to Finster</i>)
Lee Kraft	Captain	Clovis Fire (<i>alternate absent</i>)
Matt Nilsen	Captain	San Diego Fire-Rescue (<i>no alternate designated</i>)
William Pigeon	FF/Paramedic	SoCal Tribal Fire Departments (<i>no alternate designated</i>)
Mark Rau	Comm. Manager	Clovis Fire (<i>alternate to Kraft</i>)
Don Root	Deputy Chief	OES Telecommunications (<i>alternate absent</i>)
Mike Sidlinger	Battalion Chief	Ventura County Fire (<i>alternate present</i>)
Hampton Stewart	Frequency Coordinator	State of CA – CDF (<i>alternate to Savage</i>)
Randy Terich	Battalion Chief	Vista Fire (<i>alternate to Fisher</i>)
Tom Tornell	Captain	Santa Clara County Fire (<i>no alternate designated</i>)

FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group (FCSG) Logistics

Approval of July FCSG minutes – The Chair asked for any comments or corrections on the July 2005 meeting minutes. There was an error in a name noted. The motion to approve the minutes, with the correction, passed unanimously.

FCSG Roster – The Secretary distributed the current roster ([copy is distributed separately.](#)) Any changes should be emailed to bfinster@cccfd.org

FCSG Membership Status – Chief Praytor discussed the current status of FCSG membership:

USFS – Frank Ealand and Eric Martinez (alternate) will represent the United States Forest Service.

NIFC – No formal contact has been made by Chief Praytor but Glen Savage stated that he had talked to John Moulder at NIFC and John stated that they were willing to participate.

Riverside County Fire – Geoff Pemberton is the alternate for Chet Ashbaugh.

Tribal Fire Departments – Will Pigeon has submitted his resignation due a new job opportunity with Contra Costa County Fire. Tribal representatives will be solicited.

National Guard – Salvatore Santangelo will represent the California National Guard.

BLM – Chief Praytor will contact Dexter Dirth to see if he can represent BLM or the Department of the Interior.

FCSG Email List Server – There was no report as Don Root was absent.

Agency Reports

FIRESCOPE Operations/Task Force/Board of Directors – Chief Praytor introduced Battalion Chief Daniel Drake from the Orange County Fire Authority who will become the new Task Force liaison to the Communications Specialist Group. There was little else to report as there had not been any meetings recently. The next Task Force meeting is November 16 & 17 in Buellton, the next Board of Directors meeting is January 11, 2006 in San Marcos, the next Operations Team meeting is January 26 & 27, 2006 in Santa Barbara County.

OES Fire & Rescue – Chief Praytor gave a status report on OES Fire & Rescue Branch activities including information on the new apparatus being ordered.

OES Telecommunications – There was no report as Don Root was absent.

CDF COMPLAG – Glen Savage gave the report on the recent CDF COMPLAG meeting. Walt Embree is the new Chair of the CDF Communications Planning Group. CDF intends to narrowband all of its unit's local repeater channels using a phased-in approach. As the units are narrowbanded, any Command repeaters located at those same sites will be narrowbanded as well. Savage explained that the 2006 CDF channel plan will include a CDF CMD 1 NARROWBAND, CDF CMD 1 WIDEBAND, CDF CMD 2 NARROWBAND, and CDF CMD 2 WIDEBAND channel so that resources responding from another part of the state have the correctly programmed channel for the Command repeater that they will be using. FCSG advised Savage of the confusion and training issues that this phased-in approach may cause to cooperators as well as CDF personnel. The FOG Appendix A will need to be updated at the January 2006 FCSG meeting to reflect these changes.

Savage also stated that all CDF tactical nets will be narrowbanded by January 1, 2008 to correspond with the anticipated timing of the narrowbanding of the WHITE channels.

CALSIEC – Don Root was absent so there was no formal report. However, Chief Praytor advised that Fire and Rescue Branch had been advised that OES Telecommunications is hiring an outside contractor to help move forward with statewide interoperability issues. A work plan is to be developed within the next 45 to 60 days.

There was no information available on the finalization or approval of the adhoc rules for the V-CALL/V-TAC and U-CALL/U-TAC developed at the April 2005 FCSG meeting.

FCSG Sub-committee Reports

FCSG Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) – Chris Hinshaw distributed the CTAG Report. Hinshaw advised that there had been no requests for technical assistance from any fire agencies since the last meeting.

FCSG Training Group (COMMTRAIN) – Matt Nilsen had indicated via email that he was unable to put any time or energy into this sub-committee until January 2006. A goal was set for COMMTRAIN that a "BK/VHF 101" training curriculum should be developed and made available for agencies to train their personnel prior to the 2006 fire season. Any basic radio, specific radio, or Communications Unit (RADO, INCM) training documents, including lesson plans, PowerPoints, etc., should continue to be forwarded to Nilsen.

Channel Advisory Group (CAG) – There are two aspects being worked on by this sub-committee: 1) development of a statewide "Priority 4" channel plan, and 2) development and implementation of a channel sharing agreement. Pete Lawrence distributed a summary of the project status ([see ANNEX A](#)) and a list of the 103 channels that had been submitted since last winter's request. Lawrence led the group in a discussion about the different options available.

As a starting point for discussion on which frequencies could be used more frequently than others by mutual aid responders, three possible ways of including additional channels in Appendix A were discussed. The first method was a four part "Preference" rating scale as follows:

Preference 1: Countywide Mutual Aid Command or Interoperability channels and Large Agency (500,000 population) Command channels (**21 total channels**).

Preference 2: Countywide Mutual Aid and Large Agency (500,000 population) Tactical channels (**24 total channels**).

Preference 3: City or Small/Mid-sized Agency specific Command and Tactical channels (**30 total channels**).

Preference 4: Dispatch (regardless of size) and CDF Local channels already contained in the FOG (**28 total channels**).

The second method discussed was to simply program the radios in simplex mode and identify the channels by frequency, rather than by agency or channel usage. This is similar to the process CDF formerly used in some of their radio programming. This would require a cross reference to be developed, published and maintained, but would allow for inclusion of more frequencies than if each individual user tone and repeater pair were included.

The third method discussed was that FIRESCOPE would simply become the repository for accurate non-State or Federal mutual aid or large incident frequencies. This information would be compiled yearly, sorted by Operational Area or Agency and published on the FIRESCOPE website. Agencies could then use the remaining space in their radios to program those frequencies that they had the greatest chance of using. For example, an agency in the Bay Area may choose to include the San Jose City frequencies, while an agency in Southern California may choose to include the Los Angeles, Ventura or Santa Barbara County frequencies. The goal here would be to get the information into the hands of the users and allow them to make the decision as to which frequencies were the most valuable to them.

Lawrence identified that there is still considerable work to be done on this project, including, but not limited to.

1. Determining the method of dissemination of the final "Priority 4" list (e.g. by user, by frequency or as a repository for frequency information).
2. Determining if there are additional channels that should be included. Several of the Operational Areas did not respond or individual agencies within the OA responded with agency-specific, as opposed to Operational Area frequencies.
3. Determining the proper use of each frequency. The true or intended use of some frequencies was not able to be determined due to the limited nature of the material submitted by the agency or Operational Area. This may have resulted in the assignment of an incorrect "Preference".
4. Determining what additional Federal and CDF frequencies would be useful for inclusion in the "Priority 4 FOG" channel list. Another option for CDF frequencies is publishing a cross reference of the CDF Tactical/CDF Command/CDF Local frequencies so that users can access the CDF local simplex frequencies without needing to program additional repeater pairs into the system.

The group identified that the third method of dissemination was the most preferable of the three. Chief Praytor will be determining if there is a method of locating the frequency information on the FIRESCOPE website in the password protected section. It was felt that this method of dissemination would be more effective than attempting to try and determine which of the 103 channels submitted was more important on a Statewide basis than another. The four stage "preference" identification will still be utilized in order to give users an idea of which channels in each Operational Area were deemed more likely to be used or more valuable to program into the radio if channel space was limited.

ICS Form 205 Revision Group (FCSG205) – There was no progress to report. The Chair announced that he would have Chet Ashbaugh take the lead for this sub-committee.

Old Business

Recommendation-800 MHz. radios for Fire Service – Chief Praytor requested that the FCSG re-send him the recommendation and it will be discussed for possible inclusion in the re-write of the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA).

Communications Response Teams – Chris Hinshaw stated that no requested changes to the distributed conceptual document had been received (*see Annex B*). He also stated that this concept will not work unless the ordering system is set up to handle CRT's and that the key is having qualified personnel. Frank Ealand indicated that he supported the idea and that it had worked successfully in other GACC areas. Generally, the CRT is ordered by the GACC, however their time is then billed back to the incident after the fact. Typically, the CRT, as envisioned, would consist of 3-4 personnel including a Communications Unit Leader, Incident Communications Technician, Incident Communications Manager

and perhaps a Radio Operator or trainee. Questions arose about the CRT trigger points: Should it be tied to the ordering of a Starter Kit? Should it be tied to a mutual aid request? These issues need to be addressed in a detailed implementation proposal.

Some OES Operational Areas have already adopted the CRT concept and these programs could be a model and, while other Operational Areas may not have enough qualified personnel to field their own CRT, they could provide personnel for regional CRT's.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously that FIREScope adopt the concept of Communications Response Teams and seek support from the key agencies (USFS, CDF, OES). Upon approval of the concept, FCSG could then provide a detailed implementation proposal to the Task Force.

CDF ICT COML & CIIMT COML & COMC Summit – Due to the Task Force not meeting for the last several months, this issue had been set aside. Chief Praytor stated that he would like to see a combination CDF-, OES-, USFS-sponsored forum. Much discussion ensued as to who the target audience should be and what the format should look like. There was a motion, amended and passed, that FIREScope should sponsor two events. The first will be in the Spring 2006 at a location to be determined and it will include training and open forum discussions about changes in technology and operational aspects of incident communications. The target audience will be Communications Unit Leaders based in California, both assigned to CDF or CIIMT teams or at large with the emphasis on post-IA communications. The second event will be held in the fall or winter 2006 and will include training and vendor presentations/exhibits. The target audience for the second event will be anyone interested in all-risk, multi-discipline incident communications with the emphasis being on IA communications. All FCSG members will need to do their share of the planning and execution of both events to make them successful.

Marine channels programmed in Part 90 radios – A letter to the FCC has not been drafted. It was suggested that Don Root be tasked to consult with the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council as this issue has nationwide impact.

CALSIEC EMS request to use Fire Service Channels – Information available was that the OES Fire & Rescue branch was still waiting for a formal letter of request from the EMSA.

WHITE channels narrowbanding – FCSG made a recommendation at the July 2005 meeting concerning this issue and the Task Force will be discussing this issue at their meeting on November 17th in Buellton. Rick Smith agreed to attend and explain the recommendation.

Travel Net – Frank Ealand stated that the federal government is in the process of re-allocating frequencies among federal departments. The frequencies used by Travel Net have been re-allocated to the Department of Justice starting January 1, 2006. USFS was unable to defend the use of the Travel Net because the original intent of Travel Net to re-direct resources enroute to an incident is now handled almost exclusively by cellular phone. There is still an obvious need for a simplex inter-strike team channel that would be available for coordinating re-fueling stops, etc.

Ealand stated that he would go through Region 5 to ask the DOJ to delay the implementation of their new system that uses the Travel Net frequencies, until after the 2006 fire season. He would also look at options for a simplex VHF channel that could be used for inter-strike team coordination.

Due to the time constraints inherent to this issue and not knowing if Ealand will be able to delay DOJ implementation, Chief Praytor will notify the Task Force of this issue at their next meeting.

Comm Unit Personnel Ordering-MIRPS/ROSS - There were again multiple situations described during the 2005 fire season that 1) there were delays in getting orders for Incident Communications personnel filled, 2) some orders for Incident Communications personnel went UTF (Unable To Fill) even though qualified personnel were available in the state and in some cases in the county in which the incident was occurring, 3) the federal fire agencies were bypassing available, qualified, closest resources for Incident

Communications personnel (including Radio Operators) and were filling them with out-of-state federal personnel, and 4) trainees are not getting ordered or approved for incident assignments.

There is an understanding that each agency has an inherent responsibility to hire employees of their agency. However, there was consensus that the fire community was not being well served by skipping closest resources and then either killing orders or filling them with resources that might take 1 to 2 days to arrive at the incident. It is apparent that the California "portal-to-portal" reimbursement system is having a significant impact on how federal agencies are dealing with local and state government resource ordering.

The Chair and Frank Ealand were requested to provide a written explanation or diagram as to how resources are ordered and filled.

Incident Communications Positions/310-1/CICCS/NIMS – The memo, written by former FCSG member Jim Swanson providing a recommendation regarding the inappropriate filling of incident communications personnel orders with non-qualified people has not been sent out by OES ([see Annex C](#)). The members present felt that this information should still go to agency heads. The Chair will provide the recommendation to Chief Praytor for consideration by the Task Force.

Brent Finster, Matt Nilsen, and Rick Smith will be participating in the NWCG S-358 Communications Unit Leader curriculum re-write over the next two years. In addition, Brent Finster explained that the NIMS Integration Center is currently reviewing two proposals regarding the training of NIMS Incident Communications personnel. Neither one of these proposals specifically uses the standards established by NWCG for Communications Unit Leader, Incident Communications Technician, Incident Communications Center Manager or Radio Operator. Confusion will reign if these two processes are developed independently of each other. Finster will ensure that FIRESCOPE is kept abreast of this issue during the coming year and have an opportunity for input.

Communications Resource Database – Incident Communications personnel are listed in MIRPS and, in the future, ROSS. There is currently no coordinated repository of information regarding communications assets such as portable repeaters, portable radio kits, interoperability gateways, and MCC's. Some information is contained in the OES STRESS database, some information is contained in each Urban Area Security Initiative's (UASI) Tactical Interoperability Communications Plan (TICP), or in Operational Area databases. However, there is no single location where an agency in need of communications equipment can find out what is available. It was suggested that this information could be kept in some type of simple database accessible from the FIRESCOPE website. Chief Praytor will discuss this possibility with Don Weiss who maintains the website.

New Business

California-Based Radio Cache Equipment – All USFS Region 5 caches are staying pre-positioned in California. They are being re-hab'ed in Redding and are not going back to Boise. There appears to be no reason, at this time, to expand the OES communications cache.

Incident Dispatcher Program – Don Stabler did a PowerPoint presentation on the California Fire Chiefs' Association Incident Dispatcher program ([see Annex D](#)). This program has been in place for over a decade and approximately 400 dispatchers have been trained. Currently, Incident Dispatcher is not an NWCG approved ICS position. It would basically fit between RADO and INCM. All but a few of the personnel who have taken the training are professional public safety dispatchers. Don fielded quite a few questions from the group. A motion was made and passed unanimously that FCSG recommend FIRESCOPE's endorsement and support the CalChief's Incident Dispatcher program. Don was asked by Chief Praytor to provide the same presentation for the Task Force at their next meeting.

Mobile Communications Center Technician Training – Glen Savage and Brent Finster reviewed the recent discussion at the CDF COMPLAG meeting involving MCCT training. There appears to be no standard for the CDF ICS position of MCCT. Other agencies that have MCC's may or may not have a formalized training program for their personnel. It was suggested that a modular training curriculum be

established. Module 1 could consist of generic training applicable to any agency (including law enforcement) that owns a MCC. That generic Module 1 training might include power line safety, generator safety and maintenance, antenna placement to minimize RF interference, basic training on telephone tip and ring, etc. Module 2 would be vehicle-specific and based on a standardized template. Module 2 training might include where the keys are located, who is authorized/qualified to drive the vehicle, who needs to respond with the vehicle, mast operation, the locations for the various system switches and displays, video/camera system operation, console operation, radio channel programming, interoperability gateway capabilities and operation, etc.

Chief Praytor stated that the "idea has merit". However, due to higher priorities, this issue is off the FCSG issue list for the foreseeable future.

Narrowbanding Safety Concerns/NMAC Strategic Plan – The final NMAC Strategic plan was distributed by NIFC. The members present felt that it was appropriate for FCSG to review and evaluate each of the NMAC's findings, one by one to determine if further action was appropriate by FIRESCOPE. A conference call with any available FCSG member will be held on Thursday, December 1st from 0900 to 1030 to go over the NMAC strategic plan. The FIRESCOPE conference call number will be used for access.

Review of FIRESCOPE Communications work products – A reminder that all members should prepare for the annual review of the existing FCSG work products at the January 2006 FCSG meeting.

Federal agencies moving to P25 – OES Telecommunications had received information that the federal fire agencies were moving to Project 25 digital mode as early as 2008. That information is incorrect per Frank Ealand. Ealand stated that the deadline for narrowbanding federal UHF frequencies is January 1, 2008. He stated that the federal law enforcement agencies are rapidly moving to P25 as they will make use of the encryption capabilities offered by the P25 standard. There is an internal USFS/DOI mandate that they are unable to buy any radio equipment that is not P25. However, the federal fire agencies have no immediate plans to switch to the P25 mode of operation and Ealand believes that the earliest that could happen is 2016.

Topanga Incident – Kevin Nida presented a memo dated October 25th with subject "Topanga Fire Communications Recommendations" (*see Annex E*). There were significant communications issues during this fire, according to Nida. It was Nida's intention to have someone hear the issues and resolve or make recommendations on the problems. Each bullet point in the memo was discussed. The general consensus was that most of the issues (excluding spectrum issues and the delay in getting a Command repeater working) were local issues that should be dealt with by his agency and the other cooperators involved. The spectrum and Command repeater issue are statewide issues that are being addressed in other FCSG discussion items. The Chair requested that if Los Angeles City Fire requested additional FCSG resources to assist with their issues list, they should request that in writing and the Chair will discuss that request with Chief Praytor and Chief Drake.

BK Portable Radio Passwords – Frank Ealand requested that FIRESCOPE recommend to NIFC to change the current BK Radio password scheme. Apparently confusion has occurred when some non-NIFC cache radios were not programmed with the new password preventing re-programming in the field. It was stated that if the password is changed each year using the same number scheme, there is no real security value in changing it annually. Suggestions included eliminating the password altogether by going back to the default BK password or to change it annually to a random 6-digit code not tied to the year. Rick Smith will draft the appropriate language and get it to the Chair who will then formulate a recommendation from FCSG to the Task Force with a copy to Ealand.

Good of the Order

The Chair stated that he will be assuming new responsibilities as the CDF Assistant Chief for the Pilot Rock camp. He does not anticipate any immediate affects on his participation with FCSG.

Brent Finster reminded committee members that he has FIRESCOPE Communications polo shirts available for \$30 each. Please contact Brent by email at bfinster@cccpd.org for details.

Next meeting

The next FCSG meeting will be in the San Diego area on Thursday, January 19, 2006 0900 to 1600 hours and Friday, January 20, 2006 0900 to 1600 hours.



ANNEX A
OCEANSIDE FIRE DEPARTMENT
M E M O R A N D U M

October 25, 2005

TO: FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group

FROM: Peter H. Lawrence, Battalion Chief, B Division

SUBJECT: Update on Operational Area/Mutual Aid Frequencies
FOG Priority 4 Channels

I have started the process of identifying the frequencies that are candidates for inclusion in the next Appendix A portion of the FOG. To date, 103 frequency users in the VHF-High band have submitted frequencies for potential inclusion. Frequencies already contained in the FOG or in frequency bands outside of VHF-High were not considered as part of this review process. The following statistics are available from this initial review process:

1. Out of the 103 frequencies submitted, if you consider only the receive frequency (simplex side of repeater pairs), there are only 63 frequencies involved.
2. Only 31 of the frequencies can be considered "Operational Area mutual aid or Interoperability frequencies". These channels are listed as X** under the Agency heading in the spreadsheet. The remaining frequencies are assigned to individual agencies and are available for use only when responding to assist the license holder.
3. Six of the frequencies submitted are CDF Local frequencies that are already contained in the FOG as a CDF Tactical. These were not automatically eliminated as they were part of a repeater pair.
4. Three of the frequencies submitted are USFS or NPS dispatch or command frequencies.

As a starting point for discussion on which frequencies could be used more frequently than others by mutual aid responders, three possible ways of including additional channels in Appendix A were envisioned. The first method was a four part "Preference" rating scale as follows:

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There is still considerable work to be done on this project, including, but not limited to.

1. Determining the method of dissemination of the final "Priority 4" list (e.g. by user, by frequency or as a repository for frequency information).
2. Determining if there are additional channels that should be included. Several of the Operational Areas did not respond or individual agencies within the OA responded with agency specific as opposed to OA frequencies.
3. Determining the proper use of each frequency. The true or intended use of some frequencies was not able to be determined due to the limited nature of the material submitted by the agency or OA. This may have resulted in the assignment of an incorrect "Preference".
4. Determining what additional Federal and CDF frequencies would be useful for inclusion in the "Priority 4 FOG" channel list. Another option for CDF frequencies is publishing a cross reference of the CDF Tactical/CDF Command/CDF Local frequencies so that users can access the CDF local simplex frequencies without needing to program additional repeater pairs into the system.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 760-435-4262.

ANNEX B

COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE TEAMS

October 25th, 2005

Attached below is the concept that was presented at the April 26th, 2005 CSAG meeting.

I have received a general outline of the Region 3 Communications Advance Teams (CAT) from Kevin Harper. I have received no substantive additional input from the CSAG members.

For the CRT concept to become reality there needs to be a certified pool of personnel existing from which to generate the Teams. This pool of personnel must include COML, COMT, INCN, RADO certifications. There also needs to be an acknowledgement from Command Staff that the CRT exists and that it is to be activated regionally for incidents.

Currently, whether fiscally or logistically problematic, ordering local and regional personnel is not happening. Requests for communications personnel on incidents are being returned as unfillable or being filled with out of region personnel a significant amount of the time. This is resulting in personnel not being certified in a timely manner. Without a cadre of certified local and regional personnel any attempt to form CRT is doomed to failure. Not only will the personnel be held to an uncertain standard but the CRT itself will never be utilized by the major wildland agencies because they fail the certification test.

There are several efforts underway to provide training for the positions of COMT. I will also be trying to host classes for INCM and RADO. If these are successful and we then have candidates fro certification, we will need to make a concerted effort to see that the trainees are utilized in order to be certified.

I have been COMT Trainee trained for almost a year and I have only been able to get assigned to one fire. My book is half signed off. Even though I am in MIRPS, and this has been verified several times, and I have never put myself as unavailable, I have not been assigned, even when specifically asked for by name, to an incident. If this situation is allowed to continue any efforts to provide a level of availability of communications personnel on the local, regional level will be doomed to failure.



Chris R Hinshaw, Manager

San Diego-Imperial County Regional Communications System
San Diego County Sheriff's Wireless Services Division

COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE TEAM CONCEPT
Communications Specialist Group
October 7th, 2004

CONCEPT:

The Communications Response Team (CRT) would be activated at some pre-identified level of mutual aid response to any all-risk scenario. The intent is to treat incident communications as a system with a systemic response. The system requires Technologists, Dispatchers, Messengers, Supervisors and Managers to operate fully and functionally. This provides levels of benefit.

1. Using local personnel assures that the local communications infrastructure is utilized to the greatest benefit of the target incident and the maintenance of basic service levels.
2. Treating the communications issues as a system provides a spectrum of support.
 - a. this reduces the length of time required to provide full communications support
 - b. Pre-designates personnel to respond
 - c. Allows for certification of personnel which can be managed by local agencies.
3. Pre-designation of the CRT provides for training with and identification of, the communications resources already available and that are likely to be required in a specific region based on what assets already exist.
 - a. The pre-designated CRT members will have intimate knowledge of the assets in the region.
 - b. The CRT members will have specific knowledge from scenario training of the assets that need to be stationed locally and those that will be required to be cached for extended operations.
 - c. The CRT members will be able to assist in identifying, equipping, testing and verifying assets, scenarios and certifications of the communications assets in the region. They will be the subject matter experts.
4. Certification of the CRT members as RADO, COMT and COML will ensure that the team has the requisite knowledge to deploy the cached assets which are designed to replace or augment local systems. The cached assets include but are not limited to;
 - a. Local pre-designated assets, preferably catalogued in a database such as the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) Communications Assets Survey and Mapping Tool (CASM).
 - b. The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) caches.

BASIC RESPONSE TEAM:

- 1 COML-Communications Unit Leader
- 1 INCM-Incident Communications Center Manager
- 2 COMT-Incident Communications Technician
- 3 RADO-Incident Radio Operator

DUTIES:**COML**

- Manages Incident Communications Systems
- Interfaces cooperatively with local infrastructure
- Prepares ICS 205
- Reports to Logistics Chief

INCM

- Supervises Incident Dispatch operations
- Interfaces cooperatively with local agency dispatch operations
- Report to COML

COMT

- Establishes and maintains Incident specific communications systems
- Interfaces cooperatively with local communications system infrastructure
- Reports to COML

RADO

- Performs Incident dispatch operations
- Interfaces cooperatively with local dispatch centers
- Reports to the INCM

STANDARD EQUIPMENT:

The CRT will identify a standard equipment package to be deployed with the Team upon activation. This standard package is likely to include the following.

1. Mobile Communications/Command Center
 - a. Regional communications/command vehicle with regional and State mutual aid communications capabilities.
 - b. Vehicle must contain a minimum of two operator positions.
 - c. Vehicle should be self-sustaining for a period of 72 hours (not including fuel replenishment).
2. Portable Radio Cache
 - a. Cache of portable radios with regional and State mutual aid communications capabilities.
 - b. May be contained on the Mobile Communications/Command Center
3. System Recovery/Enhancement Equipment
 - a. This may be portable repeater(s), a mobile Intellirepeater, a Satellite downlink or any combination of system infrastructure equipment.
 - b. May be contained on the Mobile Communications/Command Center

ANNEX C

MEMORANDUM

DRAFT

January 20, 2005

To: All Fire Chiefs and Agency Heads
From: FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group
Subject: ICS Communications Positions Qualifications Review

Based on the recent fire seasons, the FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group has identified the need to review the qualifications of individuals certified for the following incident command system communications positions:

- (COML) Communications Unit Leader
- (COMT) Incident Communications Technician
- (INCM) Incident Communications Center Manager

The California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) and the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System are “performance based” qualification systems. . An individual is required to perform satisfactorily in a specified position within the last five (5) years to maintain qualification for the position. A key component in the certification or re-certification process is the subjective evaluation by the appropriate agency official of the individual’s capability to perform in a position.

The FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group is requesting that each agency review the qualifications for individuals who that agency intends to deploy for incident communications positions. After reviewing the qualifications, each agency should update MIRPS (Multi-Agency Incident Resource Processing System).

To assist agencies with reviewing the qualifications, attached is a copy of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310-1 position qualifications for COML, COMT, and INCM.

S))Q
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT LEADER (COML)

<u>REQUIRED TRAINING</u>	None
<u>ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</u>	Intermediate ICS (I-300) Leadership and Organizational Development (S-381) Communications Unit Leader (S-358)
<u>PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE</u>	Satisfactory performance as an Incident Communications Technician + Satisfactory performance as an Incident Communications Center Manager + Satisfactory position performance as a Communications Unit Leader
<u>PHYSICAL FITNESS</u>	None
<u>OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY</u>	Incident Communications Center Manager Incident Communications Technician

S))Q
INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIAN (COMT)

<u>REQUIRED TRAINING</u>	None
<u>ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</u>	Communications Equipment and Procedures (S-258) Basic ICS (I-200) Firefighter Training (S-130)
<u>PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE</u>	Satisfactory position performance as a Incident Communications Technician
<u>PHYSICAL FITNESS</u>	None
<u>OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY</u>	None

S))Q

INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS CENTER MANAGER (INCM)

<u>REQUIRED TRAINING</u>	None
<u>ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS</u>	Basic Fire Suppression Orientation (S-110) Basic ICS (I-200) Supervisory Concepts and Techniques (S-281) Incident Communications Center Manager (J-257) Interagency Incident Business Management (S-260)
<u>PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE</u>	Satisfactory performance as a Radio Operator + Satisfactory position performance as a Incident Communications Center Manager
<u>PHYSICAL FITNESS</u>	None
<u>OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY</u>	None



ANNEX D

Incident Dispatcher - Course Outline 3-Day CFCA Incident Dispatcher Workshop 2005 * = guest instructor segments

Introduction to Incident Dispatch - Traditionally, an Incident Communications Unit has been staffed with line fire personnel (who may or may not have been trained in dispatch). Using fire dispatchers puts a professional communicator - who specializes in communicating and managing resources every day in the Comm center - behind these kind of support activities at an incident scene

Resource Designation System - Students will learn about agency and county identification, strike teams and task forces, and the all-important Order and Request numbers, who needs them, and who issues them. Also covered are kinds and types of apparatus and equipment.

* **The California Mutual Aid System** - How the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System works, and what role as dispatchers we play in it. How to access resources from near and far. Taking the incident from “initial attack” to bringing help from throughout the state.

* **OES Operations** - Where does OES fall into all this? How is disaster and fire mutual aid coordinated? What is Urban Search And Rescue, FIRESCOPE, and what role does OES play with the forest agencies and local government?

* **CDF Overview** - How and where do the local fire agencies interact with CDF? What is a “Ranger Unit?” What is “Expanded Dispatch?” How do CDF’s “Command Teams” operate?

• **Fire Behavior for Incident Dispatchers** - As Incident Dispatchers, we should never be working in a hostile environment. Still, you’re a wee bit closer at a Base Camp or Incident Command Post than you are back home in your Comm Center - here’s what you need to know about wildfire behavior, safety gear, fire shelter deployment, and danger signs to keep you safe on deployment.

ICS Forms - The fire is not out until the paperwork is done, and there’s tons of it, from ordering equipment to incident documentation, accounting for

resource status to reimbursement for mutual aid deployment. Learn how to maneuver the intricacies of ICS paperwork.

Resource Ordering and Tracking - Navigating your way through the paper trail – how to order resources for a major, extended-attack incident. How to account for those resources while they're on your incident, and how to get them released when they're done?

EOC Operations - Incident Dispatchers may not operate only in the field. They are also being used at California OES Fire & Rescue headquarters in Sacramento. What kinds of activities will you be involved with in a deployment at the state EOC?

Receiving An Assignment - Okay. You've just been woken up and told you're going to a fire assignment in the nether regions to fill an Incident Dispatcher position. What do you need to know before you leave? What should you take with you? How should you behave? The Do's and Don'ts of mutual aid deployment.

Local Agency Incident Dispatcher Teams - Incident Dispatchers were initially developed to serve as a mutual aid resource for OES Fire & Rescue, deploying trained communicators into the field during major incidents. The same concept, however, has been found valuable in several local agencies, and many fire departments are now developing IDTs – specially trained fire dispatchers providing communications and resource status support at an incident command post.

Communications Van Operations/Table Top Exercises - A hands-on demonstration at several mobile Comm Vans, including local agency vehicles, county and state vans. Get a close-up look at how these vehicles are configured and what might be your home and office for a weeklong ID deployment. Then participate in a table-top simulation of mutual aid resource ordering, tracking, and reimbursement logging – using the forms as you would on a real ID assignment.

Certifications & Qualifications – The new California Incident Command Certification System and its impact upon Incident Dispatcher certification.

Resource Ordering – The Incident Dispatcher and Resource Ordering systems and protocols through the California Fire & Rescue Mutual Aid System.

Incident Dispatchers in the Field – What we have learned from challenges, solutions, rewards, and lessons during recent callouts as Incident Dispatchers in the field.

Status/Check-In Recorder – A classroom Certification course in S-248 – Status/Check-In Recorder. A Task Book will be provided at the end of the class.

Radio Operator (Incident Dispatcher, Basic) - A classroom Certification course in J-158 – Radio Operator. A Task Book will be provided at the end of the class.

For class schedule see: www.calchiefs.com (click on COMMUNICATIONS, then CALENDAR) or contact Instructors Don Stabler (DStab@cccfd.org) or Randall Larson(Randall.larson@sanjoseca.gov)

ANNEX E

MEMORANDUM

October 25, 2005

TO: Chief Tim McClelland, Chair
Brent Finster, Secretary
Firescope Communications Specialists Group

FROM: Captain Kevin Nida, Member
Los Angeles Fire Department

SUBJECT: TOPANGA FIRE COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the communications problems at the Topanga Fire from September 28, through October 6, 2005; the following are recommendations are submitted for discussion as a new agenda item, or during the round table discussion portion of the CSG meeting:

Pre-deployment of repeaters and portable radios are necessary to reduce equipment deployment times.

Pre-install repeaters in high risk areas to reduce equipment deployment times.

Develop a predetermined communications plan for specific geographical areas to minimize planning and enhance deployment.

A standard of one agency provided VHF portable radio per fire engine will allow faster deployment of resources in staging and will ensure that an appropriate number of radios are assigned and available.

Increase the RF power output of VHF repeaters assigned to the fire to provide better radio coverage.

Increase the number of linked repeaters on the fire to increase overall fire-line coverage.

Consider satellite technology for wide-area communications, and a stop-gap measure until the basic infrastructure can be established.

Make it a Firescope goal to have every fire agency in California embrace radio and communications training so firefighters have a better expectation of the differences of urban versus wild-land communications.