



## WHITE PAPER

July 11, 2018

To: FIRESCOPE Board of Directors  
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From: FIRESCOPE Task Force and Operations Team  
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Subject: Movement of ITSS (CTSP) from Plans to Logistics

### Issue

In 2016 the National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG) created a new position within the organization called the Information and Technology Specialist (ITSS). In the past, California has had a similar position called the Computer Technical Specialist (CTSP). The CTSP position has been renamed and is now using the ITSS acronym for their position on wildland fire incidents. (Note: The CTSP Acronym still appears at the National level)

The ITSS (also known as CTSP) is rostered under the Plans Section on incident management teams. The original intent of the CTSP was to provide network and computer support for Isuite and now E-Isuite databases.

Communications Unit Leaders (COML) are rostered under the Logistics Section on incident management teams. Prior to the CTSP/ITSS position, the COML was responsible for determining and providing for telecommunications needs as well as data/internet needs for the ICP.

These two positions (COML and ITSS) both have similar duties and responsibilities on the non-radio communications aspects of the incident and there sometimes is confusion as to which position or unit actually supports the incident's data and voice communications needs.

### Process

The FIRESCOPE Task Force convened a meeting of the Communications, Emerging Information Technology and GIS Specialist Groups in December 2016. One of the topics for this meeting was where the ITSS should reside. The decision was then forwarded to the Task Force in January 2017.

### Issues Identified

- There are duplicate duties between the COML and ITSS positions (e.g. who is responsible for setting up internet and telecommunications devices). Both the COML and the ITSS have a need to order internet services. The ITSS is primarily supporting the needs of the Plans and Finance Sections while the COML is normally supporting the OPS Section and incident responder needs. By having the ITSS under the supervision of the COML, there is a more seamless integration of the internet into the overall incident operations.
- Both positions provide support for incident communications needs (computers, fax equipment, etc.). However, most responders and IMT members turn to the Communications Unit as the logical choice due to its name “Communications.”
- Both positions took responsibility for ordering ICP internet and telephone lines.

### Options Discussed

- Creation of a separate Communications Section within ICS
- Creation of a Communications Branch within the Logistics Section
- Creation of an Information and Technology Unit within Logistics

### Resolution

- The recommendation from the three Specialist Groups (Communications, EIS and GIS) was for California to move the ITSS (CTSP) from the Plans Section to the Logistics Section and place it under the COML.
- The Communications Unit is now the single identified position to oversee the delivery of the following services to the incident:
  - Internet
  - Telecommunications (telephone)
  - Computer
  - Voice communications
- Develop an Implementation Plan to address the impacts of this transition in the following documentation
  - ROSS Ordering impacts
  - Qualifications / NWCG Task Book updates needed (if not a Tech Spec position)
  - Position Descriptions for ITSS
  - Adjustment to IMT documents and Team rosters (April 2019)
  - ICS 420-1 Updates to the FOG GUIDE

### Conclusion

The need for reliable and immediate data (internet connectivity), telecommunications (voice and fax), and voice radio communications on emergency incidents continues to grow at an alarming rate. Within the Incident Command System, the Communications Unit or the COML was determined to currently be the logical choice to handle these needs. Moving the ITSS under the Communications Unit and the COML provides a one-stop-shop for members on the incident management team to provide for their communications needs. Additionally, there was no concern that the addition of the ITSS to the list of positions reporting to the COML would create a span of control issue.