



# INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM PUBLICATION

Radio Communications Guidelines  
ICS-1301 Job Aid

**January 2025**

This document contains information relative to the Incident Command System (ICS) component of the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS). This is the same Incident Command System developed by FIRESCOPE.

Additional information and documentation can be obtained from the following resources:

Cal OES FIRESCOPE  
Document Control  
23300 Castle Street  
Riverside, Ca 92518  
(951) 782-4174  
Fax (951) 782-4239  
[www.firescope.caloes.ca.gov](http://www.firescope.caloes.ca.gov)

The information contained in this document has been approved by the Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee/FIRESCOPE Board of Directors for application in the statewide California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. This material is a development of the FIRESCOPE Program.

## Table of Contents

ICS 205 INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN .....	3
PURPOSE: .....	3
CREATING AN ICS 205:.....	3
RESOURCES: .....	5
INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS 205) – EXAMPLE .....	6

## ICS 205 INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

### PURPOSE:

The Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205) provides frequency information on all conventional radio channels and/or trunked radio system talk group assignments for each operational period. The plan is a summary of information obtained about available radio channels and/or talk groups and the assignments of those resources by the Communications Unit Leader (COML) for use by incident responders. Information from the Incident Radio Communications Plan related to channel or talk group assignments is normally placed on the Assignment List (ICS 204).

Although there are many ways to lay out the ICS 205, FIREScope has created this Common Practices document to guide the COML in developing an ICS 205 that is consistent across the state of California. This follows the rules of the MACS 441-1 and provides safety for the end user.

### CREATING AN ICS 205:

- The [California ICS 217A](#) and the [FIREScope MACS 441-1](#) provides an approved list of frequencies and their respective channel names. Use these documents to assist in creating your ICS 205.
- It is a California FIREScope standard to not deviate from a common or known channel name.
- Adopt and utilize standard channel naming (i.e., NIFC C1, VFIRE 26, R5T5, CDF T1). Utilize the controlling agency in the label/name (i.e.: CDF C4, NIFC C4, CDF T7, NIFC T6) provided it is not part of the national naming standard (i.e.: VFIRE 21, VTAC 11).
- Do not assign generic Command or Tac numbers and names (i.e., Command 1, 2, 3, 4, Tac 5, 6, 7, 8).
- Special repeaters or tactical channels shall utilize their assigned reference number (i.e., NIFC C35).
- When a “special” tactical frequency is assigned from the Communications Duty Officer (CDO) and no common name or number to go along with it, the CDO shall assign a number 10 or above and it will be labeled as a CDO Special Tactical (i.e., CDOS T10) to avoid conflict with other incidents.
- When a local forest net is required to be on the ICS 205 multiple times but with different tones, the COML will identify it in the channel name with the different tone. An example of Angeles National Forest Tone 3 and Tone 8 would be “ANF TN3 and ANF TN8”.

- The CDO will assign a tone for your incident when ordering a starter kit. If you do use a tone, you must use the assigned tone or coordinate with the CDO before changing it.
- Utilize standard tones as published in the California MACS 441-1, CAL-IFOG, and NIFOG for all National Interoperable channels including VFIRE, VTAC, and all UHF/700/800Mhz interoperable channels.
- Authorize and coordinate interoperability channels VTAC, VFIRE, and OES V1-V4 through CalOES. To receive authorization, fill out the online form available at the address below.

[California Interoperability Frequency Request Form](#)

For additional assistance contact the OES Tactical Communications Duty Officer [tdo@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:tdo@caloes.ca.gov) or the California State Warning Center at 1-916-845-8911

- Changing the CTCSS or NAC and/or the name of a channel that is already in use on your incident is not authorized. Do not assume you can change the tone on a tactical frequency and assign it somewhere else on the fire as a clear channel. This is not authorized and will cause a safety issue.
- Operationally the use of different tones on the same frequency (i.e. same tactical frequency but different tones on neighboring fires) reduces the chance of hearing unwanted traffic from other users, it does not prevent interference when multiple users are transmitting at the same time.
- If a frequency is provided by a local agency and does not have a standard channel name, contact local sources to determine a commonly used channel name when possible.
- The channel order listed below is a suggestion and common practice for California.
- AIRGUARD must be the last channel in the radio Group/Zone. This channel order provides a known and common order for the end user and provides for safety as users are trained to revert to end of the Group/Zone for AIRGUARD.
- CALCORD should be placed above AIRGUARD and is used statewide for medical coordination. This will be the expected frequency a medical helicopter will use with ground resources.
- Utilize the standard 32 CTCSS tone chart from the California MACS 441-1. Preferably stay within the first 16 tones to accommodate legacy radios.

- Assign channels to Groups/Zones with consideration of interoperability between divisions and to prevent interference between divisions.
- Sharing tactical channels with multiple divisions is an acceptable practice if the channel name and tones are not altered and remain identical. Sharing Example: On the ICS 205 example below Div A/Z utilizes NIFC T4. The forward slash between A and Z (A/Z) indicates these divisions have been merged under one supervisor and therefore use one tactical channel. DIV C, Y utilizes R5 T5. The comma between C and Y (C, Y) indicates these divisions have not merged and are sharing the channel. This can usually be accomplished by geographic separation to prevent interference. Add in the Notes on the ICS 205 that a slash indicates divisions have merged under one supervisor, and a comma denotes that divisions have not merged but are sharing a channel.
- Adding a unique clone version name in the radio Group/Zone ID is a good practice (i.e.: “FireNameDayCreated”, “Windy02”). Include the Group/Zone clone version name in the “Special Instructions” section of the ICS 205.
- When available, add a contact phone number (COML or COMM unit) by the COML name on the ICS 205, this assists users with communications questions/needs.

## RESOURCES:

- California ICS 217A and FIRESCOPE MACS 441-1
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JK1cdt66BVwvxtF6FKA4CAPc2irC1Hn1/view?usp=sharing%20>
- Simple 205 based off NIMS IAP
  - [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OADPpq5kZqRWbke3pvnrHLp\\_-\\_dnkyNPEFKA9S18-kM/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OADPpq5kZqRWbke3pvnrHLp_-_dnkyNPEFKA9S18-kM/edit?usp=sharing)
- NIMS IAP
  - <http://www.nimsiap.org/>
- FEMA ICS Forms
  - <https://training.fema.gov/icsresource/icsforms.aspx>
- California FIRESCOPE Publications
  - <https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/publications>

## INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (ICS 205) – EXAMPLE

**CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED  
INFORMATION//BASIC**

### ICS 205 - INCIDENT RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PLAN - Example

<b>1. Incident Name:</b> Windy			<b>2. Date/Time Prepared</b> Date: 04/21/2024 Time: 1930		<b>3. Operational Period:</b> Date From: 04/22/24      Date To: 04/23/24 Time From: 0700      Time To: 0700				
<b>4. Communications</b>									
Ch#	Function	Name	Assigned To	Rx Freq	Rx Tone	Tx Freq	Tx Tone	Mode	Notes
1	COMMAND	NIFC C1	ALL DIVS	170.9750	0.0	168.7000	0.0	A	Bald Mtn., All CMD repeaters linked
2	COMMAND	NIFC C9	BR I	170.0125	0.0	165.2500	0.0	A	Walker Lookout, All CMD repeaters linked
3	COMMAND	NIFC C6	BR V	168.4750	0.0	165.4000	0.0	A	Brush Peak, All CMD repeaters linked
4	COMMAND	NIFC C32	FUTURE	171.0875	0.0	164.0125	0.0	A	Not in service
5	TACTICAL	NIFC T4	DIV A / Z	166.7250	0.0	166.7250	0.0	A	*Example of a Combined Division (A/Z)*
6	TACTICAL	NIFC T5	DIV B	166.7750	0.0	166.7750	0.0	A	
7	TACTICAL	NIFC T6	DIV M	168.2500	0.0	168.2500	0.0	A	
8	TACTICAL	R5 T4	CONTINGENCY	166.5500	0.0	166.5500	0.0	A	
9	TACTICAL	R5 T5	DIV C, Y	167.1125	0.0	167.1125	0.0	A	*Example of a Shared TAC Channel (C,Y)*
10	TACTICAL	CDOS T10	Firing OP	170.0000	0.0	170.0000	0.0	A	
11	FOREST	ANF TN3	IA & Emergency backup	172.3750		164.9375	(T3) 131.8	A	FS ANF Tone 3
12	FOREST	ANF TN8	IA & Emergency backup	172.3750		164.9375	(T8) 103.5	A	FS ANF Tone 8
13	A/G CMD	A/G CMD	ALL DIVS	173.7000		173.7000		A	
14	A/G TAC	A/G TAC	ALL DIVS	166.6125		166.6125	0.0	A	
15	TACTICAL	CALCORD	ALL DIVS	156.0750	(T6) 156.7	156.0750	(T6) 156.7	A	
16	EMERGENCY	AIRGUARD	ALL DIVS	168.6250	0.0	168.6250	(T1) 110.9	A	
17									
18									
19									
20	EMERGENCY	AIRGUARD		168.6250	0.0	168.6250	(T1) 110.9	A	
<b>5. Special Instructions</b>									
Version: Windy02									
<b>6. Prepared by (Communications Unit Leader): Name: Bob Smith 925.555.1212</b>						Signature: _____			
<b>ICS 205 – CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION//BASIC NIMS IAP</b>						<b>Date/Time: 04/21/24      1930</b>			