



# FIREScope COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

February 26, 2025  
Meeting Agenda

## **Meeting Started 0900**

### **1) Welcome and Introductions** – (Oliveri)

- a. Logistics

### **2) Communications Specialist Group (FCS) Logistics**

- a. Approval of previous minutes (Oliveri)
  - Approved
- b. Roster and Attendance (Williams)

### **3) Agency Reports**

- a. FIREScope Operations/Task Force/Board of Directors (Brinsfield)
  - Not present, 205 best practices documents being worked through taskforce.
- b. CAL OES Fire & Rescue Branch (Stone/Camarena)
  - Stone: went to board meeting a few weeks ago, approved 441
  - Pre-position \$25 million annually, still doing pre-positions for wildland and mud debris flow
  - Annual CWGC risk management Safety Officers Symposium @ Humphrey's in San Diego April 8, 9, 10, will post on the hub, free to attend. Supported by San Diego Fire.
- c. CAL OES Tactical Communications (Beckstrand)
  - Not present, no report.
- d. CAL FIRE Telecommunications (Sweet)
  - John Agulera: State load spreadsheet forwarded out yesterday, email with questions
    - Programing to start April 1 statewide, code plugs currently being vetted.
  - Oliveri: can we distribute the state load documents?
    - Yes, PDF document can be shared, agency will have to code plug will have to request through PSC.
- e. CAL OES PSC (Matzke)
  - Not present
- f. NIFC/NIICD (Albracht)
  - Nothing to report
- g. R5 FOREST SERVICE (Kolenic)
  - Not present
- h. First Net (Secrest)
  - Not present
- i. CALSIEC Fire Working Group (Secrest)
  - Not present

### **4) FCS Sub-committee Reports**

- a. COMMTRAIN-Communications Training Group (Nilsen, Wills)
  - Kerwin: S-258 Anaheim at North Net Training Facility. March 10-14. 30 students signed up, 8 on waiting list. 6 forest service employees pending status if still available to attend
  - March 15<sup>th</sup> 258/358 refresher, North Net Training Facility open to any qualified COML/COMT, including a lot of statewide California specific type info. Aaron Mooney doing an APX cloning class.
- b. Operational Area Communications List-ICS 217A (Oliveri)
  - Oliveri: updated and available for everyone. Send any updated to Oliveri/Towns to keep living document up to date.
  - Sean Tajkowski, Comment: We recommend we do some type of disclosure in the front for of document to "enable channel select" for radios that do not have continuous channel knobs and can only go up to 16 channels. BK radios would need to add channel select feature through keypad.
    - Kerwin: Attended mob center, initial action was to program in state load zones to

initially get all channels to the user but can be an issue with 16 channel stops. As progressed, created a 205 that meets the 16 channel requirements. Do not what to change an agencies code plug on an incident to where they need to get the radios re-cloned at home when the leave the incident.

- Agulera: Training issues on state side of state load being dropped into radios unauthorized. This has been addressed and corrected.
- Training and awareness topic for techs and firefighters cloning. Cloning a state zone into a radio with a 16 channel stop and inability to “channel” select makes those channels above 16 unusable.
- c. Emerging Technologies working group update (Vanderzwaag)
  - Tech summit ESRI recently completed. Vendors demonstrated new tech through training incident.
  - Next meeting early May will report back after.
- d. MACS 441 2025 (Oliveri)
  - Approved at the end of January. Successful in moving the schedule up this year.
  - Next year plan is review in first week of December meeting, finalize and present to BOD the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of December. Goal to have available by January 1. Letter will be coming out advising all of the new timeline.
- e. ICS 205 California Common Practices (Oliveri)
  - Working with BOD/Task Force and getting a lot of traction. CWCG is reviewing and is in support. It will get distributed at in-briefs to IMTs coming in to promote consistency.
- f. Trunked System Interoperability (Williams, Mooney)
  - Reached out to trunked system vendor in local area to start conversation on sharing system keys. Will update further in the future.

## **5) New Business**

- a. Increase minimum channel load to 500 channels (Mahan)
  - This is a multi-year process, wanted to start discussion to see how the group feels about it
  - Oliveri: need to develop a white paper (updated 400 ch version) and present to FSCG group then move to the FireScope Board of Directors. Also add P25 capability.
  - Drumright: Pete Lawrence requested to have input if 500 channel limit increase is being discusses
  - Nilsen: Thinks it's time to make the move to 500 channels and P25 capable radios. P25 would imply multi-band radios. Make recommendation to get multi-band radio, or two radios.
  - Kerwin: addressed in 2008, highly recommended that ST leaders carry an 800mhz radio to communicate with LA basin radio systems (trunk/conventional). Agree that it is time to move forward to multi-band radios and create best practices, radio specification recommendation, etc.
  - Oliveri: recommend “multi-band capability” by way of multi-band radios or two radios
  - Agulera: question, why are limiting the number of channels at 500 when industry supports far greater channel loads. Recommend manufacture spec with modern radios.
    - Kerwin: history, smaller agencies may not have funding to replace radios, grant funding has dried up in regions without UASI. Trying to get the smaller agencies to update GPH/DPH radios. Need buy-in from task force to move this forward.
    - Nilsen: this a minimum only, also includes contractor requirements. Cannot change every few years due to contract office complications. But you cannot buy a radio with 500 channels anymore.
  - Pete Lawrence: It is a long process; expectation is a 5-year minimum (actually 6) last time this was addressed. Must be able to explain why there is a need and number of channels considered “critical.” It will continue to be a 5–6-year process and require a well thought out presentation to FireScope BOD/Task Force.
- b. Consider P25 capability as minimum recommended standard (Oliveri)
  - Discussed above, section 5a
- c. Drumright, Dan Wills sent out information additional all hazard comms classes will be coming out this year with all the upcoming large events in CA soon.

## **6) Old Business**

- a. Cal OES Fire Rescue Ops Bulletin 28 (Beckstrand/Camarena)
  - Updated and distributed
- b. SAFECOM and ECD, COMU position (Wills)
  - Not present
- c. Motorola APX Cloning (Mooney)

- APX 7000 questions: per Motorola, not included because it is a discontinued platform, but as long as firmware 32.0xx or higher, it will work. It will not be supported after update. See documentation sent out by Mooney.
  - Motorola has got official cloning tool documentation out, still working on improving/supporting over time
  - On going question, can we clone above 16 channels? Currently unknown.
  - Want to send out official communication from this group that these radios are now being supported
  - Nilsen: need to emphasis the need for the correct feature set, a lot of agencies will not have them included. Q52/53 feature set info
  - How many zones should be minimum requirement? Consensus is minimum 2, recommend 3-5.
    - LA County did 2 clone zones, each one adds 16 personalities causing space issues.
  - Mooney, North Net Training dates will be posted to group hub once finalized.
  - Oliveri: May be appropriate to add note in 441 related to APX radios with recommendation of 3 zones
    - Nilsen: be careful with specifying specific brand
    - Use language: "multi-zone cloning capable radio with minimum of 2 cloneable zones recommended"
  - Mooney: time frame to push out something official? Will push out documents to Oliveri next week for taskforce to present, hoping for approval by May.
  - Chris Hardy: will NWCG approve radio list be updated?
    - Nilsen: NWCG approved list is only radios approved to purchase by federal agencies, does not restrict other agencies using other radios.
    - Chris Oliver: incident may not support radios not on the list, but the radios can be used.
- d. FOG Manual Type Standard Update (Williams, Beckstrand)
- Not present, will check back

## 7) Round Table

- Welsby: Nothing to report
- Craig VanderZwaag: Week of May 12, new regional fire command center (RFCC) going into service. New language created for future MACS 441. Changing local area channel names to XSB CMD/TAC. Working on getting internal comm plan done. How should we distribute the new XSB CMDs and TACs prior to 2026 MACS 441/CalFire state load? Will not affect what is already published for state/wildland incidents, will only affect local area channels. Also, would like to host a meeting a new command center in the future
  - Oliveri: get changes added to 217A once officially changed but will not be in MACS 441/CalFire State load for the year. Send communication to Chief Camarena of OES to send information to all op areas.
- Tad: Nothing to report
- Kim A: Nothing to report
- James Harsh: Nothing to report
- Aaron Drumright: Nothing to report
- Aaron Mulhall: Nothing to report
- Jeff Davis: Nothing to report
- Chirs Oliver: Nothing to report
- Eric (woodside fire): Nothing to report
- John Agulera: Nothing to report
- Hampton Stewart: Nothing to report
- Rick (RS Comm)
- Liana Toledo: Nothing
- Jeff Carter: teaching class with Kerwin: Aaron Mooney APX class scheduled Thursday at 1300, want to get him back on Friday for COML/COMT refresher.
- Kevin Harper: Nothing to report
- Chief Stone: Nothing to report
- Chief Mahan: Nothing to report
- Grant Grunbaum: Nothing to report
- Darrell Norris: Nothing to report
- Matt Nilsen: Nothing to report
- Jason McKeon: Nothing to report
- Matt (Sac Metro Fire): Nothing to report

- Peter with OC communications: Nothing to report
- Mike Mackenzie: Last day at work, retiring today but would love to stay involved with the group
- Dave Paschke: IMT 2 communications section will be hosting at McClellan, reach out to myself, Harper or Tad Sua. Dates pending. Mooney interesting in giving APX presentation at the meeting.
- Jared Turner: Nothing to report

#### 8) **Next Meeting**

- Location: Sacramento at OES HQ
- April 30 and May 1<sup>st</sup> in person meeting

Conference Call info: Dial-in Number: (267) 807-9601, Access Code: 247-471-686 or  
<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/firescope>