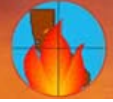




FIRESCOPE



FIRESCOPE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST GROUP

Fresno, CA

Minutes of Meeting

April 29-30, 2008

(Approved)

Committee Members Present:

Dan Drake – FIRESCOPE Task Force

Brent Finster, Secretary, Contra Costa County FPD – County Fire Departments North

Chet Ashbaugh, Riverside County FD - County Fire Depts. South

Fred Buhr - USDA Forest Service

Paul Clay for David Bail – California Dept. of General Services Telecom. (alternate)

Tim Henry, Fresno FD - Metro Fire Departments North

Steve Hobbs - Santa Barbara County FD

Frank McCarthy – Los Angeles County FD

Matt Nilsen, San Diego FD – Metro Fire Departments South

David Paschke – Orange County Fire Authority

Don Root, San Diego RCS – Large Regional Radio System

Glen Savage – CALFIRE Telecommunications

Don Stabler - California Fire Chiefs Association

Ian Wallace, Santa Clara County FPD – Fire Districts North

Committee Members Absent:

Dave Stone – FIRESCOPE Task Force

Tim McClelland, Chair - CALFIRE

Peter Lawrence, Vice-Chair, Oceanside Fire – City Fire Departments South

David Bail – California Dept. of General Services Telecommunications (alternate present)

Chris Baker, Roseville FD – City Fire Departments North

Kevin Harper, Kern County FD – Fire Districts South

John Moulder – National Interagency Fire Center NIICD

Kevin Nida – Los Angeles FD

Salvatore Santangelo, California National Guard – California Military Department

Mike Sidlinger – Ventura County FPD

Denny Neville, Elfin Forest VFD – Volunteer Fire Departments

Samuel Williams – California OES Telecommunications

Others Present:

Sam Lafferty – California Dept. of General Services Telecom. (alternate)

Rick Smith – Santa Maria FD (alternate)

Hampton Stewart – CAL FIRE Telecommunications (alternate)

Eric Oliveri – Tracy FD

John Finnerty – FIRESCOPE Aviations Specialist Group (4/30/08 only)

Welcome and Introductions

Brent Finster announced that both the Chair and Vice-Chair were unable to attend the Fresno meeting due to unexpected conflicts. Finster, as the only other elected officer of the Group, advised that he would chair the meeting in their absence. Finster introduced Fresno Fire Department Battalion Chief Tim Henry who provided information on logistics for the attendees. Henry then introduced Fresno Fire Chief Randy Bruegman who welcomed the group to the Fresno Convention Center. Chief Bruegman took a few minutes describing his department as well as his outlook of statewide and nationwide fire service issues from his perspective as past-president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Secretary's note: Since some attendees were only available during certain periods of time, these notes do not necessarily reflect the chronological order in which the topics were discussed.

FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group (FCSG) Logistics

Approval of FCSG Minutes – The minutes of the January 2008 meeting were previously approved via the email process and have been distributed via the FIRESCOPE website.

Membership Representation – Chief Drake advised that Chuck Dahlen from Shasta Lake Fire Protection District would be the new representative for volunteer departments taking Denny Neville's place. Drake also approved Don Root to take Chris Hinshaw's place representing large regional systems.

Membership Roster – Brent Finster advised that any changes needed to the public or confidential roster should be forwarded to him.

Agency Reports

FIRESCOPE Task Force/Operations/Board of Directors – Chief Drake gave a short update on FIRESCOPE issues.

OES Fire & Rescue – There was no report.

OES Telecommunications – There was no report.

CALFIRE Telecommunications – Glen Savage updated the group on CALFIRE Telecommunications activity. Considerable discussion ensued surrounding a requirement by Dept. of General Services (DGS) that a frequency agreement be in place prior to them programming a frequency into a CALFIRE radio. This requirement has led to a delay in getting the new frequency load released, however the issue should be resolved in the next week.

State frequency coordination will use a single contact phone number 916-337-8652 this year.

National Interagency Fire Center/National Interagency Incident Communications Division – Frank McCarthy received some information from John Moulder since he was unable to attend. Among the items discussed were that AM "Victor" frequencies, besides

the few that are assigned nationwide, will need to be released by the FAA on an incident-specific basis rather than a more blanket-type authorization which has occurred in the past. A great deal of discussion centered around the pros and cons of NIFC's decision to add sub-audible CTCSS tones for both repeaters (repeater inputs only) and tactical channels starting this fire season (NIICD Hotsheet www.fs.fed.us/fire/niicd/Hotsheet/Hotsheet.html for additional information).

The 7390 issue appears resolved. All 7390 Starter Systems are being sent to Boise, are being rehab'ed as 4390's and then returning to their California pre-positioned locations.

All NIFC UHF Logistics frequencies will be narrowbanded for the 2008 fire season. NIFC has many new UHF frequencies and they will be distributed to the group.

FCSG Sub-committee Reports

FCSG Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) – CTAG Team Leader Geoff Pemberton was absent. The existing CTAG project of creating a Narrowband Migration Plan (NMP) was sent to Chief Drake on 3/20/2008 for approval by the Task Force. Brent Finster had sent some additional information that he had received from a national contact to CTAG that might be included in a revised FIRESCOPE NMP.

(CTAG team members are Geoff Pemberton, Pete Lawrence, Chet Ashbaugh and Paul Clay.)

FCSG Training Group (COMMTRAIN) – Incoming COMMTRAIN Team Leader Don Stabler and outgoing Team Leader Matt Nilsen led a discussion about FCSG training issues. It was decided that Stabler will represent Northern California training interests and Nilsen will represent Southern California. (Secretary's note: for additional information, see Incident Communications Conference below.)

(COMMTRAIN team leaders are Don Stabler and Matt Nilsen; other team members are Pete Lawrence, Rick Smith, Geoff Pemberton, and Don Root.)

Adhoc Channel Advisory Group (CAG) – In January, Chief Drake advised that he had sent the draft OES Transmittal to OES Deputy Chief Tom Drayer and had not received a response. Drake will followup with Drayer. No change.

(CAG team members are Steve Hobbs and Pete Lawrence.)

Adhoc ICS Form 205 Revision Group (FCSG205) – FCSG205 Team Leader Brent Finster advised that the new 205 and 217A forms and instructions were provided to the COMLs attending the National Logistics Workshop. He also stated that both forms were included in the recently approved DHS NIMS All-Hazard COML course curriculum.

Tim Henry and Frank McCarthy made the group aware that they were involved in a recent meeting in Boise held by DHS as part of an Incident Management Working Group. During that meeting an ICS Forms Booklet "FEMA 502-2" was distributed which had an ICS 205 (no 217A was present) and that although the ICS 205 in the booklet was not the legacy

NWCG version, it had some of the pieces of the new 205 form as initiated by FCSG, but it would be ineffective for use due to some deficiencies present.

Finster re-iterated that in Seattle at the NIMS All-Hazard COML meeting, Kevin Malloy from DHS Incident Management Systems Integration Division was present for the discussion regarding the new 205 and 217A forms and that his department had approved them, since they had approved the NIMS All-Hazard COML curriculum.

Finster and Don Root will follow-up with their national contacts to ensure that the various groups within DHS that are dealing with ICS forms are aware of the parallel efforts.

(FCSG205 team members are Brent Finster, Chet Ashbaugh, Hampton Stewart and Kody Kerwin.)

CALSIEC Fire Working Group

Interoperability Channel Nomenclature – Brent Finster updated the group on the current status of the common nomenclature issue as it was being addressed by CALSIEC. A copy of the approved plan will be distributed to FCSG as soon as it is published.

CALSCIP Update – Brent Finster advised that the California Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (CALSCIP) had been approved by DHS and would be distributed soon. In addition, California's Investment Justifications for our part of the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grants thru the Department of Commerce had been approved. Within the state's portion, \$500,000 was approved for training local and state government personnel to the NIMS All-Hazard COML standard.

Old Business

Review of FCSG Plan of Work – The FCSG Plan of Work was updated and will be submitted to the Task Force.

FCSG Plan of Work Items:

Review FCSG content on FIRESCOPE website & FCSG work products –All changes to the MACS441-1 that were made at the January meeting have been posted on the www.firescope.org website.

Continued development of CESRS as a Travel Net – The Secretary will ensure that Chief Drake has the FCSG recommendation from the January meeting that fire service agencies not need to sign a separate authorization agreement with OES for the use of CESRS as a Travel Net due to the administrative burden.

ICS Communications Unit Resource Typing & Database – There was no progress on this issue. The Secretary will ensure that the preliminary catalog of deployable OES Telecommunications resources provided to him by Ben Green are distributed to FCSG members.

Incident Communications Conference – The 2008 conference, using the same format as 2007 in conjunction with the Northern California Chapter of APCO, will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2008 at the San Ramon Marriott. Don Stabler and Chris Baker will again lead the FCSG coordination. It was discussed and decided to hold a similar one-day Incident Communications Conference in Southern California also. Matt Nilsen and Don Root volunteered to lead the FCSG coordination to hold a SoCal conference in the same December time-frame. These two efforts will now become part of the COMMTRAIN committee under Stabler's and Nilsen's leadership.

Create Narrowband Migration Plan – See CTAG information above.

Compile List of Mexican border issues – Don Root advised he would discuss this issue with Chair McClelland for an action plan.

S-358 Communications Unit Leader Re-Write – Brent Finster advised that the course is now out for field review with comments back to NWCG by the end of May.

NIMS All-Hazard Communications Unit Leader – Brent Finster advised that DHS finally has approved the training curriculum. The first training courses will be held in Seattle for those doing the 2010 Winter Olympics and in Denver for the Democratic National Convention. California training is being organized now with probable deployment by late summer or fall. In addition, an Incident Communications Awareness on-line course is being developed to help educate all first responders in communications interoperability issues.

VCALL Narrowband Interoperability Channel Limitation – No one from OES Telecommunications was present, so the status of the dissemination of this safety information to fire and law enforcement agencies via the OES process was unknown.

Use of Unauthorized Tactical Nets – This issue was discussed at the National Logistics Workshop in February and the IMT meetings in April with the aspects of education and enforcement being emphasized.

National Logistics Workshop – This workshop was held in Reno, Nevada the end of March, had excellent attendance and the leadership received much positive feedback. Separate minutes of the NLW were made available by email. Many of the FCSG issues and positions are nationwide issues. For additional information, contact Rick Smith or Kody Kerwin.

New Business

Air Operations Issues – John Finnerty, representing the FIRESCOPE Aviation Specialist Group, brought forward two agenda items that he wanted input on from the Communications Specialist Group. The first was the establishment of a statewide or nationwide "Incident Guard Frequency". The draft issue paper prepared by the Aviation Specialist Group described the need for an AM "Victor" Air-to-Air frequency that could be used by all civilian and most military aircraft as a calling frequency when arriving into the area of an incident. After much discussion, regarding both the need and potential options, it was suggested that more work needs to be done on building a case for a nationwide

assignment of a frequency by the FCC for this use. FCSG was supportive of the concept. It was suggested that this should not be called a "guard" frequency as it may cause additional confusion with the emergency guard channel (121.5000 MHz.), AIR GUARD (168.6250 Mhz.) and the CDF Air-to-Ground channel (151.2200 MHz.) that is loaded into one of the guard slots in the CALFIRE aviation VHF FM radio. Perhaps the term "contact channel" might be considered. Finnerty will take the bullet points back to his group for further discussion.

The second item brought forth from the Aviation Specialist Group was FCSG input on a draft Issue Paper entitled "Communications Equipment Guidelines for Helicopters". The FCSG recommended that any public safety helicopter (including law enforcement aircraft) be encouraged to have a VHF FM radio for interoperability purposes. In addition, it was suggested that the Aviation Specialist Group consider refraining from discussing any specific frequency bands or technology in the document and to consider the deletion of an included compilation of communications equipment guidelines into a single FIRESCOPE document, due to liability concerns as well as the ability to maintain the information as current and accurate.

Finnerty was advised that the FCSG would like to continue discussions on these and any future issues to ensure that a positive relationship is maintained by the two Groups.

AB2185 – Don Root led a discussion about Assembly Bill 2185. There are concerns about this Bill as it currently reads in regards to potentially overreaching standards placed on local governments. In addition, Root advised that AB38 which would merge the Office of Emergency Services with the Office of Homeland Security passed out of Committee.

Dedicated Air-to-Ground Channel – A question was posed by the EMS Air Medical Task Force regarding the need to identify a statewide predetermined air-to-ground frequency. A flurry of emails ensued since February on the topic and the resolution in the email, confirmed by those present, was that CALCORD was the best, most obvious channel for this usage. Don Root and Brent Finster advised that they had already started work within CALSIEC to lobby that one of the primary functions of CALCORD is to be a daily air-to-ground channel (primarily EMS) for helispot coordination. OES Fire & Rescue (via an email) and FCSG re-affirmed that the use of a WHITE channel for landing an EMS helicopter was inappropriate.

CRT/CAT Teams – Brent Finster described a presentation that Rick Smith had done on the Southwest Region Communications Advance Teams during the National Logistics Workshop. Finster stated that he had contacted Bianca Juganaru from the Southwest Region to get a copy of the PowerPoint and to discuss whether the CAT was formalized in their mobilization guide. She provided the requested document and stated that CATs were indeed included in the newest version of the mob guide. Don Stabler advised that CalChiefs was still encouraging the formation of CRT Teams (to include an Incident Dispatcher) with Operational Areas. Finster asked if there was interest in resurrecting this issue since it had been formalized by the USFS and Region V might be approachable on the subject. The consensus was that although everyone that that CRT/CAT teams were a great idea, the obstacles in getting them formalized in California were almost insurmountable (who pays them?, how are they ordered?, who tracks them?, and state contract issues surrounding standby pay)

The discussion then turned to the continuation of the problem that Incident Dispatchers are not formally recognized by NWCG 310-1, but those present thought that it should be. Several members again brought up horror stories regarding Radio Operators (RADOs) who were no more than warm bodies not qualified to handle even the simplest of situations. This then led to a larger discussion regarding the deficiencies of NWCG 310-1 regarding Communications Unit positions:

- COML does not require completion of S-358
- COMT does not require completion of S-258
- INCM should require a course not just a job aid
- RADOs should be qualified to handle duties/situations similar to how an Incident Dispatcher is trained to handle them
- RADO should require a course not just a job aid

Matt Nilsen volunteered to write a draft FCSG Issue Paper on the issues prior to the next FCSG meeting. There was discussion about whether these should be handled in a single Issue Paper/process or whether it was possibly taking "too big of a bite" to deal with all of the issues at once. The consensus was that at least identifying all the issues now would be appropriate and those will be able to make changes and improvements will do so at their own pace.

Other/Good of the Order - During lunch, attendees shared information regarding other issues and upcoming events.

Paul Clay and Sam Lafferty made the group aware of a situation in which a forest ordered a DGST (Dept. of General Services Technician) thru the agreement that DGS has with the USFS. Upon arrival, the DGST was assigned by the IC as the COML. Clay and Lafferty wanted to make it clear that DGSTs will refuse those field promotions in the future.

Adjournment/Next meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next FCSG meeting will be hosted by Oceanside Fire Department on October 15th 1300 to 1700 hours and October 16th 0830 to 1500 hours. The following meeting will be held at DGS Headquarters in Sacramento on January 20-21, 2009.