



FIRESCOPE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST GROUP

MAY 2-3, 2007
OES HEADQUARTERS - SACRAMENTO
MINUTES (Approved)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Tim McClelland welcomed the group to the OES Headquarters at Mather. Vice-Chair Peter Lawrence was absent due to a fire assignment. Chief Dave Stone representing FIRESCOPE was present. Chiefs Dan Drake (FIRESCOPE) and Tom Drayer (OES Fire & Rescue) were absent.

Members in Attendance:

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Chet Ashbaugh | Telecom. Manager | Riverside County Fire |
| David Bail | Telecom. Mtce. Sup. | State of CA–DGS Telecommunications (5/2 only) |
| Fred Buhr | Frequency Manager | USFS ISO |
| Paul Clay | Sr. Telecom. Trainer | State of CA – DGS Telecommunications (alt.) |
| Michael Dickerson | Comm. Supervisor | Ventura County Fire (alt.) |
| Brent Finster | Telecom. Manager | Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Assoc. |
| Kevin Harper | Captain | Kern County Fire |
| Chris Hinshaw | Manager | San Diego Sheriff/Imperial Fire Chiefs |
| Steve Hobbs | Captain | Santa Barbara County Fire |
| Kody Kerwin | Telecom. Specialist | Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Assoc. (alt.) |
| Sam Lafferty | Telecom. Mtce. Sup. | State of CA – DGS Telecommunications (alt.) |
| George Lowry | Assistant Chief | State of CA – OES Telecommunications |
| Tim McClelland | Assistant Chief | State of CA – CAL FIRE San Bernardino |
| Matt Nilsen | Captain | San Diego Fire-Rescue (audio bridge 5/3 only) |
| Geoff Pemberton | Captain | Riverside County Fire (alt.) |
| Rick Robinson | Battalion Chief | Orange County Fire |
| Glen Savage | Telecom. Manager | State of CA – CAL FIRE Telecommunications |
| Don Stabler | Comm. Chair | CA Fire Chiefs Assoc. Comm – North |
| Hampton Stewart | Frequency Coordinator | State of CA – CAL FIRE (alt.) |
| Scott Wallace | Telecom. Specialist | State of CA – DGS Telecommunications (alt-5/3 only) |
| Gerry Warren | Sergeant First Class | State of CA – National Guard (alt.) |

Guests in Attendance:

| | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Chris Baker | Engineer | Roseville Fire |
| Jim Vell | Captain | Sacramento Metro Fire |
| Ian Wallace | Captain | Santa Clara County Fire |

Members Absent:

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Tim Henry | Battalion Chief | Fresno City Fire (alternate absent) |
| Lee Kraft | Battalion Chief | Clovis Fire (alternate absent) |
| Peter Lawrence | Battalion Chief | Oceanside Fire (no alternate designated) |
| Frank McCarthy | Captain | Los Angeles County Fire (no alternate designated) |
| John Moulder | CDO Coordinator | National Interagency Fire Center – Boise (no alt. desig.) |
| Denny Neville | Deputy Chief | Elfin Forest Volunteer Fire (no alternate designated) |
| Kevin Nida | Battalion Chief | Los Angeles City Fire (no alternate designated) |
| Sal Santangelo | Sergeant Major | State of CA - Army National Guard (alternate present) |
| Mike Sidlinger | Battalion Chief | Ventura County Fire (alternate present) |

FIREScope Communications Specialist Group (FCSG) Logistics

Approval of FCSG Minutes – The minutes of the January 2007 meeting were approved with a minor correction.

FCSG Roster – Updated roster will be emailed out to the group. Any changes should be emailed to bfinster@cccfd.org

FCSG Membership – Chief Drayer was absent, however, Fred Buhr was introduced who will now be the United States Forest Service Region V representative. In addition, Gerry Warren was introduced as an alternate from the California Military Department.

Agency Reports

FIREScope Operations/Task Force/Board of Directors – Chief Stone updated the group on the recent activities of FIREScope. He announced that the FOG was going to print July 1st and that the Task Force had approved the submitted Appendix A with just a few minor changes. <Subsequent to this, Hampton Stewart found an error regarding the narrowbanding of CDF Air-to-Ground channel. Brent Finster will work with Chief Stone on getting the last minute correction made.>

OES Fire & Rescue – Chief Zagaris was able to join the meeting and provide an update of OES Fire & Rescue activities including budget, staffing, and new equipment. Chief Zagaris advised that OES was in the process of deploying 1100 new BK GPH-CMD radios which include replacement of six OES Fire & Rescue caches, all portable radios assigned to OES owned engines and water tenders, US&R teams, and swiftwater teams. Chief Zagaris emphasized the need to have FCSG members share the information learned at these meetings with their department leadership as it will be a benefit to all if education comes from both the top and the bottom of our organizations.

Chief Zagaris also discussed the EMS use of the fire channels. He stated that private ambulance providers should not receive “carte blanche” to use fire channels. He stated that he knew that there existed some local agreements between fire agencies and private ambulance providers to use local channels and also the WHITE channels. He further stated that he did not have a problem with privates using fire channels in an incident environment with proper authorization by the Communications Unit Leader or IC.

OES Telecommunications – George Lowry updated the group on OES Telecommunications activities including the laser engraving of the BK radios that Chief Zagaris spoke about, procurement and deployment of the six mobile interoperability gateways project (PSRSPC), and work with CALSIEC on development of the California Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (CalSCIP) which is due to DHS on September 30th.

CAL FIRE – Glen Savage updated the group on CAL FIRE radio reprogramming which is in progress. State contracts for Midland radios were approved and final acceptance testing of Daniels repeaters is underway. Local Government agencies may purchase using the state contracts. The CAL FIRE Communications Planning Group (COMPLAG) will be reinstated with a meeting May 30th. There will be several changes to the way in which COMPLAG operates under the new leadership. Savage stated that the Cache BK EPH radios will be changed out to GPH-CMD radios as soon as funding issues are resolved.

National Interagency Fire Center/National Interagency Incident Communications Division – No report as John Moulder was absent. However, Fred Buhr stated that he had heard that the starter systems were moving to Redding and that there would be nothing pre-positioned at the Ontario cache. After a phone call to NIFC and a discussion with Chief Zagaris, the current information is that the seven 7390 kits will still be pre-positioned at various locations within California during the 2007 fire season. They will be rehab'ed by cache personnel in Redding. NIFC indicated that they are willing to incorporate

the 7390's into the national system and be responsible for them. FCSG members expressed concern that if that occurs, it will be more difficult to have influence over their needed pre-positioning in Region V.

FCSG Sub-committee Reports

FCSG Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) – CTAG Chair Chris Hinshaw advised that there had been no need for a meeting of CTAG as there had been no inquiries referred to the group. (CTAG group members are Rick Robinson, Peter Lawrence, and Geoff Pemberton.)

FCSG Training Group (COMMTRAIN) – COMMTRAIN Chair Matt Nilsen joined the meeting via the audio bridge to give his report. Nilsen stated that he had sent out the training material and received no feedback from the group. There appears to be inconsistencies in the way in which personnel have been entered into ROSS as some agencies have entered qualifications not consistent with the requirements of CICCS. Nilsen would like to know if the group has input on the number of COML, COMT, etc. training that should be provided statewide in 2008. FCSG group members should email Nilsen if they have needs within their organization for this type of training. Reminder to check the website www.radio.nifc.gov for updated training information pertaining to certain model radios used by the fire service. He stated that he needed direction as to how to post the training information (templates, lesson plans, etc.) so that it can be used by agencies. Nilsen will forward it to Brent Finster for posting. (The COMMTRAIN group consists of Pete Lawrence, Rick Smith, and Geoff Pemberton.)

Channel Advisory Group (CAG) – Steve Hobbs had prepared a draft document at the last meeting to be distributed through the OES transmittal system requesting Operational Areas to provide local channels that could be used for mutual aid during the first operational period. Chief Drayer indicated at the last meeting that he would take it to Chief Zagaris for distribution. As Chief Drayer was absent, Chair McClelland will follow-up with him to determine the status.

ICS Form 205 Revision Group (FCSG205) – Brent Finster completed the developed the instructions for completion of the ICS 205 and ICS 217A form. Previously, John Moulder had stated that he would post them to the NIICD website and initiate the NWCG approval process. It appears that NIFC does not have a close a contact with the NWCG process as originally thought. Chief Stone advised that he had been working with Chief Hollingworth on the updating of some other ICS forms recently and suggested that he be sent the forms for possible inclusion with that process. Brent Finster will email the ICS 205 and ICS 217A forms and instructions to Chief Stone. Finster advised that the new ICS 205 and ICS 217A forms have been included into the curriculum of the NIMS All-Hazard Communications Unit Leader course.

CALSIEC Fire Working Group

Interoperability Channel Nomenclature – Brent Finster updated the group on the current status of the nomenclature issue. In summary, NPSTC hosted a meeting in Orlando in February. The consensus at that meeting was 95% of what the California Fire Service proposed in its submittal. The representative from Wisconsin was the lone dissenting voice on the consensus. The NPSTC Adhoc Common Naming Task Group's Final Report of Committee was published and input was invited nationwide. Wisconsin and Tennessee representatives appeared to be campaigning that the original FIRESCOPE/CAL CHIEFS proposal was actually better than what came out of the consensus meeting. The team members believed that the process had been a fair and equitable one and that we had agreed to support the consensus at the conclusion of the NPSTC meeting. Finster had met personally with the representatives from Wisconsin and Tennessee at the National Governors Conference in Los Angeles last month and advised them the reasons for our support of the consensus.

Comments are due on May 20th to NPSTC. If no new issues are brought forward of substantial value to re-visit the process, the NPSTC board will vote in favor of the consensus proposal as contained in the Committee's Final Report on June 13th in Denver. Chief Penido had stated that one of the issues with the old NCC proposal from 2003 was that it had never been tested in a real world situation. In order that it could be proved that the consensus proposal would work, Finster had his staff perform a test with

several different brands of portable radios (BK DPH and Motorola XTS 3000) by programming the new nomenclature into them and then testing the channel names over the air. There were no problems noted. Although each agency from the California Fire Service may provide comments on the NPSTC website, a written statement from FIRESCOPE and CAL CHIEFS will be provided to NPSTC prior to May 20th supporting the committee's final report.

CALSIEC Representation – Chair McClelland announced that he would assume the representation of FIRESCOPE – South on CALSIEC replacing Kevin Nida. This change will clear up the confusion as to who is the Chair of the CALSIEC Fire Working Group.

PSRSPC 2007 Report to Legislature – FCSG discussed an email that Don Root had sent regarding some concerns that the 2007 Report to the Legislature made it look like the Public Safety Radio Strategic Planning Committee was dominant to CALSIEC in regards to who was responsible for interoperability in California. Don had emphasized that each state was required by the FCC to stand up a statewide interoperability executive committee consisting of federal, state and local government representatives. As PSRSPC consisted of solely state agencies, their involvement in statewide interoperability is limited.

Old Business

Recommendation-800 MHz. radios for Fire Service – Since Chief Drayer was absent there was no status report. It was noted that this recommendation was made in October 2004, if it is not going to go forward, it should be taken off of old business.

Travel Net – Glen Savage reported that the memorandum of understanding between OES and CAL FIRE regarding the use of CESRS as a travel net was on the OES Deputy Director's desk awaiting execution. Chief Zagaris indicated that he desired that there be some sort of mechanism put in place in which OES approves agencies to use CESRS. FCSG members created a draft of an OES Transmittal to announce the cessation of CA Travel Net and the use of CESRS so that it is ready to go as soon as the MOU is signed. George Lowry will take the draft Transmittal to Chief Zagaris next week. Lowry and Savage confirmed that CESRS will not be called "travel net" and that the simplex channel in radios that do not have the flexibility of a repeat/direct switch or button, will be called "CESRS D" with the "D" standing for "direct". However, the name in the CAL FIRE plan will be CESRS and there will only be one channel slot dedicated.

CTCSS tones for CESRS D were confirmed to be carrier squelch for the mobile receive and transmit so that mobile fire operations do not open the receivers of some existing users of the channel.

Per Savage, CESRS D may be utilized immediately, after receiving written approval authorization from OES Telecommunications. CESRS repeat operation will become available as equipment upgrades are completed.

Communications Resource Database – Since Pete Lawrence was absent, this item was tabled.

Incident Dispatcher Program – Don Stabler advised that was still taking the Incident Dispatcher course curriculum to State Fire Training for consideration of adoption and that he had not taken the proposal to the FIRESCOPE Task Force yet. He also advised that there were three upcoming Incident Dispatcher courses in Napa, Dublin, and Roseville. Stabler also advised that CAL CHIEFS had taken up the cause of the Communications Response Teams (CRT) that was supported but tabled by FIRESCOPE previously. Further information on CRT's is forthcoming.

S-358 Communications Unit Leader Re-Write – Brent Finster advised that the group met in Boise for a week in February and progress is being made. Unfortunately, NWCG does not want to be involved in any courses from a non-wildland fire perspective. Although the NWCG S-358 will involve training for all-hazards it will still be from a wildland fire perspective. The re-write committee meets the end of May to finalize the curriculum changes.

NIMS All-Hazard Communications Unit Leader – Brent Finster advised that the drafting of the NIMS All-Hazard COML curriculum is going well. SEARCH which was contracted by DHS to build the curriculum by mid-summer brought together the working group in Salt Lake City recently. An Alpha and Beta class is scheduled for Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office in May and two Train-the-Trainer classes are being scheduled for late June and early July. Finster was given to permission by SEARCH to share the curriculum outline with FCSG and asked that if anyone had any comments to get them to him immediately.

Review of FIRESCOPE Communications Work Products/Appendix A – The printing of the new FOG will be this summer with a deadline of approval by the BOD at their April 11th meeting. There was a discussion of a few changes that should be incorporated into the new Appendix A if the timeline permits a revision to what was submitted previously. These include elimination of the CTCSS tones on the receive side of the VCALL & UCALL channels, and inclusion that FRS radios may not be used on state incidents as well as federal incidents.

VCALL Narrowband Interoperability Channel Limitation - George Lowry advised that he will ensure that the information is disseminated to fire and law enforcement agencies via the OES process.

Incident Communications Conference – Rick Robinson brought the concept of a FIRESCOPE Incident Communications Conference back on the table. Chair McClelland asked for volunteers willing to work with Rick. Don Stabler, George Lowry, Kody Kerwin, and Chris Baker raised their hand. After discussion about success of last year's two FCSG-sponsored Communications Unit Leader summits in Contra Costa County and Los Angeles County, the value of having a one day meeting of personnel interested in ICS communications issues was evident. The one day meeting will be a combination of training, information sharing, and brainstorming. A date and location was proposed: Thursday, December 13, 2007 in San Ramon which is the day preceding the Northern California APCO vendor show. Baker will work on logistics of the venue. The new FCSG group hub site will be used to coordinate activities.

New Business

FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group Workplan – Tabled until the next meeting.

FCSG Group hub – Brent Finster introduced the group's collaborative website that is the same one that the NIMS Comm Unit Leader group is using. FCSG members are encouraged to use it for issues related to FIRESCOPE. However, he didn't want it to take the place of the unofficial information sharing of the CAINCOMM yahoo group. Contact him if you have any difficulties logging in. The website address is <http://FIRESCOPEComm.grouphub.com>

ICS Communications Unit Resource Typing – As Vice-Chair Lawrence was absent, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

Frequency User Authorization Agreements - As Vice-Chair Lawrence was absent, this item was tabled until the next meeting.

Need for Additional OES Mutual Aid Channels – Hampton Stewart explained that he felt there was a definite need for additional tactical channels for wildland fire incidents in California. The use of the OES 1 and 2 channels was discussed. These channels, according to the existing FOG Appendix A, can be used for an incident in simplex mode. Proper ordering and approval through the OES mutual aid system should be done for use of those channels. The use of the repeater mode for OES 1 and 2 is currently limited to OES Op Area and Regional communications centers. There is the potential for using them as additional command nets if details can be worked out with Chief Zagaris. Chair McClelland will open a discussion with Chief Zagaris regarding this possibility. Stewart explained that there might be some old IMTS mobile telephone channels that might be available for fire service use. He explained that he has done some research and found some possible options. He will discuss this further with Glen Savage to determine the best way to proceed.

Good of the Order

Denny Neville advised via email that Vice-Chair Pete Lawrence received the IAFC James O. Page EMS Achievement Award for his work with ambulance reimbursement issues within the fire service. Congrats and a golf clap for Pete!

Next meeting

The next FCSG meeting will be hosted by Ventura County Fire on Wednesday, October 17, 2007 1300 to 1700 hours and Thursday, October 18, 2007 0900 to 1500 hours.

