

**Communications Interoperability Working Group**  
**18 November 2003**  
**Minutes**

Meeting was called to order at 1304. There were no Public Comments. The 23 September 2003 meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made, seconded and unanimously passed.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A status of the 800 MHz hand held radio training and distribution was provided by CTDHS. It was reported that approximately 50 of the recently targeted 85 emergency medical services (EMS) personnel had previously received training during the April-May training sessions. Similarly 17 of the targeted 172 emergency management directors (EMD) had previously received training as extras without receiving a radio. It was also reported that several EMD/EMS intended recipients held "multiple positions" (fire chief, EMS, EMD), had already received a radio at a previous training session and did not want another radio. There was a discussion about the need to encourage the "dual hatted" people to draw all of the radios they were entitled to because they might not hold the dual hatted positions in the future. A summary of people targeted to be trained/receive a radio vs actual is as follows:

EMD	172 identified
EMS	<u>85</u> identified
Total	257
Recent Attendees	59 (not all rcvd a radio but attended for educational value)
Dual hats	<u>97</u>
Unaccounted	101 (best guess)

There is also approximately 25 people that were supposed to be trained/receive a radio in April-May that did not attend any of the session. Thus, there are approximately 126 individuals that need to be contacted, trained and provided a radio. There was discussion about the need to send a "last chance" letter to the individuals and/or their supervisor. The letter would be drafted by DPS/DHS, signed by D/C CTDHS or perhaps DPS Commissioner and given a broad distribution (direct mailing, e-mail, CCM, CPCA, CCFCA, CFCA). There was also a discussion but no resolution about who would conduct future training or how the training would be funded. Lt. Wayne Rioux offered to have his minions conduct future 800 MHz hand held radio training if future funding could not be identified to pay Eric, Mike and Bob. He just needs to be given the directive to proceed.

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A report on the status of the Control Station training was provided. OF the 140 primary and secondary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) identified to receive a Control Station and have dispatchers trained, 139 have submitted names; only Suffield had not yet responded. Training is set to take place the week of 21 November at DPSHQ. Dana Conover (OEM Operations Officer) owes CTDHS the names of dispatchers to be trained from the Millstone EPZ and host towns that are receiving Control Stations funded by a FEMA grant.

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The draft Communications Plan prepared by the sub-committee was presented. Chief Jakubson discussed the importance of creating a Communications Plan as a means to “formalize” the governance of the communications process; something that was emphasized at a recent NGA conference he attended. All were asked to review the draft and get any comments/recommended changes to Chief Jakubson and Skip Thomas NLT 12/1/03.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Some new requests for training and radio equipment were discussed. There were conflicting reports that Bradley Airport Fire Department wanted some additional 800 MHz radios and the use of the I-CALL/TAC system to be able to serve as a communications system between all of the state owned airports. Due to the conflicting reports and the absence of the DOT member at the meeting, the decision was made that the issue would be returned to Bradley Airport FD with a recommendation that they work their needs through their program manager, CT DOT.

Programming the Department of Corrections (DOC) 800 MHz radios with the I-CALL/TAC frequencies was discussed. Since the radios already exist the cost would be minimal (programming and training). It was decided that any consideration to add the I-CALL/TAC frequencies to the DOC radios would be limited to a few command staff units. The CSP will address the issue with DOC.

There was discussion about the need for I-CALL/TAC radios for the DEP Forrest Fire Fighters. It was decided that the issue should be handled with DEP before being presented to the interoperability committee.

A request from Chief Jim Walsh, leader of the CERRIT HAZMAT Team, to provide more I-CALL/TAC radios and Envoy in-suit interface units to the Regional HAZMAT Teams was discussed. The request was based on a need for HAZMAT team members who come together from different fire departments to be able to have a common communications system. There was a difference of opinion expressed on whether or not this would be the intended/legal use of the I-CALL/TAC system. It was decided that the HAZMAT Teams should seek a common communications system other than the I-CALL/TAC frequencies. Once such a system is chosen, then the proper Envoy unit could be purchased. Chief Varney and Chuck Beck will discuss with Chief Walsh.

The State Coroner expressed an interest in being able to use the I-CALL/TAC system as a result of his experience at the Bradley Airport exercise. After discussion, it was decided not to include the Coroner on the I-CALL/TAC system at this time. DPS/DHS will address with Dr. Carver.

Under other new business, it was recommended that the potential need to educate potential users of the I-CALL/TAC system be an agenda item at the next meeting. Potential users would include those who have already received a radio and training as well as the need for “dual hat” individuals to accept more than one radio. Another piece of the education could be aimed at encouraging the use of the system.

There was some discussion on the need to develop ideas and a budget plan (i.e. a Strategy) on how the State could obtain the goals identified in the Communications Plan. It was recommended that the Plan and the Strategy be developed in parallel to reduce the time to completing both. It was decided to defer further discussion to the next meeting.

**AFTER ACTION REPORTS:**

There was discussion on four recently held exercises/incidents and the use of the I-CALL/TAC system; Dow Chemical/Gales Ferry exercise, Ellington incident, Bradley International Airport exercise, New Haven drill. Each reported the successful use of the I-CALL/TAC system. Some reported some initial and/or minor problems. Coverage problems due to geography and location of repeaters were overcome by either shifting to another repeater or using repeated on decon trailer.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting of the Interoperability Communications working group will be held at 1300 on Tuesday 12/9/03 at DPSHQ. Members are reminded to review the draft Communications Plan document and submit comments/recommended changes to Chief Jakubson and Skip Thomas NLT COB Monday 12/1/03.