

Communications Interoperability Working Group
08 July 2003 Meeting minutes

Meeting commenced at 1300 at the DPS Headquarters in Middletown, CT.

There were no comments made during the Public Comment period of the agenda.

Eric Fine asked that the minutes of the 20 May 2003 meeting be amended to better reflect the State position with regards to providing 800 MHz control stations to secondary PSAPs. Specifically, in the second paragraph of the second page the notes indicated that “the State does not favor this approach.” The approach not favored was a statewide support of the secondary PSAPS as a 911 site as opposed to support to provide 800 MHz control stations to secondary PSAPs. The motion was seconded and a favorable vote taken.

Mike Varney provided a report on the 800 MHz hand held radio training “make-up session”. Of the 34 entities needing the training, 23 showed up at the appointed place and time leaving 11 jurisdictions still in need. Discussion on when/how to deliver training to the 11 delinquents was deferred due to additional training needs (EMDs/CEOs) that were to be discussed later in the agenda.

Skip Thomas provided copies of letters/e-mails from state agencies/associations (Civil Air Patrol, DEP, DMAT) that requested they be included in the 800 MHz radio training and delivery. After considerable discussion on the pros and cons relative to the purpose of the I-CALL/I-TAC command and control system the committee voted the following decisions:

- CAP - As a resource that would /should have an inherent communications capability, any need to plug into the command and control system would be accomplished by establishing a liaison in the operations section of the incident/unified command post.
- DEP – A request for an additional 11 800 MHz radios (5 for the oil/chem response team and 6 for the radiation response team) was discussed. After some discussion, it was determined that the oil/chem teams actually needed the CSP style radios vs the I-CALL/I-TAC version. MAJ Buturla indicated that he would work with DEP to provide the additional CSP radios to the DEP oil/chem response teams. The committee voted to provide the necessary I-CALL/I-TAC radios to the DEP radiation response teams. The question of whether or not the DEP dispatch center would receive an 800 MHz control station was also addressed. The DEP dispatch center is in deed on the list to receive an 800 MHz control station.
- DAMT- The DMAT team leader (Dr. Zanker) expressed a need for the DMAT to be able to use the I-CALL/I-TAC radio system during the deployment of the DMAT. There was discussion about if the DMAT needed to plug into the Incident Command cell during a deployment, 800 MHz radios could/would be provided to the team leader(s) once on scene much like the CAP previously discussed. Gordon Shand stated that the DMAT is being provided with an

internal communications system (radios) for use during a deployment by DPH. MAJ Buturla stated that the USAR Team will have a medical component and will most likely turn to the DMAT to meet that need. He recommended that the DMAT issue be tabled until the USAR/DMAT relationship is finalized since USAR will have an inherent communications capability. The motion was seconded and carried by a unanimous vote.

CPT Scott Martin raised the issue of training for the people that will now be getting the I-CALL/I-TAC radios; the new issues. Additionally, training STILL needs to be provided to the 10 jurisdictions that missed all of the previous training sessions. A training plan will be needed for the Emergency Management Directors (EMD) and Chief Elected Officials (CEO) targeted to receive the 800 MHz radios as well.

These questions lead into a discussion about the need to provide an 800 MHz handheld radio to the CEOs. Skip Thomas reported that OPM has been working the issue with Dean Pagani. OPM is confident that the Governor is willing to back away from statements made previously about the CEO getting a radio. The cover will be that each town will have received a minimum of 2 and in most cases more 800 MHz hand held radios all accessible to the CEO. Discussion ensued about what to do with the \$342 k requested by OEM and soon to be received from FEMA to purchase 342 radios (1 for every EMD and CEO). Chuck Beck stated that OEM could most likely “reprogram” the money with concurrence from FEMA. Or all of the radios could still be bought with 171 going to the EMDs and the remaining 171 used for other purposes; State cache, local public works, PD/FD shift commanders, etc. Near the end of the discussion, John Buturla stated that CT DHS had just purchased 300 more 800 MHz handheld radios using funds from the FY 03 SHSGP grant. The revelation led to additional discussion related to how the \$342 k FEMA money might now be spent since it would no longer be needed to buy radios. Several suggestions were made; improving the 800 MHz infrastructure, , additional handheld caches, etc. Consensus was reached that the 300 radios being bought by CT DHS should be distributed as follows: one to each local EMD (171), complete the distribution to the EMS community (60), increase the State cache (69).

The discussion turned to 800 MHz radio training particularly related to the training of the new people (EMDs, EMS, remaining FD/PD and perhaps CEOs). OEM has 175 copies of the video made during the inaugural 800 MHz radio training conducted at the State Fire Academy. The intent is to distribute the videos to each town/tribal nation to facilitate refresher training and/or the training of new employees. It was recommended that the videos be distributed to the EMD's as part of the 800 MHz radio training that will be provided to them when the radios are distributed.

The discussion turned to the 800 MHz control stations: how many to buy, where to distribute, training required to dispatchers. After some discussion, the list of PSAP and other locations was scrubbed. By vote it was decided that 140 control stations needed to be purchased to provide a control station to each primary and secondary PSAP as well as a cache of spares. The cost of the control station would include basic installation. It was also decided that any "custom" installation would have to be at the expense of the receiving entity. Training for the PSAP dispatchers could be provided by adding a module to upcoming training to be provided by OCET to the 1500 or so dispatchers on the new 911 system being installed statewide. The training sub-committee will develop the module. It was decided that a letter should be sent to each intended recipient of an 800 MHz control station. The letter should explain the 800 MHz I-CALL/I-TAC program as well as provide a list of equipment to be provided/installed. It was recommended that the letter be signed by CT DHS or perhaps the Governor.

The possible need to provide mobile 800 MHz radios to a select few who had propagation problems was discussed. Putting a repeater at Rentschler Field was discussed as well. Mobile radios were voted down. The DPS mobile communications van will be deployed at any major event held at Rentschler Field for the time being. The need to provide additional repeaters was tabled pending recommendations from DPS OCET on a statewide infrastructure (repeater) improvement plan. Mike Stemmler agreed to provide information on infrastructure improvements to the committee.

Under new business, George Pohorilak advised that a new 4.9 GHz spectrum was now available to any and all organization/individuals. Bob DiBella advised of the survey being conducted by CRCOG on communications needs. Keith Victor advised that the 800 MHz repeater in Massachusetts (MT Tom) seemed to be activated at all times. Chuck Beck advised of the FY 2003 COPS and EP&R Interoperable Communications Equipment grants that Bridgeport and Westport (respectively) have been nominated to apply for and compete nationally to receive. CPT Scot Martin announced that he was being re-assigned and would be replaced by CPT Tom Daverson and CPT John Herman.

The next Interoperability Communication Working Group meeting is scheduled for 26 August 2003 at 1300. The location will be either DPSHQ or Rentschler Field.