

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

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NMAC Correspondence 2019-02

March 21, 2019

To: Geographic Area Coordinating Group Chairs
Attn: IHC Superintendents

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Interagency Hotshot Crew Intra-Crew Communications

Intra-crew communications are an integral component of safe and successful IHC operations. Due to the limited availability of dedicated frequencies for intra –crew communications, logistical radio traffic was historically conducted on incident tactical and command frequencies. These frequencies became extremely congested with non-tactical radio traffic.

In 2007, the Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC) community worked with the National Interagency Communications Division (NIICD) and the Frequency Managers for the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to provide intra-crew frequencies for IHC logistical communications. Four “Common Use” frequencies were identified for the purpose, and each crew was assigned a Continuous Tone Coded Squelch System (CTCSS) tone used with these frequencies to isolate their radio traffic from other IHCs.

The following “Common Use” frequencies are approved for IHC use for travel and incident intra-crew communications:

- 163.7125 MHz (Intra-Crew 1)
- 167.1375 MHz (Intra-Crew 2)
- 168.6125 MHz (Intra-Crew 3)
- 173.6250 MHz (Intra-Crew 4)

All IHC’s have been assigned a CTCSS tone that must be utilized for **both** transmit and receive. IHC CTCSS tone assignments are reviewed and updated annually. The current IHC intra-crew tone list is available on the NIFC FTP site in the “Radio Management” folder. Access to this folder requires a NAP user name and password. To gain access to the FTP site, send an email request to Kim Albracht, kimberly.albracht@usda.gov, requesting access to the IHC Intra-crew Tone List. Once the email is received you will be give directions on how to request NAP access.

These four frequencies are available on a shared, non-priority basis only and will not be authorized nor are they intended for the exclusive use of any one agency. No protection from interference will be provided to any stations operating on the same frequency. The use of code squelch is required to reduce nuisance interference from other users. These frequencies are not authorized for use in radios above 10 watts.

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IHC superintendents are responsible for utilizing frequencies appropriately and reporting frequency issues to line supervisors and the incident communications unit.

- Use of the four intra-crew frequencies is not guaranteed on an incident. Frequencies may be unavailable due to frequency management issues.
- Frequencies will be utilized for logistical and non-tactical communications. All IHC's will utilize and monitor assigned Command, Tactical, and Air-to-Ground frequencies as required in the ICS-205, Incident Communication Plan.
- IHC superintendents should coordinate with the incident communications unit upon incident check-in. Additional frequencies may be available at each incident.
- IHC superintendents should coordinate with adjoining crews to limit interference.
- Interference issues should be coordinated with incident communications unit and line supervisors.

For assistance with the IHC intra-crew frequencies and tones, please contact Jose Lopez at 208-387-5858 or jose.lopez2@usda.gov.

/s/ Dan Smith
Chair, NMAC

CC: Geographic Area Coordination Center Managers
CC: Chair, National Incident Commander/Area Commander Council
CC: Chair, National Interagency Hotshot Crew Steering Committee
CC: Chief, NIICD
CC: NMAC

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