

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence 2017-30

September 5, 2017

To: Geographic Area Coordination Group Chairs

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Radio Equipment and Communications Situation

There has been a significant increase in communications equipment orders from the National Interagency Radio Support Cache (NIRSC) to supply the radio equipment needed for communications systems that span larger geographic areas. A variety of factors are combining to create this need, including fire size, spatial separation of incident facilities, topography, transportation corridors, initial attack responsibilities and an increased requirement for reliable coverage.

Due to the increased demand and numerous long duration fires, the NIRSC is now critically low on a majority of radio communications equipment. Due to this lack of equipment availability the NIRSC will no longer be able to support the following requests:

- Travel route coverage
- Second or third repeater requests put on an order prior to a Team arriving on an incident
- Requests for equipment “just in case”

All requests for radio equipment are being reviewed and prioritized at the national level so that the NIRSC can continue to provide support to all fires.

When there is a lack of radio communication, firefighters need to maintain situational awareness, conduct a risk assessment, and mitigate the situation by choosing alternative strategies or adapting tactics.

Mitigation measures can be employed when fighting fire in areas with less than 100% radio communications coverage. Those include:

- Exploring alternative methods of maintaining LCES
- Evaluating risk, exposure and consequences
- Changing existing repeater locations to increase coverage capabilities
- Modifying tactics
- Assigning human repeaters

To ensure that the NIRSC can continue its mission of providing safe, reliable communications equipment in support of all ongoing incidents, Incident Management Teams **must immediately return** radio equipment not currently in use. All radio equipment should be returned to the NIRSC **expedited overnight**. Do not ship “next business day,” or via any other conveyance that will delay transportation of critical radio equipment.

/s/ Dan Buckley
NMAC Chair

