



National Interagency Fire Center

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Area Command Team 4 Briefing Paper

Date: August 30, 2005

Action Item 9

Name: Workload Analysis

Issue/Topic: A review is needed of current workload capacity of maintenance, training and management of radio system to determine level of support required is available.

Indicators of Need for Action: Some of the Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) findings addressed the level of maintenance occurring on the existing radio systems. FAST indicated that many users did not have their radios maintained on a regular basis. Some of the SAFENETs indicated that there were lengthy delays on getting radios back that were sent in for repairs.

Key Points:

- In speaking with personnel from the National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD), recommendations surfaced to send radio technicians to the field to help program radios or to have all radios returned on an annual basis for a “tune-up”, and to ensure the radios had the proper programming and software.
- Some of the comments had to do with the move within the U.S. Forest Service to have the Information Services Office (ISO) coordinate and make repairs for all radio equipment. Several personnel did not believe the ISO was able to carry out their mission requirements.
- The issues related to maintenance, training and management of radio systems are interagency problem since the owners of the radio systems must determine what their own capacity is to handle maintenance issues. The solutions agencies have found and implemented range from having fully staffed radio shops with diagnostic equipment and technicians, to those who use contractors to keep their radios maintained.
- Some contractors and cooperators have no radio maintenance program.

Proposed Action Description: Each agency determines how radios will be tuned-up and maintained. The agency is responsible for their own maintenance and their requirements depend on how many radios and repeaters the agency owns. Most agencies have a person responsible for communications management and this individual could work with their local radio shop and technicians to write a plan to have radios brought in from the field for annual maintenance.

This interagency issue that is addressed by an executive committee formed to deal with communication issues. Agencies determine level of support needed based on the expected workload. Agencies develop alternative plans if their level of support falls short of the needs. This

could include interagency sharing of radio technicians or the use of contractors and private industry repair shops. Any additional costs must be planned for and borne by the agencies.

Agencies write their own protocols regarding having radios repaired and maintained and distributing the protocols to their users. Field personnel have an understanding of how to report problems, whom to call, and what to do when their radios need to be repaired.