Homeland Security

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ICTAP Bulletin

Connecting First Responders, Keeping America Safe

The Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) provides free technical assistance to enhance interoperable communications among Federal, State, and local emergency responders and public safety officials in cities and States that have received grants from the Office of Grants and Training (G&T) in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Preparedness Directorate.

Interoperable Communications
ICTAP
Technical Assistance Program

February 2006

February Highlights

TICPs Submitted: Denver and San Diego submitted their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICP).

Workshops: ICTAP held 17 workshops during the month of February.

New Sites: Orange County, CA, and the State of West Virginia held kick-off meetings this month.

Functional Exercises: Honolulu and Fresno held successful functional exercises to test their TICPs. [See article for more information.]

HONOLULU AND FRESNO HOLD SUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONAL EXERCISES

ICTAP conducted two communications-based Functional Exercises (FE) in February. The Fresno Urban Area (UA) exercise, held on February 9, tested interoperable communications during a mock terrorism scenario involving attacks on Bulldog Stadium at California State University-Fresno and on a commercial truck stop along a busy Interstate highway in southern Fresno County. More than108 public safety professionals from 88 Federal, State, and local agencies and private organizations attended the Fresno Field Functional Exercise (FFE).

On February 23, the Honolulu UA tested interoperable communications during simulated attacks on Aloha Stadium. More than 180 public safety professionals from 26 Federal, State, and local agencies and private organizations attended the Honolulu FE.

In Honolulu, area responders gathered in the stadium and were assigned to teams composed of various agencies and

disciplines. Similar to a Tabletop Exercise (TTX), the first responders met in a room to test the UA's Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP); however, during the FE, the on-scene responders communicated using actual interoperable communications equipment. The participants worked with any of four regional communication centers and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to respond to the attacks on Aloha Stadium.

Honolulu, HI EOC

During the FFE in Fresno, area responders assembled in the field at the two scenes of attack and were assigned to various roles as the incidents developed. On-scene responders utilized actual equipment to communicate with the ten regional communication centers, as well as their own local dispatch centers, for agencies outside of the immediate incident scenes.

Public safety professionals in the Honolulu and Fresno UAs were able to successfully utilize numerous communications systems they would need to respond to and mitigate the disaster scenario. The exercise tested the area's response against their draft TICPs. Responders also benefited from the opportunity to access the National Incident Management System (NIMS), to use new and existing interoperable communications technologies and systems (e.g., mobile gateway devices, interoperable talk groups, etc.), and to learn from one another about the capabilities and assets available from other regional agencies.

ICTAP designed this Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)-compliant FE to accomplish three goals:

- To help prepare public safety professionals to communicate effectively during a full-scale exercise and an actual incident.

- To provide public safety professionals with a communications-focused training opportunity.

- To serve as an additional gap analysis following the area's ICTAP TTX.

As a gap-analysis process, the FEx identified several remaining areas for improvement in the

region's interoperability. These communications gaps will be analyzed over the next few months and a full After Action Report (AAR) and improvement plan will be provided to the UA.

Captain Flynn, 93rd Civil Support Team, leads the Honolulu UAWG .

The exercise served as a powerful and positive step for the UAs as they steadily increase their ability to communicate across agencies, disciplines, and jurisdictions in response to day-to-day incidents and large-scale disasters.

For more information on ICTAP, visit the program's Web page at:

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/ta_ictap.htm

For general information, contact the Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk at (800) 368-6498 or e-mail askcsid@dhs.gov.

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