



National Interagency Fire Center

3838 S. Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

August 11, 2005

Delegation of Authority Fire & Aviation Safety Team (FAST)

Situation Summary

Since the Federal conversion to narrow banding, the fire community has observed a significant increase in radio communications problems reported through SAFENET, Safecom and other sources. The reported problems can occur while communicating with our interagency partners on emerging fires, as well as on single agency initial attack and large fires. They manifest themselves in many ways, but unexplainable problems with individual radios or higher demands for additional frequencies/repeaters on large fires are the most common.

In order to delineate the problems our firefighters are having with narrow banding, and how these problems may be compounded when communicating with our state and local interagency partners, a Fire and Aviation Safety Team (FAST) is being formed by the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) to gather field data.

Objectives

The team will conduct field visits in the Northern Rockies, Northwest, and Western Great Basin Geographic Areas. These Areas are currently experiencing substantial initial attack and large fire activity, or historically have a high incidence of interagency fire response (i.e. the Sierra Front).

The team will examine the following issues:

1. Examine the rationale behind the recent increase of disproportionate pre-orders for communications equipment (repeaters and frequencies) by Incident Management Teams.
2. Examine the use of command and tactical repeater frequencies and determine, in general, if the use is appropriate.
3. Given the various system requirements (narrowband, wideband, 800Mhz etc), explicitly define the problems users in the field are encountering while attempting communications between responding agencies. Make suggestions for short term and long term solutions.
4. Determine what, if any, problems the field is having with the federal migration to narrow banding. Establish whether reports received (SAFENET) are a function of the hardware or a problem with the user.

Team Skills Required

The team will consist of a team lead, two communications technical specialists, one fire operations specialist, and one aviation operations specialist. The final team composition will be determined at time of dispatch.

Mission

The FAST is to conduct an independent assessment and evaluation of operational and managerial activities related to the objectives stated above. Initially the team will work out of Missoula, conducting interviews on fires there as well as southeast Washington and northeast Oregon. The second part of the mission will occur in Reno, where multiple jurisdiction fires occur frequently.

The team may determine visits to other incidents/organizations/operations are appropriate, and may do so after communicating with NMAC and the appropriate agency representative.

The FAST is to provide technical or managerial assistance when requested and where necessary to immediately correct an identified, critical problem.

Protocols

The FAST will organize and conduct an entry briefing with the appropriate managers of the locations/incidents previously identified. The entry briefing will outline the objectives and operational parameters of the mission.

Once the mission is completed, the FAST will organize and conduct an exit briefing with the same officials or their designees, during which a draft of the mission-segment report will be presented and discussed. Components of this report will include the following:

MISSION SEGMENT REPORT OUTLINE

- Purpose and Objectives
- Introduction
- Methods and Procedures
- Analysis
- Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations
- Follow-up Actions Needed
 - Immediate
 - Long-term
 - Scope [local, area, national]
- A copy of the Delegation of Authority (DOA)

The FAST will contact the GMAC Coordinator or designated official _____.

The FAST will provide a final written report to the GMAC Coordinator or designated official and NMAC Chair upon completion of the mission. This report will include:

FAST FINAL REPORT OUTLINE

- Executive Summary
 - Purpose and Objectives
 - Summary (Findings, Recommendations, Commendations, Assistance Provided)
 - Critical and Immediate Follow-up Actions Required
- Introduction
- Methods and Procedures

- Mission Segments (Summary of Incidents, Organizations, Operations Reviewed. Include copies of Mission Segment Reports.
- Analysis
- Findings and Trends, Commendations, and Recommendations
- Follow-up Actions Needed
 - Immediate
 - Long-term
 - Scope [local, area, national]
- A copy of the DOA

The NMAC Group hereby charters and delegates the preceding authority to John Gould/Paul Hefner, FAST Co-Leaders, effective on 8/11/05.

Don Artley
Chair, NMAC