



National Interagency Fire Center

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Boise, Idaho 83705

Area Command Team 4 Briefing Paper

Date: August 30, 2005

Action Item 7

Name: Radio Technical Support

Issue/Topic: Current National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) training curriculum is not adapting to meet today's rapidly changing electronics technology. Communication Unit Leaders (COML) need to enhance their knowledge of the latest electronics technology. COMLs are not provided the equipment, hardware, and instructions to program all the radios that are currently being used.

Indicators of Need for Action: COML's are challenged by programming and maintaining the variety of radio types and brands and repeaters that are being used in wildland fire. Six different brands of handheld radios are in service and numerous brands of radio consoles, repeaters, and mobiles are also being used. It has become a daunting task to obtain knowledge and skill base for these radio systems without additional training. COMLs, once on an incident, are not provided equipment to program the all of brands of radios.

Key Points:

- COML are not receiving additional communication training after initially becoming qualified. Current NWCG training does not include training on the radios that are now being used in wildland fire.
- COMLs are not provided with the required programming equipment, hardware, or instructions on the radios that are being used. S-358 will be revised in 2006 and S-258 will be revised in 2007.

Proposed Action Description: NWCG develops a biannual communications refresher for all COML. S-358 and S-258 revisions should include hands-on training on all the radios that are currently being used in wildland fire.

To keep pace with technology, the courses are revised on a shorter cycle, five years instead of 10 years. NWCG develops a 400 level training for COML. This training would include in-depth training on the various repeaters, radios, etc. The NIICD should provide all required programming equipment, hardware, and instructions in the Incident Management Team Communications Kit (estimated cost of \$4000 per kit).