

Southwest Coordination Center

Operations Guide

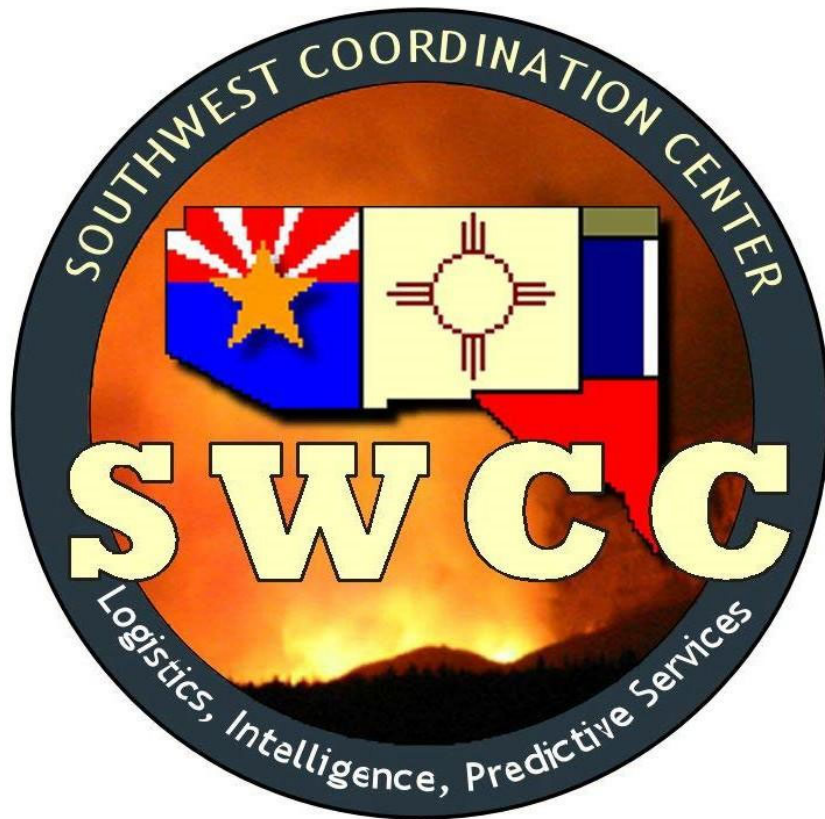


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**** The SWCC Operations Guide and Appendices are updated and bound on an as needed basis as procedures or information changes, not necessarily on an annual basis****

LAST UPDATED May 2019

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Welcome to the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC). SWCC is an interagency office with permanent staff from five of the Federal Land Management Agencies as well as NM State.

We have developed this guide to assist you in making the adjustment from your home unit to our operation, and to inform agencies and offices about our basic operating procedures. This publication will address the overall operations of SWCC. Questions about the individual desk operations and shift schedules can be answered by your Supervisor or in the individual desk operations guides (see appendices).

Our goal in the Southwest Area is to provide the best service possible to the firefighter on the ground. You will be a very important part of that service during your assignment here. Your suggestions and experience will make a valuable contribution to our operation. We expect you to take the “extra step” to support the folks on the ground.

We appreciate your willingness to be a part of our organization. We trust that your assignment here will be a safe, enjoyable, and productive experience.

Kenan Jaycox
Center Manager
Southwest Coordination Center

Southwest Coordination Center Briefing Paper

- Obtain Detailer's Checklist (Check-in/Check-out).
- Always ask if you are unsure of the "chain of command." Ask questions to your Supervisory Dispatcher (EDSP) first (if present). The EDSP can assist you or bring the question or issue to the Coordinator on Duty (COD).
- Coordinate with your supervisor on breaks and lunch times so as to minimize the number of people gone at once.
- All desks are required to document related incident activity in the Firenet Daily Logs or the ROSS program. Although every phone call may not require documentation, most phone calls related to a specific request or desk function need to be documented appropriately.
- Internet searching is allowed. However, downloading of games, screensavers, or other freeware is strictly prohibited. Streaming of videos, music, or other types of media for non-official business is prohibited. These types of activities are the cause of computer problems and slowness and can prevent other programs from functioning properly.
- Review the "Neighborhood Agreement" – See Section 30.2
- Do not place requests to a neighbor of the requesting office without first checking to see if they have already shopped their neighbors. This will avoid us duplicating efforts. Use of the Neighborhood Agreement by the local centers is not a requirement. Often the order will be placed with SWCC without having shopped their neighbors first.
- All Name Requests must be approved by the COD. Print out the request only if the COD requests you to do so (the single request only, not the entire incident). The COD will report back to you on how to proceed.
- Use the SWCC Request Tracking Sheet to document all Overhead and Equipment requests placed to other centers to ensure timely response (fills/UTF, etc).
- Notify your EDSP or COD of any Overhead Group orders (Incident Management Teams, Buying Teams, Wildland Fire Modules, etc).
- When participating in daily briefings, stand up and speak loudly enough so that others may hear you. Give an overview of the request activity you have experienced since last briefing.
- If no offices show availability for a request, notify the EDSP or COD and they will advise you whether to place to NICC or UTF. Ask the ordering unit if they want the request placed up to NICC.

Southwest Area Coordination Center OFFICE OPERATIONS GUIDE

10 GENERAL

10.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Southwest Area Coordination Center (SWCC) Office Operations Guide is to define roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures for the office.

Standard Operating procedures for each functional area can be found in the appendices of this document.

10.2 SOUTHWEST COORDINATION CENTER MISSION

To promote safe, efficient, cost-effective fire and aviation management support operations through interagency cooperation and standardized procedures, and to be equally responsive to all the agencies we serve.

The Southwest Coordination Center will:

- **Serve the Dispatch Centers.**
- Identify the “quickest and most cost effective” resource regardless of boundary, and utilize as appropriate.
- Provide timely communications on information and decisions that affect the interagency community.
- Give all agencies equal considerations to fill resource requests.
- Move personnel, aircraft, supplies, and equipment throughout the Southwest, and to other geographic areas to meet incident and preparedness needs.
- Monitor status on teams, overhead, crews, equipment, and supplies, and fill requests based on priorities in multiple fire/non-fire situations.
- Collect and distribute intelligence concerning the national/area fire/non-fire situation.
- Provide customers with timely and accurate predictive services products related to weather, fuel conditions, and fire behavior.
- Treat all of our customers with courtesy and respect, meeting their needs professionally, competently, and efficiently.
- Commit to working together in a cooperative, non-competitive way. Positive attitudes are always encouraged.
- Maintain clear communications between all agencies and offices.

10.3 FUNCTIONAL DEFINITIONS

Center Manager

The Center Manager performs general coordination duties for area support operations, keeping the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) informed of fire situations, determines priorities, and supervises normal fire activities. This position works directly with the SWCG and NICC Center Manager.

Deputy Center Manager

The Deputy Center Manager performs all the duties of the Center Manager in his/her absence. The primary focus of the Deputy Center Manager is operational regarding resource allocation decisions and ensures appropriate staffing levels for incident activity.

Area Coordinators

The Area Coordinators assist the COD and the Center Manager in making sure SWCC operations are running smoothly. Coordinators work with their counterparts at NICC as well as the other GACCs.

Coordinator-on-Duty

The Coordinator on Duty (COD) is either one of the Area Coordinators or sometimes a detailed individual that provides direct supervision to the Supervisory Dispatchers (if present) and Support Dispatchers. They are responsible for managing the overall dispatch operation, and act as a focal point for resource order related questions.

Supervisory Dispatcher

Each functional area of dispatching may have a Supervisory Dispatcher (one supervisory may oversee more than one function, depending on the amount of business). The Supervisory Dispatcher is responsible for the technical accuracy in the execution of resource orders and operational efficiency of one or more sections. This position performs routine dispatching duties, and supervises Support Dispatchers and Dispatch Recorders if assigned.

Support Dispatcher/Dispatch Recorder

The Support Dispatchers and Dispatch Recorders are the basic positions of the office. They sometimes work under the supervision of a Supervisory Dispatcher, but mostly work under the functional Area Coordinator. Their primary job is to process resource orders.

Predictive Services Group

The Predictive Services Group monitors, analyzes and predicts fire weather, fire danger and behavior, and fire management resource impacts across the Southwest Area. Predictive Services is a combined effort of the Intelligence and Fire Weather sections. Both provide input and analysis to assess and predict fire danger and associated fire management resource impact. This group works for the Center Manager under the leadership of the Predictive Services Group Leader.

Predictive Services Group Leader/Fire Weather Program Manager

The Predictive Services Group Leader oversees the functions of the Fire Weather Program. As Fire Weather Program Manager, duties include preparing and disseminating fire weather forecasts and briefings for the Southwest Area, providing meteorological input to Predictive Services, briefing the MAC group, acting as liaison to the National Weather Service, assisting in the dispatch of weather related resources, conducting training and research and development efforts, and maintaining the integrity of the interagency RAWS/NFDRS network. This person serves as the main Southwest contact to the National Predictive Services Center at NICC.

Fire Weather Program Assistant/RAWS Coordinator

The Fire Weather Program Assistant/RAWS Coordinator assists the Fire Weather Program Manager in all activities. Also, provides primary technical expertise for acquisition, placement, and maintenance of RAWs/NFDRS stations to assure a complete and quality fire weather/danger network.

Intelligence Operations Coordinator

The Intelligence Operations Coordinator serves as the primary Intelligence specialist responsible for the overall operations of the Intelligence function at SWCC. This includes overseeing various programs (i.e. FAMWEB, FTP.NIFC.GOV, NFMD, ROSS COGNOS, etc) as well as providing timely Intelligence related products to the wildland fire community. Products include, but not necessarily limited to, the SWCC Morning Intelligence Briefing, SWCC News & Notes, ICS-209 and Prescribed Fire Location Maps, Daily Resource Summary, Southwest Anticipated Resource Demand, ERC Charts, ROSS Reports, and Year-to-Date Fires & Acres Reports. In addition to provide these products, the Intelligence Operations Coordinator works with the SWA MAC Group providing reports and program services during MAC Group sessions, and coordinating and managing the SWCC and SWCG websites.

Intelligence Support Specialist

The Intelligence Support Specialist (INTS) is a detailed position whom works alongside the Intelligence Operations Coordinator during PL-3 and higher. Primary duties of the INTS are to compile, edit, and disseminate above Intelligence related products.

Fire Information Officer

The Fire Information Officer manages the Fire Information Desk which is seasonally staffed from March to August by detailing Incident Information Officers who are qualified at the Type 1 or 2 levels. The position is a liaison between the fire community and the local and national media. This position provides briefings to staff and visiting personnel and responds to telephone and e-mail requests.

10.4 STAFFING

During the core fire season, hours of operation normally are 0700-1900, 7 days a week. As activity occurs, SWCC will extend or reduce hours as necessary. During the early stages of mobilization it may become necessary for the COD or functional Area Coordinator to reassign dispatchers among sections until replacements arrive. Additional help will be requested to meet operational demands. Many times we improvise schedules as needed depending on what is required to support a particular incident.

10.5 TELEPHONE OPERATIONS

- SWCC's telephone number is **(505) 842-3473. ONLY GIVE OUT THIS NUMBER.**
- Each desk extension is displayed on the ceiling above the desk.
- To call the USFS Aviation and Fire Management Regional Office personnel or anyone in the Forest Service Regional Office, dial "7" and their four-digit extension.
- Local Numbers: Dial 9 + number
- Long Distance: Dial 9 + 1 + area code and number
- Speed dial numbers for each Dispatch center are at each workstation. To use, dial the three-digit speed dial number. For instance to call NICC, dial **609**.
- When the main line or an individual desk phone rings, picking up the handset or pressing the "Speaker" button will pick up the line.

- If a particular desk is busy with phone calls both incoming and outgoing, the HLog button can be pressed to remove the phone from the Hunt Group (incoming calls to the main 3473 line), thus making the line free for the dispatcher to make outgoing calls.
- When an initial call comes into SWCC, the dispatcher will answer it by saying “Southwest Area” or “Southwest Coordination Center” and their first name. In some cases it may be desirable to use your first and last name. (In busy months, there will be a receptionist to field calls.)

Example: **“Southwest Area (or Southwest Coordination Center)–this is Tony”**

- To transfer a call, press the **Transfer** button, then “7” plus the extension of the requested desk, then press transfer again or hang up. Each station extension is listed above that phone. You may also stay on the line after transfer is made, announce the caller you’re transferring and then hang up. If the call is transferred to your desk, identify the desk you are on and then state your name.

Example: **“Equipment, this is Tony”**

- If a call needs to be transferred to a person who is currently on the phone, you can park the call on their line. Do this by pressing the “More” button beside the digital readout screen, then “Park” and “7 + extension.” The second line that was parked will ring once they hang up from the original call.

10.6 FAX PROTOCOL

SWCC has two fax machines. The incoming fax number is **505-842-3801**.

ALWAYS make a follow up call to ensure the receiving unit is aware of the FAX transmission. Speed dials for all Dispatch Centers and misc. offices are on the fax. Other numbers can be found in the SWA Directory that is saved on the SWCC Firenet Drive.

10.7 COMPUTER USE

The computers in SWCC are on a US Government USFS network, which may be accessed and used only for official government business by authorized personnel. Unauthorized access or use of the system may subject violators to criminal, civil and/or administrative action per USFS policy. **All information on each computer may be monitored, intercepted, recorded, read, copied, and disclosed by and to authorized personnel for official purposes including criminal investigations.** Access or use of the SWCC computer system by any person constitutes consent to those terms. To login to any SWCC computer will require a LincPass (FS employees) or a specific login/password. You must also read and sign a Statement of Responsibilities document to obtain this access.

10.8 TELEVISION USE

Between the hours of 0700 – 1900, Monday through Friday the SWCC televisions will be off, unless it is on the **Weather Channel or a news channel**. Between 1900 – 0700, Monday through Friday and on weekends the channel may be changed with the approval of the COD or Supervisory Dispatcher.

10.9 CONDUCT

Each person working at SWCC is expected to maintain a professional attitude. The atmosphere is expected to be relaxed, functional, and friendly. **Each person is to be treated with courtesy**

and mutual respect. Please report any problems you encounter in this area to your supervisor immediately.

10.10 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

A performance evaluation may be completed for outstanding performance, poor performance or upon request.

10.11 DRESS CODE

The dress code at SWCC is casual. Appropriate attire will be worn. Clothing such as slacks, blouses, T-shirts, jeans and shorts (only on weekends) are considered appropriate. See through, low-cut tops, obscene T-shirts, short-shorts/cut-offs and provocative attire is not acceptable.

10.12 PHONE ETIQUETTE

Always be courteous on the telephone. **If someone gives you a difficult time, put them on hold and get your Supervisory Dispatcher or the COD to field the call.**

10.13 HOTELS, MEALS AND TRANSPORTATION

Detailers are expected to use standard per diem procedures. Detailers are also responsible for making their own travel/hotel arrangements, if possible. The FAM Staff (see below) may help only when the detailer is not self-sufficient. Detailers are allowed to change their motel arrangements at their convenience but should inform the SWCC staff of such changes. Make sure your room information and or cell number is documented on your SWCC Briefing Checklist.

10.14 TRAVEL

See the "Coordinator on Duty" on processes for making travel arrangements.

Fire and Aviation Management support staff, Scott Wolfe-Carlisle extension 3462 (Office Manager or acting) will set up the travel arrangements. Provide resource order and any other documentation requested. USFS Regional Office employees are normally required to use their Government Travel Card. We only set up travel for the employee if they do not have a travel card.

20 FACILITIES

20.1 GENERAL FACILITIES INFORMATION

- The front doors to the USDA Forest Service Southwest Regional Office are locked from 1630 – 0700, Monday through Friday and 24 hours Saturday and Sunday. Entry into the building can be obtained via a key card on the south and west doors. SWCC key cards can be obtained from your Supervisory Dispatcher or the COD. **Do not give the card to anyone else to use.**
- First aid kit is located in SWCC beside the north door and in the FAM administrative support office.
- The telephone number for the building security is 842-3710.
- The copy machine is located on the east facing wall. It is a color copier/printer; however, please modify settings to black and white or grayscale when color is not

necessary. Additional copy machines are located down the hall in the Technology Center, Room 147 and in the FAM Administrative support office.

- Security Guards are available for assistance and are staffed to accommodate extended hours at SWCC.
- No weapons are allowed.

20.2 EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

There is a workout room in the basement with many types of exercise equipment. Separate showers for both men and women are located in the restrooms next to the workout room. Consult your supervisor for approval.

20.3 PARKING & SAFETY

Parking for detailers is provided free of charge. The parking area is gated and surrounded by a fence. You will need a SWCC key card to enter the gated area and the building. This may be obtained from the COD.

The area around the USDA Forest Service building is located near downtown Albuquerque. As a result, the potential is great that a number of people will be walking the streets during the night time hours. Be aware of your surroundings. Building security performs periodic patrols throughout the building and parking lot. For your safety, the following is recommended:

- Use the buddy system if you want to walk from the office to the downtown area.
- If you are entering or departing SWCC after dark, have an escort with you to your vehicle and if available, park as close to the exit door, as possible. The office security folks will escort anyone to/from their vehicle if asked. Their number is 842-3710. Don't hesitate to call them if you feel uncomfortable.
- As you approach your vehicle, take a look around!
- When entering the gate, be aware of any vehicles that may follow in behind you. If this happens, report it to Security immediately. When exiting, be aware of anyone hanging around the gate to the end of the driveway.
- Report any suspicious activities to the office security or COD.

30 RESOURCE ORDERING PROCEDURES (GENERAL)

30.1 SOUTHWEST AREA ESTABLISHED ORDERING CHANNELS

The established ordering channels for the Southwest Area are graphically displayed in the Southwest Mobilization Guide and SWCC website. In addition, each desk should have a map depicting the Dispatch Centers, cooperating agencies, and boundaries. If your desk does not have this map, request one from your Supervisory Dispatcher or COD.

Remember, the Neighborhood Ordering Policy allows direct ordering between local units at all times, not just initial attack (see Section 30.2 Neighborhood Ordering).

All resource orders SWCC receives should be in ROSS. The only exceptions are when the internet is down (server/network problems) or the orders are for Initial Attack (Aircraft desk). The following are specific SWCC instructions:

- All documentation is done in ROSS and the Daily Logs. **DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!**

- Once a request is UTF'd, SWCC (or NICC) will not accept the same request again. The ordering unit shall cancel the request. ROSS will not allow you to cancel a request, unless the order was created by SWCC.
- Preparedness/severity/detail orders will be placed through established ordering channels in ROSS. A Detail Request form is **required** for requests that require commitment of the resource for more than 14 days or there are other specific requirements. Therefore, SWCC should receive the Detail Request from the originating office on hard-copy. If one isn't received, a phone call will need to be placed to the Dispatch center. **Do not** place the order until you receive the Detail Request.

30.2 Southwest Area Dispatch Center Neighborhood Policy

Interagency dispatch centers within the Southwest Area can engage in resource ordering via the neighborhood policy (excludes National Resources). The neighborhood policy applies to initial attack, extended attack, project fires, prescribed fire, all risk, and other types of incident ordering.

National resources (T-1 crews, VLAT, T-1 or 2 airtankers, T-1 or 2 helicopters, smokejumpers, etc.) are not part of the neighborhood and can be mobilized by placing orders through the SWCC. All Type 1 or 2 Incident Management Team mobilizations will be placed through SWCC.

The following table identifies the neighborhood for each dispatch center.

Dispatch Center	Can Order Directly From . . .
Alamogordo	Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Silver City
Albuquerque	Alamogordo, Silver City, Santa Fe, Taos, Flagstaff, Show Low
Arizona	Williams, Flagstaff, Phoenix, Prescott, Show Low, Tucson
Flagstaff	Williams, Show Low, Phoenix, Arizona, Prescott, Albuquerque
Phoenix	Flagstaff, Show Low, Tucson, Prescott, Arizona
Prescott	Arizona, Phoenix, Flagstaff, Williams
Santa Fe	Taos, Albuquerque, Alamogordo
Silver City	Tucson, Show Low, Albuquerque, Alamogordo
Show Low	Flagstaff, Phoenix, Arizona, Tucson, Silver City, Albuquerque
Taos	Santa Fe, Albuquerque
Tucson	Show Low, Silver City, Arizona, Phoenix
Williams	Flagstaff, Arizona, Prescott

- Dispatch centers may only dispatch those resources that are normally assigned within their unit. Dispatch centers may not reassign their neighbor's resource outside the zone without prior approval from the resource's home dispatch center.
- Although neighborhood ordering is not required, dispatch centers should attempt to place orders for available resources from their neighbors prior to placing orders with SWCC.
- SWCC may elect to terminate the neighborhood policy when competition and incident prioritization arises, regardless of PL level. All center managers will be consulted regarding this decision.

30.3 REASSIGNMENT AND RESOURCE ORDER TRACKING

A resource is considered reassigned when a resource moves from one incident to another. This can happen within a dispatch center's response area, between dispatch centers via SWCC or between GACC's via NICC. Check with your supervisor prior to reassigning a resource under SWCC's control.

30.4 DAILY LOG DOCUMENTATION

Each dispatch functional area and the Supervisory Dispatcher in SWCC will maintain all documentation related to a specific request in ROSS. All other documentation is entered into the Daily Logs on the shared SWCC Firenet Drive. Examples of documentation are:

- Any movement of National Resources
- Any significant incident activity
- Any departure from established Standard Operating Procedures
- Any messages relating to injury notification.
- Any significant resource shortages
- Planned aircraft movement
- Brief summary of shift activities
- Any follow-up or interaction with other sections

40 BRIEFINGS

40.1 Daily

At 1100 each morning during PL4 and above, the EDSP or COD will conduct a floor briefing. This briefing consists of updates from Predictive Services and Intelligence, Fire Information, Communications/Airspace Coordinators, Supervisory Dispatchers, Coordinator on Duty, SWCC Center Manager, and floor dispatchers. The briefing usually lasts around 30 minutes. All incoming phone calls will be held by the receptionist and a message will be taken, except for the aircraft desk during times of Initial Attack ordering or other critical aircraft mobilizations.

When asked to provide an update for your functional area, please stand and speak loudly enough so others can hear.

40.2 Shift

At the end of each shift, it is the responsibility of the Coordinator on Duty, in conjunction with the Supervisory Dispatchers, to ensure all dispatchers provide adequate shift briefing to the next shift dispatchers. An adequate shift briefing includes a general discussion of the past shift,

review of the Daily Log(s), and a description of each open order on the desk and any other pertinent information.

50 EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

50.1 EMERGENCIES

Immediately notify the Center Manager or COD when the following emergencies occur at an incident:

- ❖ Fatality
- ❖ Serious Accident/Injury
- ❖ Incident is threat to life and/or property.
- ❖ Toxic or hazardous materials incident of major proportions.
- ❖ Aircraft Incident or Accident

The Center Manager or COD will notify appropriate members of the Southwest Coordinating Group. See Appendix 13 for Emergency Notification Protocols.

50.2 FIRE IN THE BUILDING

- ✓ You should become familiar with the locations of the fire extinguisher throughout the building and this room. **The fire extinguisher is located in the hallway outside of SWCC (north door).**
- ✓ Know the emergency exit route and alternate route(s) you are to use. These are posted by the elevators. **Stairs are located on each floor.**
- ✓ If the fire is small and confined, like a wastebasket fire, and if you can extinguish it “safely,” do so. Use a fire extinguisher.
- ✓ If fire and smoke are not confined, dial 9-911, pull fire alarm and exit the building. **Refer to the Building Evacuation Plan.**
- ✓ **DO NOT** risk your life. If you cannot safely call from the building, go to another building that is safe from the fire to make the emergency call. Your first responsibility is to yourself and your co-workers.
- ✓ Leave the light switches AS THEY ARE. Turning the lights off/on could trigger an explosive to go off.
- ✓ First aid kits are located in the FAM office.

WHEN THE FIRE ALARM HAS SOUNDED

- ✓ First of all, stay calm!
- ✓ **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS**
- ✓ Ensure that you are familiar with the location of the nearest fire extinguisher (at the end of each hall).
- ✓ When you exit the building, **PLEASE GO TO THE PARKING LOT AT THE CORNER OF CENTRAL AND BROADWAY.** Do not stand around the building. If there is a fire, glass and debris will possibly be falling from above.

50.3 BOMB THREATS

All employees should:

- ✓ Keep work areas clean so that the possibility of hiding bombs is minimized.
- ✓ Be observant of unknown persons leaving packages or other objects in or around the building.

If you receive a threat via phone call:

- ✓ Stay calm!
- ✓ Document all verbal communication
- ✓ Use non-verbal signals to gain attention of supervisors
- ✓ Notify Security immediately
- ✓ Evacuate as appropriate or directed by Security

If you notice a suspicious package:

- ✓ DO NOT TOUCH.
- ✓ Notify your Supervisory Dispatcher.
- ✓ Evacuate area if needed.

60 Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group Activations

During times of high activity when multiple large incidents and resource competition are occurring, the SWCC Center Manager will meet with the Southwest Coordinating Group to determine whether to activate the Geographic MAC Group. Typically this will only occur during the higher Preparedness Levels (3-5). The MAC Group function is to assess the fire situation from an interagency perspective and make resource allocation decisions based on the latest intelligence and information from the Incident Commanders. The SWCC is responsible for implementing these decisions and the SWCC staff will be briefed by the Center Manager or COD after MAC decisions are made.

Typically the MAC Group daily schedule is as follows (when activated):

- 0900 - Conference call with Incident Commanders on Southwest incidents to have dialog regarding their fire situation and any critical needs
- 1000-1500 – Southwest Decision Support Group develops products to assist the MAC group in prioritization and various geospatial products
- 1200-1400 – SWCC Center Manager, Deputy, or Intelligence Section gathers any additional information and intelligence on the fire and resource situation in preparation for the 1500 Incident Prioritization Meeting. This additional information will be shared with the Decision Support Group.
- 1500 - MAC Group (with input from the Decision Support Group) prioritizes the needs of incidents based on specific threats to life and property, cultural and historical values, and threats to infrastructure. The SWCC staff is then briefed and actions are implemented (resource allocation, reallocation, etc.