

2016 SW Communications Committee



January 20, 2016 @ 10:00 am

Conference call notes

Conference call number: 866-814-0450

Conference call password: 2875001

Attendees: Scott Harness, NM-BLM/ Chris Romo, NMSF/Mike Spilde, AZ-BLM/ Tim Gilk, NPS-Intermountain Region

No representation from: BIA or US-FWS. USFS-NM Curtis Steinman and Ted Medina were unable to connect to the call.

The meeting was more than likely adjourned by the time they connected. Romo called and briefed them about the meeting and asked if they had issues or anything for the meeting notes (see round robin for their updates).

- On January 19, 2016 @ 2:20 pm Mike Tuominen, NIFC sent a group email advising that he will be in training tomorrow and will not be unavailable for the call. He asked the group if they needed anything from him prior to the call. There were no issues.
- On January 19, 2016 @ 2:20 pm Dale Brown, AZSF sent a group email advising he had an internal agency communications meeting & won't be available for the conference call. He was able to gather some input from the air ambulance company's pilot perspective. It would change their current tempo in AZ and the proposed frequency change will impact emergency responders in AZ since a good majority of paramedics/fire line medics and fire department resources will need their radios touched as well. Most all AZ based air ambulances are capable of adding frequencies in their aircraft but it will have to be sent out as a statewide notice that the change would occur. Also, this will not be specific to any one incident. The concept sounds great but it might have an unforeseen negative impact. He didn't think there have been any communications issues with emergency medical aircraft in AZ. One item to keep in mind is that all 23 air ambulance aircraft in AZ currently for the most part navigate towards the use of VMED21, and on a daily basis.

- **Conference call start time 10:05 am**

- **2016 SW Interoperability Guide**

Scott advised that he hadn't received any agency updated ICS-217's for this year's guide. Scott asked what would be a good timeframe for the deadline of this guide. In the past we had a December 31st deadline and submit to SWCC by

January 31st. The group voted to extend the deadline to mid-February 2016 and submit to SWCC Commo Group by Jan beginning of March 2016.

Also, Scott mentioned that he had received the SW A/G frequencies but not the map. Romo advised that Donald Griego, NMSF State FMO had put in for the NMSF air to ground frequency and it's in the process of getting licensed. They are awaiting an IPR approval to get it sent through. This was a request sent through Shannon Talent with NMDOH.

Scott tasked Chris Romo to compile the ICS-217's from each agency for the guide and have a draft format generated before the next conference call. Scott will send out a reminder to each agency pertaining to their updates and to include the deadline & submittal timeframes.

- **SWCC/SWCG Commo Group Tasks**

IDOPP is the only thing tasked to the group and the decision to move forward is still being looked at a higher level. The radio issue seems to be only a minor part of the consolidation, more critical issues like the cost apportionment seems to be the underlying factor. This will be a primary topic at the next SWCG meeting.

Scott said that the Taos Interagency Dispatch Center are still moving forward with their mover regardless of the consolidation and they are aiding in the radio issues with Ted Medina.

Tim mentioned that this proposed consolidation would be detrimental when it comes to people in the field. There are a lot of negative issue: what if the site goes down. They are also dealing with technical issues pertaining to NPS & USFS radio equipment. He is working with Eric Torres to bridge the gap between the NPS & USFS radio issues. Seems like the focus of the move with DOI is Law Enforcement aspect of things and it needs to focus on all personnel including non-Law enforcement types. He agreed that the field personnel and offices are going to feel the consolidation the most and the next step is to get further guidance from SWCG and the line officers.

- **Air Ambulance frequencies**

Scott recommended that we go with what we have licensed. The VMED28/29 is licensed nationally for our use and we have the RFA in place. Each agency involved with a significant incident and the IMT can discuss and utilized either of these frequencies during the incident.

Mike Spilde advised that he brought this recommendation from Region 2 to the SW to use these frequencies as a standard and a lot of States are utilizing these frequencies. Nevada and California are moving towards using them. Utah is still using VMed21. Idaho and Montana are using their own channel but are looking at using VMED28. We need to look at the entire SW as a whole if we are to standardize these freqs. and not just AZ. This is an RFA approved frequency and the national utilization is a good idea and benefits the SW.

Tim added that we must keep the naming scheme the same to the RFA license and not switch the name. Montana utilizes these frequencies but calls them by colors so VMED28 is called "Tan" in Montana. This is confusing for all prepositioned resources from other States.

Mike and Romo thought that VMED28 would be utilized as the primary frequency in the SW and VMED29 would be utilized as a secondary frequency in the SW like some of the other states are doing. Scott advised they can be utilized anyway you want them to best suit our needs.

Romo added if we do decide to adopt these frequencies in the SW a memo needs to be sent out to all cooperators that way they have and can execute the change. When the R3 tac channels came out it wasn't until the Interoperability guide came out that the info was discriminated to everyone. If we have a significant frequency change yes it should be added to the guide but also send via memo.

Scott mentioned that he has a presentation pertaining to the VFire28/29 utilization at the next SWCG meeting. He plans to address this highly at the meeting and give the groups concurrence. He will also send a recommendation memo to the SWCG concerning the air ambulance frequency's (VMed28 & 29) to be utilized in the SW area.

- **Round Robin**

NPS: Tim advised that the USFS & NPS are going back and forth with radio issues and need to come to an agreement and make it happen. He states that his NPS resources out in the field right now can't communicate with dispatch due to the frequency coming from the NPS site to the USFS dispatch circuit. These are DOI and USFS network security issues.

NMSF: Romo advised the group that as per the SW Communications charter we should of sent updates the Chair by December 31st. Scott added that there aren't a lot or any changes but will send out the Communication Committee list to the group for updates. There are no pending or upcoming radio issues for the NMSF besides the A/G frequency license.

BLM: Mike doesn't have anything new to report. Art Goldberg had another meeting he had to attend and couldn't miss it because he is the Chair. He is still keeping his counterparts in the loop as the Air Ambulance is hashed out. He is reporting to his separate SW committees that he is committed to.

NM-USFS: These items were given to Romo after the conference call via a separate landline call. Curtis was unable to connect to the call but said he really didn't have anything for the notes. He is currently working on the 217 updates and asked if we are using last year's form. Romo advised that we are using last year's form and Scott is going to send a reminder to the group.

Ted advised that the TDC move is still underway and they are planning on being in place by this April. They are waiting on the lease agreement. If this agreement is not ready by Mid-April they are going to postpone the move until the fall of 2016.

- **10:40 am/ Meeting adjourned- Next conference call date/time to cover 2016 Interoperability Guide review and any pending issues will be sent via doodle poll by Chris Romo (proposed dates/time February 24th @ 10:00 am, March 2 or 9th @ 10:00 am.**