



Arizona State Forestry Division
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions
Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico
National Park Service, Intermountain Region
New Mexico State Forestry Division
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
U. S. Forest Service



Date: February 4, 2013

To: Southwest Geographic Area

From: Southwest Coordinating Group

Topic/Issue: 2013 Air-to-Ground Frequency Naming Convention

Original Implementation Date: April 1, 2012

Last year, on April 1, 2012, the Southwest Area implemented a standard air-to-ground radio frequency naming convention as part of a nationwide effort. This naming convention utilizes a standardized frequency identifier (or naming system) for initial attack zone air-to-ground frequencies. Due to the late implementation of this procedure last year, this memo serves as a re-notification of the implementation that occurred last season and provides guidance in the steps necessary to implement and utilize this new standard for the 2013 Fire Season.

This is being done in conjunction with similar efforts in several other geographic areas. This will reduce the confusion to air crews as they transit between dispatch zones or between geographic areas, and will facilitate pre-programming of air-to-ground radio frequencies in aircraft.

For the 2013 season, the National Interagency Incident Communications Division Communication Duty Officer issued the air-to-ground FM frequency assignments and maps on January 17. There will be no Air-to-Ground frequency changes after that date.

Air-to-ground frequencies will be assigned a numerical name for the 2013 season (example: a given frequency, 1XX.XXXX, will be designated as "A/G 1" and all other air-to-ground frequencies will get an ascending numerical name). The ID's (frequency name) were assigned in order of frequency and not by geographical area so consideration should be given to the fact that one zone may be assigned with the frequency id name of A/G-13 while an adjoining zone may be assigned A/G-64.

The standardized naming of the air-to-ground frequencies will not dictate the priority usage of a frequency. If a local dispatch center desires to set a priority of which available frequency is used, that is a local prerogative.

Benefits

The standardized frequency naming will provide aviators a logical system where frequency selection is paired with the radio channel (assuming their radio is pre-programmed). The benefits of this will:

- Minimize the amount of radio programming while flying.
- Decrease the time it takes to cross reference frequencies assigned with those already programmed or to a printed frequency plan.
- Alleviate confusion when ground personnel are directing non-local aviation resources to utilize local air-to-ground frequencies.

- Have a method to cross check the air-to ground frequency assigned with the radio channel identifier (assuming that the radios have been programmed with the identifier) or with the local printed frequency plan.

When on an incident, the frequency name will not need to be repeatedly used by either the aviators or the ground personnel. The intention of the plan is to facilitate rapid selection of the correct frequency. Once on scene and communication is established, the radio user would use the frequency function, as normal, when sending a radio transmission (example – “Air Attack, Division Zulu on air-to-ground” not “Air Attack, and Division Zulu on air-to-ground 27.”)

The IA Zone air-to-ground frequency name pair information will be sent to SWCC, Dispatch Center Managers, Unit Aviation Managers, and Communication Program Coordinators. The frequency name pairing will be determined from the national list of IA Zone assignments. There are at least 66 frequencies. The frequency name will be a number based on the lowest frequency being number 1.

Implementation

The following guidelines will need to be followed by each dispatch center, local frequency coordination group, and operations personnel.

- Local frequency user coordination groups will need to set up their radio plans with the IA Zone Air-to-Ground frequency and name pairs.
- Unit Aviation Managers will need to include the new frequency plan into their Aircrew Orientation Guides, Unit Aviation Plans and functional operating plans.
- ROSS and local aircraft dispatch forms will need to have both the frequency and the corresponding name listed by function - i.e. Air / Ground - 27, 168.4275 tx/ rx
- The ROSS program will need to have the local dispatch center frequency information loaded.
- The standardized naming will not eliminate the requirement for reading off, by dispatchers, the frequency with the name whenever a frequency assignment is made via radio or phone.
- Radio Technicians can program mobile and handheld radios with the IA Zone Air-to-Ground frequency and name pairs. This is not essential, but would be beneficial for integration into normal radio use.
- Unit Aviation Managers will need to present the frequency plan, operations procedures etc. to aviation refresher workshops, and firefighter refresher sessions.

Enclosed is a Southwest Area Reference list of naming standards for Southwest area only Air-to-Ground frequencies and the updated A-G frequency map for the 2013 season. Additionally, the national A-G name id list can be found on the SWCC website as well as the SW version id list. Note: Fire management zone AZ-07 will continue to be utilized in terms of A-G frequencies and its respective geographical boundary.

It is important to note that, while each A-G frequency number is paired with a specific radio frequency, in some localities a CTSS tone will be required. For example, A/G-60 will be frequency 169.1250N for both the Prescott and Silver City Dispatch Centers. However CTSS tone 110.9 is required for the Silver City Dispatch Center. It is essential that air crews are aware of the tone requirements as they transition around the country.

Questions and feedback about the implementation and utilization of this naming convention can be directed to your agency’s representative or to the SWCG Operations Committee, or to SWCC.



Carl Gossard
Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Attachments;
2013 A-G Map Ver 2.0
2013 A-G Naming Convention ID Reference List-SW version -Ver 1.0