

Communications Interoperability Working Group
1300 26 August 2003
Rentschaler Field

Meeting was called to order at 1305 in the Club Section of the new stadium. There were no Public Comments. The minutes of the 8 July meeting were reviewed and approved.

The first item of business was the status of the portable radio distribution and training for local Emergency Management Directors (EMD), additional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel and any other key governmental or public safety officials. Members of the Training sub-committee reported that they had met and discussed the need for some minor modifications to the training materials and presentation. The discussion turned to the need to establish locations, dates and a timeline for the training sessions to be given to the next wave of recipients of the hand held radios. There are 171 EMDs and 85 EMS personnel that will need to be trained and provided a hand held I-CALL/TAC radio. Additionally there are approximately two dozen fire, police, EMS people that did not attend the initial training thus have not received a radio. Several possible schemes were discussed; five sessions (one in each of the OEM Areas), three sessions (one in each of the CSP regions), all sessions held in one location (DPSHQ Middletown). No decision was made. The training sub-committee was asked to draft a training schedule replete with location, times, etc and present it at the next working group meeting.

It was reported that 101 control stations are on hand (an additional 39 are on order) awaiting a distribution and training schedule. The idea of piggy-backing the control station training onto the 911 training to be conducted by OSET was revisited. Due to a delay in the 911 schedule and the most likely location for that training (SNET facility), it was recommended to not conduct the 911 training and control station training at one session. The need to prioritize both the distribution and the training schedule for the control stations was discussed. Again, the training sub-committee was asked to prepare a training curriculum, draft a training schedule replete with location, times, etc and present it at the next working group meeting. The need to make it clear that the installation of the control stations would not include any "bells and whistle" or any features unique to a particular location was discussed. The control stations are basically desk top stand alone units. Any desire to mount the units into a console or connect them to a system would be at the expense of the receiving PSAP.

The discussion turned to how to resource the training discussed above. It was reported that OPM does not have any more Byrne Grant money to fund the training (personnel hours, printing) as it did for the initial training. It was reported that the FY 02 DOJ/ODP Equipment grant is just about tapped out. CTDHS reported that the FY 03 and FY 03 Part II SHSGP/ODP grants are already programmed to be spent on other things. OEM and CTDHS will look at the DOJ and SHSGP Equipment grants to see if some money can be squeezed out. OEM reported that there might be some unused printing money in the FY 02 DOJ/ODP Equipment grant however, there is no money left in the Administration budget for personnel costs. There was some discussion on DPS/OCET taking the lead role in conducting 800 MHz training, however, there was no conclusion to the discussion.

There was some discussion about using the CPCA, CFCA CCFCA groups to establish refresher training as part of their annual/semi-annual membership meetings. The CPCA, CFCA and CCFCA representatives to the Communications Interoperability Working Group were asked to raise this issue with their organizations and report back at the next meeting.

Discussion turned to the number of hand held radios available and the demand for them. The e-mail summary distributed to members of the working group was reviewed. The critical information is as follows:

AGENCY	ORIGINAL COUNT	REVISED COUNT	ACTUAL COUNT
POLICE	91	91	102
FIRE	305	305	300
REGINAL FIRE COORDINATORS	0	36	36
EMS	121	121	116
DECON TRAILERS	0	126	132
DOT		15	15
SPARE @ VENDOR	15	15	15
SPARE @ DPS		15	15
SUB TOTAL	532	724	731
NEW REQUIREMENTS			
RADIOS for EMDs			171
RADIOS for ADDITIONAL EMS			85
RADIOS for ADDITIONAL DECON			72
SUB TOTAL			328
TOTAL RADIOS REQUIRED			1059
INITIAL RADIOS PURCHASED			761
ADDITIONAL RADIOS PURCHASED			300
TOTAL PURCHASED			1061
TOTAL UNASSIGNED RADIOS			2

The above summary does not include the hand held radios needed by DEP. It was decided that an acceptable immediate solution to DEP's I-CALL/TAC radio needs can be met by using the 6 radios assigned to the decon trailer assigned to DEP. However, it was also noted that it would be in the best interest to the communications interoperability program to purchase additional 800 MHz I-CALL/TAC hand held radios to meet DEP's needs. There was also discussion concerning the potential need to provide the radios to non-government (i.e. quasi governmental or corporate type) fire departments and security forces. After discussion which included the possibility of reclaiming recently distributed radios from municipalities that had their own I-CALL-TAC capability as well as asking DPH to add the 15 800 MHz hand held radios being purchased with CDC/HRSA grant money to the mix, the decision was made that it would be best to wait until after the current statewide vulnerability/capability needs assessment is completed before more radios are purchased.

There was some discussion on how the working group could facilitate the use of the I-CALL/TAC system during local/regional responses to “routine” emergencies. There have been several instances throughout the State where the I-CALL/TAC system could have been used but wasn’t. There have also been a few instances where the system was used. An approach to be pursued might be the use of newsletters prepared and distributed by organizations like the CT Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, the CPCA, the CCFCA and the CFCA and perhaps DPS.

The need to craft a comprehensive CT Communications Strategy and a CT Communication Plan was discussed. The strategy would be a long range view (a view from 10,000 feet) of what the State would need to do to have an integrated communication capability for the response to all hazards. The strategy would identify what the State needed, what it had and provide a vision for the future. A plan would provide the road map on how to make the vision a reality. The ensuing discussion included elements that still needed to be addressed by the working group such as improving the 800 MHz infrastructure, coordinating cross-departmental resources for efficiencies and addressing the tactical communications interoperability issue. Other pieces that might/should be included in a statewide strategy were discussed such as the Fairfield County I-95 Corridor Project. CONNDOT stated that they had a “white paper” that contains information about the CONNDOT communications infrastructure that would be distributed to members of the working group. The need to have the working group, or the next version of the group, officially “chartered by perhaps legislative action was discussed.

Before adjourning to tour the new stadium, the next meeting of the working group was set; Tuesday 23 September 2003 at 1300 most likely at DPSHQ in Middletown.