Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Topic: 2009 City-Wide Drill Debrief

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Date: Thursday, 05-November-2009, 19:30

Event: Cupertino ARES meeting, Orientation Training

2009 City-wide Drill Debrief

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Topics

- In General
- Communications Specifics
- Next steps

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Prep for the After Action Report

- 13 responses to email survey
- 55 responses to the web survey

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Feedback themes

Asked questions on…

1. Overall execution
2. Ark Team Execution
3. Comm Team Execution
4. Your ICS Section Execution
5. Resources & Logistics
6. Operating Procedures & Documentation
7. Interactions with Emergency Responders
8. Interactions with other volunteers
9. Interactions with the Public
10. Other Ares or Comments

Key Comm Themes on…

1. Message Handling
2. Staffing

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Feedback in general

What Comm Team members said…

- *"Net setup was very realistic… good representation of what really would happen."*

- *"Felt like a real event."*

- *"Identified problems that could really show up."*

- *"This was by far one of the most helpful exercises I've done… It felt less like a "Drill" and more like an actual incident, which helped force me to ensure my capabilities and thoughts were on task."*

- *Impressive. I never saw anyone with a dazed "what am I doing?" look.*

Feedback, Comm Team Execution

What Comm Team members said…

1. Communicators at all ARKs via the message net were very professional

2. […] and got into passing messages at 5 words at a time quickly

3. Field Comm teams worked well together

4. Messages were handled efficiently with no appreciable delays

5. The new antenna is great!... Was glad to see the setup demo

6. There was some chaos with message traffic on the message net, causing the field to get more organized

7. Good "templating" of the DNO message (fixed format)

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Feedback, improvement opportunities
What Comm Team members said…

- Need to resolve intermod on Tac 1
- Antenna blew over; need sandbags
- Missing antenna at Lawson Ark site
- Plenty of comments on
  1. Message origination
  2. Message forms
  3. Message numbering
  4. Message management
  5. Message passing
- Plenty of comments on staffing

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Message Handling
1. Message Origination

Issue:	Message from ICS was not clear
Description:	• I ended up writing messages for the CERT team; it made things easier to do the writing after understanding the message.
Discussion:	• What can CARES do vs. what Ark teams do? • Is there a difference working with Ark volunteers vs. public officials? • CARES gave on-the-spot training on how to fill out the message forms • Late change in the selection of the forms for use in the field, no complete training of the form in the field • CARES is in a position to "add value" by clarifying the intent of the message with the originator
Recommendation:	1. Visit and understand the content of an Ark to support a Comms response

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Message Handling
2. Forms

Issue:	Not all users had message forms, some confusion with their use.
Description:	• Message form was extensive with all boxes to be checked; overkill? • Paperwork for a simple message was as much as for a complex msg, even for short replies like "yes", "a count", or other simple answers • Message log has a small field for the content of the message. What should go here? • No forms at the Ark sites
Discussion:	• Confirm what messages need a "paper-trail" and want can be ad-hoc • Who's got the forms? Arks? Personal stock?
Recommendation:	1. Revisit the entire message handling process 2. Reconfirm the message form for City use 3. Develop a Message Log for all message handlers (Field, RRO) 4. Include Message Forms in Ark P&I boxes, or… 5. Create a Comms Box with forms, other supplies

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Message Handling
3. Message numbering

Issue:	Message numbering confusion with multiple numbers
Description:	• Field discussion that [operator] had to get message numbers assigned by EOC BEFORE [op] could send them. • Confusion that [came up] by assigning multiple message numbers (originator, receiver, relay[??!!] points to a single message) • The message handling and message numbering was too complicated and not what we have practiced in the past
Discussion:	1. Use single message numbering scheme per ??? 2. Message NCS assigns the Message number on passing a "message" 3. There was a Ark reason for some local message # associated with a DNO report 4. DNO data should have a control # associated with it (the essence of the Ark Msg #)
Recommendation:	1. Process definition sheet for MACs when they show up in Cupertino

Message Handling
4. Message Management

Issue:	Message organization at the sites
Description:	• Operating space was cramped • No tools to manage the paper generated during message handling (inbound and outbound); dealing with piles of paper, radios, cables, etc.
Discussion:	In/out-trays? File folders?
Recommendation:	Create a Comms Box with forms, other supplies

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Message Handling
5. Message Passing – Type

Issue:	All message types are not the same
Description:	• All messages were treated the same: formal messages as well as ad hoc inquiries resulting in too much overhead for passing some traffic
Discussion:	Message names: "Message", "Inquiry" (non-formal message)
Recommendation:	

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Message Handling
6. Message Passing – Process

Issue:	Ad hoc message content change
Description:	• Decision in the field to change DNO reporting covering a few details along with the incremental to cumulative counts. • Process change was not reviewed/approved by EOC, confused the EOC until discovered.
Discussion:	
Recommendation:	

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Staffing
7. Constraints at the EOC

Issue:	EOC Staffing constraints
Description:	• Resorted to the Message NCS and RRO assigned to one person • Inconsistent tracking of traffic requests from the field, missed follow-up, no message queuing
Discussion:	• Establish priorities for staffing • When single assigning 1 person to both NCS and RRO, must slow down and enforce both processes
Recommendation:	

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Staffing
8. Constraints at the Ark

Issue:	Ark Communications Staffing constraints
Description:	• Missing the IC, no Ops or Logistic volunteers • Ark Comm Team was asked to perform a Logistics task due to limited Ark staff (This is probably realistic) • CARES members responding to fill Ark ICS positions
Discussion:	• Do we have sufficient coverage to sustain our required staffing level? (1-SS, 1-NCO, 1-RRO, 6-Ark responders, plus any ISA coverage we may be asked to do?) • Look at other communications options – packet?
Recommendation:	

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Next Steps

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