

Auxiliary Communications (AUXCOMM)

Training Course

Unit 2: AUXCOMM Roles and Responsibilities



Homeland
Security

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Terminal Learning Objective Enabling Learning Objectives

TLO: At the conclusion of this unit, the student will describe the functions, responsibilities, and roles of personnel within the AUXCOMM function.

ELO A: Describe responsibilities of Auxiliary Communicators.



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2

AUXCOMM UNIT 2 - AUXCOMM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Enabling Learning Objectives

ELO B: Describe additional responsibilities of the Auxiliary Communications Manager.

ELO C: Identify components of the AUXCOMM "Go Kit".

ELO D: Participate in Exercise 2-1 SOP.



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3

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Unit Objectives

- This unit describes the general roles and responsibilities of Auxiliary Communicators
- This unit describes specific added roles and responsibilities of the ACM
- Recommended equipment to be included in the AUXCOMM "Go Kit"
- Participate in 2-1 SOP Exercise

Pre-Planning Activities

FAMILY

Preparation is required for your family before you activate/mobilize:

- Prepare family disaster plan so your family will be safe
- Home emergency supplies - water, food, first aid kit, flashlight, medications/prescriptions
- Evacuation – Routes and Locations

Pre-Planning Activities (Cont'd)

- Go Bag/Survival Kit - Ready on short notice
- POC (out of state) & phone number to notify & update status

Auxiliary Communicator Task List

- An Auxiliary Communications Manager (ACM) or Auxiliary Communicator will not undertake any task until directed to do so by their incident supervisor
- The list on the following slides contains possible assignments that could be tasked by an ACM

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

MOBILIZATION

1. Upon initial activation, obtain the following:
 - Incident name and number identifying the incident for tracking purposes
 - Reporting time and location
 - Verify communication gear requirements
 - Transportation arrangements/travel routes
 - Contact procedures during travel (telephone/radio)

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

2. Arrive at incident and check in.
 - Arrive properly equipped at the assigned incident location within acceptable time limits

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

INCIDENT ACTIVITIES

3. Obtain briefing from ACM or COML. Examples of items covered are:
 - Current resource commitments and expectations
 - Current situation
 - Expected duration of assignment
 - Operating procedures and policies (SOPs, etc.)



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10

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

INCIDENT ACTIVITIES

3. Obtain briefing from ACM or COML. Examples of items covered are: (Cont'd)
 - Task assignment
 - Work schedule
 - Work space



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11

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

4. Install AUXCOMM equipment per discussion with COML:
 - Use appropriate/approved AUXCOMM equipment
 - Install/test all components of AUXCOMM equipment to ensure systems are operational, for example:
 - Communications with aircraft (e.g., supporting Civil Air Patrol (CAP)) and other special needs
 - Links (radio and wire-based)
 - Remotes
 - Repeaters



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12

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

- Obtain installation priorities
- Cloning or programming radios

This list is not all inclusive; the Auxiliary Communicator is responsible for asking adequate questions



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13

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

5. Assist with distribution of AUXCOMM equipment by:

- Identifying kinds and numbers of AUXCOMM equipment to be distributed to specific units according to the communications plan
- Maintaining AUXCOMM equipment inventory to provide accountability
- Providing basic training as needed on equipment being fielded



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14

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

6. Establish Auxiliary Communications area(s) of operation:

- Coordinate location with ACM/COML
- Locate away from radio frequency and electronic interference
- Keep away from generators (ensure noise and exhaust from generators is not in close proximity to the operations area)
- Obtain necessary supplies to function properly



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15

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

7. Perform duties within the AUXCOMM area(s) of operation by:
- Directing AUXCOMM radio/telephone traffic to proper destinations
 - Documenting AUXCOMM radio/telephone activities on appropriate ICS forms
 - Following established routing procedures for AUXCOMM messages

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

- Identifying AUXCOMM system problems, both technical and operational, and determining appropriate solutions
- Setting up the filing system for AUXCOMM documentation

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

8. Coordinate resources by:
- Notifying ACM of personnel/equipment excesses or deficiencies
 - Identifying AUXCOMM resources as to capabilities, quantity, and location

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

9. Initiate and maintain accurate records of all AUXCOMM equipment by:
- Documenting geographic locations of AUXCOMM equipment and transfer this information to local maps (latitude/longitude)
 - Initiating and maintaining an accountability system for issuing AUXCOMM hand-held and mobile radio resources
 - Keeping records of AUXCOMM resources to ensure return to proper location



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19

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

10. Perform operational tests of AUXCOMM systems throughout the duration of the incident by:
- Acting decisively to minimize interruptions in system operation
 - Identifying and taking necessary action to accomplish minor field repair
 - Planning for battery replacement



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20

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

11. Interact and coordinate with appropriate AUXCOMM operational personnel by:
- Coordinating with ACM regarding system coverage and needs
 - Knowing what other AUXCOMM resources may be coming to the incident
 - Participating in briefings and other planning meetings when permitted



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21

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Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

12. Maintain ICS Form 214 Activity Log. The activity log will be kept current, legible, and will document all significant activities, which may include:

- Equipment locations
- Medical evacuations
- Personnel changes
- Meetings attended/briefings
- Personnel issues

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

DEMobilIZATION

13. Demobilization and check out by:

- Receiving demobilization instructions from ACM
- Briefing AUXCOMM subordinate staff on demobilization procedures and responsibilities
- Completing required ICS form(s) and turning them in to the appropriate person

Auxiliary Communicator Task List (Cont'd)

- Documenting lost/damaged equipment on agency/organization specific form(s)
- Ensuring that incident and agency/organization demobilization procedures are followed
- Submitting all required information to the ACM

Auxiliary Communications Manager (ACM) Task List

In addition to the Auxiliary Communicator Task List

1. Obtain and assemble information and materials needed for a "Go Kit" prior to receiving an assignment, including critical items needed for the assignment and items needed for functioning during the first 72 hours.

Documentation, such as local Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICPs), if available, may be provided by the local jurisdiction to the ACM and not to all Auxiliary Communicators.



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25

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

2. Establish and maintain positive interpersonal working relationships by:
 - Coordinating with the Communications Unit Leader and other Communications Unit personnel to share information and assure appropriate communications support is provided
 - Creating a work environment that provides diversity and equal opportunity for all AUXCOMM personnel assigned to the incident



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26

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

3. Provide for the safety and welfare of assigned AUXCOMM personnel during the entire period of supervision by:
 - Recognizing potentially hazardous situations and informing subordinates of hazards
 - Providing safety and identifying equipment, such as vests identifying the communications function, flashlights, and glow sticks
 - Ensuring that special precautions are taken when hazards exist



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27

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

- Ensuring adequate rest, hydration, and nutrition is provided to all AUXCOMM personnel
- Don't assign personnel with serious health problems
- Recognizing any special medical needs of AUXCOMM personnel



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28

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

4. Receive and review the Incident Action Plan (IAP) or Incident Briefing Form (ICS Form 201), if developed and available to Auxiliary Communicators from the COML
5. Determine requirements for communications to be established, evaluate AUXCOMM needs, and order supplies, materials, and personnel per incident protocol to keep unit operating



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29

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

6. Organize and supervise by:
 - Assigning and monitoring Auxiliary Communicator work assignments
 - Briefing and keeping subordinates informed and updated
 - Developing and promoting teamwork
 - Establishing timeframes and schedules
 - Following established procedures for reporting inappropriate actions



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30

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

- Using the chain of command
- Briefing relief AUXCOMM personnel
- Managing or delegating the responsibility to manage the AUXCOMM area(s) of operation
- Ensuring proper demobilization
- Distributing AUXCOMM documentation as necessary
- Notifying other AUXCOMM groups of assignments and communication information



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31

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

7. Participate in meetings with the COML related to formal ICS Incident Planning meetings as the AUXCOMM subject matter expert for communications needs, by:
- Determining the feasibility of providing the required AUXCOMM support
 - Providing operational and technical information on available AUXCOMM equipment
 - Providing operational and technical information on communications equipment and systems capabilities and restrictions



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32

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ACM Task List (Cont'd)

8. Design AUXCOMM systems to support incident operational needs by:
- Preparing a communications plan
 - Assisting with preparation of the Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS Form 205), as may be requested by the COML
 - Coordinating through the COML for any additional communication needs
 - Verifying Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) of personnel
 - Basing assignments on incident requirements
 - Setting schedules around operations requirements



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33

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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit”

Suggested “Go Kit” items:

- Personal Care
 - Cash (potentially no working ATMs in the area)
 - Alarm Clock (manual or battery powered)
 - Appropriate clothing with 3 or more changes
 - Personal items, toiletries, toilet paper
 - Insect repellent, sunscreen, moisturizer, and hand wipes/gel



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34

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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- First aid kit, medications/prescriptions
- Flashlight or portable lighting
- Extra batteries
- Keys (including site access cards/keys)
- Foul weather gear



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35

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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Sustenance and Shelter
 - Beverages (water) and food for 9 meals minimum
 - Snack items
 - Waterproof matches
 - Mess kit with cleaning accessories
 - Portable stove with extra propane tanks
 - Shelter (mattress, pillow, sleeping bag, tent)



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36

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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Communications Equipment
 - Pads of paper, pencils, pens, tape, sticky-notes
 - ICS Forms (201, 205, 205A, 213, and 214) and Forms 217A and 309
 - 24-hour clock
 - Hand-held GPS
 - Mobile and portable radio(s) as appropriate for the region and assignment, radio manuals, batteries, headset



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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Communications Equipment (Cont'd)
 - AUXCOMM radio programming equipment (adapters, cloning cable and/or computer, software, manuals for front panel radio programming)
 - Patch cords
 - Power supplies, chargers
 - Standing Wave Ratio (SWR) bridge(s), antenna analyzer



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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Communications Equipment (Cont'd)
 - Safety glasses
 - Multi-purpose knife
 - Volt-Ohm meter (VOM/Multi-meter)
 - Communications tool kit including soldering iron & solder (other than 110 volt)
 - Electrical, flagging, & duct tape
 - Antennas, coax, RF connectors, and proper tools



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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Communications Equipment (Cont'd)
 - AUXCOMM Mobilization Guide
 - Auxiliary Communications Field Operations Guide (AUXFOG)
 - National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG)
 - Local or State Field Operation Guides
 - Local system coverage maps
 - Current Repeater Directory



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40

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Assembling the 72 Hour AUXCOMM “Go Kit” (Cont'd)

- Specifically added “Go Kit” items for the ACM are:
 - Availability, capability and contact information for local and regional AUXCOMM personnel
 - Current TICP for area(s) being served, if available and provided by the local jurisdiction
 - ICS Forms 211, 221 and 225



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41

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Resources – AUXFOG

- The DHS Auxiliary Communications Field Operations Guide (AUXFOG) was released by OEC in 2013.
- It can be downloaded from the OEC Public Safety Tools website at www.publicsafetytools.info



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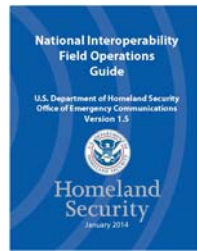
42

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Resources – NIFOG

National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) – reference guide to:

- Rules and regulations
- Interoperability channels
- Operational contact info
- Technical information



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43

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Auxiliary Communicator General Information

- **Plain Language:**
- All Public Safety Agencies are required to use plain language and common terminology in major emergencies
- Auxiliary Communicators need to do the same
 - Don't use "Q Signals" or "10 Codes"
 - Avoid abbreviations
 - Only use local time in a 24 hour format (i.e. 2330 hrs = 11:30 pm)



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44

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AUXCOMM Communicator General Information (Cont'd)

ITU PHONETIC ALPHABET

A	ALFA	N	NOVEMBER
B	BRAVO	O	OSCAR
C	CHARLIE	P	PAPA
D	DELTA	Q	QUEBEC
E	ECHO	R	ROMEO
F	FOXTROT	S	SIERRA
G	GOLF	T	TANGO
H	HOTEL	U	UNIFORM
I	INDIA	V	VICTOR
J	JULIETT	W	WHISKEY
K	KILO	X	X-RAY
L	LIMA	Y	YANKEE
M	MIKE	Z	ZULU



Word list adopted by the International Telecommunication Union.

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45

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AUXCOMM–When Support Is Needed

AUXCOMM Support is needed when:

- All communications have failed, been severely disrupted, or is insufficient to meet response needs for emergencies, planned events, etc.

During emergencies/incidents, Auxiliary Communicators should:

- If directed by the COML, maintain contact with the local dispatch center using a Public Safety radio if the COML has one for you



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46

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AUXCOMM–When Support Is Needed (Cont'd)

Examples of Communications Systems that may fail or become disrupted during a major incident:

- Cell phones
- FAX
- Internet connections
- Phone lines
- Public Safety radio systems



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47

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Exercise 2-1: SOP Exercise

Terminal Learning Objective

- Develop a usable draft SOP for AUXCOMM personnel

Enabling Learning Objective

- Describe the components of an SOP

Instructions

- Break into groups
- Review the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum and Writing Guide for SOPs slides



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48

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Exercise 2-1: SOP Exercise (Cont'd)

Instructions (Cont'd)

Based on individual organization needs, for example:

- Communications Support Between EOCs
- Initial Deployment
- Logistics Support
- Net Management
- Shelter Management
- Support in Absence of Reliable Public Safety Comms



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49

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Exercise 2-1: SOP Exercise (Cont'd)

Outputs

- Draft an SOP based on the review of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum and Writing Guide for SOPs presentation
- Present and discuss draft SOP details per group

Exercise Duration: 1 hour



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50

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Background Document for Exercise



A softcopy can be downloaded from the SAFECOM Website at:

<http://www.safecomprogram.gov/sitecollectiondocuments/sop.pdf>



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51

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Section 1: Introduction

Questions to consider:

- To what capability does this SOP apply
- What is the recognized need
- Are any established agreements already in place among responders
- Who will be using the SOP
- Why is this concern being addressed

Section 2: Purpose Section 3: Scope

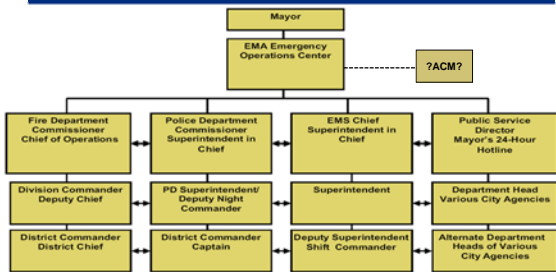
Purpose:

- What is the principal objective
- What is authority, roles, and procedures
- Are there other communications alternatives to the proposed solution

Scope:

- Which agencies/groups are to be included
- What level of authority
- When will this resource be used
 - Critical incidents
 - Day-to-Day
 - Discretion of Emergency Manager
 - Planned events

Section 4: Communications Structure



Sample Organization Chart

Section 5: Channel Patching and Monitoring

5a: Patching the Interoperability Channel

- What bands are going to be used
- What are the benefits of the current configuration?
- Are there more effective alternatives

5b: Interoperability Channel Monitoring

- Who will monitor the channel?
- What are the monitoring procedures once the channel is activated?



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55

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Section 6: Activation, Transfer and Discontinuation

6a: Rules of Use

- Use Common language
- Use the International Phonetic Alphabet
- NIMS/ICS compliance
- How will the channel be used
 - Emergency information transmissions

6b: Operational Procedure and Guidelines for Limited and Full Activation

- What are the requirements, procedures, and guidelines for:
 - limited activation (e.g., day-to-day incidents)
 - full activation (e.g., large-scale incidents)



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56

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Section 6: Activation, Transfer and Discontinuation (Cont'd)

6c: Activation Authority

- What are the procedures for requesting use of the resource
- What are the conditions for use for each organization using the resource
- What are proper uses of the resource

6d: Establishing and Transferring Net Control

- What are the procedures for requesting users to switch their radios to the support channel
- Who is involved in the procedure
- Who has the authority to order it
- Will a lead Net Control operator be designated



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57

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Section 6: Activation, Transfer and Discontinuation (Cont'd)

6e: Notification Process for Establishing Command Control

- What are the notification procedures for establishing command and control among participating agencies?
- Who is authorized to activate the AUXCOMM resource?

6f: Discontinuation of AUXCOMM Support

- What are the procedures for discontinuing AUXCOMM support?
- Who will make the decision to discontinue use?
- How will all participants be notified?



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58

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Section 7: Separation of the AUXCOMM Channels Due to Interference

What procedures should be in place when there is intentional or unintentional interference with the AUXCOMM support resource?



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59

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Section 8: Communications Alternatives

- Telephone Conference Bridges
- Cellular/Push-to-Talk Commercial Wireless Technology
- Computerized Emergency Notification System
- Internet/E-mail
- Satellite Phones



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60

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Section 8: Communications Alternatives (Cont'd)

- Cache of Portable Radios on Various Bands
- Mobile Capabilities with Conventional Channels
- Dispatch/Radio Communications Center to Dispatch/Radio Communications Center Messaging
- Runner System

Section 9: Training Requirements

- Who will be responsible for ensuring that participating agencies' and organizations' personnel are familiar with the SOP and are properly trained
- What will be the minimum training requirements for:
 - How the resource is set up
 - How to select the right channel
 - Proper terminology and radio etiquette
 - Who to notify if they have a radio problem

Section 10: Testing Requirements

- What are the standardized testing procedures
- Will there be different phases of testing (i.e., weekly net testing and operational testing)
- What are the procedures for each testing phase
- When should testing take place
- What agencies/organizations should be involved

Section 11: Responsibility

- Whose responsibility will it be to ensure that these SOPs are followed when necessary
- Whose responsibility will it be to be familiar with and comply with these SOPs

SOP Exercise 2-1

- Draft and present an SOP.
- Groups have 30 minutes to prepare and 30 minutes to present and discuss.

Conclusion

Creating and applying SOPs that foster AUXCOMM support communications across an area or region can be challenging due to differences in technology, organizational structures, and the overall experience of the volunteer responders.

However, SOPs are essential for successful incident response.

Unit 2: Summary

- 1) Described the functions, responsibilities, and roles of personnel within the AUXCOMM function.
- 2) Described the responsibilities of the Auxiliary Communicator.
- 3) Described additional responsibilities of the ACM.
- 4) Identified components of the AUXCOMM "Go Kit."
- 5) Participate in exercise 2-1 SOP.



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67

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