



National IHC Steering Committee 2003 Newsletter

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INTRA-CREW RADIO FREQUENCY STUDY

During the 2003/2004 fire seasons a study will take place that will be used to evaluate the need for and use of intra-crew frequencies. It will be an interagency effort, coordinated and run by the Incident Communications Operations (ICO) Branch of the National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) working with Hotshot crews from USFS, BLM, BIA, NPS, and FWS. Approximately 20 crews are involved in the study. The radios that will be used in this study will be the Project 25 radios that are approved for wildland fire use and available through the National Incident Radio Support Cache (NIRSC). In addition, plans for existing King radios utilizing CTCSS tones will be explored. NIFC-NIICD will assign the intra-crew frequencies to the crews upon notification of their dispatch, and will also notify the incident of the assignment. There will be an open line of communications between the crews and ICO during the entire testing process and ICO and the training group will visit the participating crews while they are on incidents to monitor use, see how the process is working, and deal directly with any issues that may arise.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Shane Greer / Pike IHC

INTRA-CREW RADIO FREQUENCY PROTOCOL

The 2001 National IHC Workshop identified “Dedicated frequencies for inter-crew communication” as an action item. A number of actions were undertaken in 2002 to address this issue. The IHC Steering Committee did not receive any issues from the regional IHC committees identifying major problems last field season. The two federal shared frequencies are still available, 163.100 and 168.350. These are shared and other government agencies can use them, fire incidents do not control them. If you are using a dedicated frequency for inter-crew communication please let the incident Communications Unit know what frequency it is. If you have a need for an inter-crew frequency, request it through the incident’s Communications Unit. They have a protocol to go through. Com Unit Leaders on an incident request frequencies through the GACC. GACC’s will pass request on through to NICC. NICC then makes the request from the NIFC Communication Duty Officer. They will make every attempt to fill the requests based on availability. Please remember that frequencies provided to you on an incident are not portable away from the incident. In some cases these frequencies are borrowed for one particular incident only.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Dennis Baldrige / Laguna IHC

CREW CERTIFICATION / DECERTIFICATION

The process for certification of new crews is detailed in Appendix E of the National IHC Operations Guide. Appendix C of the Operations Guide details the availability of National IHC's for mobilization as an IHC. The Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations 2003, Chapter 8 page 10 states that any IHC not meeting all of the requirements in "Appendix C" before, or during, the crew's availability period will be available as an IHC (t). The crew superintendent is responsible to inform local supervisor and the local GACC of any required changes in the crew's typing.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Dennis Baldrige / Laguna IHC

IHC OPERATIONS GUIDE UPDATE

During the March 2003 National IHC Steering Committee meeting, the group agreed that it is time to update the current 2001 version of the IHC Operations Guide. A few of the proposed changes have been assigned to members of the committee. When the committee meets again in December of 2003, the proposed changes will be reviewed, and then sent out by the committee representatives to their geographic area groups for concurrence. The goal is to have the changes completed and approved before the 2004 fire season. The Interagency Hotshot Crew Operations Guide can be found online at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/people/hotshots/2001_IHC_Ops_Gde.pdf

IHC Steering Committee contact: Brit Rosso / Arrowhead IHC

PHYSICAL FITNESS TRAINING MANUAL

This is a continuation item from the IHC Steering Committee action items from 2002. The National IHC Steering Committee is drafting a proposal to the Missoula Technology Development Center to develop a Physical Training Manual for firefighters. The intent of the manual would be for those involved in wildland firefighting to be able to build a work related training program. It would be designed to help individuals and crews to safely achieve a fitness level that is needed for extended firefighting duties. The draft proposal is currently being worked on.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Shane Greer / Pike IHC & Steve Karkanen / Lolo IHC

NATIONAL MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION (MAC) GROUP

When national preparedness reaches levels IV and V, a MAC group is activated and briefings are conducted twice daily to provide national leadership to establish priorities and direction for wildland fire activities. The national MAC (NMAC) group is comprised of the directors of the BLM, USFS, BIA, NPS, FWS, a State Foresters' representative, and a representative of the NWS. The BLM, BIA, USFS, NPS, and FWS directors at NIFC have written delegated authority from their respective agency heads to:

- Represent his/her agency on all matters related to wildland fire operations. This includes membership on the NMAC group, determining national priorities, and allocating or reallocating incident resources.
- Represent the state's interests in the absence of the State Foresters' representative, as established in the agreement with the National Association of State Foresters.

The NMAC group will often issue directives that change, add to, or give implementation strategies to existing individual agency policies. These policy changes are issued in the form of Interim Directives (ID's) from NMAC through the individual agencies National Fire and Aviation Offices. These ID's are valid for the remainder of the current fire season and supercede your existing agencies policies. These ID's are rendered invalid at the end of the fire season unless they are accepted as agency policy through your agencies normal policy implementation process.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Kurt LaRue, DOI Fire Center Representative

HAZARD PAY FOR HAZARD TREES

This is a continuation item from the IHC Steering Committee action items from 2002. No progress was made last season. The IHC Steering Committee Chair is getting some background information from some individuals that have worked on this in the past. He will be tasking out some portions to help gather data needed to support the effort to get hazard tree cutting listed as a hazardous duty. Any data or statistics that you have for your crews would help immensely in building a case.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Dennis Baldrige / Laguna IHC

PAUL GLEASON MEMORIAL SERVICE

On March 27th, 2003 Paul Gleason lost his battle with cancer. The California Interagency Hotshot community felt it was their duty to assemble a memorial service for Paul and his family. El Cariso County Park was chosen as the proper location for the service. This park is dedicated to the 12 members of the El Cariso Hotshots who died on the Loop Fire in 1966. Paul Gleason was a member of the Dalton Hotshots in 1966, assigned to the Loop Fire. The service was held on Saturday March 15th. The Hotshots would like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions in making the service a success.

Jeff Koenig – Incident Commander

Bob Serrato – Deputy IC

Jim Cook – Liaison Officer

Anthony Escobar – Operations

Bill Wallis – Family Liaison

Dan Gosnell – USFS Color Guard

Scott Jones – LA County Liaison

Brit Rosso – Information Officer

We would also like to thank the countless others that provided assistance and support in this memorial service. Without the support from the Angeles NF, San Bernardino NF, and LA County, this event would not have been possible.

IHC Steering Committee contact: Brit Rosso / Arrowhead IHC

CURRENT IHC STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Regional or State level fire operations representative - **Greg Greenhoe**

Agency Administrator representative - **Bruce Greco transitioning to Terri Marceron**

U.S. Forest Service National Interagency Fire Center representative - **Jim Cook**

Dept of Interior National Interagency Fire Center representative - **Kurt La Rue**

Three IHC Superintendents from the Department of Interior agencies -

Carl Crawford; representing Bureau of Indian Affairs

Brit Rosso; representing National Park Service

Shane McDonald; representing Bureau of Land Management

Four IHC Superintendents from the U.S. Forest Service in these geographic areas:

Steve Karkanen; representing the Northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest areas

Shane Greer; representing the Great Basin, Rocky Mountain, and Eastern areas

Dennis Baldrige; representing the California area

Paul Musser; representing the Southwest and Southern areas