



Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Operations Manual

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Title: **On-Scene Radio
Communications**

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PURPOSE

To establish a policy regarding on scene radio traffic in an effort to minimize confusion, promote scene safety and increase efficient communications.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of this department that the following guidelines be used to establish incident communications.

SECTION I – GENERAL

On scene radio communication is one of the key elements of running a successful incident, yet communications are usually described as chaotic at best. In an effort to improve on scene radio communications, the following shall be the accepted procedures for any incident that Jackson Hole Fire/EMS responds to:

1. The incident commander shall choose a command frequency (used to communicate with dispatch and other officers), capable of reaching the jurisdictional dispatch center and responding resources not yet on scene, and announce that frequency during the initial scene size up. The incident commander may also decide to utilize one or more tactical frequencies (used to communicate within groups or divisions or to facilitate on scene logistics), which will also be announced and assigned over the command frequency. Resources arriving on scene will switch to assigned tactical (direct, no repeater) frequencies to coordinate operations. Use of the tactical channels is critical to freeing up command channels in the event of other incidents or critical communications needs by the IC.

Command Channels available:

JHF/EMS Repeater - Primary Fire and EMS Repeater

E-Net - Rosies, Snow King, Pow Wow

TCSO - Law Enforcement

SO GARN - Garn Mtn. Law Enforcement
USFS - Rendezvous, Ramshorn
GTNP - Signal Mountain

Tactical Channels available:

TAC 3 - JHF/EMS
TAC 4 - JHF/EMS
MUT AID - Mutual Aid (usually reserved for Highway Patrol)
NIMS - National Tactical Channel
FS A-G - Air to ground with fire support aircraft - (Lifelight will usually use command channel)

2. All Responding resources will establish communication with the Jurisdictional Dispatch Center as follows:

Jackson Dispatch: All Teton County and Town of Jackson Responses
Teton Dispatch: All USFS and NPS responses

When resources are responding to mutual aid calls to another agency, responding units will "close out" with their assigned dispatch and "sign in" with the jurisdictional dispatch until they are stood down or clear from the scene.

3. The choice of which frequency to utilize as the command frequency will depend upon geographical location, other incidents in progress, and availability of frequencies on the radios of the responding units and agencies. Regardless of the frequency chosen, the dispatch center with jurisdiction for the incident will respond on the radio and record all radio traffic. For example, an incident on Togwotee Pass may require utilizing Grand Teton National Park's primary repeater for communications, but all traffic should be addressed to and will be answered by the dispatch center at the Teton County Sheriff's Office by calling "Jackson, unit ID." An incident at Signal Mountain that occurs simultaneously with other incidents in Grand Teton National Park may require the use of ENET for command frequency and all traffic will be addressed to and will be answered by Teton Interagency Dispatch Center by calling, "Teton Dispatch, unit ID."
4. All units shall call "in service," "enroute," "on scene," and "clear of scene" to the appropriate dispatch center via the command frequency. Responding units are encouraged to keep their radio traffic to a minimum on the command frequency to allow for command traffic. Resources arriving on scene will be assigned or should request tactical (direct, no repeater) frequencies to coordinate operations. Use of the tactical channels is critical to freeing up command channels in the event of other incidents or critical communications needs by the IC. Resources who have a need to contact the IC should first attempt to make contact over the tactical frequency. If that is unsuccessful, the command frequency may be utilized.
5. The incident commander is encouraged to select E-Net as command channel. Avoiding the use of the main dispatch frequencies (i.e. other than JHFEMS repeat and Grand Teton National Park primary) keeps those frequencies open for the dispatch of additional resources or other incidents.

6. The incident commander shall choose appropriate tactical frequencies in an effort to clear up communications on the command channel. If possible, the tactical frequencies shall be a direct line of sight frequency. All pertinent actions, decisions, updates, and requests shall be relayed to the appropriate dispatch center on the command frequency to insure that that communication is recorded in both audio and written forms.