REGIONAL RADIO SYSTEM UPDATE

PORTABLE RADIOS - BID AWARDED

The bid for portable radios has been awarded to Marcus Communications of Manchester. One hundred twenty-eight Kenwood handheld radios are being purchased by the State on behalf of the Greater Hartford Incident Management Team for use at major incidents on our highways.

These radios will be distributed early this Fall to local fire departments, State Police, DOT maintenance supervisors and DEP hazmat personnel. Local police will access the communication network through the State Police using the areawide RAFS radio system.

These radios will be operated on frequencies licensed to the North Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Council. Specific Operating Procedures have been adopted by the Incident Management Steering Committee and approved by NCC-EMS. These procedures will be relayed to agencies receiving the radios prior to distribution.

Plans for the distribution of these radios are now underway and agencies designated to receive the radios will be contacted soon.

These radios are provided through a Federal Highway Administration grant and matching funds from the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

RAFS ANTENNA EQUIPMENT - BID AWARDED

A separate but related part of the Regional Radio System proposal is the provision of two new antennas for the Capitol Region Chiefs of Police RAFS radio system and one new antenna for the NCC-EMS radio system.

The bid for these antennas and related equipment is now being reviewed by the Connecticut Department of Information Technology.

The RAFS antennas will replace equipment on Talcott Mountain and on Jon Tom Mountain in Glastonbury. In addition to updating the equipment, these improvements will result in better, more reliable coverage of the local police service area.

The NCC-EMS antenna will also be installed at Jon Tom Mountain, allowing expansion of coverage for the portable radios described to the left.

This equipment is expected to be installed and operational before the end of the year.

Inside: News about the Emergency Table Top Exercise held last Spring
Emergency!

It was a cool, misty morning and traffic was light. Suddenly, a rather minor two-vehicle accident on I-91 South became serious when a tractor-trailer jack-knifed trying to avoid the disabled vehicles.

5:06 a.m. and now commuter traffic is at a stand still. People may be injured, and if so the extent of the injuries are unknown. The tractor-trailer is blocking much of the highway, gasoline is visible on the pavement, and poultry products are scattered across the highway. At least five more vehicles have been involved in a chain-reaction collision directly behind the tractor-trailer.

Participants in an Incident Management Table Top Exercise were presented with this scenario by facilitator Warren Hall, Exercise Training Officer for the State Office of Emergency Management. Representatives from more than 36 local, State and federal agencies involved in the management of incidents on our highways had been invited to participate in or observe this table top exercise at the Hartford Fire Academy on April 5, 2000. The exercise was sponsored by the Greater Hartford Area Incident Management Steering Committee, and was designed to test communication and coordination among the various agencies that respond to emergencies on our highways.

When the more than 30 participants and another 25 observers filled the training room at the Hartford Fire Academy, the only thing we knew about what OEM had in store for us was that the incident would take place on a highway and would probably involve responders from the cities of Hartford, East Hartford and West Hartford, as well as various State agencies.

Soon after Mr. Hall’s presentation of the initial scenario, participants were detailing for the group the activities that would be undertaken by each responding agency. They told of initial activities by the first on scene: today as most days, a State trooper. Calls were made to appropriate dispatchers, and the Hartford Fire Department was sent out and assumed command of the incident. ConnDOT, observing activities through a nearby video camera and confirming responses by communicating with the State Police, informed the traveling public of the problems with messages posted on variable message signs and highway advisory radio. NCC-EMS placed hospitals on alert. DEP was also notified of the possibility of a hazmat condition.

Then, Mr. Hall threw more problems at the participants.

At 5:30 a.m., a fire was called in from an assisted living center in the northend of Hartford, and soon thereafter, another vehicle accident was reported, this time in the Town of Bloomfield.

The professionals were taking this all in stride. The fire departments of West Hartford and East Hartford were put on stand-by for possible mutual aide assistance. The Red Cross was called in the event that families of nursing home residents needed to be contacted. In the meantime, DOT and the State Police were working with local police to initiate diversion routes around the incidents. DOT also extended their notifications to the traveling public on variable message signs posted all the way to the Massachusetts and New York borders. Truck traffic especially might wish to self-divert given sufficient notification.

The time of day became critical. Most departments are not fully staffed at this early hour and some were undergoing shift changes. But all responders knew where their people were and how to get ahold of them. Towing company reps described their needs and concerns. NCC-EMS informed participants of their capabilities in notifying and dispatching ambulances to the scene.
After almost three hours of lively “role playing,” the group broke for lunch. The discussions continued on a more personal level, but after lunch the participants and observers reconvened to critique both the table top event itself and the emergency response efforts detailed throughout the morning.

This afternoon discussion was at least if not more beneficial than the morning session. The good will of people who work together for the same goal, the safe and efficient management of a highway incident, was strongly in evidence. Participants were eager to share their capabilities with the widest audience in an effort to reduce duplication both in manpower and time spent on any response component.

Suggestions for improving both the technologies and procedures we have were made. The consensus of most participants was that the day was well spent and that this table top effort should be followed up with more of the same, for a wider audience.

| Participants: |
| City of Hartford—Local Police |
| City of Hartford—Local Fire |
| City of Hartford – Public Works |
| City of East Hartford—Local Police |
| City of East Hartford—Local Fire |
| City of West Hartford—Local Police |
| City of West Hartford—Local Fire |
| State Dept of Transportation – Highway Operations |
| State Dept of Transportation – Maintenance District 1 |
| State Dept of Consumer Protection |
| State Dept of Environmental Protection |
| State Police – Troop H |
| State Office of Emergency Management |
| State Office of Emergency Medical Services |
| CMED, EMS and Ambulance Services |
| Local Towing Companies |
| Local Hospitals |
| American Red Cross |

| Observers: |
| Town of Avon - Fire |
| Town of Enfield - Fire |
| City of Greenwich - Police |
| Town of Manchester - Fire |
| Town of Plainville - Police |
| Capitol Region Council of Governments |
| Central CT Regional Planning Agency |
| Midstate Regional Planning Agency |
| Federal Highway Administration |
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the Steering Committee are listed below.

Local Fire Departments
Chief Edward Richards,
Enfield, 745-1878
Chief David Dagon,
East Hartford, 528-4171

Local Police
Lt. A. Lupo, Hartford,
722-6138
Chief Daniel Coppinger,
Plainville, 747-1616
Chief James Strillacci,
West Hartford, 523-5203

Emergency Medical Services
North Central Connecticut EMS Council
Hugo S. Costa, Jr., 769-6055

Towing Services
Towing & Recovery Professionals of CT,
Tim Vibert, 677-9074

Regional Planning Agencies
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Tom Maziarz, Karen Olson, 522-2217
Central Connecticut RPA
Ross Altobelli, 589-7820
Midstate RPA,
Robert Haramut, 347-7214

State Agencies
State Police
Lt. Thomas Davoren, Troop C,
870-9500
Lt. Philip Halibozek, Troop H,
534-1018
State DEP
Don Burton, 424-3377
State DOT
Bill Stoeckert, 594-2630; Mike
Healy, 594-2634; Sue Reynolds,
594-3062; Vic LaBarre, 258-4501;
Jim Mona, 594-3450

Incident Management:
• Coordination
• Cooperation
• Communication

Questions or Comments?
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A highway incident management newsletter for the Hartford, New Britain, and Middletown areas. Prepared by:
Capitol Region Council of Governments
Connecticut Department of Transportation