

# SANTA CLARA COUNTY LOCAL FIRE SERVICE AND RESCUE MUTUAL AID PLAN

## APPENDIX 16 – INCIDENT DISPATCH TEAMS (IDT)

Revised Date: March 2015  
Next Revision Date: January 2018

### **Introduction**

The Santa Clara County Fire Chiefs' Association acknowledges that supplemental communications support and assistance by trained dispatch personnel may be of benefit to fire agencies in the event of a major incident. This program is intended to provide additional, specifically trained communications dispatch resources to any fire department in Santa Clara County requesting such assistance. A number of Santa Clara County Fire agencies have established Incident Dispatch Teams (IDTs) which consist of one or more fire dispatch specialists who are specially trained, equipped, and authorized by their agencies to respond to the scene of a major emergency to provide communications and command post support for that incident.

### **Purpose**

Incident Dispatch Teams or members can be helpful in various types of emergency situations to the requesting fire agency where additional or supplemental communications and coordination assistance may be of benefit to the Incident Command Staff and to the overall incident. Assistance from IDTs is intended to allow the Incident Command Staff to devote their time and focus to operational, planning, and logistical strategies, by relieving them of the burden of radio monitoring, transmitting, and tracking of resources. Types of incidents would include greater alarm/extended duration structure fires, Wildland/Urban interface (WUI) fires, complex hazardous materials incidents, multiple casualty incidents and localized environmental disasters such as floods, windstorms and plane crashes.

### **Qualifications**

Minimum qualifications required to be considered as a member of the Incident Dispatch Team would include the following:

- 1 or more years experience as a fire dispatcher
- Completion of State Fire Marshal certified specialized training consisting of ICS I-200 or equivalent
- Completion of a 24 hour incident dispatch class modeled after the California Fire Chief's Association Communications Section
- Authorized to respond to fire department emergencies within Santa Clara County for the purpose of functioning as an Incident Dispatcher (ID)
- Recommendation and approval by own agency Communications Dispatch Manager
- Approval of own agency Fire Chief
- Attendance at required meetings or training sessions for IDTs
- Desirable training: ICS I 300 or equivalent

Note: Required equipment will be issued to Incident Dispatchers by their home fire agency and will include pager or cell phone, proper radio equipment (e.g. portable radio) and necessary personal protective equipment. Wildland PPE (aka “yellows” or brush gear) and safety shoes are recognized as adequate PPE for IDT members.

### **Terminology**

For the purposes of clarification, the following definitions will apply:

- Responsible Jurisdiction or Requesting Agency shall mean the jurisdiction within whose boundaries the emergency exists
- Assisting Agency shall mean the jurisdiction providing outside assistance
- Shared Resource shall mean an Incident Dispatcher (ID) employed by one agency and shared with another agency for the purpose of assisting or supporting the Incident Command Staff in addition to, or instead of, IDs belonging to the requesting jurisdiction

### **Procedures**

In the event of a major emergency in which supplemental communications assistance is needed or when the Responsible Jurisdiction either has exhausted their IDT resources or has none to provide, the Assisting Agencies (upon request by the Responsible Jurisdiction), will respond one or more qualified fire Incident Dispatchers to the scene of the emergency or to a location and reporting time designated by the Requesting Agency. The limitation on the number of IDs available for assistance shall be determined by each individual Assisting Agency. The maximum number of resources available will be noted in the mutual aid resource list. IDT’s may be requested for either “Immediate Need” or “Planned Need” events.

Activation of an IDT will be requested as a Mutual Aid resource via the existing Red Net fire mutual aid procedures. The Incident Commander will place the request for outside agency Incident Dispatchers through their dispatch center. The requesting agency will activate the Red Net All-Call feature to all fire agencies in the County and transmit the following:

- Name of requesting agency
- Need for IDTs and the number of resources (IDs) requested
- Type of incident, reporting location, and Thomas Brothers Map coordinates
- Conduct a roll call to determine which agencies have the ability to provide IDT resources

Each fire dispatch center that provides Incident Dispatchers will maintain a list of names and contact numbers for their qualified personnel. Upon receipt of a request for IDs, the assisting agencies will do the following:

- Advise of ID response availability to the requesting agency

- Confirm the number of IDs responding , their names, and their ETA

Upon confirmation of ID response from assisting agencies, the fire dispatch center of the requesting jurisdiction shall contact the Incident Commander and advise of the number of IDs responding and a range of travel times to scene or designated reporting location (e.g. “IC, there are 5 mutual aid resource IDs who will be responding to your incident with an ETA of between 30 to 60 minutes”).

### **IDT Response and On-Scene Coordination**

Requesting agencies should understand that response for Incident Dispatch resources will be non-Code 3 and usually in privately owned vehicles. They may or may not have a portable radio capable of transmitting on the Incident frequency. For ID resources that do have radio capability, they will acknowledge response on their own primary frequency and then switch to the designated mutual aid travel frequency.

Some Assisting Agencies own and operate their own agency command or communications vehicle. Such vehicles, if available and authorized by its jurisdiction, may also be made available to the requesting agency as part of the responding IDT, although this request should be placed as a separate Mutual Aid Request.

Upon arrival at the scene or to the designated reporting location, the Incident Dispatchers from Assisting Agencies will report to the Incident Command Post (ICP) and interface with either the IC or the Logistics Section Chief (unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander). Mutual Aid Incident Dispatchers will identify themselves by name and agency to the Requesting Agency contact person and receive their incident assignment. In all cases, IDT members will respond and report with a minimum of wildland protective clothing and agency identification.

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The role of IDT resources is to assist with radio communications for the Incident Commander. Their functions may include the following:

- Monitor radio frequencies and transmissions for the IC
- Transmit radio communications as directed by the IC
- Document resources and events as directed by the IC
- Facilitate acquisition of other support services (such as Fire Associates, American Red Cross, placing food orders, etc.) as directed by the IC
- Placing and receiving phone communications as directed by the IC
- Other support functions within the scope of their training as directed by the IC
- Prepare after-action IDT reports for the IC and/or requesting agency

The intent of this program is not to deplete any agency of sufficient numbers of Incident Dispatchers that it may need for an emergency within its own boundaries, nor is it intended to respond IDs to dispatch centers to augment dispatch personnel. Each agency

providing IDs may impose a limitation on the number of personnel available to respond to a Mutual Aid request. It is recognized that not all fire agencies in the County can provide IDs upon request and therefore it is understood that not every request for IDTs can be directly reciprocated. **At all times**, IDs from Assisting Agencies come under the direct authority and command of the Requesting Agency's Incident Commander. This program is intended for in-county Mutual Aid requests. Assisting Agencies will bear all costs and any compensation for IDTs who respond as an authorized Mutual Aid resource.

**Note:** Recognizing that not all fire dispatchers fall under the direct management authority of their agency's respective fire departments, it shall be the responsibility of the Communications Managers of responding IDT resources to administratively manage the participation of their dispatchers pursuant to this program through the Santa Clara County Public Safety Communications Manager's Association (PSCMA).