



Use Case: County Special Operations

Scenario

This scenario discusses the crisis management needs of a County Special Operations group which is made up of career and volunteer firemen from various county departments. In addition to the rescue apparatus owned by the various fire departments of the county, the county itself has specialized apparatus that is stationed in career and volunteer departments around the county.

Such a county may have the following combination units:

- Hazmat
- Rope
- Swift Water
- Collapse/Trench Rescue
- Off-Road (ATV's, UTV's, 4WD apparatus)
- Logistics
- Incident Management Team

Operationally, the local fire department is dispatched to an incident where it uses its local resources. Should the incident be such that the Incident Commander (IC) feels it warrants mutual aid, he is free to request neighboring departments to assist, or, he can initiate a Level 1 Special Operations Incident and request any county resource or teams.

While the specialized apparatus can state it is responding, it is much more difficult for the IC and Team Leaders to ascertain which volunteer team members are available and responding. Often, such a situation is fluid, and spread out for several miles in the case of swift water rescue, requiring specific personnel to respond to specific locations.

The Problem

As an example, if the Swift Water Team is requested, Logistics, Rope and Off-Road teams are also dispatched for support to the Water Team. There may be over 100 personnel on the move, all looking for instructions and updates, which may be to report to an active post at a location, or to one or more staging areas. Their pagers give only initial response info. As most of these responders do not have two-way radios, cell phones become the means for team leaders to find out what personnel are available and responding, and to make assignments. Constant busy phones, multiple call-back attempts, and changing plans create a huge coordination issue.



The Solution

REDCOM's CrucialConnect™ Crisis Conferencing Solution (CCS) offers the following problem-solving functionality:

- Communications critical to Situational Awareness
- Multiple conferences can be set up in advance--one for each team.
- 911 and/or Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) can be equipped with CrucialConnect CCS console software running on their existing PCs.
- Team Leaders and Executive Staff can have commercially-available secure smartphone apps and/or REDCOM secure softphones on their laptops. All can be equipped with PTT headsets (earbuds for mobile) to prevent background noise from interfering with conferences.
- A dispatcher would assign a conference bridge for the IC and Logistics staff to work with, and the dispatcher would monitor the conference for requests from the IC and to pass on updates.
- Each Team conference member would be screened when calling into the conference, and an optional password can also be required for entry. This is a security measure to prevent unauthorized personnel from gaining access.
- Callers to the IC conference would be directed to the dispatcher for verification before being allowed into the conference. The dispatcher can enter the participant's name into the conference record for all dispatchers to see. Direct dial entry can be created for Team Leaders to report into Command.
- The dispatcher can, at the direction of the IC or team leader, select certain members of a conference and create a sub-conference with just those selected parties. The dispatcher can then rejoin the sub-conference to the main conference.
- Call Detail Records are created which can be downloaded for downstream manipulation so the event can be later analyzed for participation, providing details to be included in the After-Action Review/Report.
- A fire operations radio can be patched into the IC conference to allow the on-scene local responder IC to brief the Command staff about the incident while they are en route.

Benefits

1. Dispatcher workload handling responder's calls for information is virtually eliminated.
2. Team conferences have tightly controlled access with screening and password checks. Team Leaders keep member access lists current.
3. Conferences can be secured by commercial SIP encryption, or by "gateways" secured by encryption devices.
4. Callers failing access security checks can be automatically routed to a dispatcher for identification challenge. The dispatcher can then add the person to a conference or reject the call.
5. Team Leaders can access their bridge and find out who is responding, assess capabilities, then enabling them to make assignments and give updates to team members.
6. A dispatcher can be assigned to each team conference to maintain a log, keeping information current, so team members can come and go from the conference as their response dictates. If an urgent message needs to be distributed, the monitoring dispatcher can immediately send a pager message with the alert or to have the members call back into the conference.
7. The IC has immediate access to a primary dispatcher to order or redirect resources.
8. The IC can call into a particular team's bridge to brief that team, or to talk to the team leader.
9. Scene information is passed to all the IC staff at once.
10. Updates are rapidly disseminated to all teams.
11. As command staff arrives at the command post, liaison officers are assigned to call into the team bridges to exchange information and give directions from the IC to the teams.
12. A secure bridge can be established to allow the Command staff or public officials to discuss information that cannot be released to the public (criminal issues, public panic drivers, etc.).
13. Speeds up the information loop (OODA) to catch up to real time.