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OPERATIONAL BULLETIN 21 / 2008

SA Country Fire Service 'Safety first – Come Home Safe'

Efficient and effective use of the GRN

The purpose of this Bulletin is to reinforce recent lessons learned about the efficient and effective use of the Government Radio Network. This Bulletin is to be read in conjunction with SOP's 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10, 10.14 and 10.15.

Information is the lifeblood of our operations. The flow of information, through our chain of command and also to the community, is essential for the safety of our firefighters, other emergency services personnel and the public. The importance of communications is reinforced in the principles of operations; the dynamic risk assessment process; LACES; the Ten Standard Fire Orders; and the 18 "WATCHOUT!" Situations.

As users of a whole of emergency services SA Government Radio Network (GRN), we need to be conscious that the summer season is always a busy time for all emergency services and during busy times there is greater demand on our communication systems.

Every form of radio communication—even listening into talk groups—contributes to the overall volume of radio users. This means a higher demand on the overall GRN capacity.

All emergency services agencies using the GRN network are being asked to remind their members about using the network wisely. It is timely to reinforce some key pointers for CFS users of the GRN:

1. An Incident Communications Plan should be documented for all Level 2 and Level 3 Incidents.
2. Usually, CFS will use GRN trunking channels for "Command and Control" communications and VHF for "Fireground" communications.
3. Incident Controllers, Operations Officers and Planning Officers should talk to all other Agencies at the incident and include them in the Incident Communications Plan.
4. Allocate and use a "Transit Talk Group" (VHF for CFS) when en route to an incident outside normal response areas.
5. Where possible and appropriate, encourage to use of VHF early in the incident to minimise capacity impact on the GRN.
6. Use "Multi-Agency Talk Groups" as often as possible. The use of multi-agency talk groups is encouraged early in an incident where several Agencies are involved (eg road crashes, searches, bushfires etc).
7. Establish a Forward Operations Point / Control Point close to the Incident so that senior personnel from each agency at the incident and incoming crews can be briefed on the communications plan.
8. Crews should not listen to their "home" Talk Group when deployed outside of their local area.



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9. Limit the use of talk groups – if you don't need to be on a talk group, don't get on it.
10. Radio conversations should be accurate, clear and simple. Keep all necessary conversations as brief as possible.
11. Don't 'shout' at the microphone on the radio – pick up the handset and transmit your message correctly and clearly. This will reduce the likelihood of the message being distorted and it having to be repeated.
12. Acknowledge receipt of all radio communications, unless the preceding communication ended with the word "OUT". If the person you are transmitting a message to does not acknowledge receipt, repeat the message.
13. Wait until a message transaction has been completed before transmitting your reply.
14. Only use the Emergency Call Button to initiate an Emergency Call as an action of last resort. The Emergency Call Button should only be used if calls for assistance on the Incident Talk Group have been unsuccessful.

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