

**CLARIFYING THE CURRENT AND FUTURE SITUATION  
IN RESPECT OF**

**CALL RECEIPT AND DISPATCH (CRD),  
COMMAND, CONTROL, COORDINATION & INFORMATION FLOW (C<sup>3</sup>I)  
FOR CFS OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Recently there have been a number of decisions taken that will result in important changes in the way that we do our business. These decisions include changes in the way we take calls from the community and dispatch our crews, and how we coordinate information and resources, particularly at an organisational, or state level.

This paper intends to clarify the differences between call receipt and dispatch, command, control and coordination and describes the future directions for CFS.

**DISCUSSION**

**Call Receipt and Dispatch (CRD)**

Definitions:

- **Call receipt:** Is the act of **receiving a call** (for assistance). This may be via a telephone system, but may also be via radio, fixed fire alarm or by electronic means (eg; a data terminal).
- **Dispatch:** *“The act of ordering attack crews and or support units to respond to a fire (or other emergency) or from one place or another.”* [Source: AFAC Glossary of Terms]

By its definition, Call Receipt and Dispatch (CRD) requires intelligence to be gathered and information to be generated (and perhaps enhanced) and then passed on to certain personnel. The CRD function is usually **time critical**, in that it is an essential element of the dispatch of the emergency service to a time critical event. CRD is also dependent on the **accuracy and quality** of information (as an example: it is useless sending emergency services to the wrong address).

CRD therefore includes the escalation of resources as an incident increases in size or complexity, demanding an increase in resource allocation. Incident escalation may be by defined tables for escalation, or at the request of the incident controller or through the established chain of command. Subsequent intelligence received prior to arrival of resources may also provide the requirement to escalate response.

CRD is currently done for CFS in three ways: (1) Calls received and dispatch by SAMFS ComGen; (2) Calls received, dispatch and escalation by the CFS State Operations Centre (SOC); (3) Calls received by the local brigade with dispatch and escalation assisted by the SOC.

## **Command, Control and Coordination**

The following provides information about what Command, Control and Coordination means for CFS and how it is applied to our systems of work.

### **Command**

*“Command is the direction of members and resources of an organisation in the performance of the organisation’s role and tasks. Authority to command is established in legislation or by agreement with an organisation. Command relates to organisations and operates vertically within an organisation.”*  
[Source: Australian Emergency Management Manual Glossary of Terms].

For CFS, command is exercised through the CFS “chain of command” which includes, the Country Fires Act 1989 and where appropriate, the chain of command established by the Australian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS).

It is self evident that, in the initiating stages of a response, the CRD centre will be carrying out some of the functions of command, albeit usually via prescribed procedures and response schedules. Usually once a response is initiated, **the most senior responding officer will then assume command of the incident.**

Depending on the predetermined communication arrangements for the incident, the CRD centre may still be used to assist with supporting incident information and resource management.

### **Control**

*“Control is the overall direction of emergency management activities in an emergency situation. Authority for control is established in legislation or in an emergency plan and carries with it the responsibility for tasking and coordinating other organisations in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control relates to situations and operates horizontally across organisations.”*  
[Source: Australian Emergency Management Manual Glossary of Terms].

As with command, control is usually exercised through the “chain of command” including, the Country Fires Act 1989 and where appropriate via the chain of command established by the Australian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS). **The AIIMS structure is principally aimed at incident control.**

It is customary that, until an Incident Controller is established, tasks associated with the control function are often undertaken by a communications centre (including Brigade or Group bases) or CRD centre. Once an Incident controller is established, an AIIIMS Incident Management Team (IMT) may also be established. The IMT may be located at the incident, but more commonly is located at an Incident Control Centre (ICC) either close to the incident, or at some pre-determined location.

Depending on the sophistication and resourcing at the ICC, the CRD centre may still be used by the Incident Controller / IMT to assist with supporting incident information and resource management. In large incidents (Level 3 incidents) however, information and resource management is almost always carried out by the IMT from the ICC.

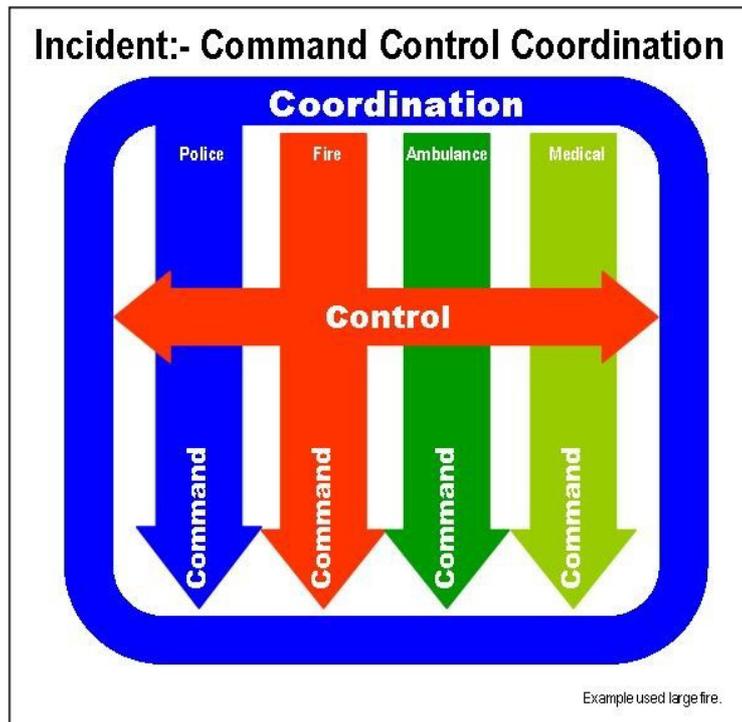
## Coordination

*“Coordination is the bringing together of organisations and elements to ensure an effective response, primarily concerned with the systematic acquisition and application of resources (organisation, manpower, and equipment) in accordance with the requirements imposed by the threat or impact of an emergency. Coordination relates primarily to resources and operates, vertically, within an organisation, as a function of the authority to command, and horizontally, across organisations, as a function of the authority to control.”* [Source: Australian Emergency Management Manual Glossary of Terms].

Therefore, coordination has two connotations for CFS: Firstly, coordination **within** the organisation of CFS information and resources. An example of internal coordination is at Regional level, where decisions are made about the allocation of resources between two incidents happening concurrently in the Region. Internal coordination also happens at a State level (eg: for deployments across the state, or across state borders, or for scarce or specialist resources).

Secondly, coordination **between agencies**, which may occur at the incident scene, at Regional level or at State level. Coordination at its extreme, may involve many organisations and multiple incidents, or situations in many different locations.

Thus, command, control and coordination may be depicted as follows:



It is important to note here that the notion of coordination extends beyond coordination of resources. **Coordination of information has become just as important as resource coordination.** That is, bringing together intelligence and information from a range of agencies or sources and distilling this into a unified and meaningful message for agency combatants, agency heads, government and most importantly for the community.

At a state level, coordination of CFS resources ultimately rests with the Chief Officer or his delegate. Over the last 4 to 5 years, CFS has placed increasing emphasis on coordination of information. Thus the current practice of inviting key agencies to have representatives in situ in the CFS State Coordination Centre (SCC) during periods of high risk or high activity. Each agency then is able to hear first hand from CFS what is happening, have an input into the overall state (and therefore incident) objectives, and bring important information into the intelligence cell that can be taken into consideration by CFS (ultimately the Incident Controller), or in the coordination of resources or provision of information to those who need to know.

The SCC has the important role of carrying out the resource and information coordination tasks required of the Incident Controller, Regional Coordinator or State Coordinator. Decisions about the coordination of resources and about critical information are increasingly made at a higher level as the number, size or complexity of incidents grows. The CRD centre has a role in State coordination but not a central role and may be used as a source of information or allocated tasks in the function of coordination.

For CFS the State Coordination Centre has been co-located within, or adjacent to, the SOC. This has been largely for convenience, but is not a necessity. Indeed, the function of coordination is largely by virtue of legislation, so it could be said that coordination ultimately occurs between those legislated heads of agencies and from where those people (or their delegates) are located.

## **Information Flow**

The importance of coordinating resources and information flow during emergencies is self-evident. Information flow includes not only intelligence and information going up and down the chain of command, but most importantly, includes the provision of information to the community. The lessons learned from the Wangary fire reinforce this fact, as does the recently released Report of the Council Of Australian Government's Inquiry into Bushfire Mitigation and Management.

There is much logic in the philosophy that individuals in the community who are made aware of and understand the risk, and understand what they need to do to mitigate that risk, can then be empowered to help themselves and to thus be a "force multiplier" to the traditional suppression forces of the fire and emergency services.

To put it simply: we need to empower people (the community) with information so that they can act to protect themselves and what is important to them.

In the future much more emphasis needs to be placed on emergency services organisations such as CFS to provide accurate and relevant information tailored to the needs of communities, in a timely manner.

## **Call Centre**

An other important requirement of our business is the provision of a Call Centre. The Call Centre function is different to Call Receipt and Dispatch. The Call Centre is about information dissemination via a variety of means to a variety of people and organisations. The sources of the information disseminated by the Call Centre include members of the public, other agencies, the CRD Centre, the State Coordination Centre and individual CFS officers. Currently, Call Centre functions are primarily provided by CFS staff, CFS reception Regional Centres and the SOC, including after hours calls and the CFS Hotline.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **Future Call Receipt and Dispatch**

There are two strategic changes in respect of CRD: Firstly, the transition of all CRD in the emergency services sector (SES, CFS) to SAMFS CRD centre. Secondly, the introduction of a system of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) across the police, fire, ambulance and emergency services sector.

**Call Receipt and Dispatch will transition to the SAMFS CRD centre at Wakefield St.** CRD for MFS already occurs from the SAMFS CRD centre, the SES CRD transition to MFS CRD at Wakefield St is being actively planned now for implementation in the last quarter of 2005. For CFS, MFS CRD Centre currently manages about 40% of CFS CRD (for busy brigades in four Groups in the Adelaide Hills). The transition of CRD for the remainder of CFS needs to commence immediately, but **implementation may occur over a period of up to two years.** This reflects the different systems currently in use by CFS and MFS and the functionality of systems at Wakefield St CRD Centre. Most importantly, it also reflects the need to document CFS needs and requirements and develop appropriate business rules, service level agreements and policies. The timeframe also reflects the need to establish new CAD mapping and databases and procedures for the CFS area.

The introduction of CAD to the emergency services sector requires significant investment in infrastructure and requires specific telecommunications infrastructure to be in place. CAD will be available at three sites: from the police building at Carrington Street, from the ambulance building at Greenhill Road and from the SAMFS building in Wakefield St. Even if CFS wanted a further site at Waymouth St, the existing infrastructure would preclude this as an option.

A further consideration, with the convergence of all emergency services CRD being undertaken from one location, is whether the CRD Centre continues to be managed and operated by MFS, or whether, at some point of time in the future, there may be a benefit in this becoming a "SAFECOM" CRD Centre. This is not an immediate issue, but one that needs to be monitored as the CRD process evolves.

### **Future role of the CFS SOC**

Thus the role of the SOC will change over time. The current role of the SOC includes some aspects of CRD, incident escalation, resource management and information management. The SOC also acts as a call centre for the CFS by accepting public ("Hotline") calls and after hours and general telephone inquiries. SOC staff also carry out important roles in support of the regional and state coordination role.

Over time, the role performed by the SOC staff will see less CRD and more focus on call centre and support to the CFS State Coordination Centre function.

Initially the SOC staff will continue to be located at Waymouth St. In time, however, it is more logical that they be re-located to where the focus of their activities will be, that is in the functions of call centre and state coordination.

### **Future Location of State Coordination**

There has been a recognition by CFS over the last 5 years that real time sharing of information during periods of increased risk or activity is an essential component of the state coordination function.

Thus, in practical terms, there has been an increase in the number and participants in teleconferences and briefing meetings. For example, during periods of significant activity, it is common for an hourly briefing involving all parties, to share information and concerns and to provide each agency concerned with an opportunity to input into the overall response to a state situation.

As a consequence to this increased information gathering and sharing function, a number of aspects of the current CFS State Coordination centre have been found wanting. In fact for the last 3 years, both internal and interagency debriefs have seriously criticised the accommodation and infrastructure at Waymouth Street. To put it simply, we have outgrown the current facility.

The interaction between the CFS State Coordination Centre and the whole of government State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) (located at the Police building at Carrington St) is also relevant.

At periods of extreme risk and significant bushfire activity or when the State Coordinator has made a declaration under the Emergency Management Act, there is an increased need to have a whole of government focus on the coordination of bushfire situations. This includes the coordination of other agencies that are involved in the recovery from a bushfire event.

Bushfire is one of the most commonly faced and obvious risks facing South Australia. There is some logic (although it is not essential) to locating the CFS State Coordination Centre as close as possible to the SEOC to further facilitate the flow of critical information and to facilitate the meeting of key decision makers.

Immediate action is required to develop a better facility for CFS state coordination. Following an offer by the Police Commissioner, **CFS is currently investigating the feasibility of locating the CFS State Coordination Centre at the Carrington St police building** (which is the same building that houses the SEOC).

The high level of telecommunications infrastructure will enable an appropriate adoption of technology in this proposed location.

Should this re-location occur, then it is logical that, **in time, the residual CFS call centre staff will also re-locate from Waymouth St to Carrington St.**

### **Future Call Centre Requirements**

Clearly CFS needs to reinforce and extend its capacity for providing information to the community before a danger exists, in the build up to a high-risk period and during the progress of an incident that poses a threat.

In the future CFS will provide a Call Centre function that meets the needs of individuals and organisations in the community. Improved systems and procedures for providing this information need to be developed. The CFS web site and intranet will be important tools to achieve this aim.

In the redevelopment of the CFS State Coordination centre, specific consideration needs to be given to the processing of intelligence so that it becomes relevant and meaningful information for the community. The ongoing provision and enhancement of the CFS Call centre function is integral to our State Bushfire Coordination function. Also, there are many synergies between the operation of a Call Centre as described and the operation of a State Coordination Centre.

**As the CFS State Coordination Centre develops and is enhanced, so too will the Call Centre. Given the resource constraints on CFS, it is logical that these two facilities be co-located,** although technological advances may not always make this a requirement.

### **Future location of CFS Headquarters**

Against the background of these changes, we also see the emergency services sector moving to align itself more closely in a number of functions. The progression of the SAFECOM Bill into Parliament is an example of the intent of the agencies and the Government for the agencies to work more closely together on common challenges.

**Options for a new headquarters location for all agencies in the sector are being investigated.** This is obviously a significant decision, and would require endorsement of the Minister and perhaps Cabinet. The earliest timeframe for such a move would be at least 12 months away. A new CFS / SAFECOM headquarters would not impact the location of the CAD and CRD centre. However, it would present a further option for the location of the CFS State Coordination Centre.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

There is significant change occurring in the location of several critical functions in CFS.

The location of Call Receipt and Dispatch (CRD) will transition over a two-year period to SAMFS CRD centre at Wakefield St.

This transition will be concurrent with the adoption of Computer Aided Dispatch systems for South Australian police, fire, ambulance and emergency services.

The current CFS State Coordination Centre (SCC) facility no longer meets our accommodation, infrastructure and technological needs.

Investigations are under way to evaluate the feasibility of re-locating the CFS SCC to the police building at Carrington St.

The system of provision of information to the community, including the CFS Call Centre function, needs to be enhanced. As the CFS State Coordination Centre develops and is enhanced, so too will the Call Centre. Given the resource constraints on CFS, it is logical that these two facilities be co-located.