

# Sacramento Fire IDT: After Action Report: State Capitol Incident

By Mike Grace

The Sacramento Regional Fire & EMS Communications Center (coincidentally the agency where the whole Incident Dispatcher concept began), provides 9-1-1 and dispatch service for City of Sacramento Fire Dept, County fire department, and numerous other fire and EMS departments and districts by contract. The Center has been developing a localized Incident Dispatcher Team and recently encountered its first response during a 4-alarm fire at the State Capitol.

## Significant Incident

On January 16th, at 9:24 PM, a truck & trailer speeding northbound on 11th Street purposely crashed into the south portico of the State Capitol building. The truck immediately caught fire with numerous explosions, killing the driver and forcing the evacuation of the Capitol building. This caused one of the largest multi-jurisdictional responses in Sacramento history. Upon Battalion Chief Joe Cherry's arrival, after assuming Incident Command, he made a request for multiple alarm assignments (ultimately to 4 alarms), the response of all off duty chiefs, and the deployment of Sacramento Regional Fire's Incident Dispatch Team.

## IDT Response

At 9:49PM a supervisor phoned me at home and let me know about the request for the IDT response. I responded to the incident, arriving at 10:33 PM. Command Post 19, our mobile Comm Unit, had already been brought out by reserve firefighters. After checking in with Chief Cherry and being briefed, I began setting up Command Post 19 for communications operations. Using an ICS T-card system, I set up Resource Status to account for their whereabouts of each assigned unit, I drew a quick map of the area, showing where the command post was, where staging was, showing the fire attack and those kinds of things. Then I started documenting the incident on various ICS forms, and got a Communications Plan (ICS-205) going so we knew what channels we were utilizing.

Glen Swarner, another of our Super-

visors, was paged and responded to the Comm Center to procure additional supplies which he brought to the scene. Debbie Harris was paged to assist at the Comm Center call-taking duties.

For our first field deployment, we had no problems integrating into the command post. The Incident Commander was glad to see us there. Field crews were very responsive as well. The scene transpired so quickly – it went to 4 alarms before I even got there – that I was initially way behind the power curve. Chief Cherry, after determining that it was not a terrorist type incident, concentrated on fire attack. So by the time I had set up and assumed Communications, most of the busy radio traffic had settled down. I was there until about 4:00 AM, shadowing the IC, answering questions, making phone calls, making faxes, relaying information in and out of the command post. We hadn't yet developed our policies and procedures for IDT yet, so it was kind of an off the cuff operation as far as what we were doing, but we did the kinds of things we expected to be doing, from prior training and IDT drills.

## Equipment Deficiencies

We did learn that we needed to have more resources stocked in CP-19, so we didn't have to go by the Comm Center and pick them up. We noted a few other equipment deficiencies. The value of having the immediate availability of such things as a full cache of ICS forms, a dedicated Mobile Data Terminal/laptop for IDT use, dedicated cell phone and portable radio, basic office supplies, and an equipment tracking system would be very beneficial.

In addition to appropriate protective clothing, IDT Members should also be issued cell phones and portable radios for communication between members during the response in order to coordinate job duties with other IDT mem-

bers, and with the IC while responding and after arrival at the scene.

## Summary

After this incident it is apparent IDT can be an integral part of the response matrix of this county. The knowledge and experience the IDT can provide in the way of dedicated communications personnel to an incident is invaluable for the IC. With a detailed Policy & Procedure manual, proper training and equipment as well as support from the Communications Center and County Chiefs, the IDT will be able to efficiently respond to any emergency independent of any other entity. They will be able to provide the IC with a dedicated professional team of individuals capable of performing tasks associated with the incident at hand.

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When a truck driver careened into the state capitol building in Sacramento (CA), the regional dispatch center's newly formed Incident Dispatcher Team was called into action.

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