

Public Safety Communications Administrative Policy/Procedure

Date: **Effective 07/01/01**
 Revised 09/17/02
 Revised 10/20/03
 Revised 10/26/04

Approved: _____
 Communications Center Director

Subject: **Incident Dispatch Team Program**

1. **Purpose:**

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to establish responsibilities and determine actions required to manage the Public Safety Communications Incident Dispatch Team (IDT) program.

2. **Mission Statement:**

2.1. The role of the IDT is to enhance communications, efficiency and safety at either local greater alarm fires and major fire related incidents or campaign fires that require mutual aid from local government. The IDT will assume on-scene communications support as delegated by the Incident Commander or Communications Unit Leader.

3. **Selection Process**

3.1. When an opening or openings for Incident Dispatcher exist, the Fire/EMS Program Manager or designee will announce the opening and recruitment. The selection process will consist of the following components:

3.2. Eligibility

The applicant must

- Be a non-probationary San Mateo County Communications Dispatch II – Fire/EMS Controller or cross-trained dispatcher
- Have a current performance evaluation of standard or better

3.3. Application

3.3.1. Upon request, applicants will submit a narrative request to the Fire/EMS Program Manager or designee indicating the reason the applicant is interested in becoming an Incident Dispatcher.

3.4. Selection

3.4.1. A selection committee will review the applications and interview each eligible candidate.

3.4.2. The committee may consist of a PSC Communications Supervisor/Manager, Fire Agency representative (ideally Command Level), the Fire/EMS Program Manager and a member of the Incident Dispatch Team.

3.4.3. The committee will consider the following when making a recommendation:

- Pro-active work habits and performance
- Preparation for the position
- Standard to superior customer service skills
- Past training performance
- Outside employment commitments
- Attendance – to include sick time usage
- Demonstrated ability to:
 - Remain calm in stressful situations
 - Effectively manage extended high profile and/or critical incidents
 - Accept immediate or delayed feedback

3.4.4. The Fire/EMS Program Manager or designee will present a list of recommended applicants to the Communication Center Director who will ultimately select the candidate(s).

4. **Staffing Requirements**

4.1. Public Safety Communications will have no more than 12 trained and certified Incident Dispatchers at any time.

4.2. The team consists of

- The Communications Center Director
- Fire/EMS Program Manager
- IDT Leader
- Incident Dispatchers

4.3. Each Incident Dispatcher will be assigned a classification of “Level 1” or “Level II.”

- Level I IDT – Level I ID’s are personnel who can arrive to a call-out

within a 20 minute response time.

- Level II IDT – Level II ID's are personnel who, due to the proximity of their residence, are not normally able to respond within the required 20 minute response time for in county incidents. However, if a Level II is within the 20 minute response time they are eligible to respond to an incident pursuant to applicable sections under 6.3. Additionally, Level II – Incident Dispatchers will be considered as primary responders when state mutual aid is requested.

4.4. The IDT program shall have one Level I Incident Dispatcher on call 24 hours a day seven days a week.

5. **Training**

5.1. IDT personnel will adhere to the following training requirements:

- Successful completion of the 24 hour Incident Dispatcher Workshop
- ICS 100/200
- In-service training to be determined by PSC, including but not limited to: in-house training, basic and advanced skills training, Departmental training

6. **Program Parameters**

6.1. Compensation

6.1.1. Incident Dispatchers will assume the responsibility of the position on a voluntary basis. The program offers the following compensation calculated by times documented in the CAD incident:

6.1.2. From enroute to on-scene, the Incident Dispatcher shall receive pay at time and one half, per minute.

6.1.3. Once on scene, the Incident Dispatcher shall receive pay for a minimum of three hours or length of time on scene.

6.1.4. On-call IDT personnel shall receive on-call pay during their off hours.

6.2. Responses

6.2.1. PSC's IDT will respond automatically to the following incidents:

- 2nd alarm or greater incidents
- Large scale or sustained Hazardous Materials incident
- Any page that is received that requests an IDT response

6.2.2. An ID may choose to cancel or not respond whenever he/she feels an unacceptable level of risk is present. Examples include:

- 2nd alarm as the result of an MCI on a freeway
- 2nd alarm as the result of a nuclear, biological or chemical release

6.3. Level 1 Response Configuration

6.3.1. The optimal IDT response is one Incident Dispatcher per alarm level on the 2nd and 4th alarm for a maximum of two Incident Dispatchers at any scene. Additional Incident Dispatchers may be special called at any level by an ID on scene if needed.

6.3.1.1. The responding ID should consider special calling an additional ID when an incident involves a greater alarm and an MCI.

6.3.2. The on call Incident Dispatcher is required to respond to all incidents as described in section 6.2.1 unless:

- He/she is on-duty and cannot be relieved from the Communications Center
- He/she is preempted by a closer Incident Dispatcher. Should this occur, the on call has the option to cancel or continue

6.3.3. The closest available OFF CALL Incident Dispatcher may respond along with the on call to ensure a timely response to an incident. Should a closer off call Incident Dispatcher become available the farther responding off call Incident Dispatcher(s) shall be preempted.

6.3.3.1. When the on call Incident Dispatcher arrives after a closer team member, the on call ID shall stage and contact Incident Communications on the zone primary channel who will advise the on call of the need for commitment to the incident.

6.3.3.2. Should two IDT members respond on the 2nd alarm there will be no response on the 4th. A maximum of 2 IDT members shall be maintained unless additional resources are required.

7. **Responder Status and Notification**

7.1. Two types of IDT units will be maintained: A generic IDT unit used to activate an IDT response from a CAD recommendation. And unique

units corresponding with the individual dispatcher's ID number i.e., IDT65, IDT47, etc.

7.1.1. The generic unit "COM" shall live at station HIDN and remain logged on to CAD at all times to allow a unit recommendation.

7.1.2. Individual units shall live at station HIDN and remain logged off. Individual units shall be attached to an incident in logged off status (-) so they do not remain logged on once cleared.

7.2. The on call schedule will be maintained by the IDT Leader or designee and entered into the CAD Information File. Shift change for on call occurs at 0600.

7.2.1. Once the on call schedule has been posted, each Level 1 Incident Dispatcher is responsible for managing changes to his/her on call time to ensure complete coverage.

7.3. A Dispatch Warning on unit IDT will note changes to the on call list.

7.3.1. When a full or partial on call change is agreed upon that differs from the posted on call schedule, it shall be the responsibility of the originally scheduled ID to assign and remove DWN information.

Changes to the IDT unit Dispatch Warning should be by wireless CAD access via the "IDT" application on a Palm VII PDA or equivalent whenever possible.

DWN text should indicate the temporarily assigned on call unit and time parameter. Example: IDT65 for IDT 32 until March 14.

There should be no DWN if the normally scheduled on call ID is on duty.

7.4. Level 1 and 2 Incident Dispatchers receive response notifications via department supplied pagers programmed with Greater Alarm Notifications and the IDT group call.

7.5. Responding level 1 Incident Dispatchers shall notify the Center via phone, radio or wireless CAD that they are enroute, on scene and clear of the incident.

7.6. Level 2 Incident Dispatchers, during the declared fire season, shall reply to pages which direct them personally or the Level 2 group to call the Center or an employee of PSC within 10 minutes of the page being sent.

7.7. All Incident Dispatchers on scene of an incident are committed until released by the Incident Commander.

7.8. Responding Level 1 Incident Dispatchers shall cancel their response if the fire is declared under control or extinguished, or if units are clearing from the incident.

8. **Responsibilities**

8.1. Overall responsibilities of the Incident Dispatcher include the processing and documenting of operational information and conducting communication procedures to support the command and control of critical operations. The IDT's primary objectives include:

- support of the incident commander in the execution of his/her duties
- the ability to be fully integrated into the command post operations in direct support of the command staff
- the ability to be fully equipped in order to perform supporting tasks

8.2. The role and responsibility of the IDT is (not in any specific order):

First Arriving Incident Dispatcher:

- Brief with the I/C
- Establish Comm Unit under ICS protocol (“_____ Communications”)
- Assume command net radio traffic for the I/C
- Monitor tactical Channel
- Establish 20 minute mark if needed
- Obtain resource allocation via CAD, Palm, Comm Center, I/C
- Obtain resource status via I/C, using the Deer Valley form or command board
- Manage T-Card or command board system
- Complete initial information on Deer Valley form (run numbers, times, etc) for I/C and PIO
- Complete IDT Checklist
- Establish CAD Connection

Second Arriving Incident Dispatchers:

- (transition 20 min timer from first arriving Incident Dispatcher)
- (transition Command Net radio from first arriving Incident Dispatcher)
- Assist communications/Re-Stat Incident Dispatcher with CAD, T-Cards, Boards
- Log/Manage PIO Requests
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9. **Equipment**

9.1. PSC will supply Incident Dispatchers with the following equipment:

- Wildland Brush Coat and Pants and/or turn-out jacket and pants
- Leather boots
- Wildland helmet
- Wildland goggles
- Wildland gloves
- Fire Shelter
- Pager
- Portable Radio
- Posse Box

9.2. Any additional items will be at the expense of the employee.

9.3. When on scene of a local response, Incident Dispatchers shall be dressed in a wildland or turnout jacket; wildland, turnout or dark blue wool uniform pants; and leather safety boots. In addition, each Incident Dispatchers shall have a wildland or structure helmet in his/her possession.

When on scene of an out of County response, attire is designated by the Comm Unit Leader. Each Incident Dispatchers shall have all PPE's in his/her possession for immediate application.

10. **Compliance**

10.1. Incident Dispatchers are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of IDT C.E. classes and IDT specific/assigned training annually.

10.2. Level 2 Incident Dispatchers are expected to reply to a minimum of 80% of pages as defined in section 7.6

10.3. The Communications Center Director may remove an Incident Dispatcher from the Team at any time with or without cause.