

#### RELATED TERMS

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## Incident Management: Announcing the Communications Unit Leader to All Personnel

### SUMMARY

When an Incident Commander (IC) or Unified Commander (UC) designates a Communications Unit Leader (COML) at the beginning of an incident response, the IC or UC should consider announcing the COML's position to all personnel. Alerting all personnel to the COML's assigned position will reduce confusion about the COML's role, responsibilities, and available capabilities for field personnel and the IC/UC.

### DESCRIPTION

The Tampa Bay, Florida, Urban Area evaluated the organizational performance of its' Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan during the US Coast Guard Bay Sentinel 06 Full Scale Exercise (FSE) on August 1, 2006. The Tampa Bay Urban Area co-sponsored the FSE with the US Coast Guard, Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Force, and the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Grants and Training. The exercise tested participants' ability to establish and maintain interoperable communications during two simultaneous incidents at separate locations within the City of Tampa. The first incident involved a suspicious package and individual at the Martin Gas Facility; the second incident involved an explosion near storage tanks at the Chevron fuel facility.

The UC designated a UC COML at the beginning of the incident response and announced his designation to all personnel at the UC site. Neither IC at the two incident sites formally designated COMLs. Instead, communications personnel at both sites assumed COML responsibilities informally. However, the ad hoc COMLs did not alert the UC COML or the other incident sites that they had assumed the role of COML. As a result, there was limited communications between the Chevron site COML and the UC COML.

The exercise's after-action report recommended that an IC or UC formally designate one individual as COML for each site, and alert all relevant personnel to that individual's role as COML. Doing so will facilitate interoperable communications among responders and clarify roles and responsibilities.

### CITATION

Tampa Bay Sentinel 06 Tactical Interoperability Plan Validation After-Action Report. 2006, p. 14.

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