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LESSON LEARNED

Incident Command: Incorporating the Distribution of an Incident Radio Communications Plan into Standard Operating Procedures

SUMMARY

Agencies and jurisdictions should incorporate the distribution of the Incident Radio Communications Plan into standard operating procedures (SOP) for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident responses. Incident commanders can redact sensitive information from versions intended for wider distribution.

DESCRIPTION

On August 16, 2006, the New York City Office of Emergency Management, with the participation of seven other state and local agencies, staged the New York City Urban Area Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) Validation Exercise. Large-scale events and emergencies in the city during the summer of 2006 prevented the validation of the TICP with a real-world event or planned exercise. The exercise planning team determined that the best method of validating the TICP was a small drill focused on tactical interoperable communications.

Exercise objectives included assessing the ability to manage necessary communications logistics for a large-scale incident. This included verifying the establishment of incident command and collaboration of necessary unified incident management components. Incident commanders from the New York City Fire Department and the New York City Police Department effectively established a unified command. The planning section had developed the Incident Radio Communications Plan using the standard Incident Command System (ICS) Form 205, but during the exercise, incident commanders did not distribute the plan to the operations section.

Incident commanders determined that the incident response required the highest level of communications security, particularly concerning tactical interoperability among multiple response agencies. Therefore, they decided to limit distribution of ICS Form 205. During larger incidents that would have required considerable response assets be documented on ICS Form 205, the failure to distribute the form to both command and operations sections could have hindered response operations.

Agencies and jurisdictions should incorporate the distribution of the Incident Radio Communications Plan into SOPs for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incident responses. Incident commanders can redact sensitive information from versions intended for wider distribution.

LINK

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Incident Command System Form 205
http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ICSResource/ICSResCntr_Forms.htm

CITATIONS

City of New York Office of Emergency Management. *New York City Urban Area TICP Validation After-Action Report*. 05 Oct 2006.

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=24108

City of New York. *The New York City Urban Area Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan*. July 2006.

https://www.llis.dhs.gov/member/secure/detail.cfm?content_id=24109

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