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A-10 STRIKE TEAM / TASK FORCE OPERATIONS

PURPOSE

An obligation of each Zone within the San Diego Operational Area is to assure a readily accessible pool of resources, apparatus and equipment that meets common standards to fill mutual aid requests from all agencies.

The Strike Team/Task Force has become an effective tool in the emergency management of incidents of all types. The use of Strike Teams/Task Forces enables the responsible jurisdiction to make incident assignments on a team basis.

DEFINITIONS

Cal OES – California Office of Emergency Services

CICCS – California Incident Command Certification System

FOG – FIRESCOPE Field Operations Guide

ICS – Incident Command System

STEN – Strike Team Leader Engine

TFLD – Task Force Leader

ROSS – Resource Ordering and Status System Reports

ENGINE STRIKE TEAM RESPONSE MODE DEFINITIONS

Initial Attack

Life and/or Property is imminently threatened by an event. The closest available resources shall be selected and will respond directly to the incident. Personnel can expect to be assigned and begin tactical operations immediately upon arrival at the incident. Resource should respond as if they are on the initial attack with a code 3 response. The STEN/TFLD shall be responsible to make contact with his/her respective resources upon the STEN's/TFLD's arrival. The incident communication plan must be provided to units assigned.

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Immediate Need

Strike Teams that are needed for the protection of life and property that is imminently threatened by an event. The resources may or may not be coming from your operational or adjacent operational areas. Resources shall respond as expeditiously as possible. Personnel can expect to be immediately assigned and begin tactical operations upon arrival at the incident or within the current operational period. The STEN/TFLD shall be responsible to make contact with his/her respective resources upon arrival. The incident communication plan must be provided to units assigned.

Planned Need

Planned need is utilized when resources are needed for the next operational period. Planned need is a non-code three response. Planned incident reporting time should determine the departure time. Planned need strike team/task force units should travel together and plan to arrive at least one hour prior to briefing for the next operational period (for which they are likely to be assigned). Mutual aid resources may respond within the operational area, adjacent operational area, region or state, as needed for the next operational period or as determined by the requesting agency.

PROCEDURE**Duties and Responsibilities**

The Central Zone is responsible for selecting their personnel for the various ICS Positions. Each agency retains responsibility for assuring the proper training/certification has been met, maintained, and the individual has adequate and appropriate field experience.

All agencies within the Central Zone shall follow the CICCS as established by Cal OES, The State Board of Fire Services and the California State Fire Marshal's Office.

The Central Zone Chief's must assure their personnel are trained, prepared and truly qualified for their assignment. This is imperative when the ICS position is expected to provide supervision over personnel from any other agency. Personnel must possess CICCS certification and be entered in ROSS in order to fill ICS positions requested at the Area, Regional, State, and National Level.

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The STEN/TFLD selected to command the Strike Team/Task Force should be an experienced Fire Officer, knowledgeable in both structural and wildland fire control. Personnel responding to a Forest Agency, Master Mutual Aid and/or California Fire Assistance Agreement request for overhead positions shall meet the training requirements established for the ICS position to be filled (STEN/TFLD).

Heartland Communications Facility Authority will maintain the rotational list of qualified STEN/TFLD, STEN/TFLD trainees, and engines available from the Central Zone. The Operational Area Fire Rescue Coordinator Center will maintain the most current list of qualified STEN/TFLD.

The STEN/TFLD must have the capability and experience for managing, coordinating, and directing the actions of fire companies at a wide variety of emergency situations. This includes maintaining all required records, and ensuring the logistical needs of all personnel are met during the entire activation of the STEN/TFLD.

A STEN/TFLD should include a STEN/TFLD Trainee whenever possible.
Agencies should send 4 personnel per apparatus on Planned Need Strike Team Requests.

Strike Team Requirements

Personnel: Proper safety equipment is required for all members of any strike team. This consists of full structural and wild land protective clothing.

All Apparatus and Vehicles: Per FOG, Radio Communications Guidelines (Appendix A); there are specific VHF high band channels that should be programmed into all VHF radios utilized by fire service agencies providing mutual aid in California (see the FIRESCOPE STATEWIDE CHANNEL PLAN). These Channels shall be the the minimum required per current FOG guide.

All apparatus and vehicles assigned to a Strike Team/Task Force shall possess the following minimum in-county local VHF frequencies: XSD Command 1, (formerly White Net) XSD TAC 1, (formerly Red Net), XSD Command 3 (formerly Border Command), and VFIRE 21. A cellular phone is recommended. In addition, full code 3 equipment is required.

Strike Team/Task Force Leader Vehicle: The vehicle should be separate from engines assigned. STEN/TFLD vehicle shall have portable and mobile radio capability to talk with all state and federal fire agencies.

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Engines: The engines should meet the equipment and criteria requirements for the configuration of the strike team each engine is part of. It is recommended the engines be configured also of same fuel type. Engines should meet typing requirements for configuration of strike team assignments as described in the FOG.

Pre-Incident Checklist

Prior to a deployment, each unit shall assemble all equipment, documents, and reference material required to participate in a Strike Team/Task Force response:

- State and Local Maps
- Financial documents, purchase orders, credit cards
- Portable radio(s) with spare batteries
- FOG
- NWCG Incident Reponse Pocket Guide
- ICS forms (minimum of ICS 214, ICS 225, OES F-42)
- Strike Team Apparatus Inventory Record
- Strike Team identification cards or glass chalk/white shoe polish
- Appropriate stationary supplies
- Agency specific forms
- Personal items to support deployment for a minimum of 7 days, excluding travel, per OES guidelines and agreements in effect.

Strike Team/Task Force Assembly and Travel

All units must contact their communication/command center on the assigned frequency.

STEN/TFLD shall obtain response information including:

- Strike Team Number (do not change or alter this number)
- Order number and Request number
- Incident name and type
- Units within strike team or task force, including Leader and Trainee
- Reporting location and travel route; restrictions
- Radio frequencies (including travel channel if applicable)

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- Check in location and time
- Incident contact phone numbers
- Rendezvous location with map page (if applicable)

In addition, STEN/TFLD will coordinate the following if applicable:

- Rendezvous with responding units
- Complete Strike Team Apparatus Inventory Records
- Sign/review Code of Conduct
- Discuss deployment information
- Discuss travel and communications plan
- Ensure apparatus and personnel are ready for response including all personal protective equipment
- Discuss expectation of personnel assigned to the Strike Team and provide a strike team safety briefing.
- Begin ICS 214 Unit Log
- Brief strike team on Incident Action Plan for each operational period and prior to re-engagement or change in assignment

Expectations

Each STEN/TFLD or the agency supplying the resource must provide for its personnel needs (i.e. personal gear bag, feeding, fuel, repairs, financial or injury documents). If a mechanical problem occurs while enroute or returning from an Incident, Contact OES Fire and Rescue Branch by phone, 24 hours a day and ask for the Duty Officer. (916)845-8911. They will advise on how to handle the mechanical problem.

Each apparatus shall keep a unit log of their assignment, actions, and major events in addition to all reports required for normal activity (ICS 214). A copy shall be supplied to their STEN/TFLD upon completion of each operational Period.

Forms necessary for reimbursement shall be filled out and submitted through proper channels before demobilization.

STEN/TFLD must contact the Central Zone Coordinator or designee on a daily basis to update status and condition of the strike team/task force. Zone Coordinator will relay info from the STEN/TFLD back to agencies in the Zone.

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Notwithstanding specific Memorandum of Understanding practices, relief of committed strike team crews are encouraged to adhere to the following:

- Personnel responding to a Strike Team/Task Force assignment, in or out of county should be prepared to work a minimum of seven (7) and up to fourteen (14) days without relief excluding travel time. The assignment can be extended to twenty-one (21) days if requested by the incident and approved by the Central Zone Chief's. All reliefs that take place on the Strike Team/Task Force will be coordinated through the STEN/TFLD who will directly coordinate with the Cal OES representative. The STEN/TFLD can request early relief through the Incident Commander. Relief of the STEN/TFLD without written permission of the Incident Commander is not reimbursable.
- The replacement of engine personnel is the responsibility of the individual agency and will be coordinated by the STEN/TFLD through the Zone Coordinator with notification to the Cal OES representative, if available.
- Those persons requiring relief before above criteria (scheduled vacations, etc) are required to notify their agency prior to responding on a strike team assignment.
- STEN/TFLD's are responsible to see that all drivers/operators are adequately rested to ensure safe vehicle operation. Drivers that have been awake for more than sixteen (16) hours, including work and travel time, and the travel time upon release from the incident is more than thirty (30) minutes, will not be allowed to drive until they have obtained eight (8) hours of rest. Commercial Lodging may also be approved by the incident when return travel times from the incident exceed 10 hours. Arrangements for commercial lodging while returning, if applicable, should be authorized and coordinated through the Cal OES rep prior to leaving the incident. (see also "reimbursement" p.8)
- No driver will drive more than 10 hours (behind the wheel) within any day. Multiple drivers in a single vehicle may drive up to the duty day limitation provided no driver exceeds the individual driving (behind the wheel) time limitation of 10 hours. STEN/TFLD shall monitor and ensure 2:1 work to rest ratios are being met. If STEN determines the need for rest during extended travel times to and from incidents, he/she should take action to ensure proper rest breaks are provided.

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Demobilization

Upon notification of pending demobilization, the STEN/TFLD will report to the Demobilization Unit and complete the ICS 221 form.

- Return loaned equipment to the Supply Unit and obtain replacements for damaged or consumed equipment and supplies.
- Return loaned portable radios to the Communications Unit.
- Report any damaged or lost equipment that is attributable to the incident to Comp/Claims.
- Ensure all Strike Team/Task Force apparatus complete a mechanical inspection by Ground Support Unit and ensure repairs are made as necessary.
- Turn in all documents (ICS 213, ICS 214, ICS 225, etc.) completed during the incident to Documentation Unit. Retain a copy of all documents for your records.
- Turn in time records (F-42) to the Cal OES representative, or Time Unit if no OES rep. Available.
- Reimbursement for Emergency Apparatus refurbishment and rehab may be approved by the Incident Command, up to a maximum of 2 hours, as appropriate.

Injuries

If an Injury occurs to anyone assigned to the Strike Team/Task Force, notification to all appropriate personnel through the incident command organization shall be completed. STEN/TFLD shall;

- Obtain necessary medical treatment/transport, follow medical plan.
- Document on an ICS 214.
- Notification of Agency from STEN/TFLD.
- Any/all follow up shall be documented.

Out-Of Service

Strike Team/Task Forces may be out-of-service due to mechanical breakdown or during rest periods. While off shift, the strike team is subject to recall and shall remain together. The STEN/TFLD will provide the Strike Team/Task Force's planned location and contact information to the Resources Unit and the Cal OES representative. All Strike Team/Task Force personnel who are off shift remain on duty and subject to their agencies rules and regulations, as well as the Strike Team/Task Force Code of Conduct. All personnel assigned to any/all Strike Team/Task Force in-county or out of county will follow their agencies uniform policies.

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When going off shift, the following shall be completed:

- Ensure apparatus is response ready, including water and fuel.
- Fuel shall be obtained through the incident when available. If vehicles are fueled using agency credit cards, retain receipts and contact the Finance Section as soon as possible.
- Obtain necessary repairs through ground support. Repairs that are not a result of incident activity are the responsibility of each agency. In each situation proper documentation shall be completed.
- Obtain medical attention for personnel as needed through the Medical Unit.
- Complete necessary incident claims forms for incident related damaged or lost equipment.
- Obtain necessary supplies through the Supply Unit.

Reimbursement

Agencies shall assume operational costs, including necessary motor fuels and lubricants used in its emergency apparatus while responding to and returning from the State of California or Federal Fire Agency Incidents. It shall be the responsibility of the responding jurisdiction to provide the necessary means of payment for such costs.

At no time will the agencies be eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses such as fuel, food, and lodging while responding unless approved in writing at the incident. If in transit to or from an incident the STEN/TFLD determines that the safety and welfare of the strike team members requires the strike team leader to secure lodging, a call will be made in advance to the 24-hour OES Warning center for Cal OES approval (916) 845-8911. If approval is not given, the cost of the lodging will be borne by each individual agency that has personnel assigned to the strike team.

If the STEN/TFLD determines that commercial lodging during rest periods or between work shifts would benefit the personnel on the strike team, he/she shall consult the Central Zone Chief's for guidance on reimbursement authorization for lodging not provided by the incident.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

When assigned as a member of a Strike Team or Task Force:

1. All personnel will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
2. Maintain a state of readiness when assigned or in staging. Maintain a professional demeanor when in unassigned status
3. Maintain and wear all safety clothing while on line assignments. Wear the proper clothing while at the Incident Base.
4. Wear appropriate clothing that reflects your Agency as determined by the Incident.
5. Radio discipline will be utilized. Radio traffic between units will be kept to a minimum and on a professional level.
6. Limit the procurement of equipment to what is needed.
7. All equipment issued at the incident must be returned before you are demobilized.
8. Be prepared to function unsupported for at least twenty-four (24) hours.
9. Your actions are a reflection not only on your agency, but on the Central Zone as a whole.
10. No alcohol or illegal drugs will be transported or consumed while assigned to a strike team.
11. Know whom you are working for.
12. Personnel will not enter any residence without the owner's permission except to search or defend the structure or seek refuge when necessary. Unit leaders will leave a note at the residence detailing their actions and communicate their units activity through their chain of command as well as document on the ICS 214.
13. If assigned to commercial lodging for off-shift rest, know and comply with the proper procedures and policies.
14. Violation of these rules of conduct can be grounds for dismissal from the Strike Team assignment.

References:

San Diego Operational Area Policy # 11A
2016 National Interagency Mobilization Guide
NWCG Memorandum Re: Emergency Incident Driving Regulations. February 26, 2003
Cal Fire Policy 7060-4, 5, Driver Limitations, 8/80 Definitions. October 2002

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