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Upcoming Events

January 14, 2014:
Winter SIGB
Meeting

OKFOG Version 2.0

Version 2.0 of the Oklahoma Field Operations Guide (OKFOG) is officially in development. On August 14, 2013 several IOC stakeholders participated in an initial planning meeting to discuss the changes and updates they would like to see incorporated into the next edition of the OKFOG, which is scheduled to be published in early 2014. This will be the first major revision of the document since its original publication in 2011. The OKFOG is a pocket-sized operational guide intended to assist all public safety

personnel in the use of interoperable radio resources on a day-to-day basis, as well as during large-scale events which necessitate a multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional response. It is a reference tool that provides guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP's) for the proper use, naming, and programming of interoperable radio channels. The OKFOG was designed to be utilized by both emergency responders and radio technicians to ensure that every public safety agency in the state of Oklahoma is equipped with optimal interoperable capabilities. The OKFOG serves as a living document and requires periodic updates to guarantee that it provides the most accurate interoperable communications information to first responders in the state of Oklahoma.

Major updates to Version 2.0 of the OKFOG will include:

- The addition of a statewide radio programming template, which was developed by members of the SIGB to be used as the recommended standard for all public safety radios in the state.
- The removal of several pages containing outdated information.
- The addition of a Record of Change page which will be updated each time a revision is made.
- A new cover page to better distinguish Version 2.0 from the first edition.

Although hard-copies are unavailable at this time, you can still access to the most up-to-date version of the OKFOG by downloading an electronic copy from our website at www.ioc.ok.gov.

OKFOG Requests

The Oklahoma Field Operations Guide (OKFOG) is a pocket-sized communications quick-reference booklet for first responders. All public safety agencies in the state of Oklahoma may request copies of the OKFOG. Please send requests to IOC@dps.state.ok.us and include your name, agency, number of copies needed, and mailing address.

OEC/ICTAP Hosts After Action Conference Following Tabletop Exercise

On Tuesday, July 30th, John Persano of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications/Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (OEC/ICTAP) hosted an After Action Conference (AAC) to address the communications gaps and successes that were observed during the IOC Tabletop Exercise which took place earlier this summer. The purpose of the AAC was to give exercise evaluators the opportunity to make recommendations on ways to improve the gaps in communications capabilities that were identified during the exercise. Many of the exercise participants in addition to several IOC stakeholders were in attendance to provide their feedback on the OEC/ICTAP team's findings. Some of the successful communications practices that were mentioned during the AAC included excellent multi-agency and multi-disciplinary representation, as well as participant familiarization and utilization of the Oklahoma Field Operations Guide (OKFOG). Persano also acknowledged that Oklahoma is one of the only states to offer Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Communications Unit Technician (COMT) credentialing in the U.S.

Several gaps in communications capabilities were also addressed during the AAC. For example, throughout the

exercise, participants exhibited a lack of awareness of regional, state, and federal communications resources. In response to this, the OEC/ICTAP team recommended that all area-wide and state communications assets be included in any Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP) updates. In addition, it was noted that emergency responders in the Oklahoma City Metro area seem to rely too heavily on landline and cell phone communication. In order to remedy this issue, it was suggested that first responders be trained to utilize available tools within their public safety Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems to the greatest extent possible. Finally, the OEC/ICTAP team observed a gap in the activation and utilization of COMLs and COMTs during large-scale public safety events. Their recommendations for improving this particular communications inefficiency were to incorporate the COML role in future event-planning opportunities, and to conduct more robust training on Communications Unit awareness. By participating in the tabletop exercise and its subsequent after action conference, the Oklahoma City first responder community took a significant step towards an increased level of communications proficiency, which will undoubtedly benefit them in the future, particularly when responding to major public safety incidents or disasters.

OKOHS Purchases COMT Kits

The Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security's (OKOHS) Interoperable Communications Division recently provided funding to purchase the Certified Communications Unit Technicians (COMT) in the state with COMT Kits. These kits will supply Oklahoma's Certified Technicians with the necessary tools and equipment in order to provide an optimal level of communications interoperability in our state.



State Certified COMTs Jim Hennesey (left) and Bob Weist show off their new kits.

2013 SCIP Revision Workshop

The state of Oklahoma has updated its Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) annually since 2007. But this year, every state in the U.S. is required to conduct a complete overhaul of their communications plan. In order to expedite this process in our state, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) facilitated a two-day Oklahoma SCIP Revision Workshop. Several members of the IOC stakeholder community convened at the Oklahoma City Public Works facility on September 11th and 12th to provide their input on the strategic direction they felt the state of Oklahoma should take in order to achieve its vision for the future of interoperable emergency communications. This year's communications plan will highlight the key interoperability objectives that Oklahoma will strive to accomplish within the next three to five years. The group worked closely with the OEC team to revise our state's current vision and mission statements and to develop the major goals and initiatives that will be featured in the 2013 Oklahoma SCIP. Goals and initiatives were formed based on the results of a SWOT analysis conducted by the OEC team at the start of the workshop. The stakeholders were asked to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that currently, or could potentially effect Oklahoma's emergency communications environment. The goals and initiatives derived from this assessment predominantly follow the lanes of the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum (Governance, SOP's, Technology, Training and Exercises, and Usage), with the addition of two supplementary categories: Outreach and Information Sharing and Life-Cycle Funding. These are the seven critical elements that must be addressed in the SCIP in order to effectively articulate Oklahoma's vision for interoperability. Some of the key priorities for our state that will be highlighted in this year's SCIP include:

- Developing state-level and regional Tactical Interoperable Communications Plans (TICP).
- Programming all public safety radios statewide with national interoperability channels.
- Enhancing awareness of deployable communications resources statewide.
- Educating federal, state, local, and tribal users on planning for and the implementation of the National Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN).

These are just a few of the main goals that were collaboratively developed by the stakeholders during the SCIP revision workshop. The multi-agency and multi-disciplinary participation throughout the revision process allowed for the interoperability needs of the entire state to be addressed and subsequently prioritized in the 2013 Oklahoma SCIP. The recommendations from Oklahoma's emergency response community on how to improve interoperable communications statewide played a valuable role during the workshop and will hopefully pave the way for overcoming Oklahoma's most predominant communications challenges. The purpose of the SCIP is to address these challenges and to provide a strategic direction for the state to follow in order to achieve an optimal interoperability environment. The 2013 Oklahoma SCIP is expected to be completed by the end of the year, and published copies are anticipated to become available by early 2014. For more information on the SCIP, or to view SCIP's from previous years, visit ioc.ok.gov.



Oklahoma

Statewide Communication
Interoperability Plan (SCIP)

September 2013



Black Box Rodeo 2013

Photo Courtesy of DPS



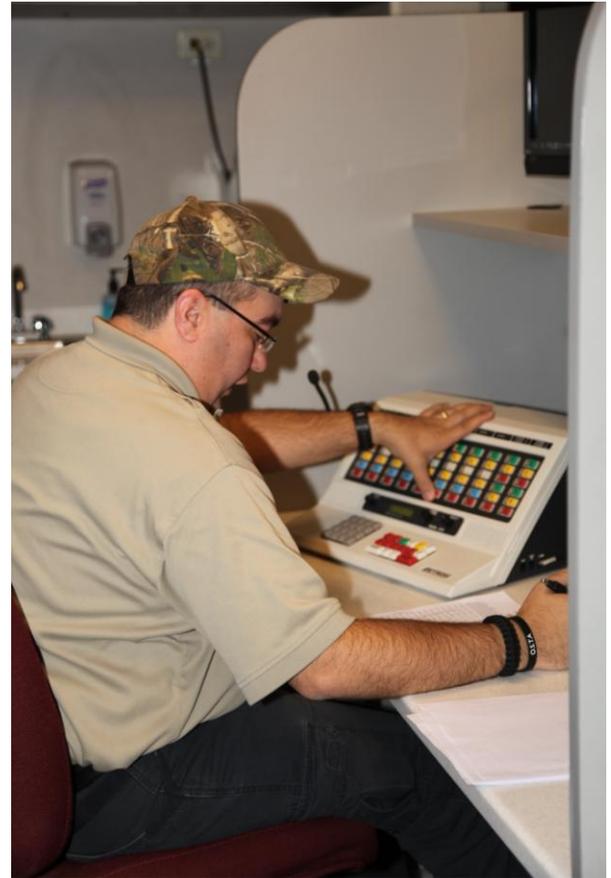
Aerial view of the mobile command and communications resources that participated in the 2013 Black Box Rodeo

On Wednesday, October 23rd, dozens of first responders representing multiple public safety agencies from across the state of Oklahoma gathered at the Shawnee Expo Center to participate in the 2nd annual Black Box Rodeo. This radio communications drill was facilitated by the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (OKOHS) and was designed to:

- Test the interoperability between numerous command and communications resources
- Allow first responders to become more familiar with the communications assets that may be available to respond during significant public safety events
- Provide Oklahoma’s public safety community with the opportunity to observe the functions of other agencies’ communications equipment

Participants in the 2013 Black Box Rodeo included personnel from over a dozen local, state, and federal agencies, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI). Several State-Certified Communications Unit Leaders (COML) were also in attendance to ensure that accurate radio testing was provided to each agency. Prior to the event, the COMLs developed an ICS-205 Communications Plan for the participants to reference during the testing. Although a few last-minute changes were made to the 205, overall the Rodeo went smoothly and no major challenges were experienced. A brief Hotwash discussion was held immediately after the event, during which participants were able to express the value that the experience brought to their agency and community.

Photo courtesy of DPS



A communications drill is conducted using Command 1

Communications Resource List

The Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security is collecting a Communication Resources Inventory. If your agency has an asset you would like listed on our website and on WebEOC, please fill out the Response Unit Request form located at ioc.ok.gov.

Communications Unit Exercise

On behalf of the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (OKOHS), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications/Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (OEC/ICTAP) facilitated a two-day Communications Unit Exercise (COMMEX) in Oklahoma City on October 30th and 31st, 2013. The COMMEX was designed to expedite the task book completion process for both Communications Unit Leader (COML) and Communications Unit Technician (COMT) trainees, in order to promote the expansion of the Communications Unit (COMU) program in the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma is one of the only states in the U.S. to offer a COML/COMT credentialing program, and the current number of certified COMLs and COMTs in the state is at a critical level. In order to be recognized at the state level in Oklahoma, trainees must attend the COML or COMT course, successfully complete all tasks in their position task books (PTB), and receive official approval from the state's COML Committee. The recognition procedure is rigorous and thorough, but has proven to be invaluable when considering the level of knowledge and expertise that Oklahoma's certified COMU personnel have to offer when responding to disasters or any other public safety event. The purpose of the COMMEX was to encourage COML/COMT hopefuls to continue moving forward with the credentialing process by allowing them to demonstrate the core communications competencies that are required to become certified in the state of Oklahoma.

Prior to the COMMEX, the exercise planning team (EPT) met several times to develop a plausible and realistic disaster scenario that would give participants the opportunity to train and exercise their emergency response communications skills. Two dozen trainees representing multiple agencies and public safety disciplines from across the state were selected by the EPT to participate in the COMMEX. Exercise play began at 8:00 am each day, with a brief overview of the scope and purpose of the event. Trainees were then required to participate in a simulated operations briefing, where they were given dispatch information, channel assignments, etc. Following the briefing, COML trainees were asked to draft an initial ICS-205 Communications Plan and begin the simulated communications operations. Meanwhile, COMT participants demonstrated their technical skills in the "tech room," where they displayed several key competencies at eight different stations. Throughout the entire COMMEX process, trainees worked closely with other key exercise personnel, including team leaders, simulators, and radio operators (RADO). The role of the simulators and RADOs was to follow a pre-determined script and provide injects that were designed not only to enhance the plausibility of the exercise scenario, but also to challenge and test the trainees on their communications skills and abilities. Team leaders were responsible for closely monitoring and documenting each trainee as they worked through the exercise. It was ultimately the job of the team leaders to decide whether or not a trainee would be signed-off on any given task.

Photo Courtesy of DPS



COML trainee Ken Eppler utilizes the equipment in Command 3 to demonstrate his communications skills during the COMMEX

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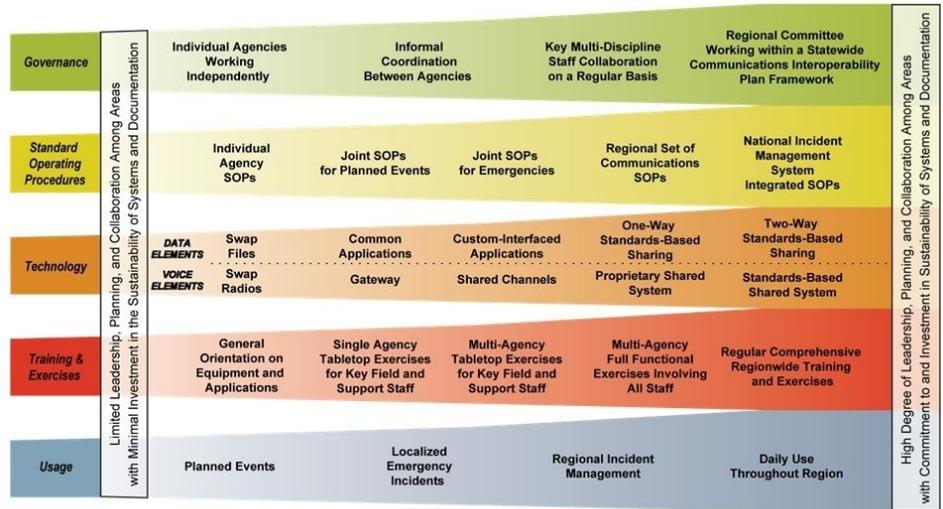


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The majority of exercise play took place in one of three communications/command vehicles. Command 2, Command 3, and the Weatherford Regional Response Trailer were all brought in from different parts of the state and were made available for the trainees to utilize during the COMMEX. The use of these mobile communications units contributed significantly to the functionality and practicality of the exercise. Overall, the COMMEX was a huge success and the trainees were able to get many of the tasks in their PTB’s approved. By participating in this exercise, hopefully each trainee will be motivated to continue on in the credentialing process, which would significantly enhance the COML program in the state of Oklahoma. Exercise facilitators are in the process of developing an After Action Report/Improvement Plan, which is scheduled to be sent out by the end of the year.



Interoperability Continuum



Oklahoma has adopted the SAFECOM Interoperability Continuum as a guide and directional goal to gain seamless communications interoperability across the state.

About the Oklahoma Interoperability Newsletter

The *Oklahoma Interoperability Newsletter* is designed to be a source of information, news, and updates for stakeholders committed to public safety communications interoperability in the state of Oklahoma. We hope that it will serve as a valuable resource for you. If you would like to contribute information to the newsletter, or for comments or suggestions, please contact Nikki Cassingham at ncassing@dps.state.ok.us or Kayla McCleery at kmccleer@dps.state.ok.us.