

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OPERATIONS AREA**

**POLICY #19**

<b>SUBJECT: EBRCS Fire Ground Emergency Communications</b>			
Date <b>10/21/13</b>	New	Approved By XCC Exec Chiefs	Pages 3
DISPOSITION XCC Operations Policy Manual			

**INTRODUCTION:**

The EBRCS (East Bay Regional Communications System) provides additional capabilities for managing Communication System Failures and declaring Fire Ground Emergencies.

**POLICY**

All XCC Communication Center and Field Personnel shall be knowledgeable in the application of the following procedures to maximize Firefighter Safety and ensure effective Incident Operations.

**PROCEDURE**

**1. Trunk System Failure and Out of Range Conditions**

Channel 15 in Zones Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Echo and Foxtrot are direct channels assigned for trunk system communication failure or out of range conditions during Incident Operations.

- a. Channel 15 in the above mentioned zones is not an EBRCS Talk Group (TG); it is a direct tactical channel that operates independent of the EBRCS.
- b. EBRCS TG's and direct channels cannot be scanned at the same time; therefore Channel 15 must be monitored independently.
- c. Channel 15 shall be monitored by the Incident Commander (IC) and Safety Officer at all times during Incident Operations.
- d. Firefighters shall establish contact with the IC on Channel 15 if a communications failure or out of range condition occurs. *Note-Out of range conditions can sometimes occur in limited areas and can be corrected by relocating a short distance.*

- e. Out of range conditions identified by the IC shall be communicated to all Incident Resources and the Communications Center. The IC can establish an alternative communications plan using direct tactical channels or Zone Kilo, as necessary, and in coordination with the jurisdictional Communications Center.

## 2. Emergency Button Operations

Dual/band portable radios are equipped with emergency buttons on the top of the radio and on top of the remote sensing microphone. The emergency button capability provides Firefighters with an additional means to declare a “Firefighter Emergency”.

- a. **The primary method to declare a “Firefighter Emergency” is to contact the Incident Commander (IC) by radio on the assigned Incident TG/Tactical Channel. The emergency button should only be activated if the Firefighter is unable to declare “Emergency Traffic” verbally.**
- b. Firefighters shall activate their Emergency Button if they encounter any delay or difficulty in transmitting an emergency traffic message via the Incident TG/Channel.
- c. A press and hold of the emergency button for three (3) seconds will send an emergency alarm to the Jurisdictional Fire Dispatch Center.
- d. The radio screen will turn orange and display “Emergency, Zone\_\_\_”.
- e. Dispatch Centers will acknowledge the receipt of an emergency button activation and then simulcast **“Emergency Button Activation from Firefighter \_\_\_ has been received”** on the Dispatch TG, Incident/Command/Tactical TG’s/Channels, and TG 16.
- f. The IC shall acknowledge the Emergency Button Activation/Emergency Traffic situation and assume the management of the Fire Ground Emergency.
- g. **The Emergency Button does not function in all zones. Additionally, the Emergency Button will not activate if the radio is on a VHF or Direct Tactical channel in an EBRCS zone.**
- h. To reset the emergency button, press and hold the button for three (3) seconds.
- i. Once the Emergency Button is activated the radio reverts to the emergency mode. If the Firefighter who activated the emergency button needs to change TG’s/Channels, the emergency button needs to be reset before another TG/Channel can be utilized.

j. **If the Firefighter does not receive a verbal acknowledgement the Communications Center or IC after activating the emergency button, the Firefighter shall switch to Channel 15 and declare “Emergency Traffic”.**

k. TG 16 shall be monitored by each Communications Center per Agency Policy

**3. Incident Commander Responsibilities –**

a. Company Officer/IC's, shall primary select the Incident TG/ Tactical Channel and scan Dispatch (Based on Agency Policy)

b. Chief Officer/IC's shall dedicate a radio to monitor direct channel 15. Assigned Chief Officers shall monitor direct channel 15 during response and throughout the Incident.

c. Chief Officer/IC's shall primary select the Incident TG/Tactical Channel and scan Command, Additional Tactical TG/Tactical Channels and Dispatch. (Based on Agency Policy)