

**CALIFORNIA FIRE SERVICE
INTEROPERABILITY CHANNEL NOMENCLATURE PROPOSAL
PRESENTATION**

Chief McClelland:

Thank you to NPSTC for the opportunity for the California Fire Service to present our alternative. I am Tim McClelland, Assistant Fire Chief with CAL FIRE formally known as CDF...the California Division of Forestry and Fire Protection. I am Chair of the FIRESCOPE Communications Specialist Group.

The team members present are:

Fire Chief Randy Bradley, Lawrence Livermore Lab Fire representing the California Fire Chiefs Association and a member of the California S.I.E.C.

On the audio bridge, Fire Chief John Penido, San Marino Fire representing the California Fire Chiefs Association and a member of the California S.I.E.C.

CAL FIRE Telecommunications Manager Glen Savage representing FIRESCOPE and a member of the California S.I.E.C.

Riverside County Fire Telecommunications Manager Chet Ashbaugh representing FIRESCOPE.

Contra Costa County Fire Telecommunications Manager Brent Finster representing FIRESCOPE and a member of the California S.I.E.C.

We felt compelled to be here today in beautiful Florida because this is such an important issue for us. Recently, we were told that California is responsible for 66% of the activity processed in ROSS - the Resource Ordering and Status System - in regards to the movement of resources to incidents nationwide. We use the channels dedicated for interoperability daily due to the tight integration of federal, state and local government agencies in our state.

Chief Bradley -

When the East Bay Hills Fire in Oakland, California needlessly destroyed homes and lives in 1991, the State Legislature mandated that all public employees be trained to the same standard. The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), modeled after the Incident Command System (ICS), became the standard for the management of all major emergencies.

Central to the effectiveness of multi-agency operations is common terminology, a basic tenet of ICS and SEMS. The Board of Directors of FIRESCOPE, an element of the Fire and Rescue Branch of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, is charged with setting interoperability standards for the California fire service. One of the standards they are called to approve is common terminology.

The California Fire Chiefs Association strongly supports this proposal for naming radio interoperability channels. That proposal is based upon existing federal and state nomenclature and sound principles of industrial psychology. The result is a simple, practical and user-friendly channel name. Since the vast majority of all the mutual aid incidents in the U.S. occur in California, the California Fire Service proposal is based upon a wealth of experience managing disasters.

Our proposal is based on channel names that are already widely used and well understood. Any change to this system must be collaboratively developed and thoroughly tested by line firefighters and police officers before a new standard is adopted.

By law, state and local agencies are responsible for disaster management, so interoperability standards must first meet their needs.

Interoperability is enhanced by common terminology, but only if it is easily understood and not likely to be mistaken by those who need it during an emergency.

Glen Savage –

California strongly endorses a nomenclature standard that addresses the needs of the end user...not just for the convenience and ideals of technical staff. Any standard to be adopted should be put forth in a real, emergency all-risk environment to ensure that it is tested and works. The California Fire Service Proposal to use the existing, established naming convention (such as the I-CALL, U-CALL, V-CALL, etc.) is based on tried and true usage in a heavy interoperability and mutual aid environment.

Chet Ashbaugh –

These are the limitations we have found in attempting to adopt the current NCC nomenclature:

- There are two sets of numbers in the channel label which can easily cause confusion and potential safety issues
- It is not expandable if additional channels become available for interoperability in the future
- The use of FIR and CAL might lead to confusion since CAL is a common abbreviation for California state government and agencies and fir trees are not the only types of trees in which we fight fire!
- The existing nomenclature does not meet an 8 character display limitation
- The Federal interoperability channels are mandated by the NTIA to use certain channel labels (for example LE 1 and IR 10). The NCC standard does not acknowledge the existing mandate which might prohibit interoperability between federal users and state/local counterparts because their radios would have been programmed differently
- We don't feel that the existing NCC nomenclature received adequate discussion within the public safety community prior to adoption

Brent Finster -

Why do we think that the California proposal is the best?

- It is user friendly from end user perspective
- It is more understandable...channel names “roll off the tongue” better (for example saying FIRE instead of FIR, MED instead of EMS, and CALL vs. CAL).
- It will be simpler to train law enforcement officers and firefighters
- It is expandable in each band by adding additional numbers after the usage (“LLAW” 2 could be the next lowband law enforcement channel added in the future if we ever possibly needed another one at lowband!)
- Our proposed channel nomenclature for the nationwide narrowband interoperability channels (V-TAC, R-TAC, .etc.) use label names as described in the FCC Report & Order 00-348
- The federal Interoperability channels use nomenclature that is compatible with the names mandated by NTIA for use by federal agencies
- The I-CALL, U-CALL, V-CALL names have been in use for several years and accepted in many states
- It meets an 8 character limitation
- It was created by a diverse group of technical and operational local, state, and federal personnel that included fire, EMS and law enforcement personnel

Chief Penido –

Finally, as representatives of state and local fire agencies, we want to reiterate the commitment of the California fire service to the development and promulgation of a common standard for interoperability channel names. We applaud the foresight of the NCC and NPSTC as pioneers seeking to bridge the communications gap between public safety agencies. It is our sincere hope that this proposal will enhance your laudable efforts to find the best means to facilitate communications across the nation.

Chief McClelland -

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion today and the California Team is available for questions or comments.