



Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho, Nevada, and Utah, Arizona

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Western Region

National Park Service
Intermountain Region
Pacific West Region

Fish and Wildlife Service
Mountain Prairie & Pacific Region
Pacific Southwest Region

Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Intermountain Region

State Agencies
Idaho, Utah, and Nevada

January 11, 2011

To: Great Basin Coordination Group Members
Western Great Basin Coordination Center
Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center

From: Rex McKnight, Chair Great Basin Coordinating Group

Subject: Great Basin 2011 Air-to-Ground Frequency Naming Convention

Due Date: March 1, 2011

During the November 2010 Great Basin Coordinating Group meeting, the Operations Committee recommended to the Coordinating Group that the Great Basin implement a standardized frequency identifier or name system for initial attack zone air-to-ground. The Coordinating Group voted affirmatively to implement for the 2011 fire season. This memo serves as the Great Basin Coordinating Group guidance for implementation.

After the Fall GBCG meeting; NMAC was briefed about the GBCG plan. Additionally, the National Interagency Incident Spectrum Support Workshop was convened in Boise where an interagency cadre of frequency managers settled on an interagency strategy to obtain permanently assigned air-to-ground FM frequencies for all 100+ initial attack zones (ARMZ – all risk management zone). It is anticipated that the effort will be complete within 3 years. There will be a minimum of 2 air-to-ground frequencies per zone and possibly more dependent on zone fire activity level and/ or availability of frequencies from zone interagency partners. For the 2011 season, the NIFC National Interagency Incident Communications Division - Communications Duty Office Coordinator will issue the air-to-ground FM frequency assignments and maps on February 1. There will be no frequency changes after that date. Starting in 2012, the frequency assignment/ maps will be issued on January 1.

Soon after the release of the 2011 frequency assignments on February 1, 2011, the Great Basin Coordinating Group will send out the IA Zone air-to-ground frequency name pair information to Dispatch Center Managers, Unit Aviation Managers and Communication Program Coordinators. The frequency – name pairing will be determined from the national list of IA Zone assignments, with the lowest frequency in the list being channel 1 to the highest frequency.

The following guidelines will need to be followed by each dispatch center, local frequency coordination group, and air and ground operations personnel.

- Local frequency user coordination groups will need to set up their radio plans with the IA Zone Air-to-Ground frequency and name pairs.
- Unit Aviation Managers will need to include the new frequency plan into their Aircrew Orientation Guides, Unit Aviation Plans and functional interagency operating plans.
- ROSS and local aircraft dispatch forms will need to have both the frequency and the corresponding name listed by function - i.e., Air / Ground - 27, 168.4275 tx/ rx.
- The ROSS program will need to have the local dispatch center frequency information loaded.
- The standardized naming will not eliminate the requirement for reading off, by dispatchers, the frequency with the name whenever a frequency assignment is made via radio or phone.
- Radio Technicians can program mobile and handheld radios with the IA Zone Air-to-Ground frequency and name pairs. This is highly recommended and beneficial for integration into normal radio operations.
- Unit Aviation Managers will need to present the frequency plan, operations procedures etc. to aviation refresher workshops, firefighter refresher sessions.

The Department of Homeland Security SAFECOM program has identified through Statewide Communications Inter-operability Planning – SCIP¹ that inconsistent channel nomenclature, common language and radio codes are impediments to interoperability between multiple incident responders. The Great Basin Coordinating Group IA zone air-to-ground frequency plan will assist in achieving frequency interoperability.

¹ (SCIP national summary 2009,
<http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/interoperability/default.htm>)

/s/Rex McKnight
Chair, Great Basin Coordinating Group