INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:
- Our goal is to reduce unnecessary radio traffic.
- Individual style and methods can be valuable but this protocol is the basic framework of good incident communications.

SCENE COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Individual unit numbers are the preferred communication method:
   - Task level designators may be used for the primary fire ground functions: i.e. Attack, Salvage, Search, and Ventilation.
   - Officer is managing a **group** – Use functional designator assigned by the Incident Commander (fire attack, salvage, ventilation, etc.)
   - An officer is assigned to manage a **division** – Use area designator assigned by the Incident Commander (Div. 2, Delta Div.)
     i. **Group definition:**
        1. A group is established to divide the incident into functional areas of operation. Groups are composed of resources assembled to perform a special function not necessarily within a single geographic division.
        2. Application: when multiple companies are working **in the same area working on the same assignment**, assign a leader and functional designator.
     ii. **Division definition:**
        1. A Division is used to divide an incident into geographical area(s) of operation. Divisions are established when the number of resources exceeds the span-of-control of the Incident Commander.
        2. Application: to manage span-of-control, **establish geographic area(s) where companies are working together doing different tasks** to accomplish objectives assigned by the Incident Commander (Division Supervisor will pick the tactics). Assign a leader and geographic / area designator (Division 2, Delta Division).
2. All crews should maintain awareness of the other companies working in their area and their assignments. Ensure appropriate coordination is occurring and **report when you recognize confusion.**
3. **"2 Call Rule":**
   - **If any radio call goes unanswered twice**, the caller will ask for anyone on the fire ground with knowledge of the location of the person being called. Additionally, anyone who has eyes on the crew or person, or knows their whereabouts, is obligated, whenever possible, to:
     o Advise the caller that you see or know of the location of the person being called and their status.
     o Physically contact the person being called and inform them of the call.

TERMINOLOGY:

- **ABANDON:** used when an *immediate* withdrawal of personnel to a safe area is necessary. The person calling for the signal must define the area to be abandoned. *Personnel will drop their tools and abandon the area*.
- **WITHDRAW:** used when an orderly withdrawal of Firefighters can be completed, no imminent threat. Personnel will gather up their tools and withdraw from the area.
- **EMERGENCY TRAFFIC:** used by the Incident Commander to gain control of the radio traffic for specific circumstances such as but not limited to a change in strategy (offensive to defensive); declare and identify an imminent hazard due to structural stability; or other sudden changes to circumstances deemed worthy by the IC. Once declared the IC controls all radio traffic on the incident and crews will maintain radio discipline/silence until the Emergency Traffic is cleared by the IC **(***NOTE: this change to Emergency Traffic conflicts with the RVFCA Model Operating Guideline #3.04***)**.
- **PRIORITY TRAFFIC:** When a company encounters a situation/condition that was not expected or they feel command needs to be aware of the information right away. This is considered "Red Flag" information (usually bad news) and may require adjustments to the current IAP or Strategy. This includes but is not limited to:
    - Unable to complete a critical assigned task/tactical objective
    - Urgent need to be reinforced/backed-up to complete an assigned task/tactical objective
    - Victims encountered
    - Working fire in concealed spaces not easily controlled by the locating unit
    - A roof report that includes a working attic fire, unsafe roof structure/members, or an imminent collapse threat
    - Sudden, significant incident events such as flashover, backdraft, or collapse
- **ROOF REPORTS:** Ladder or engine companies assigned to the roof should provide a roof report to command soon after making access. This should include but not be limited to:
    - Type of roof (peaked, flat, etc.)
    - Condition of the roof (stable or unstable)
    - Fire or smoke conditions (location)
    - Location of any firewalls
    - Heavy roof loads (if present)
    - Conditions in the attic (if known)
    - Basic blueprint of the building if it is unusual
- **C.A.N. REPORTS:** These reports are initiated by Command or Division Supervisors to companies and are considered progress reports. They should state the current Conditions, Actions, and Needs.

TERMINOLOGY CONTINUED...

- **EVACUATE:** This term is used to describe the task of removing civilians from an area. Not used to withdraw FF's.
- **RECYCLE:** A timely and efficient means of air replacement and re-hydration of assigned companies while still maintaining their Division assignment.
- **REHAB:** An assignment to a formal rehab location (close to the emergency scene and post gross-decontamination) where companies will be medically evaluated, rehydrated, and receive nutritional replenishment.
- **STATUS CHANGE:** Companies who are changing their work location, have completed their work assignment, or need to Recycle/Rehab. This must be transmitted to their supervisor prior to making the change and requires an accountability adjustment by the Division Supervisor or Incident Commander.
- **TASK LOCATION OBJECTIVE (TLO):** When assigning units, the Incident Commander must identify the Task, Location, and Objective(s). The assignment has to state what the task is (stretch/advance attack lines), the location (to the front door on the Alpha side), and the objective(s) (for fire control, search, check for extension, etc.).
- **CODE 13:** Used when a Firefighter's life is in imminent danger from a hostile person (i.e.: taken hostage), when clear text or attempt to abandon the area is not an option. Code 13 is a non-questioned request for immediate response from the closest available law enforcement unit/agency. **(Applicable in all aspects of a firefighter's duty)**

AUDIBLE ON-SCENE COMMUNICATIONS:

- Once an ABANDON notification has been broadcast:
  - All apparatus operators near the hazard zone will activate their air horn with **one long continuous blast lasting for approximately ten (10) seconds.**
  - Portable air horns should be used in areas that may not be heard by the engines air horn.
- Members needing to broadcast Emergency Traffic, MAYDAY traffic, or who need to gain control of the channel are authorized to generate alert tones with their portable radio prior to delivering the message. *SEE Radio Performance Guideline.*
- IC can request Alert tones from ECSO to assist in critical message delivery. Examples of when this may be beneficial:
  - MAYDAY
  - Change in fireground strategy
  - To parrot emergency traffic
  - To parrot urgent incident information
  - To gain control of the channel

INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS:

WHAT: (example situation)	RADIO DESIGNATOR(S)	WHO ANSWERS
Responding Company	Unit number (7701)	Officer
On-scene assigned a task (example: salvage or search)	Salvage & Search 7702-Salvage & 8102-Search.	Officer
8104 and 7701 both assigned to fire control	8104	8104 officer
Engineer working at the pump	7701 Pump –OR- 7701-Clark (if known)	Engineer Clark
8103 splits to do 2 jobs (often truck functions like venting and searching)	8103- Last Name of Officer 8103- Last Name of Leader	Officer Leader
BC 3 assigned to take "Charlie" Division	Charlie Division	BC3
8106 is assigned Division 3. 8103 is doing a search on the 3rd floor. 8102 is doing salvage on floor 3.	Division 3 8103 8102	8106 officer 8103 officer 8102 officer
FF wants to talk to his crew – OR - IC is calling an individual FF	8106 from Stidham Stidham from command	8106 Officer FF Stidham
Aerial Specific - 8121 / 7722	8121 Pump 8121 Pedestal / Turntable	Member at the pump Member at the pedestal