FIRE RESCUE VICTORIA

Incident Communications Plans

Purpose

This Operational Method Statement details the requirements for the establishment of incident communications plans at all incidents and fires attended by FRV personnel.

Scope

This Operational Method Statement applies to all FRV Personnel.

Actions

1. Establishing an Incident Communications Plan – Incident Controller Responsibilities

1.1. Establish a communications plan for all incidents.

1.1.1. Utilise the dispatch channel to communicate with the Communications Centre on the allocated channel for incident response and incident control.

1.1.2. Determine the level of fireground communications required based on the scale of the incident and request additional radio channels where necessary:

- Fireground Communications – to be used for firefighting and incident mitigation operations.

- Command Communications – to be used for command level incident management.

1.1.3. Manage small incidents utilising fireground communications only.

1.1.4. Manage large and complex incidents with a combination of fireground and command communications.

1.2. Ensure personnel are not required to monitor more than two (2) radios at any one time.

1.3. Ensure all on-scene FRV personnel are briefed regarding the communications plan.

1.4. Document the communications plan in any written IAP.

1.5. Expand and evolve the communications plan as the incident escalates to alleviate safety issues around excessive radio traffic and improve incident manageability.

1.5.1. Task the Planning Officer with communications planning where available.

1.5.2. Ensure any changes to the communications plan throughout the incident are communicated to all on scene personnel and updated in any IAP.

1.6. Encourage and enforce radio discipline.

1.7. Refer to Section 5 for examples of communications plans, noting that these plans are flexible and scalable, and should be tailored to each specific incident.

1.8. Consider request for operational support from FRV Communications Technicians where incident communications black spots are experienced.

1.8.1. Consider utilising a local channel where communication problems occur with allocated fireground channels.

2. Fireground Channels

2.1. Maintain the initial allocated fireground channel where a single channel provides safe and effective communications.

2.2. Request additional fireground channels to expand on the number of fireground channels available where excessive radio traffic is causing communication safety issues and/or where an incident grows in complexity and structure.

    2.2.1. Request additional fireground channels via the Communications Centre.

2.3. Allocate fireground channels to firefighting crews for communication between themselves and other crews, and for those crews to communicate to personnel performing functional roles within the incident management structure.

    2.3.1. Avoid having crews who are conducting internal fire attack change their channels.

2.4. Consider utilising a separate fireground channel for each incident sector where appropriate.

    2.4.1. Consider coupling sectors together on the same fireground channel to prevent over complicating the communications plan where practicable.

2.5. Consider requesting a Personnel Accountability Report when implementing new channels.

2.6. Include names of all heavy plant operators, private equipment operators and non-operational personnel involved in incident operations in the communications plan, together with phone numbers, and descriptions of roles being performed.

2.7. Ensure any Mayday messages transmitted on a fireground channel (local channels only) are relayed to the Communications Centre as a matter of urgency as fireground channels are not monitored by the Communications Centre.

3. Command Channels

3.1. Allocate only one command channel where practicable.

    3.1.1. Provide an additional command channel only where the Control Unit is on scene and where operators of this unit can monitor the dispatch channel for the Incident Controller.

3.2. Request an additional fireground channel to establish a command channel for communications between personnel performing functional roles within the incident management structure and the Incident Controller.


4. Emergency Management Teams – Communications

4.1. Include all agencies involved in the incident within the communications plan.

    4.1.1. Record contact names, phone numbers and roles of all agency representatives within the established EMT.

4.2. Provide the communications plan to all EMT personnel via a SMEACSQ briefing.

4.3. Determine the frequency and location of EMT meetings and communicate this to all EMT representatives.

4.4. Ensure the broader community is kept updated on relevant information, including any currently issued community warnings, and times and locations of planned community meetings.

4.5. Include contact names, phone numbers, email addresses (if relevant) and roles of any FRV department or facility that is assisting in incident mitigation (e.g. ERM, DCC, Works Officer).

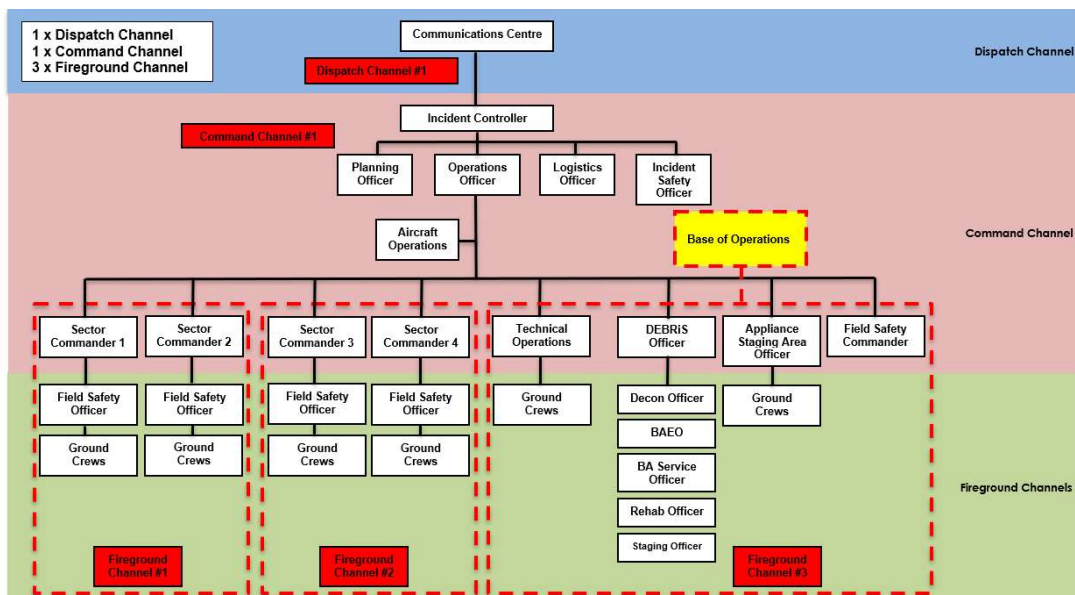## 5. Incident Communications Plan Examples

5.1. Consider the following example when establishing a communications plan for a small scale incident.
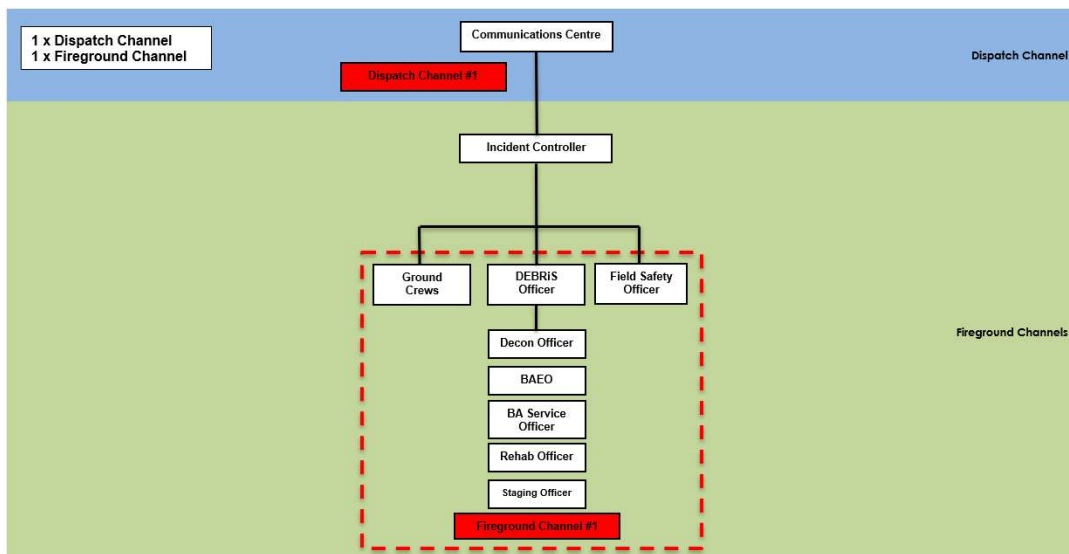
5.2. Consider the following examples when establishing a communications plan for a medium scale incident.
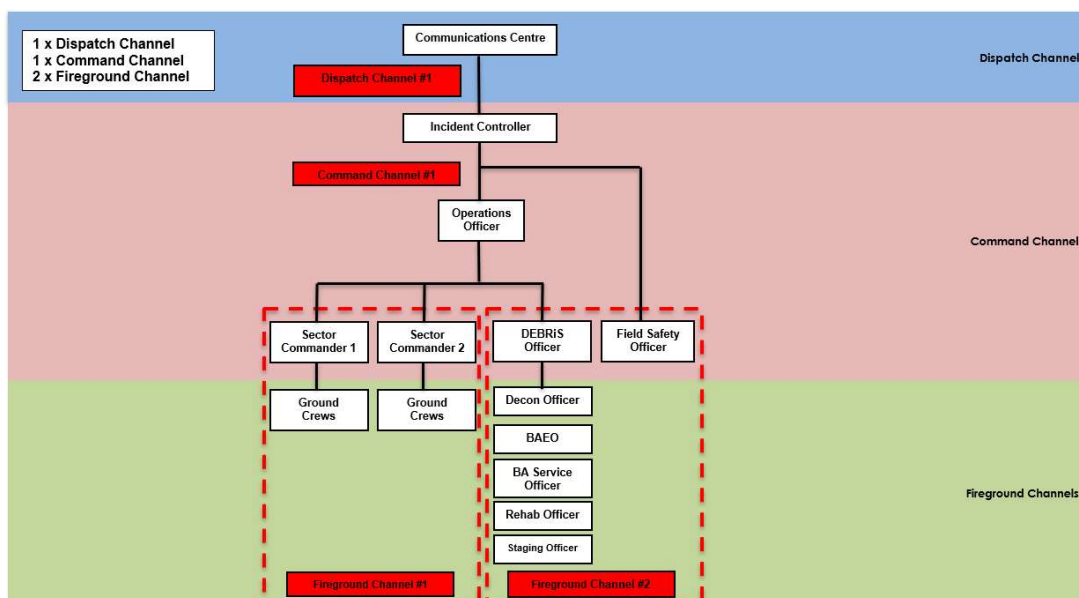
5.3. Consider the following examples when establishing a communications plan for a large scale incident