

Marin County Incident Management Protocols:

A Proposal for a Multi-Discipline Approach

By:

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Introduction:

Following recent events, there was a discussion in Marin Law Enforcement regarding incident management at significant events. After some preliminary discussions, a group of local public safety managers met and discussed the issue and we are proposing a two-pronged approach to improving our ability within Marin County to respond to and command significant field incidents. It is important to point out that we are seeking an all-hazards, multi-agency, multi-discipline approach to this issue, which is why we are seeking the support of the Marin County Fire Chiefs, Marin County Police Chiefs and the Marin County Public Works Directors in the proposal itself and in the adoption of common protocols for all Marin County agencies.

Overview of the Two-Pronged Approach:

With the exception of pre-planned events, the significant events we are concerned with have an initial phase that can last for two to four hours followed by a secondary phase that can extend for additional hours or days until the third phase begins to wind down operations. Our proposal focuses on these first two phases.

The first phase includes the initial response and mutual aid from available agencies. This portion of the response relies heavily on available supervisors and managers to organize and command. It is also a key period in establishing a strong response organization for a long-term event. Our proposal for this first phase is focused on those supervisors and managers that will be called upon to get this initial response organized in an effective and efficient manner through an Integrated Response Training program.

The second phase begins after the initial response has been organized and it becomes apparent that the incident is likely to continue for several additional hours or longer. We believe this phase will normally begin between hour 3 and 5 of an incident. At this point, we propose the development and use of a Multi-Agency, Multi-Disciplinary Type III Incident Management Team to support long-term operations.

Integrated Response Training:

The Integrated Response Training will begin with three person teams from local jurisdictions attending a three day workshop. The team should consist of one employee each from the fire service, law enforcement and public works. This team will be taught how to develop table-top and functional exercises focused on the first few hours of an incident. The exercise training will be based on ICS principles and emphasize the need to integrate the response of different disciplines and agencies into a single response using Incident Commanders and Unified Command. In this process, we plan to introduce standardized exercise development processes and the use of standardized forms and procedures for all responders in these events. Participants will also be encouraged to recognize and use local resources from their jurisdictions, such as Emergency Operations Centers and Department Operations Centers as appropriate.

These Exercise Teams will then be expected to develop appropriate exercises for their jurisdictions, again, with emphasis on inviting outside agencies to participate. We believe it is critical to train these processes through hands on exercises that will place our supervisors and managers in the roles they may actually fill, rather than reliance on lecture presentations.

This three day Integrated Response Training course will be developed by Captain Jeffries (NPD). The course will be designed to be team taught, ideally with representatives from at least two disciplines, beginning in October, 2012.

Incident Management Team:

Currently, the county has an Incident Support Team made up primarily of Fire and DPW that was an offshoot of US&R. We are proposing that this Incident Support Team be reformulated as a Type III Incident Management Team (IMT) staffed by local Fire, Police and Public Works officials. Battalion Chief Mark Brown (MCFD) will be the lead for this portion of the process. This team can be deployed in one of three configurations:

There is a state and federal trend towards decreasing the number of Type I and Type II IMTs and the direction from the state and federal authorities is to create more local All-Hazards Type III IMTs. This is in alignment with our goal of transitioning the IST into an All-Hazards IMT.

1. Local agency to maintain Incident Commander and Section Chiefs. IMT to provide additional Command Staff and Section Staff members, such as Logistics, Planning, RESTAT and SITSTAT.
2. Local Agency to provide Incident Commander. IMT to provide remaining ICS staff.
3. IMT to provide all staff, including Incident Commander. Local agency to provide a Agency Administrator to the Incident Commander or participate as a Unified Commander.

All three configurations would be described and agreed to in writing with the standard agreements available to all agencies in advance.

The IMT will consist of a single team, with members called out as needed. As with Mutual Aid, staff costs will be borne by the team member’s home agency. Should an event be subject to reimbursement, the agency having primary jurisdiction of the incident will work with all of the responding agencies to recoup any reimbursable costs.

Team members will be selected in the following manner:

1. As openings are identified, they will be advertised to Marin agencies, including qualifications. Applicants will need to show support for their assignment to the team by their home agency.
2. Applicants will be interviewed by current members of the IST/IMT with final selection by the Incident Commanders assigned to the IMT.
3. Consideration will be made both for training and experience as well as to maintain a mix of Marin agencies and disciplines.

County-Wide Protocols:

We are proposing that all three Chiefs/Directors groups adopt a common protocol that will address:

1. An endorsement of integrated field response for agencies in Marin County.
2. An endorsement and support for the transition of the Incident Support Team to a Type III Incident Management Team.
3. To encourage agencies to consider the deployment of the IMT under any of the following circumstances:
   1. Once it is clear that an incident will involve multiple agencies and/or disciplines and will likely extend for several hours.
   2. Partial activation of the IMT to assist with planning for pre-planned events as appropriate.
4. Confirming that the primary agency having jurisdiction has the option, but not the obligation, to utilize the IMT at any of the three levels described above.
5. That staff costs for the IMT will be borne by the team members’ agencies, but that agencies will cooperate to seek reimbursement when it becomes available.

Timeline:

We are proposing the following timeline:

1. Integrated Response Training
   1. Course Development – 03/12 thru 10/12
   2. Course Offerings – 10/12 thru 01/13
   3. Local Area Exercises – 01/13 thru 04/13, then on-going
2. Incident Management Team
   1. Add Law Enforcement Staff to existing IST – 01/12 thru 03/12
   2. Initial Restructure of IST to IMT - 03/12 thru 05/12
   3. Exercise IMT Concept - 05/12 thru 09/12
   4. Complete Restructure of IMT - 09/12 thru 12/12
   5. Participate in the planning of the America’s Cup as a training opportunity to aid in qualification of team members.
3. County-wide Protocols for Chief’s Associations - By 09/12