



**ACT Rural Fire Service
Standard Operating Procedure 5.2
Sub Tactical Radio Network**

5.2
Communications

Purpose

The ACT Rural Fire Service (ACT RFS) has introduced a sub-tactical radio network to complement the current standard VHF and TRN network. This sub-tactical radio network is achieved through the use of UHF Citizen Band (CB) radios. The CB radio network can be used for passing informal messages between RFS vehicles, and for passing messages between RFS vehicles and private vehicles eg landowner's vehicles, when local knowledge or guidance is required.

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has also endorsed the use of CB radios as a sub-tactical network and the ability to utilise this system in the ACT will allow for improved communications between ACT RFS vehicles and NSW RFS vehicles when working on joint operations.

This SOP describes the occasions for use of the CB radios, and the responsibilities of the members of the RFS when using the CB radios.

Operating Procedure.

UHF CB NETWORK

The UHF CB network allows fire ground discussions without imposition on the existing VHF radio network. This network is used for routine messages where they have no effect on the operations strategies or tactics.

VHF and TRN RADIO NETWORK

All important and urgent messages are to be transmitted over the incident channel (as determined by COMCEN or the IC – this will be on either the VHF or TRN networks) and not the CB sub-tactical network. The incident management team and COMCEN monitor the incident channel, and appropriate action can be taken in response to messages passed over the appropriate network that cannot be taken using the sub-tactical (CB) radio network.

PUBLIC ACCESS

In using the UHF CB system operators will need to be aware that the general public has full access to the CB radio frequencies. Therefore some courtesy and patience may need to be made for other users of the system. Experience will determine the best means of dealing with such instances, eg moving to another channel or requesting other public users to do so.



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If there are any concerns with the public interfering with fire ground communications on the CB network then the information is to be passed to the incident management team to determine a more appropriate communications plan.

Although this is a citizen band radio system, it is expected that proper communications protocol is followed by ACT RFS members whenever using the CB radio.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Though the CB radio's provide for a sub-tactical radio network on the fire ground, this does not eliminate the need to have the TRN radio on at all times. Strategic decisions from the incident management team to the sectors/units, important and urgent messages from COMCEN or the IMT to the field crews, or urgent messages from the field crews back to the IMT must all be made over the TRN network. This allows the messages to be monitored by the Incident Management Team or COMCEN, and for these messages to reach all the ACT RFS vehicles assigned to an incident.

It is appropriate that both the UHF CB radio and the TRN radio are switched on at all times when on a fire ground.

CHANNEL ALLOCATIONS

At any incident where CB radios are being used, the first unit on scene must inform COMCEN, the Incident Controller, Sector Leaders and responding Units what CB channel is being used for talk around purposes. When operating with NSW RFS the default talk around CB channel is UHF CB channel **15**.

CB COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMCEN OR IMT

Neither COMCEN nor the Incident Management Team monitors CB radio transmissions and COMCEN does not record the voice traffic passed over the CB radio.

Maintained By: Manager, Operations

Approved By: Andrew Stark

Position: Chief Officer RFS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Stark', written over a light green rectangular background.

Signature:

Date: 15/02/2011

Cross Reference SOP/s:



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Amendments: