

LOGISTICS:

Mobile Spike Camps

A 2003 Montana wildfire constantly tested the Air Operations Branch and the Logistics Section during each operational period. Since ground transportation to the fire took several hours, the IMT had crews and supplies flown into six low impact spike camps located around the fire at approximately 1½-mile intervals. As resources completed sections of line, the spike camps were cleaned up and then relocated about every two days to meet upcoming operational objectives.

Lessons Learned: 1) To minimize exposure of personnel to helicopter operations, the crews walked out about three miles to a drop point from where they were driven back to base camp, having completed their multiple day assignments based out of the spike camps. Flying time and associated risks were cut in half for all the line personnel by using a flying in and hiking out procedure. 2) To facilitate smooth spike camp operations, a Receiving and Distribution Manager (RCDM) was ordered to work out of the main helibase. The RCDM coordinated orders of all cargo going to the six spike camps. By stationing the RCDM at the helibase it facilitated getting the cargo orders to the right place at the right time.

Security Badge System

With increasing security efforts to protect incident personnel, equipment and supplies that move through a base camp, the use of identification badges to identify incident personnel has become an increasingly important means of controlling access. The badges can be readily implemented to control access to other public safety, homeland security, supply distribution, and food handling facilities as well.

Lesson Learned: As incident personnel increase the use of identification badges, in-camp conflicts involving human resources, law enforcement, supply distribution, accountability, laundry, and contract crew/engine/water tender administration should also decrease. This effort should also improve the ability to reduce costs through better personnel, supply, and equipment accountability on the incident.

Incident Medical Team

Incident Management Teams (IMT) from the Pacific Northwest utilize incident medical teams that are ordered when one of their teams is first mobilized for an in region or national assignment. Paramedics and emergency medical technicians make up this five-member team working for the Medical Unit Leader. The medical team's primary focus is on preventative medicine rather than treatment after the fact. For example, they work with crews to help prevent dehydration rather than have to treat numerous heat illness cases. Feedback

from firefighters and other incident personnel indicates that this type of consistent medical team staffing has led to high quality care on these incidents.

Dealing with a Public Closure

A Pacific Northwest wildfire in 2002 required a means to permit vehicle access to a large number of residents. There was also a need to provide normal support services to these residences, all of which were within the perimeter of an uncontrolled fire. This proved to be a difficult challenge while trying to enforce a more general public closure of the area. This problem was largely resolved on this incident by issuing permits to the affected residents for travel beyond a series of established check- points. A supplemental list of authorized support service providers such as contractors, trash collectors, and utility companies was also prepared for use at these control points to facilitate their entry into the restricted zone. This allowed personnel at the checkpoints to easily ascertain whether a party seeking entry had authorization. If the party seeking entry did not have a permit or did not meet the established criteria, they were advised by checkpoint personnel whom to contact regarding obtaining authorization for entry.

Mobile Sleeping Units

Originally developed for U.S. Military ground troops, an Incident Management Team (IMT) in Southern California tested out climate-controlled mobile sleeping units. The units were used by night shift crews whose critical sleep hours fell during periods of extremely hot daytime temperatures. The mobile units tested look similar to a semi-trailer from the exterior but the inside contains one person sleeping cubicles that can accommodate 42 firefighters per trailer. The units are also sound resistant blocking out disruptive noises such as generators and loudspeaker announcements. Comments from firefighters who slept in the units on the McNally and Williams Fires were very positive.

County Incident Command Trailer Used

Incident commanders should consider contacting local Sheriff's Department, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), or similar local organizations regarding availability and use of their incident command trailer. In a recent wildland fire in rural Wyoming, there were no land phone lines, poor to non-existent cellular phone coverage and poor two-way agency radio coverage. A County-owned incident command trailer was obtained. It came equipped with a satellite telephone as well as powerful radio antennas that allowed for phone and radio communications between the incident command post, fireline personnel and area dispatch.