

BULLETIN

NO.: 24-102

DATE: June 20, 2024

TO: All Personnel

FROM: David Gerboth, Assistant Fire Chief, Emergency Operations
Roger Fisher, Deputy Fire Chief, Emergency Command & Data Center

SUBJECT: Use of 700/800 Mhz Communications for Vegetation Fires

Effective immediately, ECDC will revert to dispatching Vegetation Fires with 700/800 Mhz radio channels as the primary communication plan for most areas. VHF may still be used in areas where the 700/800Mhz system is inadequate. Channel assignments will be the following:

- 8G / 8H / XSD AG3
- 9G / 9H / XSD AG3

The City has invested significant resources to upgrade the VHF system and had conducted extensive testing prior to implementing VHF on all vegetation fires. However, the application during emergency incidents did not meet expectations for a variety of reasons.

The primary use of VHF on vegetation fires over the past two months has resulted in several findings:

- Identification and resolution of apparatus equipment issues related to mobile radios.
- Use of the VHF system has enhanced personnel familiarity and identified areas for future training on VHF communications.
- Identification of current VHF infrastructure limitations.
- Repair of repeater sites was delayed causing system degradation.

As part of this direction, ECDC will now begin to patch a VHF command channel pair on Vegetation 1st Alarms, excluding the MTZ areas. This patch will remain in place during the active part of an incident and will serve as VHF resources for communicating with CALFIRE or other mutual aid agencies that may respond into the city that do not have our 700/800 Mhz channels. This will also effectively eliminate the need to change to VHF channels mid-incident. The patched command channels in use will be entered in the CAD notes. Important to note is that when air resources from outside the City are assigned, they will respond on a designated VHF command channel and will not engage until positive communication is achieved.

Incident commanders, division/group supervisors, and company officers should continue carrying two radios for the ability to monitor and transmit on both 700/800 and VHF (CMD and A/G) as needed. With dual band radios, it is not possible to scan across the two systems.

Please route any questions through the chain of command.