Purpose:

This policy outlines the usage of the Emergency Channel on the 800 Mhz fleet maps.

Policy:

The communications sub-committee of the Operations work group for San Diego County developed this policy to clarify the usage of the Emergency Channel. This policy is intended to give the end users, the firefighters in operations, a simple and reliable method to implement emergency traffic as defined in the county's communications traffic mode policy.

Procedure:

The Emergency channel found in each radio zone on the 800 Mhz fleetmaps shall be used for emergencies, only if other methods to communicate an emergency via the incident assigned channels have failed or the operator is unable to access those channels. When possible, the following methods shall be used by personnel to report an emergency.

1. On the assigned incident operational channels while assigned to an incident.

2. On the department or agencies hailing channel if not assigned to an incident.

3. On the assigned radio zone emergency channel

This policy should in no way discourage the use of the emergency channel when warranted by incident and non-incident personnel.

Dispatch centers will monitor the emergency channels at all times, regardless of an active incident. This provides the highest level of safety and accountability for field personnel.

As defined in the county's Communications Traffic Modes policy, personnel with an emergency that initiate emergency traffic shall not be required to move their traffic to another channel and every effort shall be made to handle the emergency on the calling channel.

Operational Approach

The emergency channel is found in the last channel of most groups and can be accessed manually or by pressing the emergency button on the radios. All personnel on an incident should have this channel in their scan list at all times. Whenever the dispatch center handling an incident receives an emergency activation with no alias and cannot otherwise identify the source, that dispatch center shall immediately:

- Notify the incident commander.

- Notify all dispatch centers that have sent resources to the incident and request assistance with the identification of the source of the activation.