

Unit 3

The Communications Unit

Unit 3:

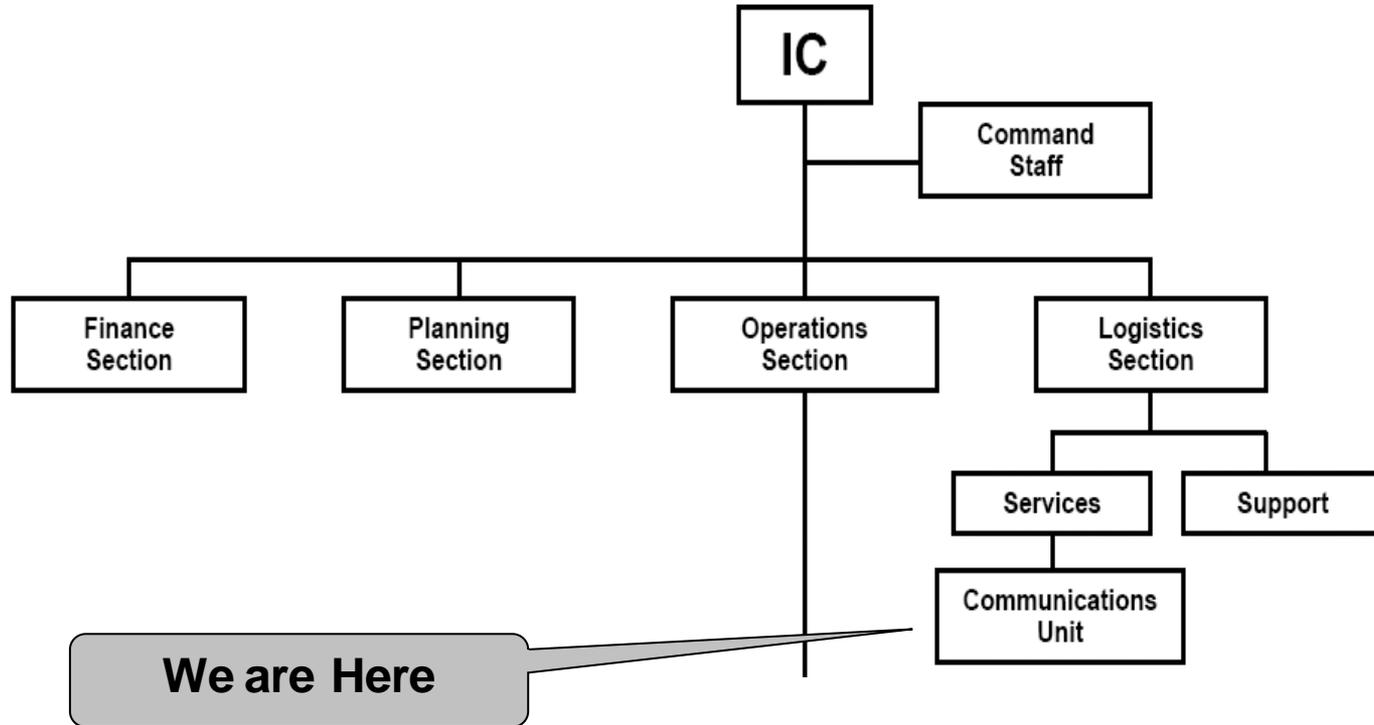
The Communications Unit

Visual 3-1

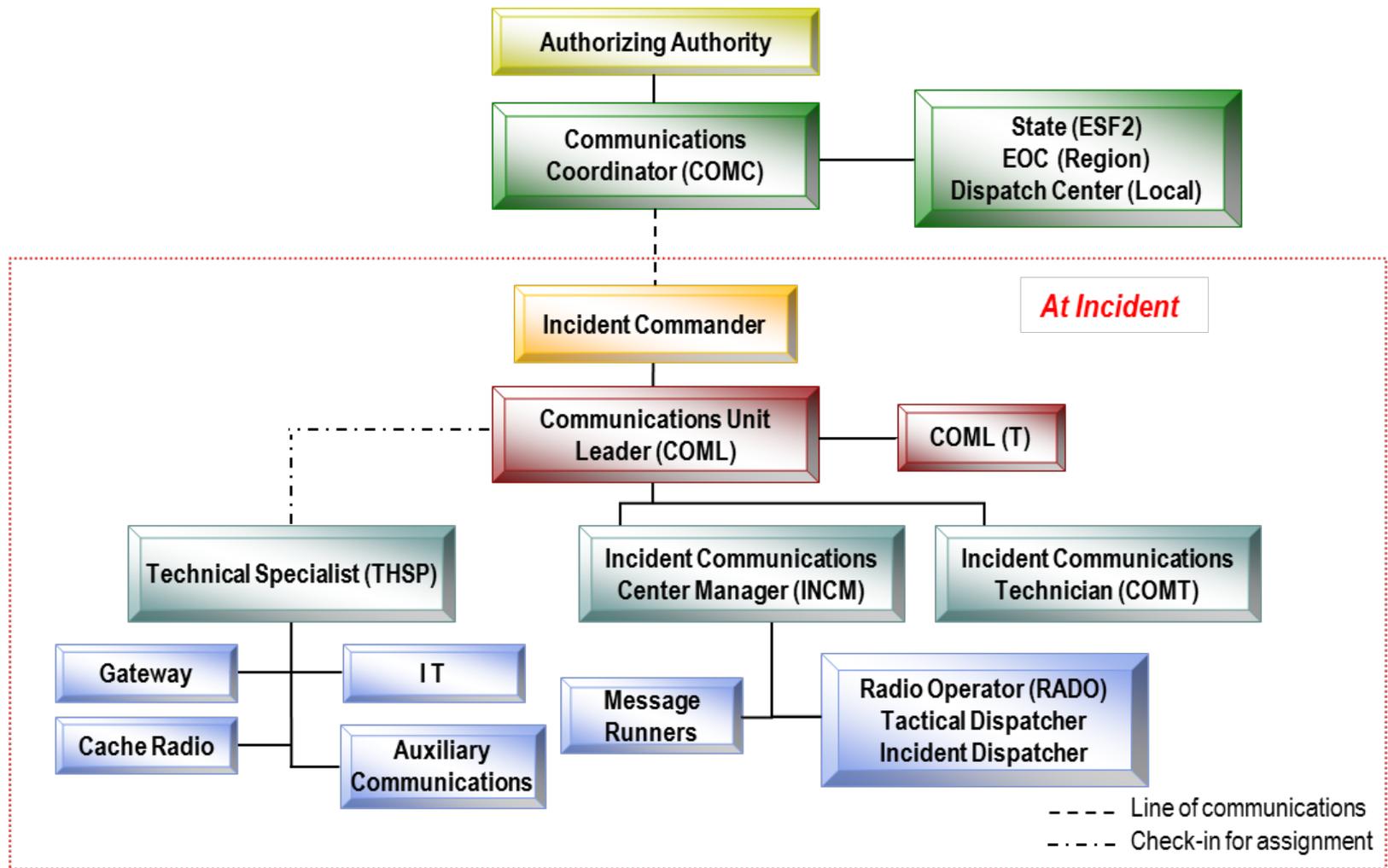
Unit Terminal Objective

Confirm knowledge of the Communications Unit Leader roles, function, and responsibilities within the Communications Unit.

National Incident Management System/Incident Command System



Communications Unit Supporting Resources

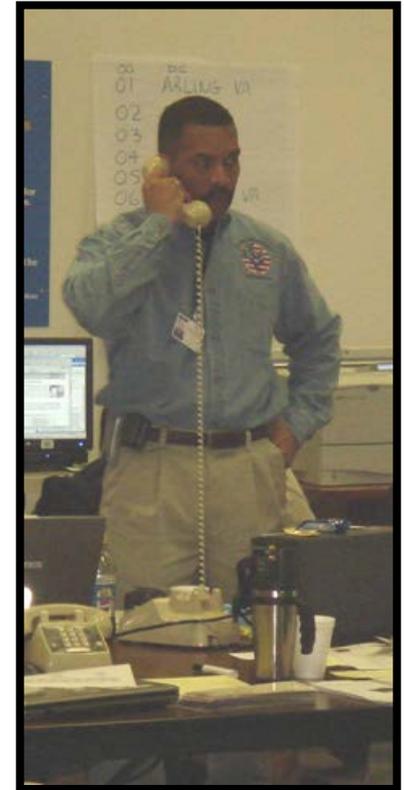


The Communications Unit



Communications Unit Personnel

- Incident Communications Technician (COMT)
- Incident Communications Manager (INCM)
- Radio Operator (RADO)
- Technical Specialists
- Message Runner
- AuxComm/NGOs



Communications Unit Leader

- Plans and manages the technical and operational aspects of the communications function during an incident or event
- Prepares Incident Radio Communications Plan (ICS 205)
- Establishes Incident Communications Center (ICC)
- Orders and manages personnel, equipment
- Establishes needed capabilities
- Participates in incident action planning



Communications Unit Leader (COML)

Duties: As with any ICS position, the COML is responsible for the duties of unfilled subordinate positions (INCM, COMT, THSP, RADO/Tactical Dispatcher) until delegated.



Incident Communications Center Manager (INCM)

Duties:

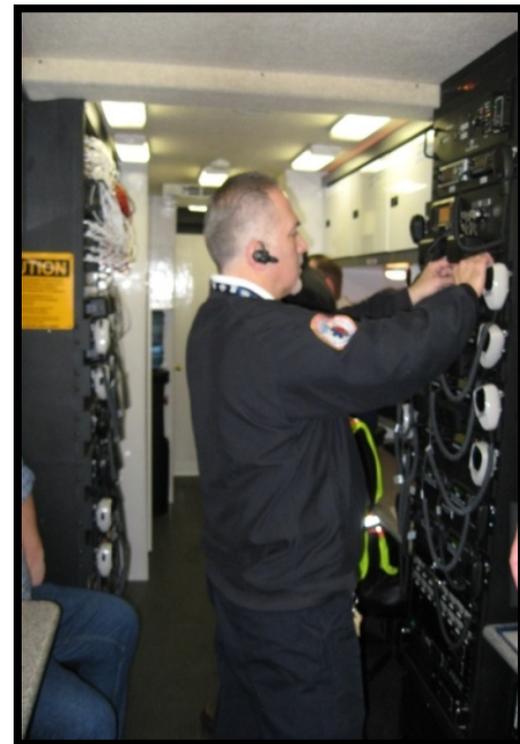
- Manage the operational aspects of the Communications Unit
- Supervise Radio Operators
- Assists the COML in establishing and maintaining the Incident Communications Center (ICC)



Incident Communications Technician (COMT)

The COMT is responsible for supporting the technical activities of the Communications Unit. For example:

- Radio/system coverage
- Radio programming
- Maintenance and repair
- Gateway management
- Cache management



Incident Communications Technician (COMT)

Duties: Provides for the technical implementation of incident communications systems:

- **Provides for equipment distribution**
- **Tracks equipment**
- **Trains users on use of equipment**
- **Verifies proper programming of equipment for incident**
- **Assists COML in the development of the ICS 205, Incident Radio Communications Plan**

Incident Communications Technician (COMT)

Similarly, an NWCG-qualified COMT is responsible for deploying radio cache assets specifically belonging to the National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho.

National Incident Radio Support Cache User's Guide



CDO Phone (208) 387-5644
Toll Free (877) 775-3451
FAX (208) 387-5892

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RADO

A RADO staffs a radio operator's position at the ICC and is responsible for documenting all radio and telephone messages.



Incident Dispatchers and Tactical Dispatchers

Some local agencies have trained public safety dispatchers to work in the field at the incident scene as Incident and/or Tactical Dispatchers who can bring additional training and experience to the ICC.



Technical Specialists (THSP)

THSP is a “catch-all” position that allows for the formal incorporation of personnel who may not be “qualified” in a specific NIMS/ICS position. For example:

- Information Technology (IT) Specialist
- Local Agency Radio Technicians (not qualified as a COMT)
- Telephone Technicians
- Interoperability Gateway Specialist
- Mobile Communications Center Specialist
- Cache Radio Specialist
- GIS Specialist



AUXCOMM

“...volunteer organizations such as community emergency response teams and auxiliary communications volunteers (e.g., amateur radio operators; also called Hams) play key roles... Today, nearly all the States and territories have incorporated some level of participation by amateur radio auxiliary communication operators into their TICPs and SCIPs; this allows them to quickly integrate the operators into response efforts, which can strengthen communications and operations during incidents of any scale.”

**-----National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP)
2014**

AUXCOMM (Cont'd)

- **Auxiliary Communications**
 - **Integration into incident communications**
 - **Provide alternate communications in cases where local services fail**
 - **Provide auxiliary support to active emergency communications**
 - **Local involvement protocol varies**

AUXCOMM Course

- A course designed to teach volunteer radio operators how to work with the Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Course also outlines how volunteer communications are used in a NIMS/ICS environment
- Course is 20 hours long (minimum) and can be taught over a weekend or during the week
- Course is taught by experienced COML instructors who have an extensive background in amateur radio

AUXCOMM Personnel

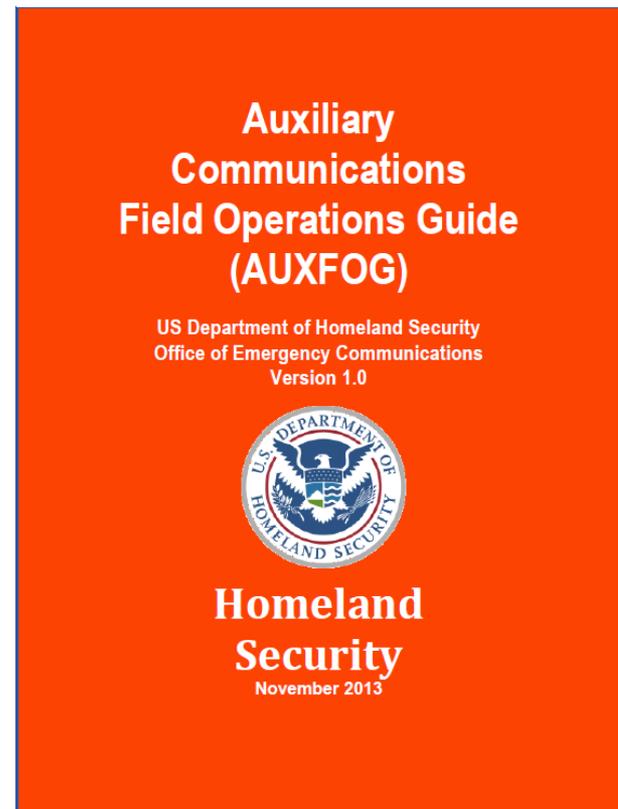
- **AUXCOMM includes MARS, FRS, CBers, ARES, RACES, SATERN, Maritime Mobile Network and others**
- **Some AUXCOMM personnel can work as communications technicians depending on their background**
- **AUXCOMM personnel report to the COMLs, but can work for COMTs during training and activations**

AUXCOMM Personnel (cont'd)

- Can operate on voice, digital, satellite, VoIP, RoIP and numerous other modes if they have the right equipment
- AUXCOMM personnel should know exactly what is expected of them prior to them volunteering
- AUXCOMM personnel work directly for the NIMS/ICS organization that they report to when activated

AUXFOG

- The DHS Auxiliary Field Operations Guide (AUXFOG) was released by OEC in 2013.
- It can be downloaded from the OEC Public Safety Tools website at www.publicsafetytools.info



Plain Language

Plain language: Common terms and definitions that can be understood by individuals from all responder disciplines. The intent of plain language is to ensure the clear and accurate communication of information during an incident.

Common Terminology

Common Terminology

- Is an ICS wide fundamental
- Necessary for operations, planning, and standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- A common dialect for describing the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of operations
- Common terminology requires a standardized dictionary of terms and terminology

Common Terminology

ICS establishes common terminology that allows diverse incident management and support organizations to work together across a wide variety of incident management functions and hazard scenarios.

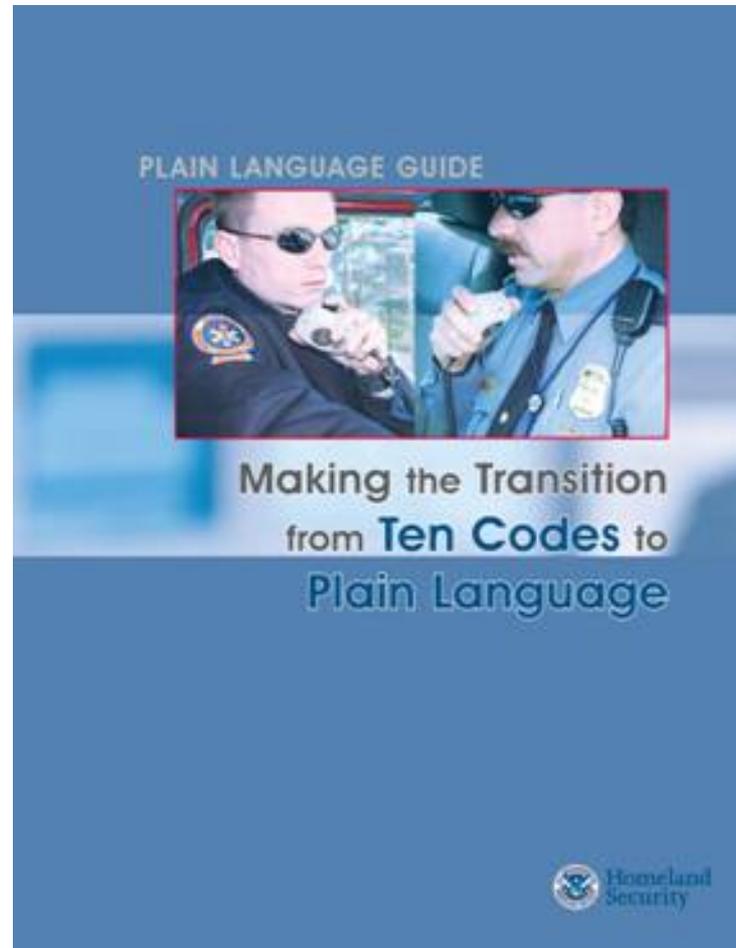


Common Terminology (cont'd)

Not all Common Terminology has the same meaning. For example, the term “cover” has several meanings.

- **If you told a fire fighter to cover they would take their fire engine and go to another station**
- **If you told a police officer to cover they would back up another officer**
- **If you told a Marine to cover they would lay down 50 cal. suppressive gun fire**

SAFECOM Plain Language Guide



Objectives Review

- 1. What are the positions within the Communications Unit?*
- 2. What are the responsibilities of positions within the Communications Unit?*

Questions?