

Springdale Fire Department

Policy & Procedures Manual

Volume 2 – Operations

Section 202 - Communications

202.2 – Tactical “Fireground” Channels

A Tactical (Fireground) radio channel shall be designated for radio communications at most incident scenes greater than a Level 1 Alarm.

For example:

Any working fire with more than a single unit response, rescues involving an extrication (entrapment alarm), technical rescues, hazardous materials incidents, etc. All personnel must be proficient in the usage of the various radios (mobile and portable) within the SFD Radio System and be proficient in selecting the proper tactical channel as directed by Command. Personnel must also be aware of the various options for selecting a tactical channel.

A primary reason for utilizing tactical channels for operations related communications is to provide a higher degree of safety to personnel assigned to the specific incident. Usage of a tactical channel eliminates the possibility of Dispatch related radio traffic “over-riding” the on scene unit(s) radio traffic.

The first arriving unit on scene shall assume Command and be responsible for identifying the tactical channel to be used for the particular incident. Command shall announce (at the time of assuming Command) the tactical channel for the particular incident scene. Example: “Battalion 1 On Scene, Multi-Car MVA, East Bound Lanes 1 and 2 Blocked, Battalion 1 is Robinson Command, All Units switch to Tactical 1.”

It is extremely important that once operations are initiated, the designated tactical radio channel not be changed unless absolutely necessary. It is difficult for personnel who may be conducting interior firefighting operations to switch radio channels. For that reason, it is imperative that the first arriving unit on scene determine and announce the particular tactical channel to be assigned to the incident.

Once a tactical channel is designated and announced by Command, all units assigned to that incident shall switch to the designated tactical channel immediately (whether on scene or not). All units assigned to the incident shall conduct all radio traffic on the designated tactical channel. Only after units are released from the incident will those units resume radio traffic on the Dispatch channel.

The following is a list (in priority order) of tactical channels that should be used: Tactical 1, Tactical 2, and Tactical 3. Under unusual circumstances where all three of these tactical channels have operations being conducted on them, Command should use an area fire department’s tactical channel (if available), i.e. tactical 41 or 51.

Whenever SFD units respond (mutual aid) to assist Station 41 or 51 in their area, the appropriate tactical channel will be that of the local department’s. If an SFD unit arrives on scene in another department’s jurisdiction prior to arrival of that department, the SFD unit shall announce the tactical channel as that of the department having jurisdiction.