

**Verdugo Fire Communications Center**  
**TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**September 9, 2008 Minutes**

*Persons Present: Tom Phelps, Dave Haney, Robert Gattas, Ray Krakowski, Jason Pfau, Don Wise, Don Wright, Ryan Weddle, Rich Garstang, Brent Bartlett, Jim Frawley, Rick Mayhew, Steve Alva, Lenia Scanlon*

**I. New Business**

- A. Data System** – In 2009, Motorola stop selling parts related to Verdugo’s RD-Lap data system. The last day to buy VRMs (vehicle radio modems) from Motorola will be Dec. 31, 2009. Technical support and repairs for our master site, etc. will stop Dec. 31, 2012. We hope to keep our current data system running for at least 4-5 more years, so Area C agencies will want to stockpile VRMs while they can. San Diego is upgrading their system and they have lots of VRMs that might soon be available at a steep discount. The next-generation data system provided by Motorola is called High Performance Data (HPD). It would be compatible with the Astro 25 7X master site we have already purchased, but it’s too soon to say for sure whether we’ll go in that direction. The Verdugo Technical Committee will be coming up with a timeline for all this; the bottom line for the Task Force is that you will want to put some money aside in the next budget year to purchase however many VRMs your agency might need to sustain you for several years.
- B. Add a second Engine on TC-Rescue incidents?** Current dispatch for TCRES (extrication rescue on city streets) is 1 BC, 1 E, 1 T, 1 RA. A second Engine is dispatched for TCFWY incidents. A suggestion was made to automatically add a second Engine on TCRES incidents to deploy a 1¾ charged hose line and dry chemical extinguisher, as well as to assist with patient care or other needs. The consensus was that sometimes TCRES incidents don’t require extrication after all, so when the first company arrives onscene and discovers it’s a true TCRES incident, they can call for a second Engine. Members were asked to remind their people that, just as it is important to “downsize” and cancel resources that won’t be needed in an incident, it is also important to feel free to “upsize” a response like adding a second Engine for an extrication rescue on city streets. For working fires though, it is always better to call an additional alarm and cancel a unit or two than to “piecemeal,” adding more units one at a time. Going to a higher alarm level automatically sends out notifications to whoever is in your multiple-alarm paging groups, so all the relevant people will be notified that there is a major working fire in your city.
- C. Strike Team policy review.** Some clarifications have been proposed in the current policy and Chief Pansini will be presenting them at the next Foothill Fire Chiefs’ meeting on Sept. 15. In general, if a contract-city strike team is next up but there are not five Engines available among the contract cities, the balance of the Strike Team will come from the tri-cities. When you are on a strike team, the daily updates should be given to Verdugo so they can be sent out systemwide. A question arose about whether two BC’s should be sent on brush fire responses into LFD, whether one is needed as Agency Rep. The consensus was that there is no compelling reason why these responses should be any different from our other strike team responses; one BC is sufficient. Sending two BCs from the west end of the system might also lead to a situation where a PAS BC might have to move up to cover the gap.
- D. Verdugo Manual** – Section 6: Radio Policy and Procedures was published 8/26/08 and uploaded to the [www.unified-response.org](http://www.unified-response.org) web site in the Authorized Users section. There is an unpublished password due to the confidential radio frequencies. Lenia will email an unprotected version to the TF for their (cautious) use. It is unlikely any of the other sections will be password-protected. As changes are made over time, they will appear as colored text in the body of the document as well as a log at the back of each section with the date and rationale behind the change. Manual sections 1, 2 & 3 will be published within the next three weeks. The other sections are actively being worked on by Verdugo’s Shift Supervisors.
- E. Possible VPN interruption** – Tonight between midnight and 6:00 am, Charter Communications will be performing maintenance that could lead to an interruption in Verdugo agencies’ access to the RMS server for NFIRS reports, along with a small portion of our paging. The outage is expected to be 30

minutes long. Most Verdugo agencies automatically reconnect when there's an interruption, but if on Wednesday morning you learn that NFIRS reporting is down, you'll need your IT person to reconnect to Verdugo's VPN.

- F. 9/11 Commemoration** – To commemorate the time when the first tower fell, Verdugo will tone out all 40 fire stations at 6:59 a.m., deliver a brief message in honor of those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001, request a moment of silence, then clear the radio.
- G. Paging for Full Assignments** – There is a “FL” paging group for each Verdugo agency, where pages are automatically sent to those in the group when incidents of type APT, GARAGE, HOUSE, or STR occur. Verdugo has added several more incident type codes to the FL paging group to ensure the proper notifications are made when a full assignment is sent out. Verdugo's paging lists are attached to these minutes, both by paging group and by member name. Please review these and return a hard copy to Verdugo with any changes.

## II. Updates on Continued Issues

- A. Unnamed Streets** – Lenia collected the maps each agency had labeled to provide names for unnamed street segments and to identify alleys, private drives, pedestrian paths, fire or dirt roads so those segments can be moved to a different layer of the map and not be included in routing calculations. Maps were returned by:

ALH   ARC   BRK   GLN   MRV   MPK   PAS   SGB   SMD   SNM   SPS  
✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓

- B. Records Destruction** – Letters were sent to the Fire Chiefs August 5 with notification of intent to destroy existing records for anything prior to July 1, 2006. The letter requested an authorization letter be signed by each Fire Chief and City Attorney authorizing Verdugo to handle this procedure in perpetuity, barring any ongoing legal action or police investigations or objection by the individual agency. Please return signed letters to Verdugo by Oct. 31. Letters have been received so far from:

ALH   ARC   BRK   GLN   MRV   MPK   PAS   SGB   SMD   SNM   SPS  
✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓

- C. TICP Pocket Booklets** – The consensus was that generic TICP booklets should be distributed to each agency as soon as possible due to where we already are in the fire season. The fillable form for home zones can be made available now or next Spring with the next TICP, but generic booklets can be sent to all in the next few weeks. Steve Page is finalizing the format. Bob Gattas said a new list will become available next week with TICP radio channels in order by frequency instead of by channel designation.

- D. Montebello** – Good news! Montebello Fire Department has announced their intention to join the Verdugo System. We look forward to starting contract dispatch service for them starting sometime in early 2009.

- E. Reddinet on MCT's** – The programmer is ready to start; Glendale Purchasing is finalizing the purchase order so we can proceed.

- F. AVL & AVRR** – Jason is preparing a Frequently Asked Questions list related to AVL installations, and it should be ready soon. He is also pursuing an issue related to those units that stop sending their GPS location for no known reason, possibly a voltage issue. Some of the radio techs are entering the CAD command, **GETAVL BRK** (or whatever the three-letter agency designator is) each morning to see which of their units are actively sending. If a unit seems to have stopped sending, they call that station and ask them to reboot that MCT. This almost always resolves the issue. Agencies that have finished installing the current software on all front-line and reserve rigs:

ALH   ARC   BRK   GLN   MRV   MPK   PAS   SGB   SMD   SNM   SPS  
✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓

Verdugo will begin testing the new AVRR system as of Oct. 1. This will require that every unit in Area C (front-line and reserve) has the latest version of the AVL software, the one that provides a color-coded indication of GPS status. Please complete these installations no later than Sept. 30.

## G. ICIS Update

- 1. Station Alerting** – The prototype alerting board built and tested by Burbank’s Radio Shop required a few modifications, then five will be built for testing at fire stations. Every fire station in Area C will eventually have the same board installed. Verdugo is buying the boards; agencies will pay for installation, and we have been assured installation should be brief and simple.
- 2. BC Alerting** – The Radio Tech committee is looking into a solution that might enable users to go back to the Minitor pagers we used to use. In the meantime, radio techs have been asked to program a single duty radio for each agency’s on-duty Ops BC, along with a spare that has the same ID but remains in the charger, turned OFF. Only this duty radio’s ID will be in that agency’s radio notification group; all others who wish to be notified may do so via Verdugo’s paging system. If there is a BC Aide, the same can be done for them – a duty radio and a spare, both having the same ID, with the spare left in the charger, turned off, and the duty radio passed to the next shift each day. So far, GLN, ARC and SMD have completed this change. Please see that this change is made *as soon as possible* and notify Don Wise when it is done so the other radio IDs can be removed from your group to resolve the notification delays we are seeing.
- 3. Tertiary Alerting** – (No change.) Once the new station alerting boards are in place, we will be able to switch to StatAlert, which will give the dispatcher an acknowledgement that the alert was received by the station. This will also eliminate the 5/6 tone phantom alerts.
- 4. Phantom Alerts** – (No change.) We are getting good information on the new problem reporting form. Submitted forms are being passed to the appropriate people for resolution. These should disappear completely when we switch to StatAlert.
- 5. LFD** – ICIS frequencies have been programmed into Battalions 2-5-7-12-14, 13’s is being programmed now, with 1’s (downtown) being next. Will be requesting an additional 1,000 trunking ID’s. We are receiving a high level of cooperation here. We are looking into holding a joint exercise with LFD using ICIS frequencies, and possibly changing our aid agreement so they will use ICIS frequencies for incidents in Area C cities.
- 6. LA County** – (No change.) On July 1, Battalion 6 split and a portion will become Battalion 22. We will be obtaining new, updated pages for your yellow helicopter directories and will distribute them when available.
- 7. Progress on Radio Reprogramming/Distribution of 5000’s?** – GLN has a few left to complete, SNM and BRK are not yet done.

**ALH** **ARC** **BRK** **GLN** **MRV** **MPK** **PAS** **SGB** **SMD** **SNM** **SPS**  
✓      ✓                      ✓      ✓      ✓      ✓      ✓      ✓

## III. Roundtable

### BRK

Orientation is tonight for 12 new BRK FF recruits and 5 PAS recruits.

Question about possible inconsistencies in move-ups.

Question about out-of-city notifications to the on-duty BC.

Executive Assistant position open – Roberta Mirzayans has retired.

New Battalion 1 Suburban going in service tomorrow; very nice.

Three new Seagrave Engines here by end of the month.

New Truck coming as well.

New Ford crewcab Patrol going online soon as a Type 5 or Type 6. Does anyone have training material on these?

Question on radio frequencies during recent earthquake drill. The BRK ICIS cell has 8 channels and the GLN cell has 14 channels. We have a trunked network where channels are assigned dynamically based on traffic.

Verdugo has 8 talk groups, so there can be a maximum of 8 groups in concurrent use. BRK PD has control stations on all the talk groups; suggest that they monitor traffic using scanners instead to eliminate the issue that occurred during the drill.

**ARC**

Barry Spriggs will start as C-shift BC on 9/14.  
Chief Odell retired with a big smile.  
Captain exam completed, new Capt will start approx 9/19.  
Finished FF exam, need 3 by end of year.  
Road Rescue is building new RA, with ETA of 6-8 months.

**SPS**

Chief Mayhew is now Division Chief at SNM.  
BC exam completed with one candidate, results due out soon.  
Suggestion about putting a training calendar on Unified Response web site – Lenia will check with Chief Beckman about status of Foothill Training Chiefs' calendar and whether to add a link to that instead.

**SGB**

BC and Captain exams in the next month.

**ALH**

Preparing for Golden Guardian exercise (this will be on TF agenda for Oct. 14 meeting).  
3 FF in backgrounds, one is a paramedic.  
USAR is back in service.  
Truck will be OOS for a few days due to preventive maintenance and recall issues.

**SNM**

Rick Mayhew is new Division Chief, also responsible for Training.

**SMD**

New Engine, RA, and possibly a Patrol coming up.

**MPK**

Problem with LAC units coming into MPK. Their dispatchers sometimes don't give them a tactical channel. It should be VF Access. Don Wise will talk to Sandy Wisdom, LAC Fire Dispatch's training person.

**GLN**

3 new Pierce Engines and air & lights utility coming soon.  
Adding a water delivery system to Patrol – leaning toward Darley pump so we can type it as Type 6 and deliver 250 gallons. Price is lower than the AirQuik too.

**Verdugo**

Added 2 new hourly people, Shannon Loffredo from Ventura Fire Dispatch (a ROSS expert) and Sarah Cohan, who has worked for Verdugo and is still applying to become a FF. Cindy Williamson also continues as an hourly, and Linda Coogan has retired completely from dispatching.

**Next Task Force Meeting:** Tuesday, October 14, 9 a.m. at Verdugo