

Exercise Tests Response to Mock Terrorist Attack



Full activation of Emergency Operations Centre tests mettle of emergency agencies.

An exercise of the Vancouver Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was held April 30 in order to test the City's emergency response methods during a terrorist attack. More than 100 personnel were involved in the scenario that focused on a mock chemical attack in the Skytrain tunnels in downtown Vancouver.

The exercise had response agencies scrambling to contain not only the terrorists involved but also dealing with large numbers of contaminated victims and evacuees from

the affected areas. While a scenario of this type would be extremely difficult to manage, the state of the art systems available in the Vancouver EOC made the situation much more manageable.

The purpose of exercises is to ensure the EOC remains in a ready state of response; that all systems in the EOC are functioning properly; and to test response measures of a number of agencies. Full exercises are generally held three times a year.

Richmond Firefighters Climb for Kids

A group of Richmond firefighters has formed the "Climb For Wishes" Team, which will attempt to summit Mt. McKinley, the tallest mountain in North America.

The climb, scheduled for May 2004, is in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of B.C. and Yukon. Richmond Fire-Rescue Services has a long history of working together with the Foundation making special wishes come true for some very deserving children.

The team has a goal of raising \$203,000 (\$10 for every foot of elevation of this impressive mountain), all of which goes to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

For more information, visit www.climbforwishes.com



Richmond Firefighters from left to right: Don Chin, Jim Wishlove, Kelly Moss (kneeling), Dave Pehowich, Stu Sutton and Brad Cooper.



Sechelt firefighters practice confined rescue at local mining site.



Sunshine Coast Mine Rescue

The Sechelt Volunteer Fire Department, as part of its regular monthly training program, held a mock rescue exercise at a local mining site in May. The exercise revolved around the rescue of two miners who suffered serious injuries while working in a mineshaft. The exercise provided the department with the opportunity to test their response methods and equipment. The Sechelt Fire Department is one of seven fire departments E-Comm provides dispatch services for.

Delta to Join E-Comm Radio System

In a unanimous decision May 5th, Delta Council voted to bring its Police and Fire departments onto the E-Comm radio system, bringing the total number of agencies on the radio system to 20. Delta's current radio system is aging which poses concerns from an operational and safety perspective. Delta found that some of the capabilities and benefits of the E-Comm radio system are:

- Offers a higher quality radio system at a lower cost than if Delta were to fund a similar radio network independently;
- System is fully incorporated with police, fire and ambulance on the radio network system throughout the GVRD;
- A priority call system will mean that in a major disaster urgent radio traffic will get through;
- Radio system will be housed in a post-disaster, high security facility able to withstand major earthquakes and containing sufficient back-up emergency power and storage capabilities;
- Voice privacy on standard radio channels will be greater because it is a digital system;
- Delta will transition onto the radio system in 2004.

Number of 9-1-1 calls to E-Comm*

*since Spring issue of e-communiqué

January	99,642
February	88,258
March	94,286
April	98,057
May	106,274

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E-Comm 9-1-1
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FOR SOUTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA
Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

E-Comm Radio System Helps Track Shooter

NWPS Sgt David Jansen and dispatcher George Raitt.

The shooting of two New Westminister police officers and the massive manhunt that followed, is being hailed as an excellent example of coordinated policing and the power of shared communications.

Just after 3:00 a.m. March 23, a flurry of calls to 9-1-1 regarding a domestic dispute and possible shots fired, led police to a New Westminister neighbourhood. The number of calls received was a good indication that something serious was underway and as a result, the entire shift was dispatched to the location.

As officers worked to determine what was happening, a perimeter check surrounding the residence was established. During the set up one officer was approached by a lone male.

"The officer came on the air to alert dispatch that a male was approaching him," says Sgt. David Jansen of the New Westminister Police Service (NWPS). "The next thing we heard was a second officer reporting 'shots fired.' Seconds later, the first constable came on the radio to say he had been shot."

The call was immediately elevated to what's known as an "active shooter" situation and as New Westminister's Emergency Response Team rolled into action by setting up a rally point and command centre, the officer was rushed to hospital.

"We were very fortunate that the Constable who was shot managed to get out a good description," says George Raitt, a dispatcher for the NWPS. "His effort was an extraordinary help to us and provided the foundation we needed to start a search."

Raitt and fellow dispatchers, Holly Dunn, Wade Armstrong and David Toews, coordinated all communications including working the phones to pull in assistance from neighbouring RCMP detachments in Burnaby, Surrey, White Rock, Maple Ridge, Langley, Coquitlam, and Richmond.

"In all, 49 members from the RCMP joined the dozens of New Westminister officers already on scene. It was a phenomenal response," adds Raitt. Vancouver and Delta Police also offered assistance.

Joining forces might have proved difficult to coordinate, but since the New Westminister Police and the RCMP are all using the E-Comm radio system, members were able to switch to a common channel and communicate directly with one another; something that would not have been possible just one year ago.

After the command centre was set up, an active search got underway. The neighbourhood is very dense—thick with trees, brush and older

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E-Comm Radio System Helps Track Shooter

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New Westminster dispatchers play critical role in effective policing.

houses built very close together. In short, the neighbourhood provided plenty of places for hiding. It was also pouring with rain, making for very poor visibility.

"This was not your average search," observes Sgt. Jansen. "There were so many complicating factors. We had an armed suspect not afraid to fire, a dark, rainy night and numerous members from different police agencies involved. We had to make sure all of the responding members were in constant communication and that the search was tightly coordinated. Everyone's safety depended on it."

The suspect was spotted moving through the neighbourhood and an alert neighbour saw him enter a residence and contacted police with this information.

After containing the house, the police were able to move in on the residence and conduct a slow search. While searching a back laundry room the suspect jumped out from under a sink and shots were fired and an ERT member was struck. The officer did not realize he had been shot until later, not uncommon due to the protection a bulletproof vest provides. The officer was not seriously injured. The first wounded officer required surgery, but is expected to make a full recovery. The suspect sustained serious injuries when police returned fire. He remains in hospital, charged with four counts of attempted murder.

"I cannot think of a worse situation to be in without a shared radio system," notes Sgt. Jansen. "The tactical operation would have been much smaller in scale and that would have left the possibility that the suspect could have escaped. The E-Comm radio system made everyone immediately useful because everyone was plugged into communications from the get-go."

"I would like to commend the officers and dispatchers of the New Westminster Police Service for their outstanding efforts on March 23 and to thank the RCMP detachments that surround our City for their assistance in this incident."

New Westminster Mayor Wayne Wright

The New Westminster Police Service joined the E-Comm Radio System in May 2002. Not long after the NWPS transition, Chief Lorne Zapotichny accurately predicted the radio system would prove invaluable for New Westminster for a variety of reasons including the close proximity to other municipalities. "It is going to make apprehending criminals much easier," he said in a May 2002 interview with E-Communiqué, "because for the first time we will be able to communicate directly with police forces outside our jurisdiction. The impact on public and officer safety is immense."

More than 4,800 radios are currently in use within the GVRD. The system provides better radio coverage, including in-building coverage, enhanced personnel safety capabilities (emergency buttons), increased reliability, higher peak traffic capacity, and improved security. Recently, The Corporation of Delta announced it will transition both its police and fire departments to the E-Comm radio system.

New Appointments



Director of Human Resources

Anne Smith has been named E-Comm's new Director of Human Resources & Labour Relations. Anne is responsible for overseeing Recruitment, Training and Development, Labour Relations, Performance Management, Compensation, Benefits Administration, Employee Orientation, Coaching and Mentoring.

Anne holds a Certified Human Resources Professional designation and has more than 25 years Human Resources experience in both the private and public sectors.

Before joining E-Comm, Anne worked as the Director of Human Resources for the City of Richmond for approximately 10 years, and was the Director of Human Resources, B.C. Region for a national accounting firm.



Wireless Operations

Peter Gauthier has been appointed Acting Director of Wireless Services, Engineering & Operations, replacing Shahir Popatia. Peter joined E-Comm in March 1999 following a 26-year career in the airline industry where he held the most senior technical position at Canadian Airlines, responsible for all ground-based radio communications. Peter received his radio training in the Canadian Armed Forces and has been instrumental in the development and successful roll out of the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio System and in-house maintenance program. Peter is accountable for E-Comm's mobile data and voice technology systems.

Peter was also a member of the Vancouver Police Department's Reserves and is currently a Traffic Authority member. He has also served as an RCMP auxiliary member while living in Alberta.

British Columbia Awarded World Police & Fire Games

The World Police and Fire Games Federation has awarded the 2009 World Police and Fire Games to British Columbia.

The approval came following a three-day site inspection, a thorough review of the Bid Book, and a one-hour presentation by the Bid Committee. E-Comm was among the venues visited during the evaluation visit.

The British Columbia Games will be staged July 31 - August 9 and will consist of 64 sports at 40 venues, stretching from Squamish to Chilliwack.

The Games will now become a 20th

anniversary celebration as British Columbia hosted the 1989 World Police and Fire Games. The 2009 Games are expected to draw close to 12,000 participants from all parts of the world.

"The Federation Directors were really impressed with the quality of the British Columbia Bid," says Dave Kent, a Burnaby Fire Department captain and one of two Canadians who sits as a Federation Director. "It was well packaged in all three areas particularly the site inspection which we all feel has now set the standard for future site inspections."

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New Ambulances Support Large-Scale Emergencies



Above: Newly refurbished ambulances on display at E-Comm.

Below: Health Minister Colin Hansen checks out new ambulance with Eric Bone, BCAS Manager of Emergency Preparedness.

The BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) unveiled its 10 new medical-support ambulances to Minister of Health Colin Hansen in May. The former emergency ambulances, on display at E-Comm, have been refurbished to support emergency services and patients in larger-scale medical emergencies.

"With the new support vehicles, the British Columbia Ambulance Service will be able to significantly improve its ability to respond quickly and effectively to larger-scale medical emergencies," says Minister Hansen.

The vehicles will be stationed at local British Columbia Ambulance Service facilities and staffed by ambulance personnel.



Editor's Notes

In the spring issue of E-Communiqué, we inadvertently left the New Westminster Police Board off the list of independent police boards represented by our newest Board member, Ross Montgomery. Our apologies to Mr. Montgomery and the New Westminster Police Board for the omission.

A special thank you to Gerry Mark, Manager, Administration Division, S/Sgt Casey de Haas, Sgt David Jansen and dispatcher George Raitt, all of the New Westminster Police Service, for their assistance on the feature story in this edition of E-Communiqué.