

Mock Disaster Tests Response

Emergency planners at the Vancouver International Airport Authority (YVR) staged a mock disaster in September to test response practices. 26 agencies participated including the Airport Authority, Richmond RCMP, Richmond

Richmond Firefighter communicates on E-Comm radio system.



Photo: E-Comm



High school students acted as crash victims during mock exercise.

Fire-Rescue Services, BC Ambulance Service, the Canadian Coast Guard, Vancouver Police, Vancouver Fire-Rescue Services and E-Comm. High school students from around the Lower Mainland helped out by playing disaster victims, each with a different level of injury.

The scenario involved an inbound flight from Toronto requesting an emergency landing. The aircraft was carrying 230 passengers and 10 crew and crashed short of the airport near Iona Beach. When response

agencies arrived at the scene, "survivors" managed to get to flotation platforms deployed from the air by a helicopter. The air deployment is part of the airport contingency plan for a "Crash on Tidal" incident if the hovercraft is not available at the time of a crash.

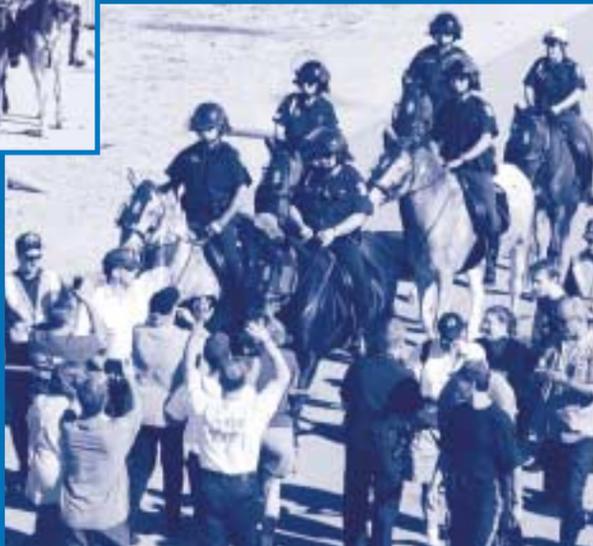
YVR Exercise Director Margaretha Lundh says the event planning was complicated as the exercise needed to be designed to meet the dozens of objectives set by key agencies. "We really wanted this exercise to be as practical as possible, and to be of maximum benefit to all participants, while keeping safety of the volunteers our number one priority."

Lundh says the agencies involved took the event very seriously and calls it a great success because everyone learned things that will improve future response. "Some response protocol problems and communication deficiencies were identified in pre-event planning sessions so we were already ahead before the exercise took place," she added.



< From left to right VPD members Cst Kent Maurer, Cst Trish Schulze, Cst Richard Jones, Cst Doug Jensen, Sgt. Geramy Field, Cst Mike Kuncewicz.

E-Comm employees and VECTOR members helped stage a mock demonstration for the mounted squads of the Vancouver, Seattle and Portland police departments in the fall. Practise sessions such as these allow officers to practise crowd control techniques and help train the horses to be even more accustomed to crowds.



Photos: Keith Montgomery, E-Comm and VPD

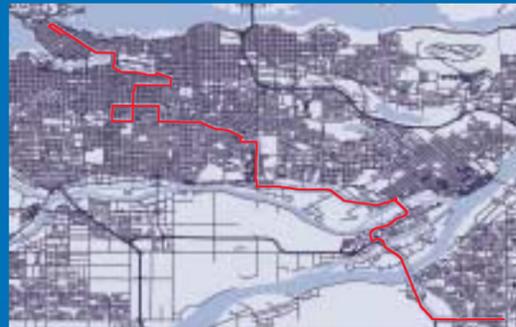
Police Pursuit Ends in Arrest

The benefits of a shared emergency radio system were evident on November 5, 2002 during a police pursuit that began in Vancouver and worked its way through Burnaby, New Westminster and Delta.

Vancouver Police officers began pursuing a stolen vehicle containing several suspects wanted in connection with a hold up the day before. The pursuit travelled through the city but was called off when the suspects' vehicle hit speeds in excess of 80 km/h and the driver began running red lights and stop signs. Unmarked vehicles were then brought in to follow the vehicle as police witnessed the suspects dump a gun. The suspects were followed through Burnaby, New Westminster and into Delta, where they were successfully apprehended.

Since Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster are all on the E-Comm Wide-Area Radio Network, they were

able to communicate directly with each other on a common channel as the surveillance moved through each municipality. This allowed officers in the to remain in constant contact, increasing both officer and public safety.



Map: Kristen Morton, E-Comm

Hold-up suspects took Vancouver police on a pursuit that ran through four different police jurisdictions. A mutual-aid channel on the E-Comm radio system allowed officers to keep in direct contact with each other.

Interoperability Key to Emergency Response

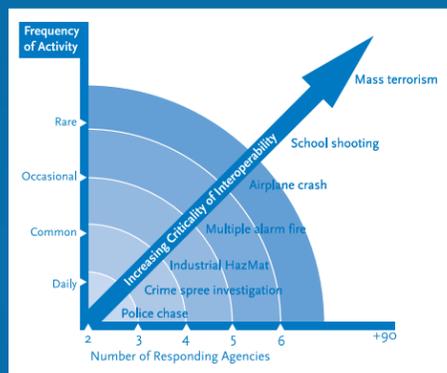
The International Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) recently released its Homeland Security White Paper, which details the findings of its Homeland Security Task Force formed following September 11. The purpose of the White Paper is to begin a process that leads to dramatically improving security by improving public safety communications.

An interoperable radio system has been identified as a key component of improving public safety communications.

"... It takes energy and deliberate planning for different agencies to cross over their geographic, jurisdiction and organizational boundaries and work together toward creating an interoperable communication system. Clearly the less time responders need to spend solving the 'how do I talk to the person next to me' problem during a major event, the more

they can focus on the dangerous, time critical tasks at hand..." *APCO International Task Security Force White Paper.*

For more information visit www.apco911.org



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

*since Autumn issue of e-communique

September 101, 423
 October 105, 905
 November 99, 853

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Helping to Save Lives and Protect Property

Information-Sharing Increases with New Computer-Aided Dispatch

E-Comm has completed the transition of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to the new Altaris™ Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. VPD is the second police agency in B.C. to begin using the new CAD, which will eventually be used by police and fire agencies throughout the Lower Mainland and the BC Ambulance Service.

The move to the new CAD began in September 2001 when Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services was successfully transitioned to the new system, followed by the Port Moody Fire Department in February 2002 and then the Port Moody Police in August.

The CAD is designed to provide quick access to information that is critical to safe and effective emergency response. It allows for increased data sharing and common language and provides more access to emergency response resources both in and outside of an agency's jurisdiction. In many areas, the CAD system can be configured to fit any agency's needs without negatively impacting other agencies using the same CAD platform.

"The new CAD will not only put an increased amount of information at a dispatcher's

fingertips, but it will also allow them to share that information with different agencies in a matter of seconds," says Glen Miller, E-Comm's Director of Information Technology.

One of the key reasons the new CAD is expected to make a dramatic impact is because of an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the BC Ambulance Service and police and fire services in southwest B.C. The MOU provides these agencies with the framework needed for sharing information. For example, if the police respond to an address where the fire department had previously found hazardous goods, the police dispatcher would have that information in front of them immediately.

"Imagine firefighters and paramedics arriving on scene with no historical information on an address," says Melanie Smith, E-Comm's CAD Administrator. "The house could be a home known to police and that information could have a direct impact on responder safety."

Access to information will remain limited to only those authorized and will be protected under the auspices of the Freedom of Information and Protection of

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MESSAGE FROM
KEN SHYMANSKI
PRESIDENT & CEO



E-Comm has strived to enhance performance this past year by working on a number of key operational objectives. It is our intention to continue this forward momentum by keeping our three core business functions, 9-1-1, the Wide-Area Radio System and Emergency Dispatch, in sharp focus for 2003.

In December, E-Comm transitioned the Vancouver Police Department onto the new Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and we are now preparing for future changeovers, including the BC Ambulance Service. The move to this updated CAD system marks the beginning of a new era in emergency response, as the ability to share information between emergency agencies will increase significantly, as will the speed of information reaching emergency responders in the field. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the E-Comm staff members who have worked tirelessly to make this happen, including our CAD & PRIME-BC teams, our Operations staff, our Trainers and our Information Technology department. This has been an enormous undertaking and each of you has risen to the occasion with dedication and professionalism. I would also like to thank the Vancouver Police for their support during this transition.

E-Comm also welcomed new agencies into the facility in 2002—the Ridge-Meadows RCMP and Fire-Rescue Services in Vancouver, Port Moody, Whistler, Garibaldi and the Sunshine Coast. Bringing more

agencies into E-Comm dispatch operations not only supports the vision of consolidated emergency communications, but also has a fundamental impact on the Corporation's financial bottom line, including shareholder levies. We are working diligently to bring more agencies into dispatch operations and early in the New Year these efforts will result in the transition of the Richmond RCMP to E-Comm.

In the fall, E-Comm obtained 13 new radio frequencies from Industry Canada, which will have a considerable impact on reducing queuing times in Langley, Surrey, White Rock and Coquitlam as well as pave the way for transitioning the Federal RCMP onto the radio network.

Calls to 9-1-1 remain well over the one million mark and a priority for 2003 will be to ensure that E-Comm meets the demands for service while continuing to provide cost-savings to participating municipalities. As such, recruitment, retention and training will be key priorities.

We are in the process of conducting our first customer satisfaction survey in order to gain valuable feedback on our radio and dispatch services and our billing processes. Customer service is a key priority for this organization and our employees recognize there is pride in delivering high-quality service.

There is no doubt a great amount has been accomplished since the concept of E-Comm was first introduced in 1994, but there is much more work to be done. We look forward to working with our customers and shareholders to provide the best emergency communications possible in 2003 and beyond.

On behalf of the entire staff of E-Comm, we wish you a happy and safe holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Information-Sharing Increases

>>> continued from front cover

E-Comm call-taker Charles Calogirous handled the first 9-1-1 call to be processed using the new Altaris CAD at 05:38:13hrs, December 10, 2002.

Privacy Act. The information will be used to protect the health and safety of officers, firefighters, paramedics and the public.

With the new CAD system, when a dispatcher creates an incident and enters the location, the address will be automatically verified by the system and the location displayed on a map. CAD will also provide a location history and display any other events that may be underway in the same vicinity.

"The database is so comprehensive," explains Smith, "a dispatcher will be able to track down exactly what resources a police officer might need with just a few key

strokes. For example, a police officer could say 'find me a French-speaking hostage negotiator, four police dogs, two fire engines with defibulators and seven firefighters trained in hazardous materials ...and within seconds the dispatcher could have this information even if the resources are located in another municipality."

In the New Year, additional capabilities will be added to the new CAD including an automatic vehicle locator and unit recommendations that include vehicle routing. This will provide the dispatcher with a breakdown of which units are closest to an event in terms of time and distance, with the ability to take into account daily traffic patterns and street closures.

Transitioning any agency onto the CAD system involves a large amount of work including the review of all operational procedures to determine how the new system will work for each agency. There

are also vast amounts of data that must be collected, data entered and then tested. The system, for example, has been equipped with all of the user agencies' local information, including street maps, police records, building locations, floor plans, and hazardous materials information. The CAD system also interfaces with PRIME-BC.



VPD Inspector John Schouten and Vancouver firefighter Ron Dulko review police vehicle locations, now visible to fire dispatchers because they now share the same CAD platform with VPD, Port Moody police, Port Moody Fire-Rescue Services and fire departments on the Sunshine Coast and in Whistler.

Thank You!

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Information Systems Manager

David Lea
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Barry MacKenzie
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And thanks to E-Comm's entire IT and Operations staff

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POF

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POP

Fred Gele
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Sechelt Fire Dept.

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VFRS

Wayne Williams
POF

All IT departments in all our partner agencies

BCAS	BC Ambulance Service	POF	Port Moody Fire-Rescue Service
VPD	Vancouver Police Department	VFRS	Vancouver Fire & Rescue Service
POP	Port Moody Police Department		

Richmond RCMP dispatch to move to E-Comm

The transition of the Richmond RCMP's communications centre into E-Comm is targeted for mid-January of 2003. Each team will have one dispatcher, one "Info" operator, and one emergency call taker. The majority of existing full time and auxiliary staff have elected to transition to E-Comm

and the Centre staff look forward to having them join the E-Comm team. E-Comm currently dispatches for the Ridge-Meadows RCMP and the RCMP detachments at Whistler, Pemberton, Gibsons, Sechelt, Bowen Island, the University of BC and the Freeway patrols.