

The InfoGram



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Solar Flares (Radio Blackout) effects on communications

Eruptions on the sun cause [solar flares \(radio blackouts\)](#) and release electromagnetic radiation. Flares travel at the speed of light and hit with no warning. By the time we know a flare has occurred, it is already affecting the sunlit side of the Earth.

[High Frequency \(HF\) radio waves](#), used for most modern communications, travel over long distances by refracting off the upper layers of the [ionosphere](#). If a solar flare is strong enough, it can degrade HF radio waves or completely absorb them, causing radio blackouts. Depending on the solar flare's intensity, damage to emergency communications can range from some static to complete loss.

[NOAA Space Weather Scale](#) classifies solar flares from R 1 (minor) to R 5 (extreme). The intensity of a flare can last seconds to hours. How badly they impact [radio and navigational systems](#) depends on the scale and duration of the event.

NOAA SWPC provides daily [space weather predictions for responders and emergency management](#), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency provides Space Weather preparedness information at [Ready.gov](#).

(Source: [NOAA](#))

Mendocino Complex Fire after action review and lessons learned

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), U.S. Forest Service and the Los Angeles Fire Department published a joint paper on last year's [Mendocino Complex Fire](#) (PDF, 7.2 Mb), discussing openly the multitude of problems facing teams assigned to the incident. Several firefighters were injured after winds shifted, forcing them to run. This report details this incident and some of the actions leading up to it.

An overarching theme of the lessons learned, especially from those on the frontline, relates to communication. Multiple people commented on speaking up about safety concerns and even saying to leadership flat out that an operation is dangerous or not viable. Many did not feel they could bring these issues up, which led in part to actions that put firefighters at risk for their lives.

In addition, the response was managed by two full Type 1 Incident Management Teams due to the large size of the fire. These two teams were joined, which is not common. It caused problems due to duplication of duties and jobs, communications issues, and competing operational mindsets. General consensus was that joining teams could have been handled better.

A third identified issue was the problems between the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE. Some firefighters referred to it as a rivalry causing even more problems with logistics, communication and added to the general confusion.

Lessons learned from this incident can assist other federal, state and local agencies to avoid similar problems in their own wildfire incident management. Agencies should review this report and discuss the implications to their own best practices.

(Source: [CAL FIRE](#))

Highlights

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Webinar: Hospital-based Incident Command Systems

Tribal emergency management summit promotes collaboration



U.S. Fire Administration

The InfoGram is distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures.

Webinar: Hospital-based Incident Command Systems

The Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) is hosting a webinar on [hospital-based incident command systems \(HICS\)](#) (PDF, 175 Kb).

HICS have been used formally in hospitals since the late 1970s as a way to manage incidents, coordinate resources and communications, and collaborate with community-based response agencies. However, there is very little published information available on lessons learned, best practices and real-world adaptation of HICS systems.

This free webinar (the second in the series) is scheduled for March 12, 2019, from 1-2:30 p.m. Eastern and will feature speakers from small and rural hospitals who have experienced a recent emergency and activated their HICS.

Speakers will give a brief overview of the incident, describe how they implemented their incident command system, share lessons learned and tools for small and rural hospitals, and discuss how they have incorporated these lessons into their current systems and plans. [Registration is required](#).

(Source: [TRACIE](#))

Tribal emergency management summit promotes collaboration

The Tule River Indian Reservation is hosting the [Central Valley Tribal Emergency Management Summit 2019](#) (PDF, 455 Kb) from March 19-21. The summit is free of charge and will cover:

- Tribal Crisis Response Team Development and Cross Jurisdictional Collaboration.
- Tribal and Partner Health Care Emergency Response for Mass Casualty events, Pandemic, POD, etc.
- Critical decision making when working with tribal councils to declare a disaster.
- Tribal Incident Command: Capabilities, Planning and Response Actions for All Hazards.
- Homeland Security Active Shooter and Grants for tribal communities.

A pre-summit workshop will cover the importance of self-care for those who work in emergency management fields.

Both federally and non-federally recognized tribes have come together to offer you a very unique opportunity to get to know them and their governments. There will also be speakers from the federal government to local agencies. Please feel free to pass this information along to other colleagues that may be interested. [Registration is required](#) (PDF, 772 Kb).

(Source: [National Tribal Emergency Management Council](#))

The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC). For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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