

## EMS Strike Teams: A Case Study

- ❖ WHY  
Ambulance  
Strike Teams
- ❖ Concept of  
Operations in  
CA
- ❖ Lessons  
Learned
- ❖ How to Set Up



## California's System Features

- ICS – 1970's  
Wildfires
- SEMS – 1991  
Oakland Hills Fire
- Master Mutual Aid  
Agreement



## The Need Was Apparent

- Historically, significant  
natural and man-made  
disasters
  - Fires
  - Earthquakes
- Ambulances always  
"come"



## Why Ambulance Strike Teams?

- ORGANIZED Response
- "Leader Coordination  
and Management
- Integration into the  
Incident Management  
Team
- Address medical  
communications  
shortfalls
- Establish contracts for  
FEMA reimbursement



## What IS an Ambulance Strike Team?



- 5 same type/kind  
(ALS or BLS)
- Leader
- Leader Support  
Unit
- Self-sufficient for  
up to 72 hours
- "Task Force" to  
Mix Resources

## Anticipated use of (State) Ambulance Strike Teams



- From one  
region to  
another
- Incidents that  
have long term  
response

## Firestorm 2003

- 80,000 people evacuated
- In 48 hours 267,000 Acres Ablaze
- 36% Surge Capacity in 9-1-1 System
- 24 Ambulance Strike Teams
- 366 Hospital Patients Evacuated



## Oct 25 – Mountain Community Hospital

- 24 E.R. Patients, one critical trauma
- Discussed "mix" of Pts at EOC – ordered Task Forces
- Leader & Admin prioritized pts & determined destinations
- 2-3/ambulance, multiple destinations
- Convoy down mountain for safety
- Loss of radio contact – required visual



## Oct 28 – Big Bear Community Hospital

- Patients waiting outside upon ambulance arrival
- Leader requested Staging and Patient Tracking Mechanism
- COORDINATED EFFORT



## 9-1-1 Systems Over Capacity

- First Responders (Fire Based) engaged fighting fires
- AMR Strike Teams replaced local responders
- Worked in areas unfamiliar
  - Information
  - Coordination & Supervision
  - Management Liaison at EOCs



## Lessons Learned

- Multiple Providers – How to Coordinate?
- Mixed Teams for flexibility
- Plan for Surge Capacity to 9-1-1 System (Florida's Hurricanes 2004)
- ICS Structure & DOC Coordination
- Trained Personnel
- Liaison to Command Centers for Planning and Prioritization of Resources



## AST Set-Up and Design

- Definitions – Common Terminology with Fire Services and Incident Command
- Provider Terms & Conditions
- Personnel Training and Exp. Requirements
- Equipment
- Communications



## Set-Up and Design (Cont.)

- Ordering Process
- Activation Process
- Resource Management – enroute/on scene
- Protocols
- Incident Support
- Demobilization



## Equipment Requirements



- Personal 72 Hour "GO" Pack for each person on an ambulance or Strike Team Leader unit
- Ambulance Supplies/Equipment
- Strike Team Leader Vehicle Supplies/Equipment

## AST Leader's Responsibilities



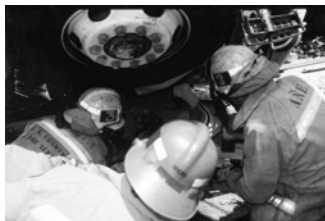
- Safety & Condition of personnel & equipment
- Coordinated movement to & from incident
- Supervision of personnel
- Interface with Incident Management Team

## AST Leader Training Courses

- Modeled after the FireScope Strike Team Leader Course
- 16-hours in length
- Modified for Ambulance
- Followed by "Task Book"
- 3 Pilot Courses



## Challenges



- Local Resource Management
- Communications (Radio frequencies, equipment standardization)
- Reimbursement for non federal deployments

## Questions??

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Ambulance Strike Team Guidelines available  
online: [www.emsa.ca.gov](http://www.emsa.ca.gov)  
EMSA publication #215, July 2003

