STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE
MUTUAL AID RESPONSE COMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE:
To establish a uniform manner of operation during major events involving multi-agency and / or multi-unit responses within VSMAI towns.

OBJECTIVE:
To create a standard communications structure to be utilized resulting in enhanced transfer of critical and routine information and total radio traffic reduction during major public safety activities. Ensure all VSMAI member departments program all VSMAI approved radio frequencies into their radio equipment, to facilitate operable and interoperable communications.

PROCEDURES:
1. Departments shall designate a common dispatch channel to serve the dual purpose of emergency dispatch and priority contact channel between IC (Incident Command) units and the communications center.

2. Departments shall designate one (1) primary operating channel for incidents in their town.

3. Departments shall strive to acquire at least one (1) channel dedicated to interior operations.

4. VSMAI has designated UHF channels dedicated to the following functions:

   a. Interior operations: Used at the discretion of the IC.
   b. RIT: To be used by all VSMAI RIT assignments.
   c. Fire Police: To be used by all Fire Police in the VSMAI area.
   d. Water Supply: Utilized for all water supply operations, including, but not limited to, incoming tender strike team assignments.
   e. EMS Tac: Utilized for EMS Tactical Use as assigned for MCI / Rescue.
   f. STOCS: 1 2 3 Statewide Tactical Interop used at the discretion of the IC.
   g. UTACD: UTAC41D UTAC42D UTAC43D used at the discretion of the IC.

   The purpose of these dedicated channels is to eliminate non-fireground radio traffic from the primary operating / fireground channels and to facilitate inter-department communications. The primary channel assignments are listed below:

NAME	RX	PL	TX	PL	USE
VS Interior	460.4125	141.3	460.4125	141.3	Portable Only
VS RIT	458.8875	141.3	458.8875	141.3	Portable Only
VS Fire Police	458.6625	141.3	458.6625	141.3	Portable Only
VS Water Supply	453.4625	156.7	453.4625	156.7	Mobile / Portable

   Refer to VSMAI Approved Frequency spreadsheet for additional channel programming requirements.

5. The IC or Operations shall have the capability of communicating on all subordinate communications sectors.

6. The primary communications center of the town in which the emergency is occurring shall inform mutual aid companies' communications centers (at the time of dispatch) of the primary channel on which to operate.

7. All mutual aid communications centers shall state on dispatch of the mutual aid companies the channel on which to operate.

8. All responding mutual aid personnel and equipment are to switch and monitor the operating channel of the department receiving the mutual aid. Each responding officer / apparatus should not sign on the air. Dispatch will specifically identify the authorized / requested units for mutual aid to avoid on-air questions and the response of un-requested (freelancing) units.

9. Incoming mutual aid departments shall conduct officer organization and individual unit management on their own local channel. Note: During multi jurisdictional events communications centers may only monitor primary operating frequencies of the town involved in the active emergency.

10. Every effort should be made to minimize non-essential requests / updates to the dispatch centers while organizing units for response. Mutual aid departments shall establish, on their local operating channels, their responding commanding officer (CO) that shall switch and operate as the mutual aid CO. This will limit multiple officers and units signing on the operating channel of the town operating the major event. For example: Killingworth Tanker 8 and Killingworth Engine 1 are the mutual aid units for a call to Clinton. Locally, on KW UHF Ops, several officers coordinate who the CO will be and it is determined to be 806. 806 then signs on CL COMMAND with Clinton dispatch when the requested assignment is enroute and when the assignment has arrived in staging. Units will be assigned assignments from staging and should not ask for individual instructions when approaching an incident. Each apparatus / unit should not individually sign on with the dispatch center of the receiving department.

CRITICAL PATH EXAMPLE:
1. VSECI dispatches Essex Fire to a room and contents fire for which Old Saybrook is requested mutual aid.

2. Essex units sign on (SX COMMAND) as Control 3 tones Old Saybrook on (46.18).

3. All Old Saybrook units coordinate on local frequency (OS FIREGROUND) that 301 is the local CO with "Old Saybrook Engine 1" and they will be responding.

4. 301 then signs on with VSECI over SX COMMAND reporting that 301 and "Old Saybrook Engine 1" are responding and will report to Essex staging. VSECI will acknowledge and repeat 301's message to ensure the Essex IC is aware of the OSFD response. No further communications are required of the OSFD assignment until their arrival at staging unless contacted directly by the IC or Staging.

5. Further inter-unit communications for OSFD may occur on (OS FIREGROUND) as long as 301 continues to monitor (SX COMMAND).

6. VSECI will monitor only 46.18, 33.96/OL OPS 1 and SX COMMAND for the duration of the major event.

7. VSECI now dispatches Haddam Fire to an MVA.

8. VSECI now monitors 46.18, 33.96/OL OPS 1, SX COMMAND and HD OPS X88.

Appendix A – Attach "VSMAI Approved Radio 11-23-2009(2)"
Appendix B – Attach "VSMAI Plain Language / Common Terminology"