



## Preliminary After-Action Report

### CAD Outage April 8 – 9, 2012

#### Chronology

At 1956 HRS on April 8, 2012, REDCOM experienced a catastrophic CAD failure due to a wild Turkey flying into electrical lines and which blew a transformer and cause a large power outage. The power in the dispatch center fluctuated, with the lights dimming but staying on, and the generator kicking on immediately. We never lost the computers, but REDCOM, SCSO, as well as all other PSAPs using the CAD, lost all connectivity with the CAD servers at Central Support. The power failure also caused radio disruptions in which the radio shop had to resolve, particularly with Control 2.

At the time of the connectivity failure, we had approximately four incidents on our screens that were currently in progress, and still had calls coming in from citizens with other fire or medical issues. The first directive to the staff was to have everyone take account of what they had on their particular channel, and take note of the units for which they were responsible. Dispatcher Calista Pimentel got out the paper tracking forms, passed them out, and showed a new and inexperienced dispatcher how to use them while Supervisor Ron Marsh attempted to contact Central Site (voicemail only when he called). Another dispatcher, Jody Bradley, got our magnetic System Status board and started placing units in the areas they were posted and also placed notes on the units that were on events to be able to track their status.

1959 HRS: Supervisor Marsh then had the team put out announcements over REDCOM/CRO2/3/4 that the CAD and MDC's were down. SFRD BC Mark Basque called in and asked if we needed him to come into the center as did Chief Braga from Sebastopol Fire (who was the duty officer for the week). Both responded.

2005 HRS: Supervisor Marsh made contact with SCSO and found that the CAD failure was system-wide and included all CAD users. We were informed that Central Site and the Radio Tech were already contacted and in transit.

2012 HRS: With no CAD alpha paging available, at the first opportune moment, Supervisor Marsh used his cell phone to send a text message to Communication Center Manager Ken Reese as well as calling him at home and apprised him of the situation.

2027 HRS: Communications Manager Ken Reese arrived at REDCOM, he took over the IT end of dispatch, handling the calls to Central Site and making various inquiries and notifications, leaving the dispatch end of things in the capable hands of those that were already dealing with the situation.

2038 HRS: The CAD system was back up, Ken Reese was able to run tests and assist in getting the paging system and ANI/ALI back on-line, and then assist with getting calls entered into CAD (via catch up mode). Reese continued to deal with Central Support with further issues of getting MDC's equipped with Air Cards back on line. This took until 0100 HRS.



## Summary

The cause, a turkey on-wing into power lines and a subsequent power spike resulting in a failure of an County ISD UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). The UPS, apparently a rental unit, is due for replacement by permanent unit. The County techs have replaced the failed component and, as of Tuesday, the system was running properly while being carefully monitored.

During the outage we processed a total of eight events (which have now been reconciled), and fielded multiple calls from the field with questions about the situation. Petaluma Fire called in and they were instructed to monitor their radios for calls, in the event that tones failed. SRFD's Mark Basque called his stations to tell them to do the same.

When BC Basque was in the dispatch center, he asked Supervisor Marsh if we should "throw the switch to CDF" (i.e., the ALT Answer switch, located at the Cal Fire ECC in St Helena, which redirects all incoming 911 telephone traffic to the ECC), and Supervisor Marsh told him he didn't think we needed to do that just yet since we still had the radios and were able to continue dispatching.

From an internal REDCOM perspective, things went pretty smoothly. Supervisor Marsh offered suggestions that he thinks might make situations like this easier: REDCOM doesn't have a "stand-alone" CAD I-Dispatcher product on a laptop computer that we could access in situations like this. It would have made everything much easier if our REDCOM dispatcher could enter calls, get appropriate recommends, and then manually dispatch units to events. Two laptops with the I-Dispatch product would be even better, with the call taker having one and REDCOM having the other. Ken Reese has been looking at alternative solutions to this but unfortunately, had not been able to develop a working product prior to this event. This continues to be a work in progress.

Dispatchers, and Supervisor Ron Marsh, did a great job of regrouping after the outage, but it required about five minutes to think through immediate next steps which included getting out the necessary forms (T-Cards) and writing down what units were assigned to each incident. Then it all came together.

## Lessons Learned

SOP 41 was followed within the confines of what was possible at that time. We unfortunately didn't have the means of ALPHA paging anyone because CAD was down and we don't have an alternate means of alpha paging. Duty officer and BC1 were contacted and the Sonoma Life Support Supervisor advised. Communications Center Manager Ken Reese was texted directly and called at home and responded. Announcements were made on REDCOM, Control 2 and 4 but apparently not on Control 3, or at least not until crews were getting frustrated that REDCOM may not have seemed to have a handle on things. What really occurred was they had no idea that we were down. It eventually was announced on Control 3, but not until we were significantly into the failure. This misstep is being examined.



As always, there are many lessons to be learned from such an occurrence. We are requesting that anyone with feedback for REDCOM on its handling of this event contact us directly, so that we can work toward more efficient and effective handling of such events when and if they occur in the future.

Submitted by:

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