

5/27/2021: Gramh Incident- Fire – Vegetation and structures.

Location of fire - approx 5.75 miles south of Hwy 44 and Ticho Ln.

Wind out of West 5 – 6 MPH

Approx 2 acres with spot fires. Cal Fire used Air Assets and ground.

K6PDS Mobile – viewed a Substantial Smoke Column in the Manton Area. First call was to 911. Then, transmit about the smoke column and approx location was made on 760 while mobile (East bound on 44). While mobile, K6PDS could hear that the Village was activated (on Village Ch 1 (murs). But, such communications were not readable by K6PDS. Initially, no hams responded on Ham Frequency 760. However, Village Area heard the 760 transmit and activated, using Internet resources.

Problem Looms: without a Ham on frequency and able to hear Village Ch1, there was no relay capability from the Village non ham frequency to the Ham frequency. Vital information which the Village was gathering was not available to the 760 Ham Frequency. Thus, the rest of Shingletown was not able to obtain information about the fire and potential risk. [Recall, this was the same area that the Ponderosa fire had originated, that could have destroyed Shingletown several years back].

Then, DON (KB6BZL) came on Frequency (760) and worked both the Ham Net and Relayed information from the Village Ch 1 (non Ham) into the Ham Net. Also, upon K6PDS arriving at home in the village, KB6BZL volunteered to go mobile and conduct field observations from the Wilson Hill Lookout. K6PDS assumed Fire Control. The ground field reports of KB6BZL were in real time, eyes on, succinct and to the point. KB6BZL provided vital information. At times, the copy was barely readable, and had to be repeated due to the rough terrain. But, it worked very well. The critical importance of this action by KB6BZL can't be overstated. In the event of Internet failure (which we just recently had together with simultaneous Cell phone failures, and VOIP failure), the Internet resources will be gone! Thus, having field stations provide accurate field reporting is vital! **Thank you Don for doing this!** Also, when KB6BZL returned home, he reported into Fire Control and advised that he was at home and secure. This is routine procedure – i.e., when a station is out in the field and providing reports, we need to know that they returned home safely.

Fire Net tactical positions included: Ground (KB6BZL); Internet Radar; Internet Winds; CAL FIRE MONITORS (DISPATCH AND TAC); Internet Camera; Mapping / Triangulation; Fire control.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WHO HELPED OUT!

Ham Stations assisting: KB6BZL; W6MWM; KE6PCR; AJ6KJ; W6CCR; K6PDS.

Village Stations working Village Ch 1, included: F7, B1, S1, S6, T3.

Midway stations, including Midway 1.

Other areas may have been working their Area Ch1.

Approx. 1548 hours – cal fire reported 75% contained. Forward progress stopped.

Fire Net Deactivated at approx. 1600 hours. QSY Scan Plan with stations continuing to monitor Cal Fire.

AFTER ACTION:

The VILLAGE WAS “JOHNY ON THE SPOT” AND STARTED USING INTERNET TACTICALS (CAMERAS, RADAR, ETC...) BEFORE HAMS started working the Ham Fire Net.

LESSON POINT AND SAFETY PROBLEM: Critical information was being gathered by the Village (showing type of fire threat we were dealing with and the potential threat areas). However, dissemination to persons listening on the Ham Frequency 760 (i.e., **other Areas of Shingletown**) was critically hampered due to the lack of Hams being immediately on Frequency (760). K6PDS was mobile when he first observed the large smoke column from Hwy 44 (east bound). First, Cal Fire was called and a report made. Then the smoke column information and estimated location was transmitted on Ham 760. Village Area stations were monitoring 760 and heard the smoke column report (Fire in the Manton area). However, Village Ch 1 was not readable by K6PDS while mobile over 15 miles away (and thus, K6PDS could not relay information from the Village into the Ham Net). The Ham information relay / flow was only able to start when KB6BZL (and a big thank you to DON) came on frequency (760) and relayed information from Village Ch 1 into the Ham net. Other Ham stations thereafter joined the Ham Fire Net and Hams started using the Internet Resources (the same resources already being used by the Village on its Ch 1). We must all take some perspective – while “**our**” life may not be in immediate danger from a fire 4 miles away, **another person’s life** in close proximity to the fire is under immediate threat. The fact that we don’t know that, doesn’t change the facts. When there is immediate threat to human life, provision is made for Non Hams to be used under the SER Plan on Ham Frequencies when Hams are not available or responding to the call for help. Listening to someone cry for help as they burn to death is not an option.

Tactical Use: On an administrative level, tacticals have been part of the SER Plan for a long time, are directly tied to the Internet Resources, and Tacticals have been part of Ham Radio emergency radio procedures for decades. We must all follow the SER Procedures during a Fire Net. I am sure that everyone will agree that changing procedures during a Wild Fire is not prudent. People need to know that the system is being followed and know what to expect as far as procedures. The factual events and emergency itself will be enough to deal with. Debating procedures with Fire Control impedes and disrupts the entire Fire Net operations. There is a lot going on all at once. For example, once K6PDS arrived at home, Fire Control’s work included: working 2 Net Frequencies (Ham and Village), supplemental monitoring Cal Fire dispatch, conducting mapping / triangulation (including determining Lat / Long and posting to Format Tango 9A), determining /measuring distances from the fire to different locations in Shingletown, posting wind reports to the map, assessing potential risk to different Shingletown Areas, Factoring in camera reports, Flight Radar reports, Cal Fire reports (Dispatch and Tactical), ground team reports, transmitting summary “bullet point information” on frequency (in this case, on both 760 and Village Ch 1) to keep those listening factually aware of the situation, etc... .
Reminder, HQ has authority over Fire Control.

We all learn by doing. Each incident can be viewed as a way to learn and improve. Thank you to everyone. Great Job!

Shingletown Emergency Radio Plan