

Incident Based Automation, IBA, System
Business Process Modeling, Interview
MAC Coordinator
January 12, 2007

Interview Notes by Craig Tanner, Senior Data Architect

Interviewee is a Fire Operations Specialist for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In this position, he conducts fire readiness reviews, and conducts oversight and makes policies to make sure all firefighters are trained.

Question: When and how do you get notified?

Answer: Typically there are two notices:

1. Heads-up notice from Coordination Center
 - a. He will notify his deputy
 - b. They both will start calling their sections heads. Everyone on the team should know that the resource order is coming.
2. Official resource order through the coordination system

Question: How is the MAC activated?

Answer:

1. A MAC is activated when a certain level of activity is reached within a geographic area.
2. Activating a MAC is driven by the guidelines set in the National and MAC Mobilization Guides.
3. Factors contributing to the activation of a MAC include:
 - a. Numerous large fires (Type I or Type 2) within a geographic area
 - b. Numerous initial attack fires
 - c. Scarcity and competition for resources.
4. The decision to activate a MAC is done by the Geographical Coordinating Group, which is made up of primarily the fire directors for the geographic area.
5. The formation of the MAC is usually initiated by the coordination center – they actually request that it be formed.

Question: What are some of the typical positions of the MAC staff?

Answer:

1. Administration
2. Intel
3. Fire Behavior Specialist
4. GIS Support
5. TFR (Tactical Flight Restrictions) Coordinator
6. MAC Coordinator

7. Aviation (monitor use of all aircraft).

Question: What are the primary functions of the MAC?

Answer:

1. The MAC sits over the GACC to provide a higher level of coordination and resource assignment.
2. The main function is Intelligence coordination.
3. The MAC doesn't actually move any resources—they request to the GACC to move resources. The MAC sets priorities for resource assignments.
4. They especially focus on any resource that is a scarcity
5. Requests for MAC support come directly from the GACCs and sometimes directly from the Incident Commander

Question: What is the basic set-up for the MAC?

Answer:

1. MACs are physically located at the GACC office.
2. When a MAC is activated, they will usually have their own room with networked computers, printers, fax machines, phones, conference area, etc.

Question: What are the steady-state operations of the MAC?

1. Each MAC team member operates to collect and provide some form of intelligence. For example the GIS Person provides updated maps of fire operations area.
2. Each MAC Position has their individual responsibilities and sources of data:
 - a. Aviation:
 - i. ROSS database used specifically for reports and request status information
 - ii. Tactical Report – A report created by the GACC. This is an aircraft status sheet. Shows aircraft in service and those that are out of service
 - iii. AFF – Automated Flight Following – Real-time aircraft status – 15 minute refresh or less (can be set)
 - iv. ICS-209 Daily Report on each individual incident
 - v. NMAC and Regional Policies on flight operations. This usually comes to the MAC in the form of an email
 - vi. Much reference material
 - vii. Individual aircraft reports—contains information about how many hours each aircraft has flown each day. This information comes directly from the incident
 - b. Communications:
 - i. ROSS Reports
 - ii. ICS-209
 - iii. Reference Materials

- iv. Frequency Management (Frequency Request Form)
 - v. GIS Maps
- c. Intel: (some MACS have a stand-alone intelligence section)
- i. ICS-209
 - ii. Daily Situation Report
 - iii. Geographic Area Situation Report
 - iv. National Situation Report
 - v. Weather Reports
 - vi. Incident Action Plans (IAP)
 - vii. WFSA (Wildland Fire Situation Analysis)
 - viii. WFIP
- d. Administration (responsible for storing all of the data for the MAC)
- i. Reference Materials (Need file storage)
 - ii. Contact Info
 - iii. Forms and Formats
 - iv. Hard Copy Storage
- e. Fire Behavior (primarily collecting info on weather and fuels)
- i. Need to have electronic access to NOAA weather stations
 - ii. Access to individual weather stations
 - iii. National weather and local weather forecasts, predictive services and real-time weather
 - iv. Fuels information (drying out or getting moist). Information comes from sources such as people actually cutting vegetation to measure the moisture level.
 - v. ICS-209
 - vi. Actual discussion with weather forecasters located at an incident
 - vii. Direct communication with the Fire Behavior Analysts at an incident
- f. TFR (Air Space Coordinator) (TFR = Tactical Flight Restriction)
- i. Work directly with the FAA on information exchange and coordination on TFRs
 - ii. Direct communication with flight Service Stations
 - iii. Direct communications with air operations at an incident
 - iv. Local Dispatch
 - v. Incident commanders
 - vi. A TFR is typically a flight restriction within a 5 mile radius of the fire operations area. It is sometimes administered by an FAA person using a “temporary tower” to actually handle air traffic within a TFR.
- g. GIS Support Person
- i. ARCINFO and Plotter

- ii. GIS Layers (usually from USGS)
 - iii. Can overlay maps and layers with TFRs and other information
 - iv. Provides incident fire boundary maps
 - v. Utilizes web sites and databases for mapping information
 - vi. Ownership maps (plat maps or property maps)
- h. MAC Coordinator
- i. Mostly receives information from verbal sources, such as through conference calls.
 - ii. Will review most of the situation reports

Question: What are the procedures of the MAC Coordinator?

Answer:

1. First priority is to read all of the Intel reports, the ICS-209, Situation Reports, WFSA, and any reports about new fires.
2. The day usually begins with the 8:00am conference call
 - a. New requests for resources
 - b. Weather info
 - c. Fire Behavior info
 - d. Situational awareness
3. Based on what they learn from the 8:00am conference call, the MAC team sets priorities for resources. They will use the Daily Priority Template (table) that lists the priorities. (Also lists all working fires and emerging fires that are still working under the GACC level). Other information utilized in resource determination:
 - a. ICS-209
 - b. WFSA/WFIT
 - c. Sit Reports
 - d. IAPs (Incident Action Plans)
 - e.
4. Priorities are sent out to:
 - a. NMAC
 - b. GACCs
 - c. Local Dispatch
 - d. Incident Commanders
 - e. GAC6
5. GACCs have a NICC daily call at 9:30am – MAC coordination usually sits in on this
6. 10:00am GAC6 (Agency Coordinator) call
 - a. This is where the daily priorities are relayed to the GAC6
7. Up through lunch, the team continues working their assignments
8. At 1500, the GACCs start making calls to all local dispatch centers for a report of latest situation of what is going on.
 - a. Asks the dispatch centers a series of questions
 - b. About 5 minutes per center

- c. Total of about 1 to 1 ½ hours total
 - d. Usually done by the Intel person
 - e. Both the GACC and MAC participate in this
9. At 1800, the NICC has phone calls with MAC and GACC
10. MAC s are under the same 14-day restrictions as other fire personnel and therefore there are times with teams will transition in and out.

Recommendations:

1. Agency restrictions on information:
 - a. Some agencies cannot post the WFSA electronically
 - b. Need one simple standard for pulling the WFSA and ICS-209s
2. Information Technology and phone issues often arise which disrupt good intelligence gathering because of poor communications.
3. The need for I-Suite to have a direct access to ROSS. Right now, they get a feed out of ROSS. They need to be able to move directly from I-Suite to ROSS.
4. Dispatch Messaging System (DMS) can be very slow. Sometimes the delays in the system can be hours.
5. Better quality of service if they are calling through cell phones or from satellite phones.
6. Need a weather dashboard (special program with overlays)