



RECORD OF COMMUNICATION

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Western Pacific Region

Date: June 18, 2014

Person Contacted: Ms. Heather McDonald (TIDC Manager)

NTSB Accident Number: WPR12GA106

Narrative: The following information was excerpted verbatim from an email sent by Ms. McDonald on June 18, 2014, in response to NTSB questions sent June 6, 2014.

NTSB IIC NOTES:

- a) "TIDC" is the Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC) in Grand Teton National Park
- b) The first two paragraphs below are a narrative provided by Ms. McDonald
- c) The text below the line "To address your questions" is a sequence of NTSB questions or statements (in black) followed immediately by the respective TIDC responses (in magenta)

The day of the accident, Tiffany Smith was dispatching in TIDC. Please see her response below. I was out of the office that day at a meeting in Cokeville, WY, with Tobin Kelley, the Bridger Teton National Forest Fire Management and Aviation Officer. We received notification via phone when the accident occurred, but I did not dispatch for any of the incident.

Just a little info on AFF. It does not provide "alerts" to dispatchers. Aircraft are depicted on the screen in blue if they are active and in red if they have lost communication (i.e. have landed in a spot where satellite communication is not positive) or if they have gone down. The flight follower would not receive an alert, they would just have to see that the aircraft turned red on the screen. At the time of the accident, TIDC dispatcher, Tiffany was not in AFF and was not flight following HL. She only got into the program when the TCSO called to let TIDC know about the accident. HL was already showing inactive (red) at that time.

To address your questions:

I also have information that although the system did not alert the two dispatchers below, it supposedly did alert correctly at the Teton Interagency Dispatch Center (TIDC) in Grand Teton National Park. **There was no "alert" to TIDC since AFF doesn't send one. What might have been the case, is that AFF seemed to be working correctly at TIDC. There are probably numerous reasons why it may work correctly at one agency**

and not at another at the same time (networks, etc). At TIDC (and I would imagine TCSO), AFF is used in conjunction with 15 minute radio check-in's. At TIDC, location is obtained via AFF at the time of each check-in and an "ops normal" response is typical from the pilot when they are called on the radio by TIDC. For the most part, AFF works consistently, but the program is not infallible. Sometimes it doesn't update in a timely manner and occasional false inactive statuses are shown. It's up to the dispatcher flight following to observe the inactive status and to try make contact with the aircraft.

a) What actions did TIDC take as a result of the alert(s) they received? AFF does not send alerts, see explanation above. TIDC was only advised of the accident by TCSO after it occurred.

b) What longer-term changes (if any) were made to ensure that alerts received by a non-primary center (such as TIDC) facility/station are communicated to the primary (eg TCSO) center in a timely manner, in order to provide redundancy and ensure timely problem notification No changes were made or are seen as necessary. Neither the TCSO nor TIDC typically provide redundant flight following for the other. However, I would imagine that if a TIDC (or a TCSO) dispatcher were in AFF flight following their own aircraft, and were to observe the other agency aircraft as having turned inactive (red), that they might likely call the other agency to confirm there wasn't a issue.

c) What specific investigations and/or findings resulted from this failure and discrepancy? In other words, what agencies looked into the reason(s) for this, and what was determined? There was no know failure and discrepancy at TIDC to investigate.

d) What changes or actions were implemented as a result of those investigations and/or findings? Were any hardware, software, procedural, or more global (eg, operator training, discard the system, etc) changes made? No changes made at TIDC. AFF is the program used in conjunction with 15 min radio check-in's used to flight follow aircraft. Overall, it works well. TIDC dispatchers take required federal aviation training (NPS RM-60, Chapter 14) AFF has since been upgraded to a newer version with improved functionality. If you need any further information on the program, I would suggest that you contact the program manager, Bob Roth. I believe he is the primary developer of the program. His contact information can be found at: [REDACTED]

Please feel free to contact me if you have any other questions,

Heather McDonald

TIDC Center Manager

[REDACTED]