

Vermont Vigilant Guard Exercise

Vermont Task Force 1 – Accountability System

During the Vermont Vigilant Guard Exercise, the Vermont Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) team, Vermont Task Force 1 (VT-TF 1), used the Salamander personnel accountability system. This was first noted during the overnight operational period on Saturday July 29, 2016. During this time, VT-TF 1 was working with the Massachusetts US&R Team, MA-TF 1, at Camp Johnson. The VT-TF 1 Operations Branch Officer had printed group assignment sheets (image 1) with him at the forward operating base. He indicated that these were printed on-site by the team's planning group. The data to formulate these sheets was derived from the team member's identification cards.

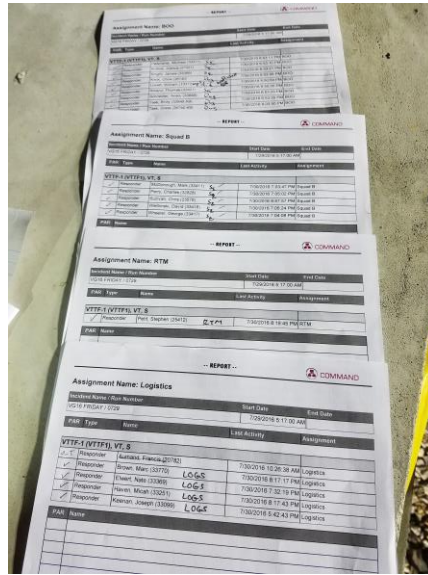


Image 1. Group Assignment Sheets

At VT-TF 1's base of operations (BOO), the planning manager had generated an incident in the Salamander system to maintain team accountability (image 2). Within this incident various group assignments were made. Members were assigned to these groups by team management.

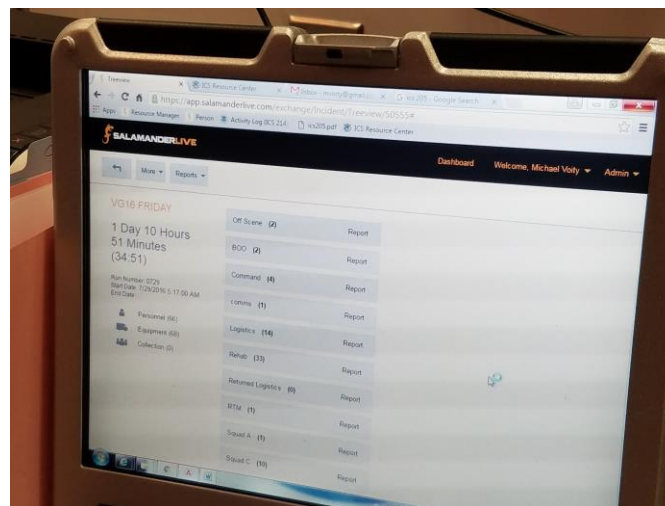


Image 2. Incident in Salamander

The Salamander personnel accountability system is a software tool used by many first responder agencies. The Illinois US&R team, IL-TF 1, also uses this system. A test was conducted to see if an IL-TF 1 member's identification card could be scanned into VT-TF 1's incident. The test was successful as the IL-TF 1 member was scanned into the incident and was then assigned to the BOO. This was captured in image 3 (IL-TF 1 member – Lyne, Kevin).

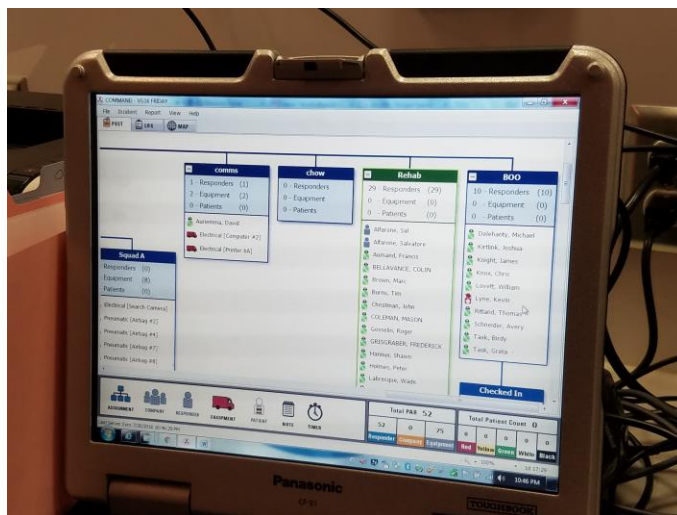


Image 3. IL-TF 1 member in VT-TF 1's incident

After seeing this successful integration test, additional testing was also conducted. MA-TF 1, uses identification cards for its members. Unlike VT-TF 1 and IL-TF 1, there are no bar or QR codes on MA-TF 1's cards. VT-TF 1's planning manager created a test QR code for a MA-TF 1 member. This QR code was printed and scanned into the incident successfully. This testing showed that the Salamander system could provide for an electronic incident accountability system of VT-TF 1, outside agencies using Salamander (IL-TF 1) and could be used to input outside agencies not using the Salamander system into an incident.

After leaving Vermont, IL-TF 1 further tested the same parameters and generated a test incident on its Salamander system based in Illinois. Scanned into this test incident (image 4) were the IL-TF 1 member, a VT-TF 1 member (Jon Strazza) and the manually imputed MA-TF 1 member (Colchester Vermont) (image 5).

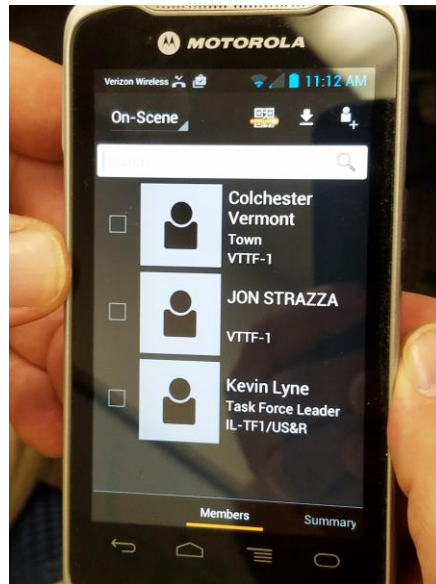


Image 4. Illinois test – scanned members from 3 agencies

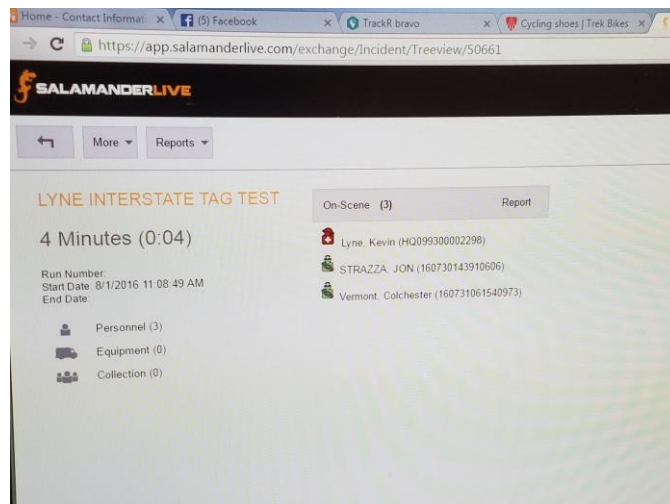


Image 5. Illinois test incident

From this testing, the Salamander system has demonstrated its capability to provide an accurate personnel accountability system for incidents. This accountability includes local responders already in the system, other response agencies that use Salamander and agencies that do not use the Salamander system. Further training with this system is recommended so more members are familiar with its capabilities. Additional training exercises are suggested to incorporate more agencies into this system to further test its limitations.