

ART of Operator v. 2



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Please note that the activities in this ART require an AV component - make sure that you can either access a YouTube video at your training location, or you let your trainers know in advance that you'll be needing the MP3 version of the activities.

10:30 - 11:00am

Welcome to the ART of Operator

Thank you for your interest in the Operator team, and for taking the time to participate in this training. Remember that you are here to get to know your pARTners in this group as well as to learn something about what it's like to work as an Operator for the Rangers. Also keep in mind that we encourage your feedback about this training, so if you see any place where we could make the experience better, please let us know using the online feedback form listed at the end. Please take breaks as needed, and have fun!

Goals

Our goals for this training are:

- To provide you with an introduction to the Operator program
- To acquaint you with some of the tools in the Operator's toolkit, and give you a picture of what it's like to work an Operator shift
- To allow you to see if serving on the Operator Team is a good fit for you

Take a moment to write down your goals for this training on a piece of scratch paper.

Discuss your goals with your training group for a few minutes. Make sure everyone has a chance to share.

[10 min]

Read the next two sections. If you are taking this ART with others, perhaps choose someone to read a section and then pass on the job of reader to the next person.

Brief History of the Operator program

Logging incidents has always been part of Ranger Shift Command operations, but up until a few years ago, shift command logs took the form of pages and pages of paper notes. Unsurprisingly, this made it difficult to track incidents that flared up again after a day or two; follow-through and identifying problem areas was next to impossible. For the past few years, the Rangers have been developing a custom software app for keeping track of current and past incidents. The Operators provide the very important link between radio traffic and that Ranger Incident Management System (IMS).

What does an Operator do? (brief version)

As part of the Shift Command team, the Operator team monitors and logs relevant Ranger radio traffic, records information that is too sensitive to be broadcast on the radio, and keeps track of open incidents. One or more Operators are always on duty to assist the Shift Command Team with their informational needs and follow-through on incidents. Operators also have access to numerous information tools and databases (such as the DMV database) and can provide details and clarification as required.

In other words, Operators spend their shifts in the comfy air-conditioned splendor of the Operator Shack, with their fingers on the pulse of Black Rock City. Pretty nice gig, eh?

[10 min]

Read the following section and think about how the skills and characteristics described might apply to you. If there is someone in your ART group who has previously worked an Operator shift, ask them about what skills are involved in working an Operator shift.

Requirements to be an Operator (“musts”)

You have Rangered at Burning Man for at least two years

You can be a verbally communicative, active member of a two-person team

You are very comfortable with using computers and typing quickly, preferably not looking at your hands.

You understand that input and recording of incidents is the primary concern

You have signed an Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)* which safeguards the personal information held in the Rangers’ Incident Management System (IMS)

Characteristics of a good Operator (“shoulds”)

You are able to multitask and prioritize competing tasks

You have excellent radio skills and can attentively listen and understand one radio channel and occasionally two channels

You are good at putting disconnected pieces of information together to see the bigger picture

You are able to keep track of and follow up on unfinished business

You are able to focus, concentrate, and stay calm in a world of distractions

You are comfortable talking to and working with Shift Leads to make sure the facts are straight

*** Don’t be a chooch with sensitive information ***

As Rangers we are sometimes privy to sensitive information; as Operators we are almost certainly privy to the ‘juicy details’. You will be asked to sign an NDA - non-disclosure agreement - in order to participate in the Operator program. By signing the NDA, you are basically agreeing to be extra-Rangerly with people's sensitive or personal information that you will have access to via the IMS and other Ranger information systems.

[10 min]

11:00-11:30

Activity: To Log, or Not to Log?

*This activity is designed to give you a taste of what it's like to be an Operator, and identify incidents that ARE and ARE NOT worth logging. The goal of this exercise is to help you to identify when you should log something, and when you should only listen and pay attention in case the conversation becomes an incident. As you go through this activity, focus on logging radio traffic that's actionable and valuable for someone to read later and to log everything that's important. Remember, Operators focus on documenting and keeping track of **incidents**.*

If you have access to the Interwebs at your training location, please go to this site to take the online version of this activity which includes audio clips of actual Ranger radio traffic:

*<https://sites.google.com/site/brcrangeroperatortraining/ART-of-Operator>
or <https://youtu.be/N6Hx-OpJazs>*

For trainings in remote locations, the Training Academy will provide the audio-only version of the above activity. Same traffic, no pretty pictures.

As you listen to the traffic, please pause between radio calls to discuss with the group why a particular incident should or shouldn't be logged.

[30 min]

BREAK TIME!

Take a 10 minute break to stretch your legs and manage your liquids as needed.

11:40 - 12:15

Read aloud through the next two sections. If there is someone in your group who hasn't read aloud yet, encourage them to go first. If one of the ARTists has experienced an Operator shift, ask them about what it's like to work an Operator shift.

What does an Operator do? (the detailed version)Log incidents:

Please do not log **every radio call** - that's impossible! (and unnecessary) It's important to remember that not everything you hear on the radio will be logged, but you'll still want to pay attention; what sounds at first like a boring or mundane call might quickly turn into an incident that should be logged. Focus on the bullet-point summary of the information coming in over the radio. You'll develop a feel for this with experience. And remember that you will have support from your Operator partner, as well as the rest of the Shift Command Team including Khaki to help with catching the relevant details and making sure your logs fit what's expected of Operators.

Log sensitive information:

Some information and some incidents never get called out over the radio; this information is referred to as non-broadcast information (NBI). Collecting NBI is very important because the kinds of incidents that cannot be shared over the radio are just the kinds of incidents Operators need to track in IMS.

In some cases, Dirt Rangers will provide Operators with further information that is too sensitive or too complex to share over the radio. This can take the form of handwritten notes or verbal reports. Operators should enter summaries of this information into the IMS. In the case of handwritten notes, this can be done during lulls in radio traffic. At the very least, we will ask Operators to note the incident number that the handwritten notes relate to, so that we can keep track of the links between the paper notes and the IMS system.

Shift Leads will almost certainly enter NBI about incidents that they have responded to in person. Don't be surprised if incidents that you are working on get updated by shift leads on the fly.

Decision Support:

Sometimes Operators can be proactive in connecting the dots. If you think you

see a pattern of incidents, bring it to the attention of the Shift Command team -- Khaki or another Shift Lead.

Because Operators have a lot of tools at their fingertips (more on that later), you can often identify and provide missing or helpful information to Shift Leads that they may not have off the top of their heads. More than just human recorders of information, Operators are a key part of the Ranger Shift Command team, so be proactive when you think you can provide information that will help with a situation you hear developing over the radio.

Other things you might do:

-- Swap batteries on the "Wiretap" radios in the Operator Shack (which are recording all Ranger radio traffic, all the time). It is recommended you check the battery levels at the beginning of every shift, and change them at the next possible lull in traffic.

-- Check the 911@ email account. Rangers deliver emergency messages to participants from friends and family members. Operators are tasked with keeping an eye on the inbox and making sure that incoming "911" messages get passed along to the Shift Command Team to deliver.

-- Connect Khaki and/or Dirt Rangers with the informational tools outlined in the next section, either face-to-face or over the radio.

[20 min]

Keep reading aloud - it's good for you! Share with the group if you have prior experience with any of these tools (HQ shifts, volunteering with DMV, etc.).

Tools in the Operator's toolbox:

DMV vehicle database

Access to the Department of Mutant Vehicle (DMV) database can be helpful in identifying Art Cars and their owners. If you're trying to document that someone is repeatedly cruising on A, it can be a lot more useful to look up a DMV license number than writing a lengthy description of 'the airship art car'.

Clubhouse

All Operators should have the same level of access to the Ranger Clubhouse as someone working the HQ window. This can be very helpful in both identifying the current rangers on shift ("who was that who just called in?") as well as rangers with a special skill for handling a current incident (like the ability to speak Japanese or ASL).

Radio directory & Channel listing

The radio directory is helpful for finding out the callsigns of different department heads, and the channels you're likely to find them on. The channel listing breaks down radio channels and channel banks, so you can quickly find channels you aren't familiar with.

City Map & Deep Playa map

You're already familiar with our beautiful city, but the Operators also have large, detailed maps of the city, updated with placed theme camps (some of which are not on the printed map you get at the Gate), and laminated so you can markup the maps with dry-erase markers. Deep Playa maps with radial grids, and distance markers are helpful for pin-pointing locations.

Controlled Vocabulary

Logging is only half of the battle, and everything that we log will be read later. We're introducing what is known as a controlled vocabulary to help with entering and searching for important information. A controlled vocabulary is an agreed upon set of words and ways of describing similar situations to make it easier to search for something later. For instance, we'll ask you to make sure that the words "Sexual Assault" are included in the incident entry, instead of just "SA" or "creepy hugs". A longer list of these magic keys to easy searching will be included in our IMS system training later this summer, and in the Operator Field Guide provided near each Operator station in the Operator Shack. [15 min]

12:15 - 12:45

Activity 2: Logging Radio Chatter

This next exercise will have you practice listening to multiple conversations back-to-back, determining if they're relevant, and logging any useful details. Try to have your logs answer: "Who is it about? Where? When? What happened?"

If you have access to the Interwebs at your training location, please go to this site to take the online version of this activity which includes audio clips of actual Ranger radio traffic:

*<https://sites.google.com/site/brcrangeroperatortraining/ART-of-Operator>
or <https://youtu.be/zot1BgwWOLI>*

For trainings in remote locations, the Training Academy will provide the audio-only version of the above activity. Same traffic, no pretty pictures.

As you listen to the traffic, please pause between radio calls to discuss with the group how you did in catching the relevant 'bullet points' of each call.

[30 min]

Finishing Up / Next Steps / Feedback

Please take a moment to reflect on today's training, and what you learned.

Then take a moment to share with the other pARTicipants one or two things you found most useful or interesting.

If possible, please take a few minutes to fill out the online feedback form at:

<http://goo.gl/forms/eJTtE5MNeb>

This training can only get better with your input and feedback, so we thank you!

Next Steps:

Please let your Operator Team Leads know about your desire to be an Operator by emailing ranger-operator-lead-list AT burningman DOT com.

New and returning Operators will be required to complete an online training before August 15th. Please let us know you want to join the team so we can send you the training materials.

Thank you for participating in the ART of Operator! We are excited to have you on the team!

Appendix A

Glossary of Jargon:

IMS

IMS stands for Incident Management System. It's the computer program and database where Operators log incidents. IMS is also used by Shift Leads, OODs, Intercept, Sanctuary Hosts, and other Operators to keep an eye on active and on-going incidents.

Passdown

Passdown is what happens at shift change. It's where the Shift Leads going off-duty talk about and "pass down" details about recent and ongoing incidents with the Shift Leads coming on-duty. As an integral part of this process, Shift Leads will check in with Operators towards the end of their shifts to discuss any outstanding issues that may carry over into the next shift, or close out issues that were resolved in the field and never made it to the radio.

NBI - Non-Broadcast Information

This is information that is too sensitive to be shared over the radio. Full names of participants, full details of messy incidents, that kind of thing. In 2015, we will be encouraging Dirt Rangers to write even more details in their trusty notebooks, and hand those to the Operators for safekeeping & entry into the IMS.