

**ROSS LESSONS LEARNED
2004**

AREA OF CONCERN	THE LESSON	HINTS AND TIPS
Network Speed		Keep communicating with network people
ROSS Currency	In 2004 the most successful offices were ones that kept up with enhancements and changes in the system. These offices had the least ramp up time to expanded, required the least amount of coaching, and were able to implement the enhancements at the start of an incident saving valuable time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each versions release notice tells the users what's new in that version. • The ROSS Reference manual and User guide are available on line to anyone. • The Practice server is available to drill or just practice on the new functions of ROSS.
Data Clean Up	Whew, data clean up... In 2003 we learned big lessons from those duplicate resources being created and not having all our resources entered or qualified. In 2004 we learned how time consuming it is to reconcile the duplicates and how easy it can be to prevent more duplicate data.	<p>Tips for prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new option of "Fill With Agreement" to supplement "Fill With New Resource". This didn't add anything to the data base and let users fill requests on the fly with a resource not in the data base. • The system restricted user rolls for "Fill With New Resource", making the "Dispatch Manager" role the only person having authority to fill with a new resource—use with caution. • Searching the data base thoroughly before creating a new resource item, filling with new resource or filling with agreement helped to prevent duplicate resources. • Formatting resource item names consistently using the data format standard make it easier to find an existing resource before creating it anew.
Office Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	As in 2003, most offices did not have an SOP for ROSS. An SOP can facilitate educating new dispatchers, easy transitions to expanded, quick disaster recovery with little or no down time, etc.	<p>A few suggestions to include in your ROSS SOP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster Recovery Plans • After hour support numbers • Agreements for room and/or laptop rental • Expanded dispatch plan to accommodate ROSS, etc.
Preparing for Expanded Dispatch	Offices that planned for expanded with ROSS in mind made the transition to expanded quite painlessly. Others fumbled some in the first three or four days.	<p>The three most often lamented problems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers and operating systems did not meet ROSS minimums and the system ran slowly. • Alternate access like modems and internet access were not available preventing the implementation of disaster recovery plans. • A local ROSS savvy coach was not available for the first few days of expanded for the new or seldom used support dispatchers.

AREA OF CONCERN	THE LESSON	HINTS AND TIPS
Disaster Recovery Plans	Another 2003 lesson we didn't heed. Many offices did not have a Disaster Recovery Plan in place for when something went wrong like network or power outages. This caused delays and confusion when trying to mitigate the problem. Having a plan is important, but having the personnel and hardware/software to implement the plan as well as everyone knowing the location of the plan is essential.	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate your plan with local IRM. • Include the plan in your office SOP/ROSS SOP. • Be sure everyone knows the plan exists. • Be sure the hardware/software is in place both in dispatch and expanded dispatch to implement the plan. • Test the plan.
Refresher Classes	Refresher classes are very helpful for returning dispatchers who haven't used ROSS for several months. Many areas held the refreshers at their spring dispatch workshops.	What to include in a refresher? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functions most often used in your office. • The most complicated functions your office uses. • New enhancements and changes to ROSS.
Resource Status	We didn't learn this well from 2003, but by the middle of the summer everyone was getting the hang of keeping resources statuses and available for dispatch. Offices eventually came up with systems for keeping status current. Hopefully these lessons will now stay in place throughout the year.	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a system to monitor status. • Monitor those offices that are status only and resources using web status so: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. they status as planned b. established a time frame for statusing (once a week, daily, etc.).
Rosters	The offices that used rosters noticed how much time they saved especially when dispatching teams. Still, many offices did not understand rosters or set up rosters ahead of time and had to spend time creating individual requests.	A few things to remember about rosters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use a roster with an NWCG standard configuration or an improvised configuration (Add or delete positions of a master roster on the fly). • You can add and delete roster members on the fly. • Rosters by-pass the selection area so a NW order for an IMT member can go to EA without going through NICC or the GACCs.
Pre-Orders	Pre-Orders were not widely utilized. When set up prior to an incident, they can save valuable time at dispatch.	
Data Draw System (DDS)	What a cool tool the data draw is. Not everyone used it, but those that did found it very useful.	