



What is Helicopter Video Downlink?

Helicopter video downlink is the ability to share the helicopter video / FLIR camera image with ground personnel. The helicopter transmits the video which can be received in most Mobile Command Vehicles, on handheld tactical video receivers and/or this signal can be received by 3Cs on one of their mountain top antennas. Once 3Cs receives the video it can be viewed over the 3Cs network at the EOC and department headquarters. It can also be streamed over the internet to any PC.

How do I get downlink for an incident?

If you have an incident where you think you need video downlink, make that request to your dispatcher.

All of SDPD ABLE helicopters, both San Diego City Fire-Rescue helicopters and three of the five ASTREA law enforcement helicopters are equipped. The remaining two Sheriff's helicopters will be equipped by the end of 2009.

What if I don't have a handheld video receiver?

If your police department does not have a receiver, check with your fire department. Half of the devices have been purchased; the remainder will be purchased in the first half of 2010. Once all devices have been purchased, each city police department and fire department in the county will have one. All of the major Sheriff's Stations have a device. On a case by case basis, ABLE and ASTREA may be able to fly a handheld receiver to you if needed. If you know you have a large event planned, contact 3Cs about getting a loaner device, if your mobile command post is not equipped.

When Helicopter Video Downlink would be appropriate

- Disasters such as fires, terrorist event, earthquake, flood etc..Especially if smoke or terrain is limiting your situational awareness.
- Large events such as Sand Castle, protests, natural disasters where you as the incident commander needs to get the big picture so you can allocate resources, re-direct traffic, or request other resources
- SWAT call / barricaded suspect

When Helicopter Video Downlink may NOT be appropriate

- Crimes in progress, vehicle pursuits, setting up perimeters

Why? In these dynamic events, especially early on as the events unfold quickly, the flight crew will not be able to respond to ground requested camera views. Nor should ground units be heads down looking at a display in these situations. Once the situation has stabilized then downlink should be possible.



What air support personnel would like you to remember:

- Flight crews will attempt to satisfy downlink requests based on priority, workload and whether the use is appropriate.
- Fire helicopters have the primary responsibility for water drops during a fire. When available, law enforcement helicopters should be used to fly video missions during fires and assist with perimeter issues during a fire.
- The safety of the helicopter and crew are the primary concern during a flight, then the mission. Conversations and requests for downlink should be limited to the incident commander and the flight crew. Tell the flight crew what you need they will do what they can to provide it. It isn't necessary for the ground units to direct the helicopter on how to operate that is the responsibility of the flight crew and ultimately the pilot in command.

For information on using the downlink devices and how to access the network, contact 3Cs staff:

619-515-2753 or
Email 3Cs@regional3Cs.org
or
Log on www.regional3cs.org.