

## Reference Field Scenarios

*These are events that surfaced in the three interviews we conducted in Sprint 1-2. We feel they are moments that illustrate why and where innovation is needed. These could feed challenge prompts in a challenge-style innovation program, or could simply provide useful background to people designing the program.*

*(see Part 2 for community/innovation scenarios)*

### **Radios in a complicated fire response**

Even a single alarm fire draws 38 (or more) responders to the scene. With every request for additional resources, the group grows. There are strict lines of communication from the IC to the division commanders to the individuals, but radio messages can be missed because of cross-traffic or actual local frequency overload. An additional problem is that firefighters entering a structure need to wear breathers and other gear that makes them difficult to understand over walkie-talkie in an already noisy environment. The worst case scenario is a firefighter trapped and in need of help, unable to get through to his peers over the radio.

### **Converging LEOs in an urban “man with a gun” response**

When a member of the public calls in a not-terribly-specific report of an armed person without a clear description, dispatch requests responses via radio. In many multiple jurisdiction cities, several agencies might have personnel in the area, and at least the primary police department might have both uniformed and plain-clothes, or even off-duty, officers nearby. An officer arriving on the scene of this direct threat to public safety has a split second to judge whether other people on the scene are safe or possible threats. Armed plain clothes officers may have their guns out before their badges, and communication will not have been set up between agencies in the first few minutes. These departments are too big for everyone to recognize each other, and while there are conventions for identifying yourself as law enforcement, not everyone uses the same ones all the time. As our participant said “I almost shot the good guy in a training exercise.”

### **Pursuit into another jurisdiction**

When one officer encounters officers of another agency in pursuit (in the example, it was state police who had pursued an armed robbery suspect from an unincorporated area into a city), they may not have any information other than that there is an active pursuit. Since departments don’t do that for non-serious offenses, they would know it was important, but wouldn’t have the ability to exchange information or get on a channel with the other officers.

### **Member of the public has information on a phone**

An officer responds to an armed robbery call (but this likely happens in other types as well) to find a victim who took a photo of their assailant on a cell phone. In order to transmit a description to responding officers in the area, the officer has to “transcribe” the picture into a simple verbal

description (“hispanic male with a black shirt and a red cap”); this description has many disadvantages over the picture, and will result in innocent people being stopped and time being lost. The blockers here are evidence and privacy rules and officers not having equipment in their cars that can receive a picture.

## **FR Community/Support/Communication scenarios**

*Examples of ways First Responders talk & think about problems, better practices, innovation and community.*

It’s important to note that some things are incredibly painful to discuss at length, but first responders still crave understanding of the experiences they have. Being able to tell a story in simple terms - one sentence even - to someone who **gets it**, and know that they will know what you were thinking and feeling, is a critical comfort. An example: “I came around the corner and there was the person with the knife...and it was a kid”.

Perhaps because their own experiences are so direct and personal, we’ve heard some expressions of major respect and excitement for the ideas of people who have taken their law enforcement interests to a detached or academic level. There appear to be stars, whose ideas at least some people are very excited to hear. Some first responders track certain “stars” on online forums/communities, which we need to investigate.

Every single response gets a post-incident review, but responses where people have seen traumatic things, especially involving children, need to be processed on an emotional level. There’s less appetite for talking about practice changes when people are dealing with the aftermath of horror.

Within police departments (perhaps others too), there are very different levels of technical competence and confidence. More than one participant noted a divide by age in police departments, since many people serve a full career from high school graduation to retirement. More tech-interested police officers (“geeks”) sometimes befriend the IT staff and meet with them informally over lunch, the water cooler, etc. The IT staff have more access to directly innovation-related communities of practice, although police conferences are more often attended by senior management.

-----

*\*\*Amy delivered a link to a Reddit AMA on this topic - it’s not yet in this analysis.*