ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT	DATE OF ISSUE	EFFECTIVE DATE	NUMBER
GENERAL ORDER	April 2016	Immediately	**V.5:05**

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES – MOBILE DATA TERMINAL, RADIO AND CELLULAR TELEPHONE**

Index as:
- Cellular Telephones
- Channel Assignments, Radio
- Communications Equipment Failure
- Communications Procedures
- Failsoft System, Radio Failure
- Mobile Computers
- MPS Communications
- Phonetic Alphabet, International
- Plain Radio Language
- Radio Failure Procedures
- Radio Language, Plain
- Radio Procedures
- Telephone Communications
- Ten Signals and Codes
- Unit Response

Accreditation Standards: 6.3.1, 22.1.8, 81.2.4, 81.2.9, 81.3.1, 81.3.3, 83.2.2, CFA 25.09

Cross Reference:
- G.O. II-12, Negligent Damage Loss or Theft of Department Property
- G.O. III-02, Dispatch Authority
- City Administrative Policy 070800, Use of Employee Cellular Phone

Replaces: I.O. V.5:05, Communication Procedures- Mobile Data Terminal, Radio and Cellular (August 28, 2023)

Portions of this Order are exempt from disclosure under Public Records Law of the State of Florida, §19.07(3)(f), F.S.S. since it contains "comprehensive policies or plans compiled by a criminal justice agency pertaining to the mobilization, deployment or tactical operations in responding to emergencies."

This Order consists of the following sections:

I. Purpose
II. Unit Response, Radio and Electronic Procedures
III. Telephone Communications
IV. System Failure
V. Failure of Failsoft System – Emergency Procedure
VI. Emergency Circumstances Contingency Plan
VII. Inoperable Equipment
VIII. Plain Radio Language
IX. Authorized Ten Codes
X. Authorized Codes
XI. International Phonetic Alphabet

I. PURPOSE

A. This Order establishes basic procedures for verbal (radio) and electronic (mobile computer) contact with the Emergency Communications Center. It also authorizes cellular phone use, lists Ten (10) Signals and Codes used by the Department and depicts the International Phonetic Alphabet.

B. The St. Petersburg Police Department operates:

1. Voice radios on the 800 MHz frequency in order to effectively broadcast and receive countywide. The system operates using the “trunking” method, which translates radio frequency digital language into computer format, allowing for more efficient use of a limited number of frequencies, thus eliminating long waits for channel access. The system provides clear communication with minimal “dead spots” quick access time, and the virtual impossibility of a complete system failure.

2. Data communications channels, to and from mobile units, which go directly to the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system through the commercial cellular telephone network. To increase capacity, more than one carrier is under contract for this service.

II. UNIT RESPONSE, RADIO, AND ELECTRONIC PROCEDURES

A. Units will:

1. Check In-Service promptly and ensure:
   a. They are electronically signed on to MPS and that their unit is depicted on the map.
   b. That their mobile and portable radio identifiers are properly entered in the system.
      1) Failure to properly enter the radio identifiers prevents the system from recognizing the radio.
      2) Anytime a new vehicle or portable radio is obtained, the Officer must enter the new identifiers in the MPS log-in.
      3) Officers will ensure the Equipment Room is advised of any changes to mobile or portable radio assignments. The Equipment Room will immediately make the revisions in RMS and CAD-BDM.

2. Keep the dispatcher advised electronically or verbally, as appropriate, of any change in their status (e.g., Busy, In Service, Eating [Subject to Call], and Arrived).

3. Monitor their assigned radio channel and pending calls from CAD on their computer whenever practical.

4. When completing their tour of duty, check “Out of Service” or be placed in the pending mobile status, electronically or verbally, as appropriate, so they can be properly cleared from CAD.

5. Ensure that voice and MPS electronic messages are professional and job-related. These messages are subject to inspection and may be considered a public record.

B. When called by the dispatcher to handle a Priority 1 or 2 event, units will respond first with their unit designator and then with their location. Lower priority events may be acknowledged electronically.

C. When an emergency or routine call requires a multiple-unit response, it is the responsibility of the assigned unit to coordinate the response to maximize the effectiveness of all concerned units.

1. If the assigned unit is prevented from coordinating the response, it is the responsibility of one of the backup units or a supervisor to coordinate responding units.

2. When requesting a perimeter, the primary responding unit will provide the dispatcher with perimeter points. Response coordination may be assumed by a field supervisor but will not be left to the dispatcher.

D. In order to avoid units overriding each other’s radio transmissions, Officers will monitor their radio for current users. After transmitting a message, it is important that Officers listen for an acknowledgment from the dispatcher to ensure the message has been received.

E. Electronic messaging via MPS for routine and non-emergency traffic is preferred. Alternately, if contacting the dispatcher by voice radio, units will call with their unit number, wait for acknowledgment, and then transmit their message unless it is very short (*e.g*., Arrived or In-Service), which may be included in the original transmission.

F. In the interest of officer safety units will verbally or electronically, advise the dispatcher of their intentions when any field stop is made, either traffic or pedestrian, or building check, etc. An acknowledgment should be received from the Emergency Communications Center.

1. When making a traffic stop, after being acknowledged, Officers will verbally give the Emergency Communications Center the vehicle information in the following order:
   a. Tag number and state (if other than Florida);
   b. Vehicle description;
   c. Location;
   d. Number of occupants.

2. The Emergency Communications Center will be verbally advised of the location and other pertinent information during other field stops or enquiries.

G. Report numbers may be issued or sought directly from the CAD system at the Officer's discretion, upon making a determination about the incident after arrival.

1. If sought via voice radio, the Officer requesting an offense number must, in the same broadcast, indicate their status (*e.g.*, Busy, In Service, etc.). If sought electronically, the requesting Officer must clear the call on the computer and update their status.

2. Officers using MPS to enter data will ensure they are using CAD-formatted, verifiable addresses. Use of the “SEND” button is required; *i.e.*, do not use the “Send Without Verify” option.

H. Any change in event title and/or report status (*e.g.*, unfounded, duplicate report, N/R, etc.) must be broadcast to the dispatcher in the same transmission in which the unit checks back in service.

1. All calls that are cleared with a report number must be updated to properly depict the true nature of the call, if different from what was dispatched.

2. The event record will be revised to show the (true) event type in CAD, while the original dispatch event type will be added to the event notes. The original dispatch priority should remain as first dispatched.

I. Units unavailable for a call will check “Busy” and briefly state or use MPS to indicate their business and location.

J. When checking out on a meal break (Eating, Subject to Call), units will verbally advise of their location or enter it directly into MPS, even when eating in the car.

K. Upon activation of a mobile or portable radio emergency alarm, the radio channel will automatically clear and allow direct communication between the particular radio/Officer and the Emergency Communications Center. Once communication between the two has been established and the emergency no longer exists, the Dispatcher will clear the emergency status and open the channel for general use.

L. Units operating a voice radio in an encrypted mode must switch to the unencrypted mode when talking on unencrypted channels or their communications will be unreadable.

M. All requests to alter channel templates must be approved by the Pinellas County Communications Department, and requests to modify encrypted channels must be approved, in writing, by the respective Bureau Assistant Chief.

N. In the interest of officer safety, the Emergency Communications Center will verify the status of all 911 Responders, who are in service and working on a primary radio channel, after ninety (90) minutes without contact.

III. TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

A. The following numbers are to be given to the general public:

1. 911 for emergencies, and

2. 727-893-7780 for non-emergencies.

B. When communicating by telephone, the employee will give their name, rank or position, and payroll number to verify identification.

C. When non-emergency voice communication with the Emergency Communications Center is required, the preferred method is by land-line telephone so as to minimize long radio transmissions and non-critical cell phone use.

D. Descriptions of wanted subjects, stolen cars, etc., may be telephoned or sent via an electronic message to the Emergency Communications Center when an immediate broadcast is not necessary.

1. Mobile units will use the proper administrative telephone number when contacting the Emergency Communications Center, depending upon the nature of their business.

E. Cellular Telephones

1. Department-issued cell phones:

a. Department-issued cell phones are for official use only; it is understood that on rare occasions, they may be used for personal emergencies. If available, and with approval, a second line may be purchased by the assigned user for personal use.

b. Telephone usage:

1) When available land-line telephones are preferred.

2) Voice mail and messages should be checked from a land-line phone.

3) Employees needing to forward their desk phone voice mail to a cellular phone, or other electronic device, will receive approval from their Chain of Command, who will request authorization of this function from ICS. Use of the call forwarding feature is restricted to scheduled working hours only, unless approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

c. Conversations on cell phones are not private since they may be monitored by the public. Communications should be professional and work-related.

d. Employees assigned a cell phone are responsible for its safekeeping. Loss or damage will be reported according to existing procedures. (See G.O. II-12, Negligent Damage Loss or Theft of Department Property)

2. Personal cell phones:

a. Employees may carry a personal cell phone on duty; however,

1) It should not be carried or used in a manner which interferes with the performance of duty; and

2) It should be secured so that it cannot be easily lost, damaged or create a tactical concern.

b. Reimbursement for a lost or damaged personal cell phone will be on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Bureau Assistant Chief.

3. Bureau Commanders will monitor the use of Department phones assigned to their respective Bureaus.

Note: The following sections of this policy are exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Law of the State of Florida §119.07(3)(f), F.S.S., since it contains "…comprehensive polices or plans compiled by a criminal justice agency pertaining to the mobilization, deployment, or tactical operations involved in responding to emergencies."

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VII. INOPERABLE EQUIPMENT

A. If the mobile radio fails, the Emergency Communications Center will be notified, and the vehicle will be taken directly to the Radio Shop with a supervisor's approval. After regular hours, a key-drop is available. A replacement vehicle will be obtained from the Equipment Room.

B. If the portable radio fails, that radio will be returned to the Equipment Room as soon as possible, and the required repair form will be completed. The Equipment Room will provide a replacement portable radio and immediately enter the new information into RMS and CAD-DBM.

C. If a mobile computer failure occurs:

1. During regular business hours, the device should be brought to the Information and Technology Services (ITS) Division for repair or replacement.

2. During non-business hours, the device should be brought to the Equipment Room and a spare computer will be issued. The Equipment Room will notify the ITS Division of the need for repair or reassignment of a computer to the Officer.

VIII. PLAIN RADIO LANGUAGE

A. The Department of Homeland Security has mandated the use of plain radio language for mutual aid scenarios, and it strongly encourages the use of plain language during day-to-day operations as well. Plain language, according to NIMS (National Incident Management System), is the use of common terms and definitions that can be understood by individuals from all responder disciplines. To comply with the DHS mandate, the Department has adopted a plain language preference for radio communications.

B. The use of “10 codes” was established to reduce the volume of radio traffic and add a layer of privacy when communicating. Each agency developed its own proprietary 10-code system, which meant that a code for one agency would have a different meaning for another, causing confusion and potentially hazardous situations during multi-agency events. As technology has advanced, mobile data devices are utilized more frequently, thus reducing radio traffic and making plain language on the radio appropriate in most scenarios. By implementing plain radio language during day-to-day operations, when a major high-stress and multi-agency event occurs, all parties will be able to safely communicate with minimal challenges.

C. Some coded language is commonly understood among law enforcement agencies and, therefore, can be utilized on a regular basis (10-4 (Affirmative), 10-20 (Location), 10-50 (Vehicle Stop), 10-51 (Enroute) and 10-97 (Arrived), for example). Officer safety is the primary goal of radio communications; therefore, some additional coded language is retained to preserve officer safety and confidentiality. These additional codes should be used when appropriate, but plain language can always be substituted.

D. The Department-Approved codes and the plain language substitutions for radio communications are detailed in this Order.

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Anthony Holloway
Chief of Police