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I. Purpose

This Directive establishes the policy and procedures relating to the operation of the Division's radio communications system and related activities.

II. Policy

It is the policy of this Division to operate the radio communications system in a professional manner and in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.) procedures and requirements at all times. This Directive is intended to be used in conjunction with the Standard Operating Procedure for the Communication Section. All Division personnel will utilize plain speech for all radio transmissions. All personnel must remember that both lives and property may depend on the proper use of this system. Every officer engaged in a field assignment will have constant access to radio communications.

III. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Dispatchers

1. Will coordinate the assignment of police units utilizing available information and in accordance with established Division procedures.
2. Requests from field personnel will be honored by the dispatcher when practical and as resources permit. If a request cannot be honored, the dispatcher will advise the requestor.
3. Communications personnel will notify the patrol supervisor of all requests for tactical assistance.
4. Dispatchers will maintain a record of all units' current status.

B. Communications Supervisor

1. Will be responsible for ensuring that proper procedures are followed by all Communications personnel.
2. Will ensure that Communications Section personnel have immediate access to assignment plans that contain tactical dispatching plans.

3. Will ensure that a current listing of telephone numbers of emergency service agencies is immediately available to Communications Section personnel.
 4. Will ensure that there is a schedule for Communication Section staffing ensuring 24 hour coverage.
- C. Patrol Supervisors
1. Will be responsible for ensuring proper radio protocol and conformance with all procedures in this Directive by field personnel. A patrol supervisor or officer-in-charge of an incident has the authority to direct officer-to-officer communications, as necessary.
 2. Will ensure that a lineup and shift assignments are provided to Communications no later than the start of their shift/tour of duty.
- D. All Officers
1. While on duty will keep the Communications Section informed of their current, and all status, changes. Units equipped with mobile data terminals (MDT) will follow the approved policy.
 2. Will, while on duty, use the car/unit number designated for their current assignment when transmitting on the radio.
 3. Officers conducting covert police operations, such as raids, stakeouts, etc., will inform Communications in advance of the assignment and provide the car numbers of the units involved, the name of the officer in charge of the operation and the car number of the communications car, if necessary. Communications will be notified by the officer in charge of the conclusion of the detail.
 4. While off duty will use their Division identification number, when transmitting on the radio. (See also Division Directive, "Take Home Vehicle Program.")
 5. Will, whenever possible, make any necessary communications directly to the County Police. This does NOT relieve officers of the requirements outlined above.

IV. Communications Functions

The Communications Section is responsible for the following activities:

- A. Coordination of Division radio communications, including reception, coordination and dispatching of all radio messages.
- B. Reception and disposition of all telephone calls received by the Section for administrative and operational needs.
- C. Training of Communications Section personnel.
- D. Sending and receiving MILES/NCIC messages.
- E. Coordinating emergency and non-emergency notifications.
- F. Providing 24 hour access to the Maryland Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and NCIC for field officers and after-hours emergency CJIS entries and deletions.
- G. Communications with other agencies via telephone & Police Mutual Aid Radio System (PMARS) and Mutual Aid Radio Network Interface System (MARNIS).
- H. Maintaining or monitoring; Emergency Contact Phone Numbers, Victim Services Directory, Division Roster, the Investigative Services On-call Schedule, Tow Log, Arrest/Detention Log, Holding Area/Cells cameras when in use, Back-up Generator Alarm Panel.

- V. Radio Use
- A. F.C.C. regulations prohibit radio misuse such as profane language, inappropriate transmissions, "covering" other units, etc. Misuse of the radio is a serious and potentially dangerous breach of safety protocol and will not be tolerated. Idle conversation not related to police operations is prohibited as it may interfere with operational transmissions and compromise officer safety. Supervisors are responsible for identifying individuals misusing the radio and those found to be in violation will be subject to disciplinary action.
- B. Messages will be transmitted using brief and concise terms.
- C. Whenever possible and practical, officers will use the MDT or telephone when making routine requests for service instead of consuming radio air-time. Officers will contact Communications on the business line or ask that a dispatcher call them at a number. The emergency (911) number will not be used by officers to contact Communications for routine messages.
- D. Dispatchers and officers will record all necessary information prior to acknowledging any radio message received.
- E. Officers will notify the dispatcher whenever they switch to another channel.
- F. When a dispatcher fails to make contact with any unit not statused out of service, three times (dispatcher must activate the ALERT tone prior to the third attempt), a lookout will be placed after notification is made to the officer's supervisor. The supervisor will take/direct the appropriate action to locate the missing unit and cancel the lookout when the officer is located.
- G. When Communications conducts a sequential welfare check of all units at the request of a supervisor, or when circumstances dictate, units will promptly acknowledge.
- H. In order to alert the dispatcher to their status and the immediate need for acknowledgment, officers calling out on a traffic stop or a suspicious situation will do so by stating their unit number and the nature in their initial call to the dispatcher. The dispatcher will acknowledge the unit and the officer will then provide the location and other pertinent information.
- I. Officers will announce the type of computer check that they need when initially contacting the dispatcher. Once advised to proceed by the dispatcher, the officer will give the necessary information, in the following order:

Driver's License and Wanted Checks

- Last name first, followed by first and middle names
- Race (Asian, Indian, White, Black, etc.; or the accepted MVA numerical race code)
- Sex
- DOB

Vehicle Listing's

- Registration State
- VIN or tag number; if VIN only also provide make of vehicle; if out of state, provide the year and type of tag.
- make and color of vehicle

J. Officer in trouble needs immediate assistance Signal 13 (formerly 10-50) procedure:

1. When a signal 13 (officer in trouble), is broadcasted by a unit, or information is received, the dispatcher will:
 - a. Activate the alert tone,
 - b. Broadcast signal 13 (officer in trouble), advising the units of the location of the call, and
 - c. Acknowledge the first two responding units.
2. As soon as the dispatcher has verified that two units are en route, radio transmission will be restricted. The two acknowledged units responding will advise when they are on the scene and will relay any necessary further information. It is imperative that all other units refrain from using the radio unless the information they wish to provide is vital.
3. If after one minute the situation is unchanged, the dispatcher will activate the alert tone and repeat the location, and state that there is no need to acknowledge.
4. As soon as a signal 13 (officer in trouble) is broadcast, the Montgomery County Police ECC will be notified immediately by Communications personnel and units requested to respond. This does not prohibit any officer that has a Montgomery County portable radio to go direct with their Communications section.
5. To lessen the risk of incorrect information being provided, units, when broadcasting a signal 13 (officer in trouble) will provide their exact location along with their unit number, if at all possible.

VI. General Procedures

- A. One or more police units will be dispatched on all requests for police service warranting the response of a field unit. Nothing will preclude handling a call for service in any other manner which will provide the same level of service. Any call for service may be held at the request of a patrol supervisor.
- B. The following information will be recorded by dispatcher's for every request for service:
 1. Date and time of request
 2. Name and address of complainant, if possible
 3. Type of incident reported
 4. Location of incident reported
 5. Time of dispatch of initial unit
 6. Car/Unit number of primary and backup units (i.e.: 1A1, 2C3, V73, Car 11)
 7. Time of first unit arrival
 8. Time of unit that is handling the incident return to service

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9. Disposition or status of reported incident
 10. In custody/arrest time of any arrested persons
- C. In the event of a non-emergency call for service or information that does not come within the jurisdiction of this Division, the caller will be given the telephone number of the appropriate agency or service.
- D. In the event of a misdirected emergency call for service, the dispatcher receiving the call will obtain all necessary information, document it, notify the appropriate agency of all information and note the time and person notified.
- E. Dispatchers will obtain all relevant information for each call for service. It is important to attempt to gather as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the responding unit(s) and to assist in anticipating conditions which may be encountered at the scene.
- F. Dispatchers will judge the characteristics of each call to determine whether an emergency or non-emergency response is required and then dispatch the call accordingly.
- G. The dispatch of a unit for a call for service will be made without unnecessary delay, unless directed otherwise by Watch Commander or officer in charge (OIC).
1. Emergency or serious “in progress [or] just occurred” incidents will not be delayed. If there are insufficient, or no Park Police units available, or if the response time or distance is excessive, another agency will be requested to respond.
 - a. The first available Park Police unit will be dispatched to assist or take charge of the incident.
 - b. Depending on the location, any of the following agencies may be called to respond;
 - (1) Montgomery County Police
 - (2) Maryland State Police
 - (3) Metro Transit Police
 - (4) Rockville City Police
 - (5) Gaithersburg City Police
 - (6) City of Takoma Park Police
 - (7) United States Park Police
 2. Serious “occurred earlier” incidents will not be delayed unnecessarily. If a dispatch delay of longer than ten (10) minutes, or the arrival of an officer is anticipated to be longer than twenty (20) minutes the caller will be notified.
 3. In the event that a call for service is received and all means to dispatch it have been exhausted, an on-duty patrol supervisor is to be notified and determine a course of action.
- H. All calls from citizens, regarding suggestions and/or complaints, *must* be documented, if they are not reported as a call for service.

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- I. A separate dispatch control number (DCN) will be assigned to each specific call for service.
 - J. Order of dispatch for field units should be based on the closest available whenever possible.
 1. Primary beat car
 2. Adjoining beat car
 3. SOS unit assigned to that area
 4. Supervisor
 - K. Manner of dispatch
 1. All calls for service will be dispatched in the following order:
 - a. Unit assigned
 - b. Location
 - c. Nature of complaint/incident
 - d. Status (in-progress, just occurred, occurred earlier)
 - e. Complainant name and location or anonymous/reluctant
 - f. Response code if a priority call
 - g. Additional facts, **only if** they are pertinent to the unit's response to the call.
 2. The dispatcher will record the primary unit and all back-up units assigned to each call on the appropriate dispatch card.
 - L. Routine/priority responses
 1. Normally, calls for service require a routine response. Certain calls do necessitate a more expeditious response, however, due to the inherent dangers associated with emergency driving, the needs for this type of response must be carefully weighed. All priority calls will be dispatched immediately to the nearest available unit(s). If no units are in service, the closest unit assigned to a less serious call will be assigned.
 2. All priority calls will be preceded by the activation of the alert tone.
 3. A priority response will only be warranted for;
 - a. An in progress call where a life is in danger, or serious injury is likely,
 - b. A felony in progress or just occurred (within five minutes),
 - c. An officer in trouble,
 - d. A domestic assault in progress, or
 - e. A personal injury collision, **except** when fire/rescue or police personnel are already on the scene and determine that the situation does not require an emergency response.
 4. The dispatcher will assign a priority response to any call for service where it is warranted, at the time the call is initially dispatched.

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5. A field supervisor has the authority to change any response classification initially assigned by a dispatcher.
- M. Assignment of Back-up Units
1. Situations requiring a response from more than one unit will be based on the actual or potential presence of one or more of the following factors:
 - a. An assault of an officer
 - b. On-scene arrest for a felony or violent misdemeanor
 - c. Resistance to arrest
 - d. Use of force
 - e. A crime in progress
 - f. A fleeing suspect
 - g. The number and age of the suspects
 2. Assigned back-up units will respond in the same manner as the initially assigned unit, as per Communications SOP.
 3. A Watch Commander or OIC has the authority to change any back-up assignment(s) initially made by the dispatcher or field units.
 4. Nothing prevents an officer on any call from requesting a back-up.
- N. Victim/Witness information
1. Whenever Communications receives witness information regarding a call that is being currently handled, Communications personnel will record the name, address and phone number. The unit assigned to the incident will be advised that there is witness information available. Except in emergency circumstances, the officer will call Communications by phone for this information. If the event has been cleared, a car will be sent to interview the witness and take any further action necessary.
 2. Upon request, dispatchers will advise any complainant/victim/witness of the Division's actions regarding the request for service, including direct service and/or referral to another agency.
- O. Handling/clearing dispatched calls for service
1. Unless otherwise instructed, officers will contact the complainant on all calls for service.
 2. Upon completing a call, officers will clear the call giving a **brief** description of the situation as actually found and the disposition.
- P. The delivery of emergency messages to the public is a legitimate police function, however, this will only be done when a bonafide emergency exists and there is no other prompt method of relaying the message. (See also Division Directive "Notifications")

VII. Anonymous and Reluctant Complaints

- A. Anonymous complainant - a complainant who refuses to give their name, address and/or telephone number.
- B. Reluctant complainant - a complainant who provides their identity but requests that the information be kept confidential. No dispatcher will broadcast the identity of a reluctant complainant over the air. If an officer needs this information, it will be obtained by telephone or MDT

VIII. Lookouts

- A. Lookouts must be obtained whenever possible. A lookout must be recorded. It must be timely, complete and accurate to serve as an investigative aid.
- B. Routine lookouts (i.e., missing person, runaways, PDC hit and run occurred earlier) will be broadcast as time permits and not when any unit is involved in a call of a serious nature.
- C. Types of lookouts
 - 1. Units may place lookouts for individuals wanted for a specific crime or a vehicle when probable cause for arrest without a warrant exists. Lookouts must state the specific crime for which the suspect is wanted and must be associated with a written report.
 - 2. Officer welfare lookouts are permissible but will not be used in lieu of a lookout for an individual who is wanted for a specific crime.
 - 3. Lookouts for crimes where no probable cause for arrest exists (stop and obtain information) may be broadcast but the initiating officer is responsible for clarifying that although the individual is implicated in a particular offense, there is not sufficient information to justify an arrest. The phrase "**no probable cause exists for arrest**" is to be included by the officer when initiating the lookout and by the dispatcher when broadcasting the lookout. All relevant information regarding the crime is to be included in the lookout. This category also includes those crimes for which probable cause exists but an arrest without a warrant cannot be legally made. This type of lookout must be associated with a written report.
 - 4. Traffic lookouts can be made but will be self-canceling at the end of the initiating officer's tour of duty unless a report is being written, as in a hit and run.
 - 5. Stolen vehicle lookouts will be broadcast only under the following conditions:
 - a. Vehicle stolen within two hours of notification to Communications.
 - b. Vehicles that have outstanding or unique characteristics, regardless of when the theft occurred.

All stolen vehicle lookouts will be broadcast as soon as possible.

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- D. Procedures for placing and canceling lookouts
1. Except in exigent circumstances, all officer generated lookouts will be given to Communications by telephone.
 2. All lookouts will be documented by the receiving dispatcher on the appropriate form.
 3. When broadcasting lookouts the name of the officer placing the lookout must be given. Lookouts from other police agencies received by telephone will also indicate this information as well as the agency name. Lookouts received via MILES/NCIC message will be so stated in the broadcast.
 4. Initial lookouts for crimes/incidents which have just occurred but have not been verified by an officer on the scene may be broadcast by the dispatcher and also given to other police agencies. Instead of giving the officer's name as the authority the dispatcher will advise, "This is an unconfirmed lookout from the complainant."
 5. Initiating officers will notify Communications to cancel a lookout whenever the subject is apprehended. All lookouts will be self canceling after 72 hours.
- IX. Requests for Assistance or Service from Other Agencies
- A. Fire/Rescue Services
- Officers will provide the following information, if available, when requesting assistance:
1. Injuries
 - a. Location
 - b. Number of persons injured
 - c. Nature and location of injuries (i.e., gunshot to the chest)
 - d. Whether or not anyone is trapped
 2. Fires, explosions, etc.
 - a. Location
 - b. Intensity of fire (i.e., smoke only, fully involved)
 - c. Type of structure (i.e., barn, house, vehicle)
 - d. Whether or not anyone is trapped
- Officers **must** advise of any hazards likely to affect the response of other emergency units.
- B. Other police agencies
1. All requests for immediate assistance from another police agency will be immediately given to the nearest field unit.

2. Any request for a specific unit/service for an in-progress incident will be relayed to the appropriate on-duty field supervisor.
3. All requests for additional service, not of an immediate nature, will be forwarded to the Assistant Chief, Field Operations Branch.

X. Radio Transmission Restricted (formerly 10-3)

- A. An officer or dispatcher involved in an incident may request restricted radio transmissions whenever a bonafide need exists; only units on the scene of the incident may cancel it.
- B. The dispatcher will activate the alert tone and advise restricted air for a specific unit or a specific location by stating "Attention all units, restricted air is in effect for..." Nothing will preclude the dispatcher from asking if the restricted air can be canceled.
- C. Units returning to service during a restricted air will be acknowledged and advised of the restricted air by the dispatcher.

XI. Communications Recordings

The Communications Section records all radio transmissions and telephone calls to a Voice Print Recorder. The Communications Supervisor, or designee, has access to the voice print system to review communications or make copies as delineated below. The Voice Print recording system has a programmed back up system, it automatically backs up recording to two DVDs. The back-up DVDs will be maintained in Communications in a locked cabinet for a minimum of 90 days.

These recordings assist in the investigation of crimes, to provide documentation of police action and to assist Communications Section personnel in the performance of their duties. *Recordings* are maintained for 90 days. Originals or copies of these tapes will only be given using the following procedures.

- A. Officers authorized to listen to or review a specific *recording* will file a written request on the appropriate form, via their supervisor, to the Management and Technology Commander. Command staff officers conducting internal investigations will submit the request directly to the Management and Technology Commander. In those instances where it is necessary for the investigator to immediately seize the *recording*, he or she may do so in addition to filing a request form with the Management and Technology Commander for documentation purposes. Requests from the State's Attorney's Office or defense attorneys will be in writing and directed to the Management and Technology Commander.
- B. The Management and Technology Commander will review all requests. All approved requests will be forwarded to the Communications Supervisor. Denied requests will be returned to the requestor.
- C. The Communications Supervisor will contact the requestor to either set up an appointment to review the tape or make notification that the copy is ready to be picked up. If a tape review is confidential that fact will be noted on the request and no other persons will be present during the review.

- D. The Communications Section Supervisor will maintain a record of all tapes copied. The completed request form will be returned to and maintained by the Management and Technology Commander. These records will be maintained for a period of five years then destroyed.

**Approved Park Police Document
Signed Original on File**

End of Directive