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1789

COMMUNICATIONS: COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
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PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to define the communications systems utilized by the Albany Police Department Communications Center in the delivery of communications services and to establish guidelines for the use of those systems.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Albany Police Department to utilize various communications systems in order to provide effective communications services to the community it serves.

DEFINITIONS: **Private Branch Exchange (PBX)** – Private Branch Exchange means an in-house telephone switching system used to interconnect both internal and external telephone extensions and networks.

eJusticeNY Integrated Justice Portal - The eJusticeNY Integrated Justice Portal (IJ Portal) provides a single interface through which authorized users can access criminal justice information from a variety of federal, state, and local agency sources. The Portal improves the administration of justice by ensuring that data needed to support criminal justice is available when and where it is needed through a single point of access.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) – Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) refers to software packages that are used to initiate and dispatch public safety calls for service, record call activity, and maintain the status of responding resources in the field.

Capital District Emergency Radio Network (CDERN) – The Capital District Emergency Radio Network (CDERN) is a radio link between law enforcement agencies in the Capital District for instant inter-departmental communication in cases of emergency or needs of rapid assistance.

I. FCC COMPLIANCE

A. The FCC is a regulatory agency established by the Communications Act of 1934. It is charged with managing use of the radio spectrum in a manner that protects

the public interest.

B. Communications services are provided in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

1. The department has current FCC licenses.
2. Current FCC rules and regulations are available at the Communications Center and via the FCC.
3. All employees are expected to be familiar with FCC rules and regulations. Violation of these rules and regulations can result in a tele-communicator failing to exercise self control.
4. The individual, as well as the department, can be fined and licenses can be forfeited for flagrant violations. Should there be a violation, it is important that it be handled quickly, by the Communications lieutenant, so it is necessary that he/she be first verbally appraised, then in writing of the violation.
5. If personnel receive a call indicating that there has been a violation, they shall notify the supervisor/senior dispatcher right away, and the supervisor/senior dispatcher shall then notify the Communications lieutenant.
6. Some of the FCC rules and regulations that every employee should be aware of are:
 - a. No foul or profane language permitted;
 - b. Use of first names or nicknames is prohibited;
 - c. Transmissions for private business are prohibited;
 - d. Messages are to be kept brief;
 - e. All times are to be accurate;
 - f. Records shall be maintained and kept up to date; and
 - g. All licenses shall be current and posted in a place where they may be easily seen.
7. The above does not cover every situation covered by FCC rules and regulations. It shall, however, cover many basic and general situations.
8. A serious and prosecutable violation is deliberately interfering with a distress call.
9. If questions arise with regard to any procedures, rules, or regulations, personnel shall contact the Communications lieutenant or Communications supervisor for clarification.
10. All radio communications are licensed through the FCC.
11. Each transmitter, base, mobile, and portable is licensed and is considered a separate station.

II. COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH (CAD)

A. The Communications Center utilizes a CAD system for dispatching. Communications personnel shall abide by the following:

1. Dispatchers shall be trained to efficiently employ the CAD system to handle calls for service.
2. Dispatchers shall familiarize themselves with the function codes, call

- types, clearance codes, and CAD operations.
3. Communications personnel shall obtain as much information as possible when receiving calls for service.
 4. Communications personnel shall handle all calls in a polite and professional manner.
 5. Dispatchers shall summarize and disseminate the information from the CAD ticket to the units on the street.
 - a. Information shall be transmitted from communications personnel to field units via radio.
 - b. Priority three (3) calls may also be transmitted to field units through CAD, via mobile data terminals (MDT), as outlined in the Mobile Client User Guide.
 6. The following information shall be obtained and recorded for each request for service or self-initiated activity:
 - a. Incident number;
 - b. Date and time of request;
 - c. Name, address, and phone number of complainant, if possible;
 - d. Type of incident reported;
 - e. Location of incident reported;
 - f. Identification of officer(s) assigned as primary and backup;
 - g. Time of dispatch;
 - h. Time of officer arrival;
 - i. Time of officer return to service; and
 - j. Disposition of officer return to service.

B. In Progress Calls:

1. For all in progress calls, the call taker should remain on the line with the caller if it is safe to do so.
2. The call taker shall ascertain the location of the incident, a description of what is occurring, the description of the suspect(s), direction of travel, etc.
3. The call taker shall gather as much information as possible and put that information into the CAD call ticket so that it may be disseminated to the responding units in the field.

C. Dispatch Cards:

1. In the event the CAD system fails or has to be shut down for an extended period of time, dispatch cards are available for use to dispatch and keep track of calls for service.
2. A dispatch card shall be used for all cases when a unit has been dispatched.
3. When the CAD system is restored to service, the supervisor shall designate one or more communications personnel to enter the information from the dispatch cards into CAD, which shall allow the most complete retention of the call information.
4. Incident numbers of the individual calls shall only be assigned to the calls after they are entered into the CAD system from the dispatch cards.

- Incident numbers shall be given out by communications personnel only after the CAD system is up and running.
5. Dispatching cards shall include the shield number of the call taker and the shield number of the dispatcher assigning the call to a unit.
 6. The dispatching card shall not be completed until after the last unit is complete with the call.
 7. The dispatching cards shall be maintained for a period of thirty (30) days after the call is entered into the CAD system.

III. CAPITAL DISTRICT EMERGENCY RADIO NETWORK (CDERN)

- A. CDERN, as it is commonly known, is to be used for emergency notice or assistance. Its purpose is to provide a more efficient and dependable line of communication between law enforcement agencies, with the end result being a higher quality of law enforcement and public assistance.
 1. The third radio console that is not in use must be left at a volume that can be heard at all times.
- B. Each participating agency must have a base station of any manufacture with the following capabilities:
 - a. The capability of operation (transmitting and receiving) on the [REDACTED]
 - b. The power to activate the repeater station located on [REDACTED]
 - c. The base station must be adjusted so it cannot be completely muted. This station must be left at a volume that can be heard at all times.
- C. When acting in an emergency situation, participating agencies are allowed to patch mobile radio units into the network for broadcast (depending on individual agency capabilities) which shall be controlled by department Communications personnel.
- D. There shall be a vocal test via radio broadcast roll call of CDERN participants, conducted daily at [REDACTED]
 1. Roll call shall be performed on a rotating basis with each member agency responsible for conducting roll call over a two (2) week period.
 - a. Member agencies as listed on the roll call:
 - i. Albany Police Department;
 - ii. Albany County Sheriff's Office;
 - iii. Bethlehem Police Department;
 - iv. State Police Capital;
 - v. State Police Communications Section;
 - vi. Coeymans Police Department;
 - vii. Colonie Police Department;
 - viii. East Greenbush Police Department;
 - ix. Guilderland Police Department;

- x. Menands Police Department;
- xi. Rensselaer Police Department;
- xii. Rotterdam Police Department;
- xiii. Saratoga County Sheriff's Office;
- xiv. State University at Albany Police Department;
- xv. State Police Thruway; and
- xvi. Troy Police Department.

- 2. Roll call period begins on a Monday and should be conducted at [REDACTED] hours.
- 3. Roll call may be delayed if necessary by the agency conducting the roll call, however it is suggested that if a roll call is to be delayed a brief message be broadcast by the dispatcher indicating that there shall be a delay.
- 4. Local agency emergency radio traffic shall take priority over roll call (as needed).
- 5. The verbal broadcast shall be given as follows:
 - a. (Call Sign and Department Name) [REDACTED]
 - b. Call each department in alphabetical order.
 - c. Each department base station shall acknowledge when called.
 - d. If a department does not respond when called, make a note and continue roll call of other departments.
 - e. When you finish the roll call, go back and re-call the department(s) that failed to acknowledge and make note of any department that still does not acknowledge.
 - f. Sign off announcing [REDACTED] (give time and dispatcher identification).
 - g. A failure to respond may indicate a problem with a department's radio equipment. After signing off, the roll calling agency must notify any agency not responding to the roll call (no reply) of possible equipment failure.
- 6. On the last day of the department's roll call duty period, it is suggested that dispatcher doing the roll call contacts the department who shall be taking over the following day as a reminder.

E. The agency licensing the repeater shall be responsible for hourly station identification (station checks), as required by FCC regulations. Other than the daily test, acknowledgments shall be given with the agencies' individual identifier on point transmissions only.

F. The following guidelines shall apply when utilizing CDERN:

- 1. Immediate crime broadcasts are to be updated (crimes in progress, just occurring) as soon as information becomes available, with the intention of keeping other agencies informed of the investigation and assisting with speedy apprehension of the perpetrator(s).
- 2. CDERN does not, in any way, supersede the eJusticeNY IJ Portal for crime broadcasts, as required by Section 221 of the New York State Executive Law. Any and all teletypes required shall be sent if an arrest is

not made.

3. CDERN shall not be used for setting up non-emergency relays.
 - a. Such information between departments should use any previously existing means, by telephone or cross monitoring.
 - b. Exceptions may be allowed in case of public utility failure.
4. CDERN can be used by any department to notify another department concerned with an emergency about the availability of personnel and/or equipment. This includes:
 - a. Police, fire, and emergency medical resources/equipment; and
 - b. Any special equipment which may be useful.
 - i. County boundaries govern where fire equipment can go, (mutual aid concerns) and requests must come through the County Fire Coordinators.
- G. Any agency receiving calls from news media concerning any emergency in progress shall refer the caller to the agency in command of the particular incident or to one of the stations.
- H. CDERN may be utilized for, but shall not be limited solely to use in the following types of incidents:
 1. Felonious crimes (assault, robbery, homicide, etc.);
 2. Stolen vehicles (definite information, visual contact, etc.);
 3. Prison breach or escape;
 4. Emergency needs of personnel & equipment (police, fire, E.M.S.);
 5. Officers needing assistance;
 6. All alert alarms from eJusticeNY IJ Portal;
 7. Hit and run traffic accidents;
 8. Major disaster (fires, aircraft crash, effected road closing);
 9. This policy does not, in any way, restrict the type of emergency radio transmissions which may be used over CDERN.

IV. RADIO SYSTEM CONSOLES:

- A. The City of Albany's radio system consists of [REDACTED]
 1. All radios that are issued to any city agency (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services [EMS], Department of Parks, Department of General Services [DGS], etc.) shall have both sites installed.
 2. This information assists personnel in understanding procedures for operating the portable and mobile radios in the system.
- B. The radio console consists of fifteen [REDACTED] and the capability of speaking on any of the fifteen [REDACTED] at any time. Units and stations can be cross-patched to several other agencies who currently operate on, not only the Capital District Radio Network (CDERN), but also to other police personnel who are presently using our network.

- C. It is possible to cross-patch a police unit/station with a fire unit and also with a field unit all at the same time. This is called trunking and is part of the system used by the Communications Center.
- D. All transmissions over the radio consoles, on all sub-fleets, are put on tape for future reference.
- E. Units are able to talk to other units, their own station, other stations, as well as to each other, but always under the control of the radio operator.
 - 1. Units must request to speak to any of the above and shall not begin transmitting unless told to do so by the dispatcher. The only exception to this rule is:
 - a. When a sub-fleet has been selected for use by either officers or detectives for a detail. They shall have capability of speaking directly to each other without going through the dispatcher.
 - b. Complete control of the radio shall be maintained at all times.
- F. The Communications Center radio consoles are equipped with push-to-talk buttons, as well as floor pedals. Volume levels are placed at a level that can be heard by the dispatcher but not to interfere with others working in close proximity to the radio system.
 - 1. Prior to dispatching personnel shall make sure that the airwaves are clear. More than one unit can transmit at the same time but the transmission shall be received garbled by the radio operator.
 - 2. The radio operator can override all other units by pressing the transmitting control and keeping it depressed during the whole transmission.
 - a. Communications personnel shall then speak in a normal tone and level.
 - b. Too loud, too short, too close or too far away distorts the transmission.
 - 3. Communications personnel shall always listen for a vocal acknowledgement confirming that the receiver has copied it fully.
 - 4. Emergency messages can be consolidated and should be repeated to avoid error.

V. RADIO SYSTEM FLEETING

A. Primary System #1:

- 1. [REDACTED]
- 2. [REDACTED]
- 3. [REDACTED]
- 4. [REDACTED]
- 5. [REDACTED]
- 6. [REDACTED]

B. Backup System # 2:

1. [REDACTED]
2. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED]
4. [REDACTED]
5. [REDACTED]
6. [REDACTED]

C. Primary Fleet Police System # 3:

1. [REDACTED]
2. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED]
4. [REDACTED]
5. [REDACTED]
6. [REDACTED]
7. [REDACTED]
8. [REDACTED]
9. [REDACTED]
10. [REDACTED]
11. [REDACTED]
12. [REDACTED]
13. [REDACTED]
14. [REDACTED]
15. [REDACTED]

D. Backup Police System # 4:

1. [REDACTED]
2. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED]
4. [REDACTED]
5. [REDACTED]
6. [REDACTED]
7. [REDACTED]
8. [REDACTED]
9. [REDACTED]
10. [REDACTED]
11. [REDACTED]
12. [REDACTED]
13. [REDACTED]
14. [REDACTED]
15. [REDACTED]

E. Use of Specific Radio Sub-Fleet for Training:

1. Sub-fleet [REDACTED] has been designed as the training channel. This shall be used for any training purpose to include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. Canine units training their own or other department's canines;
 - b. Any joint training with other departments which might warrant having a separate channel;
 - c. Any recruit training;
 - d. Any emergency services team training; and
 - e. Any other needs which might arise.
2. Sub-fleet 1-D shall be designated by the Communications Center prior to the use, and the Communications Center shall be notified of the nature of the training and whether or not monitoring shall be necessary to ensure the safety of all involved.
 3. Prior to the commencement of the training, the senior personnel using the sub-fleet for training shall make an announcement over the radio that this is the beginning of a training exercise. He/she shall then ensure that every twenty [REDACTED] that an announcement is made over the sub-fleet that the broadcasts going over this airway are part of a training exercise.

VI. RADIO SYSTEM COMPONENTS

A. Department Vehicle Radio Unit:

1. All sworn police officer/detective vehicles are equipped with multichannel radio's capable of two-way communication that gives the operator the ability to both listen and make transmissions, and allows the Communications Center to maintain continuous two-way communications with the officers while in their police vehicles.
2. All officers should become familiar with the functions of the mobile radios in each unit. The following features are located on each mobile radio unit:
 - a. The on/off switch is located out of sight, under the bottom right side of the control unit.
 - b. The display (LCD) is used as a power indicator and also to show proper operator.
 - c. The mode rocker switch is used to scroll through the list of modes programmed in the individual unit.
 - d. The volume rocker controls volume settings for radio reception.
 - e. When the home button is depressed, the radio automatically goes to the main operation mode channel.
 - f. The dim button adjusts the brightness of the display.
 - g. The channel scan feature allows an individual officer to monitor a previously selected channel while still listening to the main channel frequency.
 - h. An automatic search mode activates upon the unit moving out of range of a radio site.
 - i. Throughout the City of Albany, "dead spots" do exist. These are areas where radio transmissions and/or reception is not, for some reason or another, as clear or strong as other areas. The search function should assist in these areas.

i. [REDACTED]

button. This calls attention to your individual unit and the dispatcher shall act appropriately.

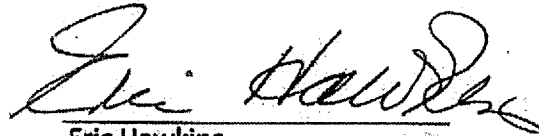
- i. Dispatchers shall attempt to make contact.
- ii. If contact is not made, officers shall be sent to the field personnel's last known location.
- iii. All attempts shall continue until contact is made.
- iv. [REDACTED]

B. Portable Radio Unit:

1. All sworn police officer/detectives are issued portable multichannel radio's capable of two-way operation with shoulder microphones' that gives the operator the ability to both listen and make transmissions and allows the Communications Center to maintain continuous two-way communications with the officers on duty even when away from their police vehicles.
2. Portable radio units are also equipped with an [REDACTED]. This calls attention to the field personnel who are assigned that specific portable number.
 - a. Dispatchers shall attempt to make contact.
 - b. If contact is not made, officers shall be sent to the field personnel's last known location.
 - c. All attempts shall continue until contact is made.
 - d. [REDACTED]
3. At times, radio frequencies go down and the main frequency channel needs to be changed to an alternate channel. Personnel shall utilize the Portable Radio Information Bulletin as a resource for switching their portable radio to the designated frequency.
4. Portable Radio Unit Repair Procedures:
 - a. Officers who determine that their issued portable radio is in need of repair shall notify the Communications Center.
 - b. Portable radio units that are brought to the Communications Center for repair shall be handled by Communications personnel in the following manner:
 - i. The portable radio unit shall be turned into Communications personnel and a loaner portable radio unit shall be issued to the officer/detective to use while the original is repaired.
 - ii. Communications personnel shall complete the necessary paperwork to be sent to Pittsfield Communication, along with the portable in need of repair. A copy of the repair paperwork shall be filed with Communications.

VII. Alternative Methods of Communication

- A.** The department issues cell phones to various personnel within the department and authorizes use of such cell phones by designated personnel in the performance of their duties.
- B.** Personal cell phones are also authorized for use while on-duty; however the department radio system shall be the primary method of communication.
 - 1.** Personal cell phones may be used under the following conditions:
 - a.** When communication via police radio is not possible;
 - b.** When there is a need for confidentiality;
 - c.** To speak to an involved party on a call (e.g. anonymous complainant, victim, witness, etc.); and
 - d.** Any other circumstance under which communication via the department radio system is not practicable or safe.



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