



Section 4/200 ♦ Communications		
4 / 210	Communications Unit	11/27/95 Rev. 08/20/04
Accreditation Standards	55.2.1/55.2.6/81.1.2/81.2.1/81.2.2/81.2.3/ 81.2.4/81.2.5/81.2.6/81.2.8/81.2.9/81.2.11/ 81.2.12/81.2.13/81.3.1/81.3.2/81.3.3/82.1.7 82.2.2	

4 / 210.05 PURPOSE

To establish procedures to provide for effective and efficient use of the police radio as well as tape requests and other matters relating to the Communications Unit.

4 / 210.10 POLICY

The Communications Unit will provide a 24-hour/daily-communication network for effective operational use. Radio communications procedures will be consistent with those regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

4 / 210.15 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Communications Unit receives requests for service from citizens and businesses; dispatches officers expeditiously and provides vital information to the officers. The police radio is a primary link that binds the elements of the Police Department into a successful operation.

4 / 210.20 ADMINISTRATION

The Communications Unit of the Police Department is entrusted with the following duties:

- Handling of MILES/NCIC requests.
- Coordinating emergency/non-emergency telephone and radio calls.
- Coordination and control of departmental radio communications, to include dispatching for all radio traffic.
- Classification of all telephone calls.
- Classification of calls for service.
- Providing 24 hour access to Maryland CJIS, NCIC, Prince George's County computer information and the Laurel Police Department's CADIS system for the operational units in the field.
- May serve as reception for the Police Department; including both walk-in visitors to the Department and incoming telephone calls.
- Operating and monitoring the radio system in accordance with FCC regulations, as well as in accordance with department regulations.

Responsibilities: The Communications Unit responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Maintenance of emergency contact lists for stores, churches, buildings, rental properties, etc., within the City of Laurel. This listing must be continually updated with new listings and changes to existing listings. Contact information is to be verified on an annual basis in order to maintain current information.
- The Communications Unit receives incoming telephone calls, obtains essential information from the caller, evaluates the situation and initiates appropriate action or response.
- Communications Specialists within the unit have the responsibility and authority to utilize available patrol personnel. To properly do so, Communications Specialists must constantly monitor the patrol assignment of each active unit, the location of each unit and the number of units necessary to quickly and safely provide delivery of appropriate service. A Patrol Supervisor may, however, override an assignment dispatched by the Communications Unit.
- The Communications Specialist on duty shall maintain an enclosed and secure area to ensure that there are no distractions or inappropriate dissemination of police information. (See General Order 4 / 109.20)
- Police Communications Specialists should demonstrate the ability and knowledge necessary to handle critical incidents. This may include keeping control of a vehicle pursuit, hostage / barricade situations, Signal 13, or other such incidents.

4 / 210.25 OPERATIONS

FCC - It shall be the responsibility of the agency holding the radio license to assure that the system is operated in accordance with the FCC rules and regulations. FCC requires that any person operating a radio transmitter be familiar with those rules and regulations. A copy of those rules is required to be on file at the facility.

False calls or false distress signals, superfluous or unidentified communications, obscene/profane language or the transmission of unassigned radio unit members are prohibited.

Information regarding a subject's criminal history is not to be disseminated on the radio network.

The agency utilizes a 24-hour/day telephone number for receipt of emergency calls. The numbers of (301) 725-3000 through (301) 725-3002 accesses the police emergency lines for the Laurel Police Department. Charges for collect calls or operator assisted calls or any other type of incoming call received on emergency lines which are charged to the department, are to be accepted. Persons calling with a non-emergency should be directed to use a non-emergency line so as to free the dedicated emergency lines for incoming emergency calls.

4 / 210.30 RADIO PROCEDURES

There exists a two-way radio system that establishes the means to provide constant communications between patrol officers and the Communications Center. The purpose of this is to permit for the exchange of information, for making requests, receiving calls for service and for any matter involving it. The radio is to be manned 24 hours each day. If the radio is left unmanned, an alternate method of radio communications is to be established. This may be through the use of mobile command or some other acceptable substitute.

Operational Procedures:

- Patrol units and other officers engaged in assignments shall maintain constant radio communications at all times during their shift.
- Transmissions will be as clear, calm and controlled as possible. Brevity of transmissions is also important.
- All Communications Specialists and Officers shall use the Laurel Police Department's 10-Code system, however, plain English is also encouraged during radio transmissions to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding.
- Professionalism is to be maintained by both Communications and Field Personnel. Slang and unnecessary phrases are not to be verbalized on the Police Radio.
- All transmissions will be restricted to police business only.
- Background noise shall be minimized before initiating or responding to a transmission, if possible.
- Since many activities may be occurring concurrently, immediate responses to a transmission may not always be possible.
- Only pertinent information shall be transmitted to minimize unnecessary radio usage.
- If possible refrain from transmitting near other radios, in order to prevent feedback.
- Deliberate covering or clicking to cover another unit is prohibited.
- Officers shall make note of the information provided in dispatches to avoid repeat broadcasts.

- Officers are recommended to have a city map book on hand to minimize radio transmissions.
- Squad supervisors shall maintain radio traffic and take appropriate action to deal with officers who consistently ask for repeated transmissions of previously acknowledged calls.
- The CAD system operates by assigning calls to units as directed by the approval of the Chief of Police. Units assigned to beats shall be assigned calls in that beat whenever possible. A supervisor may override an assignment.
- The Department shall prescribe response assignments relating to the nature of calls, number of units to respond to calls, the priority of calls, the availability of units and the number of calls holding at that time.
- Whenever possible, records checks, notifications or any other messages should be transmitted by telephone in order to minimize radio traffic.
- Units will be identified on the radio by use of that member's Unit Number; i.e.: A-10, C-4, O-9, etc. If a Unit is off-duty, that unit will be identified by his/her off-duty number; i.e.: ID1070, ID2155, ID3250, etc. (Administrative Manual, Section 2; Unit ID System)
- Requests by patrol personnel that Communications make telephone notifications shall be minimized. If feasible, persons should be directed or transported to a telephone to make any necessary arrangements personally.

Inter - agency Communications

All inter-agency communications being handled via police radios should adhere to the previous radio operational setup.

4 / 210.35 RECORDING PROCEDURES-COMPUTER

The CAD computer system permits a permanent record of calls for service and incidents initiated by officers. All CAD calls include the following information:

- ♦ Date and time
- ♦ CAD / Control number
- ♦ Name and address of complainant
- ♦ Type of incident reported
- ♦ Location of incident
- ♦ Phone / contact number for complainant
- ♦ Officer / officers dispatched to the call.
- ♦ Time of dispatch
- ♦ Time of arrival on call
- ♦ Time of officers' return to service
- ♦ Disposition of the call
- ♦ Narrative information pertaining to the call

All calls for service are to be handled in a timely manner, utilizing available units in the patrol area of the calls. Supervisor Units, SOD or dedicated K-9 Units may be

utilized as back-up on calls to prevent units from leaving their Beat/Sector.

Call management shall be handled as shown below:

- All calls where injury or property are at risk shall be dispatched immediately.
- Vehicle lock-outs, minor report calls, minor calls for service may be held for assignment to Beat or Sector cars. If such is the case, the Complainant shall be notified of the delay and an approximate waiting time.
- If calls of report type nature are held for more than ten (10) minutes, the Patrol Supervisor is to be notified with his/her response noted in the narrative of the call.
- Units serving as back-up on traffic stops shall remain in service, available for calls.
- Units on minor calls for service should be reassigned to priority calls if no other unit is available for service.
- Two (2) units will be assigned to Emergency/Officer Safety calls unless otherwise directed by the Supervisor.
- Station calls shall be handled by Beat #2 car whenever possible.

Alarms received shall be entered into the CAD system for police response once the following information is received:

- ♦ Location
- ♦ Complaint information
- ♦ Nature of the alarm
- ♦ Call back / Contact number
- ♦ Location from which the alarm is originating
- ♦ Whether the alarm is audible or silent

Any call that does not require the presence of the police, but is informational in nature, it is to be documented. This may be done by entering as a CAD call, by posting the information in Roll Call, or by completing an Intelligence Report for forwarding to CID/SEU.

4 / 210.40 CAD COMMUNICATIONS

The CAD system operates by assigning calls for service to units as directed / approved by the Support Services Division Commander of the Police Department. Units assigned to a particular geographical beat shall be assigned to calls in that beat area whenever possible. Additional units may be sent to assist if available.

Units will be assigned the responsibility of a particular Beat/Sector by the Shift Supervisor on a daily basis. Officers are to patrol their Beats and Sectors unless required to leave on official business, special assignments or assigned calls.

The agency shall make response assignments based on the following considerations:

- ♦ Nature of the call
- ♦ Number of units needed to respond to the call
- ♦ Priority nature of the call
- ♦ Status of the units working

CAD also makes recommendation as to which calls require the response of a Supervisor. The Supervisor, however, is free to respond to any calls whether dispatched or not. The Supervisor is also authorized to assign any units to a call.

Units dispatched to calls or assignments are to advise Communications of their arrival on the scene, and to advise any changes in the location of the assignment. The final disposition is to be provided by the assigned unit upon the completion of the call.

Patrol units are to go in service over the air using their beat assignments for that shift. The identifier board in Communications will display identification number of the radio being utilized by the last unit to make a radio transmission. Each radio has a unique identification number.

All Communications personnel have immediate access to the following resources in Communications:

- Duty roster with all personnel including names, home telephone numbers, pager number (if applicable), unit number, voice mail number, radio identification number and vehicle number.
- CAD system will display the officer in charge as well as the status of the units that are working.
- City maps and maps for neighboring jurisdictions.
- Agency lists of phone numbers for those jurisdictions that are in close proximity to the Laurel area.
- Communications procedures for handling emergency situations.

All calls for service are handled through the Communications Unit. The Unit has access to other law enforcement agencies and related services. Upon receipt of the information from the caller, this information is entered into the CAD system. The call is assigned a priority and CAD will assign units. Classification and priority is handled jointly by both CAD and through the training of the call-taker under Communications guidelines. All assignments made by CAD can be overridden by the call-taker.

Inter-agency contacts may be limited to telephone contact. When a telephone call for service is received, which must be referred to another agency, the caller may be given the correct number of the proper agency. If time and

communications traffic permits, the information may be obtained and forwarded to the correct agency by Communications personnel.

Any items received by mail may be redirected as soon as possible to the correct agency. Emergency notifications are defined as those regarding death or accident that require immediate response or contact by an individual. Such requests made by other agencies may be dispatched once the pertinent information is entered into CAD. Courtesy contacts or notifications requested by other agencies may be dispatched after being entered into CAD when manpower and Communications traffic permits.

4 / 210.45 RECORDER / TAPE PROCEDURES

All telephone and radio transmissions are recorded on a computerized system that allows for immediate playback and continuous recording. These transmissions are recorded on a disk, which will be changed approximately every 90 days. The only person authorized to remove the disk or make this change is the Chief Police Communications Specialist (CPCS). These disks, as well as any tapes remaining from the previous recording system are retained within a locked cabinet for a period of not less than 30 days. The disks are available for review by the Communications Supervisor, as well as for use by that Supervisor for the training of divisional personnel.

Disks may be held separately for any of the following reasons:

- ◆ Training use
- ◆ Investigation purposes
- ◆ Administrative review
- ◆ Court purposes
- ◆ Disciplinary purposes

Any officer, who requires a copy of a transmission or of a portion thereof, should direct a memo to their Supervisor outlining the details of the request.

Upon review by the Supervisor, the request is to be forwarded to the CPCS or his/her designee. The memo and accompanying information regarding the particular transmission will be logged by the CPCS as to the disk or tape the transmission is recorded on, the location of the disk or tape and the and the date the copy is needed.

If a disk or tape is needed as evidence, it should be noted in the request. The disk or tape is to be kept in Evidence / Property Storage where there can be no question of tampering.

4 / 210.50 NCIC / NETWORK ACCESSIBILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Agency shall have access to both the NCIC and MILES computer networks. There will also be access to the Prince George's County computer system. All Communications personnel shall be MILES/NCIC certified in order to perform criminal information checks. These systems are available via the Communications Section 24 hours per day.

Officer responsibilities will include:

- The complete and accurate completion of forms/checklists prior to submission to Communications for entry.
- The prompt submission of supplemental reports for the cancellation of entries.
- Upon completion of Stolen Tag Reports, Officers will instruct victim to cancel remaining tag if only one tag has been stolen. This notification will be included in written form in Incident Report. Officers will also provide expiration date of tags and number of tags when stolen.

Communications Personnel responsibilities:

- Timely validation procedures as necessary for each item still active. These validations/verifications will be performed in compliance with Departmental Directives and General Orders. A follow-up report is to be written for each contact made.
- If property is reported as recovered by the victim, the item shall be removed from NCIC immediately.
- If a missing person is reported as having returned, said individual should be removed from the Missing Person File immediately. If still missing, any additional information received shall be added to the Missing Person Entry.
- A check is to be made with District Court to ascertain if a particular Warrant is still active. If a Warrant is no longer active, it is to be removed from MILES/NCIC and the Warrant is to be returned to District Court. If the Warrant is still active, the complainant/victim is to be contacted in order to ascertain whether he/she still wishes to prosecute the wanted person should they be apprehended. If the complainant/victim no longer wishes to prosecute, the State's Attorney's Office should be contacted and under their direction, the entry may be deleted from MILES and/or NCIC. If the complainant/victim still wishes to prosecute, a complete criminal history record is made on the wanted person and any additional information shall be added to the Wanted Person entry. A follow-up report is written and the Criminal History information is destroyed.

- Maintain all necessary forms in proper case folder.

4 / 210.55 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The Communications room is off limits to police personnel not assigned to that unit, with the exception of a Shift Supervisor. Bullet resistant glass is in place in the front lobby area for personnel safety. There are also security cameras in place in Communications that view various areas within the station.

The Agency has continuous emergency communications capability through a backup generator. This system should be checked on a monthly basis, as should the radio equipment, by the CPCS or his/her designee. These checks must be logged as to the date performed and the outcome of the check, as well as the discovery of any problem or malfunction. Problems should be directed to the Division Supervisor for his/her attention.

The non-emergency calls are those received on lines (301) 498-0092 through (301) 498-0094. Police emergency lines are designated as (301) 725-3000 through (301) 725-3002.

To facilitate mutual aid assistance in emergencies, the following forms of communications are in place and are to be utilized in the manners outlined as follows:

- Telephone speed-dialing: Due to the geographic location of the City of Laurel, in close proximity to three (3) adjoining counties and the Interstate highways, it may be necessary to reroute calls to the proper jurisdiction. Requests for information or assistance may also be made via these lines.

- Cross monitoring of outside agency radio frequencies: The Laurel City Communications Unit routinely monitors neighboring jurisdictions' radio traffic, as those jurisdictions routinely monitor the radio traffic of the City of Laurel.

Mutual cooperation with these agencies provides for the directing of audible communications during emergency situations and responses, by monitoring of the frequencies of those agencies.

- By agreement with the P.G. County "911" Emergency Center, all "911" police emergency calls for the City of Laurel jurisdiction are computer forwarded to the Laurel Police Communications Unit and are answered by this agency. These calls are forwarded on the Police Department's (301) 725-3000 lines that are also published as direct dial emergency police assistance phone numbers.

END OF ORDER