


<p><b>Billerica Police Department</b></p> 	<p><b>POLICY NUMBER</b> PDS-10</p>	<p><b>PAGES</b> 3</p>	<p><b>EFFECTIVE</b> 11/6/23</p>
	<p><b>Accreditation Standards:</b> None</p> <p><b>General Orders:</b></p>		
<p><b>Emergency Rule</b></p>			

## Policy

In situations of unplanned extreme system overload in the communication center, the Emergency Rule can be activated, which may suspend or alter normal calltaking and/or dispatch procedures.

## Purpose

To ensure that PSTs complete the minimum requirements for a safe and effective response during situations of extreme system overload.

## Conditions for Activation

The following are examples of acceptable conditions to initiate the Emergency Rule:

- Mass Casualty Incidents (while both phone and radio traffic are extreme)
- Extreme weather conditions
- Emergency situations profoundly affecting normal operations of the communication center secondary to an acute event
- Unexpected major technical system failure (i.e., CAD, 911 phone system, etc.)

## Procedure

### I. Authorization

- a. Activation of the Emergency Rule will be made by the supervisor or shift lead on duty at the time.
- b. If no supervisor or lead is available, the most senior person on duty will make the determination.

### II. Activation Procedures

- a. The individual activating the Emergency Rule must:
  - i. Immediately document the time of activation and which normal operating procedures will be suspended/alterd.
  - ii. Notify appropriate administrative and emergency operations management of the activation.

- b. If the event impacts the CAD or workstation, adjust each workstation's ProQA® to stand-alone mode or utilize guide cards.
- c. PST actions when activation occurs:
  - i. The PST should make every attempt to complete the interrogation sequence. At a minimum enough of an interrogation must be completed to correctly assign a Determinant Code.
  - ii. The PST will release the caller with the following statement (or something similar):
    - 1. Medical: "I need to hang up now to take another call. The paramedics have been notified. If s/he gets worse in any way, call us back immediately."
    - 2. The PST must enter a notation (in ProQA) on events where the Emergency Rule was applied.

### **III. Other Activities Approved to Suspend/Alter**

- a. Any of the following activities can be selected and applied to the Emergency Rule activation:
  - Call back additional personnel
  - Suspend breaks/lunches
  - Lower priority of answering business lines
  - Lower priority of answering other nonemergency phones
  - Suspend nonemergency radio channels activity
  - Suspend responding to media inquires
  - Abbreviate Post-Dispatch Instructions (PDIs) where appropriate
  - Suspend PDIs/PAls
  - Suspend answering emergency calls (if another PSAP can take over 911 calls)
  - Prioritize radio traffic

### **IV. Communicating Suspended Activities**

- a. When the Emergency Rule is activated it shall be communicated to all personnel in the center and the Officer in Charge of the Shift.

### **V. Periodic Reassessment During Activation**

- a. The condition-causing event shall be reassessed approximately every 30 minutes. If applicable:
  - i. Adjust the suspended/altered activities accordingly
  - ii. Document the time and list of adjustments made in operation activities.

## **VI. Returning to Normal Operations**

- a. Deactivation of the Emergency Rule will be made by the on-duty supervisor.
- b. Announce to all dispatch personnel that the Emergency Rule procedures have been discontinued.
- c. Take the necessary actions to return the communication center to standard operations.
- d. Release additional personnel that were called in to assist.
- e. Remove any posted Emergency Rule procedures.
- f. Document the time normal operations resumed.

## **VII. Post-Activation Activities**

- a. If ProQA stand-alone activation occurred, return workstations to interface with the CAD and initiate transferring appropriate ProQA data from each workstation to CAD.
- b. Request a communications representative participate in (and if possible, attend) the post-incident evaluation if conducted by the response agency.