



Colorado Springs Police Department

General Order

1063 Communication Protocols

Section 1000 – Patrol Functions

Effective Date: 12/26/2024

Revision Rescinded: 1/10/2022

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidance to personnel when utilizing the police radio communications system to ensure effective and efficient command and control of police resources and to maximize personnel safety.

.02 Cross Reference

[GO 902 Vehicles: Emergency Operation](#)

[GO 904 Vehicle Pursuits](#)

[GO 1505 800 MHz Trunked Radio](#)

[GO 1510 Mobile Computer Procedures](#)

[GO 1606 Criminal Records Information](#)

[GO 1841 Staff and Personnel Notifications](#)

[DL-1020-01 Crimes in Progress](#)

[DL-1063-02 Timely Dispatch of Calls for Service](#)

[COM-141 Officer/Firefighter Needs Help](#)

.03 Discussion

The purpose of the radio communications system is to direct deployment to meet the needs of any situation, to facilitate coordination, to inform department personnel of situations and responses, and to assure them that all appropriate resources will be used. The department's communications protocols are based upon the use of disciplined clear speech.

Community members correctly hold public agencies accountable for using their resources efficiently. Careful prioritizing and use of alternative response systems, when appropriate, are essential to match human and material resources with service demands. The department will strive to provide the highest level of service possible by using available resources effectively.

.04 Policy

All instructions or orders from the public safety communications center will be accepted as if they had been issued personally by the chief of police. All such orders or instructions will be complied with and attempts to resolve disputes arising from them will wait until after completion of the assignments.

Simultaneous handling of multiple calls for service requires that priorities be established in advance. The department's major priorities in allocating resources to calls for service are:

- The comparative threat to human life and property
- The probability of apprehension
- The nature of the offense involved
- The nature of service required.

Although dispatchers will routinely make most decisions about prioritization, field personnel are expected to use good judgment and common-sense in prioritizing situations that require immediate field decisions.

The department's services are varied in character and must be rendered at all hours, in many locations. Deployment planning will therefore emphasize assigning officers for duty at places and at times that will be of maximum benefit to the community.

.05 Definitions

Field Personnel: Units who wholly or in part perform services in the community (e.g., CSO, patrol officers/supervisors, detectives, assigned civilian personnel, etc.)

.10 Radio Contact with the Public Safety Communications Center

All field personnel are required to carry a portable radio on their person and to always maintain radio contact with the communications center.

.12 Verbal Dispatching

Calls for service will be primarily dispatched verbally, and will include the address of the call, the call type, and the field personnel involved.

Call details will be aired on in-progress/just-occurred calls under the following conditions:

- Imminent threat to personal safety and/or property
- Likelihood of suspect(s) being on scene or in the vicinity

Updates received by the dispatcher on in-progress/just-occurred calls will also be aired by the dispatcher.

.14 Nature of Transmission

Field personnel will make their transmissions as brief as possible and will restrict their transmissions to official business matters using plain, clear, and professional language. Professional language avoids being casually conversational and is absent slang.

.16 Acknowledgments

Neither field personnel nor dispatchers will assume that their transmission has been received until a proper acknowledgment is received. After a reasonable pause, transmissions should be repeated until acknowledged.

.30 Radio Codes and Procedures

The following codes and phrases shall be used, when applicable, in local radio transmissions:

Officer Needs Help: This phrase shall be broadcast when immediate emergency assistance is needed by an officer or civilian employee assigned to field duties. The employee requesting shall include the location and, if possible, the unit identification and all other pertinent information.

If the department member is unable to use clear speech, he or she may call, "Code twenty," and/or activate their emergency alert button on the radio.

When a Code 20 or officer needs help is received, two units will be dispatched code three and other available units in the vicinity shall respond code two.

Firefighter Needs Help: This emergency call shall be broadcast when immediate emergency police assistance is needed because firefighters are being attacked, attack is imminent, or some other emergency exists. This emergency call may also be made by activation of the emergency alert button. Two units shall be dispatched code three and other available units in the vicinity shall respond code two.

Code A: Indicates a dead body (DB) or person.

Code One: Radio transmissions are limited to emergency traffic only. It may be declared by a dispatcher or a field unit. When requested by a field unit, the dispatcher will transmit that the "Channel is code 1" and identify the location of the incident. The code one status will remain in effect until a field unit advises it is no longer necessary. When code 1 is declared on a primary talkgroup, the dispatcher will immediately activate the channel marker and will leave it active until

the code 1 is terminated, or until a field supervisor advises to change to “no tones,” or discontinue the code 1. Pre-arranged events that typically use a code 1, such as a warrant execution, and are conducted on a talkgroup dedicated to that event, do not require the immediate activation of the channel marker.

Code Two: A code two response is when a department vehicle is operated in compliance with all the rules of the road, in accordance with all the provisions of this manual, the Code of the City of Colorado Springs, and the Colorado Motor Vehicle Laws. The only time exemptions are granted for adherence to the rules of the road is during a code three response as defined below.

Code Three: A code three response is when a department vehicle is operated in accordance with CRS § 42-4-108 using the emergency lights and sirens to violate certain provisions of the traffic law, while responding to an emergency call or when in pursuit of a violator of law.

A call may warrant a code three response for any reason listed below:

- A serious public hazard
- The preservation of life
- A crime of violence in progress
- An immediate pursuit
- Any unit requesting another unit "Code Three"

The decision for a code three response can be made by the responding officer or a field supervisor. The final decision will be made by the vehicle operator.

An officer shall immediately verbally broadcast their intention to proceed code three and shall notify communications as soon as is practical after terminating the code three response. When more than one unit is being operated code three at the same time in the same general area, they shall be notified by communications, when practical, that other units are code three in their vicinity.

Code Four: Will be used to indicate a situation is secured. The unit making this declaration will advise the dispatcher whether any additional responding units can disregard. Dispatched units who are not on scene will continue to respond until advised to disregard. Units responding code three will immediately change their response mode to code two upon the declaration of code four.

Code Five: [REDACTED]

Code Five-M: [REDACTED]

Code Five-F: [REDACTED]

Code Five AD: [REDACTED]

Associated Hit: Indicates a person or vehicle may be linked to a want/warrant based on an association with the person or vehicle of interest.

Code Six: Used by field units to advise the dispatcher they are busy and may not be available to respond to calls for service. Officers will give their location and a general reason for their code six status. Officers may be cleared from a code six status when needed to respond to priority one and approved priority two calls for service.

Code Seven: Used to request meal and coffee breaks. After receiving clearance for a code seven the requesting unit will give his/her location and will remain reachable by radio during the break.

Code Eight: Indicates a burglary or robbery alarm.

Code Nine: Indicates a possible homicide, as opposed to a dead body (DB) or Code A.

Code Ten: Indicates a bomb threat.

Code Twelve: [REDACTED]

Code Fifteen: Indicates that a particular talkgroup is not being monitored by a dispatcher.

Code Twenty: Request for emergency assistance when the use of clear speech will cause an undesirable reaction from the person(s) with whom the officer is in contact. Units will be immediately sent to assist.

.40 Phonetic Alphabet

Field personnel will use the department's phonetic alphabet when communicating information that should be spelled out to ensure the information is properly received/documented (e.g., last names, street names, etc.)

.50 Time Designation

The CSPD uses standard 24-hour military time as the official time keeping method for all reporting purposes.

.60 Radio Call Signs

Whenever field personnel use the radio communications system, they will verbalize their complete call sign will be used to assure proper identification (e.g., 1X10, 2A21, CSPD10, DLR10). When communicating with outside agencies, field personnel will preface their call sign with "CSPD".

Radio call signs are issued and managed by the communications center. Call signs can be temporarily assigned, such as those used by patrol sector officers or for special events, or permanently assigned to officers in certain duty assignments such as staff officers, detectives, or internal affairs.

Personnel will advise communications prior to assuming or vacating a permanent call sign.

Coordination is required between communications and the LERMS administrator to make certain the call signs in LERMS match those in the CAD system to ensure documentation sent to LERMS from officers will be accepted.

Field personnel wishing to temporarily use a call sign must coordinate the request with communications prior to using the call sign. Field personnel are prohibited from using call signs assigned to others.

Call signs are determined using a formula that includes the area command designator, the duty identifier, and a numerical code that represents something different depending on the officers' or employees' assignments.

.62 Arrival at and Changes of Location

Field personnel will verbalize that they have arrived at a given location anytime more than one officer is responding and when a channel is on a code one status.

When a change of location is necessary, field personnel will use their laptops, as well as advising the dispatcher by voice, to show they are in-route and arrived on scene at each new location. Field personnel will also advise dispatch by voice of any location change involving the transportation of a prisoner, or one that involves a potential hazard to the officer.

.64 Out of Service Requests

Field personnel will verbally request to be out of service (e.g., administrative functions, off shift, etc.). Dispatch may override any request dependent upon calls pending or other circumstances.

.66 Requests for Medical Service Response

Field personnel will verbally request medical personnel be dispatched to a location. Such requests will not be submitted via the MDC.

.70 Dispatch to Call

Field personnel will not voluntarily respond to calls assigned to other units without first clearing the response with communications center. If a dispatcher requests the location of department vehicles in the immediate vicinity of a call, any officer in that vicinity shall reply and stand by until cleared to proceed to that call.

Incidents being reported from a location other than the original scene will be handled by officers in the area command from which the reporting party is calling.

- For example: a caller, at an address in Sand Creek, is calling to report an incident that occurred in Gold Hill. The call will be sent to a Sand Creek officer to handle. Follow-up will be the responsibility of the responding officer to handle or to coordinate with officers from other divisions to conduct the follow-up.

.71 Intervening Incidents

Field personnel may be required to decide whether to continue an assigned call or handle a citizen's complaint, or other observed event. Determination of which to handle will be based upon their comparative urgency and the risk to life and property. When one or the other cannot be immediately handled, the involved field personnel should, if circumstances permit, give directions for obtaining assistance or initiate the necessary notifications themselves.

.72 Calls for Service at Hospitals

Reports from hospitals regarding patients receiving treatment, as the result of a criminal offenses or traffic accidents, will be investigated by officers assigned to the area command in which the incident occurred.

As often as possible, the officer assigned to the sector of such an occurrence, will be dispatched to the reporting hospital to conduct the initial investigation. Additional officer(s) will be dispatched as needed to the scene to handle in-progress situations, to address scene safety, or for scene preservation concerns.

.74 Description Information

If suspects have fled from the scene of an incident, field personnel will provide descriptions of the suspects and/or vehicles involved, etc., as soon as possible, so that information can be provided to other personnel.

.77 Completion of Call

Upon completing an assignment or call, field personnel will notify the dispatcher via MDC, or via radio communication if the person cannot use MDC at that time.

Field personnel may clear an assignment or call by radio if it is necessary to air hazards, BOLOs, or other necessary information.

Field personnel have a responsibility to return to service as soon as possible after completing an assignment. Completion includes the disposition of an incident and appropriate reports, unless directed by a supervisor to return to service, or the volume and seriousness of activity requires delaying completion until later during the tour of duty. It is the duty of the on-scene supervisor to ensure that officers who are not needed for completing an assignment are immediately returned to service.

.80 Requesting Wants, Warrants, etc.

Records and ID

Field personnel will use the MDC as their primary means for running and confirming wants/warrants on persons, vehicles, or items.

If an MDC is unavailable, the following information will be provided directly to the NCIC operator in Records and ID:

- Persons: name, date of birth
- Vehicles: license number and state of issuance or vehicle identification number
- Other articles: item description, brand, serial number

If field personnel requests want/warrant information directly from the records and ID section, the confirmation process should take place between an involved field personnel and the records and ID, unless doing so creates a safety concern. In most situations, this confirmation process can be facilitated using the MDC.

If field personnel needs information on an extensive list of items, persons, etc., the officer will contact the records section directly to obtain the information.

Communications Center

If the NCIC operator is not available, or if circumstances exist that would create a safety concern while running or confirming a want, field personnel may request a wants query directly with a dispatcher. If field personnel requests want/warrant information directly from the dispatcher, the

dispatcher will contact the appropriate records and ID personnel to confirm the information, to include want/warrant information from an outside agency.

.82 Want/Warrant Confirmation

To minimize liability to the department and its personnel, field personnel will confirm the validity of a want/warrant prior to taking any official action, to include any seizure of a person (e.g., arrest) or property (e.g., recovery of stolen property).

.85 Requesting Criminal History Information by Radio

The radio will not be used for routine transmission of criminal history information. Criminal history information is protected under various federal and state laws and can only be broadcast over the radio in the following situations:

- When there is a situation affecting the safety of an employee or the public
- When an officer determines there is an immediate need for the information to further an investigation

Absent either of the above listed situations, all criminal history information will be requested from personnel authorized to obtain such information and the requests will be made in person, by phone, or by MDC.

.90 Advising Adjoining Law Enforcement Agencies of Serious Crimes

When communications center personnel receive information of a felony crime of violence (e.g., armed robberies with suspect vehicle information, serious assaults with suspect or suspect vehicle information, etc.), information will be directed to Colorado law enforcement agencies by a state teletype "Be on the Lookout" (BOLO), via the NCIC operator.

The information on a crime and/or suspect must be sent to adjoining agencies as soon as possible after CSPD determines a crime has taken place and sufficient information is available to alert outside agencies of the crime.

Suspect and additional information may be sent as an update to the original State Teletype BOLO.

.91 Direct Communication with the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD)

To allow for more efficient and direct communication over the radio CSPD and CSFD have agreed to allow communication on the same involved talk group when both agencies are responding to the same call for service.

CSFD will transmit on the appropriate CSPD talk group with unit identifying information, staging information and acknowledgement to enter the scene and/or clear the call for service.

.95 Notification of Serious Incident

When dispatchers are notified of a serious incident where field personnel in other area commands need to be on the lookout for at-large suspects or any/all hazards type of critical incident notification, the information will be broadcast over the radio as soon as practical on all primary talk groups.

.100 Missed Calls

If field personnel, who is required to be within radio contact with the communications center (e.g., patrol personnel, CSO, etc.), fails to respond to a radio call, has not arrived at the scene of a call, or notified the communications center that they will be out of radio contact, the following nonemergency procedures will be followed:

- Continued attempts to call the unit will be conducted for fifteen minutes after the first missed call
- The dispatcher will document in a CAD call for service each time a missing unit does not respond to a radio call
- The dispatcher will use the radio private call function to attempt to alert the missing unit
- The communications center supervisor, the appropriate patrol supervisor, or command officer will be notified and initiate procedures to locate the missing employee(s)
- When the missing officer is located, the on-duty patrol sergeant will ascertain why the field personnel was not available and will report the findings either orally or in writing to the duty lieutenant.
- The duty lieutenant may take immediate action or may forward the report for action by the division commander.

.110 Priority Dispatch

Priority dispatch is a modified police response where calls are triaged by the communications center and only priority one incidents and high-risk priority two incidents are entered into the CAD system for patrol response.

Priority dispatch status may be implemented when a serious incident requiring a significant number of patrol resources occurs.

The decision to implement priority dispatch will be made by the duty lieutenant or higher when, in their opinion, the action is necessary to ensure the availability of sufficient personnel to control the incident as well as manage priority calls in other divisions.

Attachments

[Phonetic Alphabet](#)

[Call Sign Structure](#)