



Colorado Springs Police Department

General Order

1505 800 Megahertz Trunked Radio

Section 1500 – Assigned Equipment

Effective Date: 2/22/2021

Supersedes Date: 5/31/2013

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish department policy and procedure concerning the use of the 800 MHz trunked radio system and available equipment.

.02 Cross Reference

[GO 1063 Communications Protocols](#)

[COM-203 Storage and Handling of Communications' Recordings](#)

.03 Discussion

The department recognizes that any incident may instantly become dangerous and tactical in nature thereby placing the public and department personnel at risk. Further, nearly all police responses are investigative assignments involving sensitive personal information communicated via the radio. Therefore, the department encrypts all police radio communications on talkgroups administered by the department in order to enhance officer safety and protect the private information of victims, witnesses, and those under investigation.

The Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) is part of the Statewide Digital Trunked Radio System (DTRS). The overall use of this system is regulated by policies established by the Pikes Peak Regional Communications Network (PPRCN), which are in alignment with procedures established by the Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado (CCNC). Internal procedures, established by departments and agencies operating on this system, do not supersede these policies.

This system permits radio communications among agencies, including city, county, state and federal public safety entities, along with other governmental services and emergency services agencies. This technology provides numerous features not possible with conventional radio systems.

.04 Policy

It is the policy of CSPD to make a communications system available for official business and emergency operations to ensure effective communications, accountability, and safety of personnel.

CSPD personnel who operate and utilize the radio communications system will comply with this directive, unless the context or specific language indicates a limited applicability.

.05 Definitions

800 MHz: The radio frequency segment used by public safety.

Channel Marker: A function of the 800 MHz radio system that periodically broadcasts an audible tone on currently selected talkgroups when manually activated by a dispatcher. The system will broadcast the tone until it is manually deactivated by a dispatcher.

Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado (CCNC): An entity that represents a group of agencies using 800 MHz radios who have joined together to create, maintain, and regulate a statewide system of shared resources, which allows interoperable radio communication between agencies.

Failsoft: The condition in a trunked radio system where the central controller fails and cannot recognize individual radios or assign them to talkgroups. During failsoft, the system reverts to conventional operation, with each radio working on a pre-designated radio frequency.

Individual Call Sign: The personal radio designator for each radio user on the department not assigned a permanent call sign. An individual call sign is comprised of the prefix "PD" and the member's IBM number.

Interoperability: The ability to communicate with other agencies, departments, and jurisdictions via shared radio communication resources.

Media Outlet: A corporation, LLC, or non-profit entity whose regularly engaged business purpose is to publicly report the news. The media organization must have an FCC broadcasting license or significant print distribution. For the purposes of this policy an individual or group solely hosting a website, blog, or podcast is not considered a media outlet.

Permanent Call Sign: The radio call sign used to consistently identify an individual, such as staff officers (Staff 01), or a function such as a police incident commander (PDIC1).

Pikes Peak Regional Communications Network (PPRCN): A governmental entity established by a City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County intergovernmental agreement, to establish and manage the local trunked radio system.

Radio ID and Radio Alias: The internal identifier in every radio operating on a trunked radio system. The radio ID can be displayed as a radio alias, such as an agency, division, section, or the name and IBM number of the person assigned the radio.

Radio Priority: The ability of a trunked radio system to give designated radios higher priority in assignment of available radio frequencies than other radios. Public Safety radios have the highest priority on the trunked radio system.

Radio Templates: The pre-defined configuration of various talkgroup functions or radio features that are programmed into a radio.

Talkgroup: A set of Trunked Radio system users who communicate with each other. This term is also used to refer to a radio selector switch position relating to a set of radio users.

Temporary Call Sign: The radio call sign used temporarily to identify a department member. Examples of temporary call signs include sector assignments, extra duty, traffic control points or special events.

Trunked Radio: A computerized radio system, which enables groups of system users to share radio frequencies.

.10 Radio Communications Public Record

The department recognizes all radio communications are considered public record and may be subject to requests pursuant to the Colorado Criminal Justice Records Act. All radio communications on department-controlled talkgroups are recorded and archived.

A benefit of the 800 MHz system is the ability to communicate with other agencies during a crisis, mass event, or natural disaster. The radio templates programmed into department radios include talkgroups operated by the department and talkgroups operated by other agencies. The department only records talkgroups, which it directly controls.

.20 Radio Assignments

All sworn department members and some civilian employee classifications, as determined by the chief of police, are issued an 800 MHz encrypted radio, batteries, and charger for use in their official capacity. Employees are responsible for the care and condition of the radio. Members

issued or assigned radios may be responsible for the full cost of this equipment if it is determined the loss or damage of a radio is due to a negligent or intentional act. Each department radio is programmed with a specific radio template as determined by the department member's position, job assignment, and rank. Radios used by supervisory, administrative and specialized unit personnel may have different talkgroups not available to general patrol officers.

Personnel who transfer duty assignments within the department will contact their immediate supervisor or the supply office, prior to the transfer, to determine if their radio needs to be reprogrammed.

.22 Media Access to Radio Communications

The department recognizes the Constitutional right of freedom of the press, and the department values community partnerships. The department maintains a small inventory of radios to distribute to media outlets upon their request. The radios will be preprogrammed to monitor the primary talkgroup (aka channel 1) of each patrol division and are incapable of transmitting communications or an emergency alert. Media outlets receiving the radios will be subject to the Media Radio Terms of Agreement. The determination of whether a media outlet qualifies for the purposes of this policy is made at the discretion of the chief of police. Further, it is at the discretion of the chief whether a media outlet is able to obtain or retain a department radio.

.30 Alias ID

Each radio on the system is programmed with the individual identifier and the alias ID of the member or unit assigned to that radio. When a radio transmits a signal, the radio or alias ID can be displayed on a computer monitor in the communications center.

.32 Use of Radio Talkgroups

The primary talkgroup of each division is signified by a "1", such as Falcon 1, Stetson 1, Sand 1, or Gold 1. The primary talkgroup is used for the dispatch of calls for service and normal operations. Division commanders will determine the use of the non-primary talkgroups in their division, in accordance with guidelines established by the appropriate deputy chief. During day-to-day routine operations, the communications section will staff and monitor only the primary patrol divisions and citywide talkgroups.

The PPRCN Trunked Radio system is a countywide system. To provide system wide interoperability, every radio on the PPRCN system is programmed with sixteen identical C-zone talkgroups. Only three of these interoperability talkgroups are monitored full time by a communications center:

- Colorado Springs Police Department and Colorado Springs Fire Department CSFD 1 (C-16 position on the radios)
- El Paso Sheriff's Office and EPSO Red. (C-1 position on the radios)
- Colorado Springs Utilities and CSU Dispatch. (C-15 position on the radios)

In the event of an incident involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies, supervisors may request the use of an interoperable talkgroup through communications. The supervisor will stand by until advised which talkgroup has been approved for their use. All other personnel will request approval to operate on an interoperable talkgroup through their supervisor before advising the dispatcher they will need an interoperable talkgroup.

Once the interagency communications are concluded, the original requesting member is responsible for contacting the dispatcher and advising the assigned talkgroup is clear for use.

.34 Emergency Alert

Every radio is equipped with an emergency alert button. When activated, this button sends an audible and digital signal to communications, identifying the activated radio and indicating duress. The emergency alert button is only to be used by an employee experiencing an emergency, when assisting units must respond in emergency mode (Code 3), or when the use of clear communications is prohibited by the nature of the situation.

The emergency alert button opens a primary dispatch talkgroup between the activated radio and the dispatcher. Other personnel on that talkgroup will still be able to hear and transmit. Upon receipt of the emergency signal, the communications center will activate appropriate procedures for the prompt response to these alerts.

In the event of accidental activation of the emergency alert button, a member will immediately advise the dispatcher that they have no emergency. The member will clear the emergency alert by pressing the emergency alert button for three (3) seconds. A medium pitched tone will sound until the button is released and the radio returns to normal operation.

Deliberate use of the emergency alert button, for inappropriate purposes, may result in disciplinary action.

.40 Management and Use of Equipment

Commanders shall take all necessary steps to ensure this equipment is used and cared for properly. Commanders will ensure special attention is paid to the temporary issuance and tracking of spare radios assigned to each division.

.42 Inoperable Radios

Personnel who encounter a defective or inoperable radio will contact the radio shop to arrange for repair of the radio.

Portable (hand-held) radios in need of repair are the sole responsibility of the user. Portable radio operators must ensure their equipment is in proper working order. All required radio repairs are made at the radio communications facility, Fontanero Complex.

.44 Damage to Portable Radios

Portable radios are intended to provide mobility and security. They are the responsibility of the person to whom the unit is issued or assigned. Damage to units through neglect or abuse is the responsibility of that person.

.50 Spare Radio Usage

Each division has an inventory of spare portable radios. The on-duty lieutenant or supervisor must approve use of these radios. The radios will be checked in and out using the Quartermaster on Q inventory program.

.52 Use of Portable Radios by Others

Radios are to be used only for police functions and are not to be used in any manner that violates this purpose or contributes to neglect of duty.

In the event of an emergency, when a member is unable or prevented from using a department radio, others (e.g., family members, significant others, approved ride-alongs) may use an officer's radio to transmit information to the communications center. It is the officer's responsibility to instruct other individuals who may need to use the device in an emergency about its proper use, to include communicating the details of the situation as clearly and calmly as possible to the dispatcher.

.60 Disabling Trunked Radios

The internal identifier within each radio makes it possible for the system controller computer to recognize each individual radio. This allows radio shop or PPRCN personnel to deactivate the radio.

In the event of loss or theft of a radio, department members must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Upon notification, the supervisor must immediately contact the communications section to have the radio deactivated.

.62 Suspension or Termination

If a department member is suspended for a significant length of time or is terminated, the involved member's commander will retrieve the member's radio.

Attachment

[Media Radio Terms of Agreement](#)