

CHAMPAIGN POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY and PROCEDURE

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SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS

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INDEX AS:

81.2.1 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER
81.2.2 CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION
81.2.3 CONTROL SYSTEM
81.2.4 RADIO COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES
81.2.5 RESOURCE DIRECTORIES
81.2.6 CALLS FOR INFORMATION OR SERVICES
81.2.7 VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE
81.2.8 RECORDING
81.2.9 LEADS and NCIC
81.2.10 ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF COMMUNICATIONS
81.2.11 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION
81.2.12 MISDIRECTED EMERGENCY CALLS
81.2.13 ALARM MONITORING AND RESPONSE
81.2.14 ALTERNATE CALL RECEIPT PROCEDURES
81.2.15 EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the communications system utilized by the Champaign Police Department during routine and emergency activities.

DEFINITIONS:

CAD: Computer Aided Dispatch, which is a computer system designed to aid telecommunicators in routine operations by providing rapid access to operational and historical data, to support both dispatching and operational analysis.

LEADS: Law Enforcement Agencies Data System. LEADS is a statewide, computerized telecommunications system which is interfaced with several other information/data systems and designed to provide services, information, and capabilities to the law enforcement and criminal justice community in the state of Illinois.

NCIC: National Crime Information Center. The Federal Bureau of Investigation operates the NCIC. The NCIC computer located in Washington, D.C., is connected directly to the LEADS computer by two high-speed lines. The NCIC is also connected to law enforcement computers or terminals in all other states.

POLICY:

81.2.1 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER

- A. In order to allow the public to contact the police at all times, Metropolitan Computer-Aided Dispatch (METCAD) provides 24-hour, toll-free telephone and TDD access for emergency calls for service via the 9-1-1 system, or transfer by the operator.
- B. The Department also provides telephone access for non-emergency and informational purposes 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.
- C. The Department utilizes 9-1-1 as an emergency telephone number. This emergency telephone number is displayed to the public in the following ways:
 1. Inside area telephone books.
 2. Listed in various crime prevention and community publications.
 3. Posted in various public places.

81.2.2 CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

- A. All Department personnel engaged in field duties shall have continuous 24-hour radio communications access to METCAD by means of portable radios.
- B. METCAD shall be staffed 24-hours each day with competent, trained individuals. The assigned telecommunications personnel will be responsible for maintaining radio communications between field units and the base, and between police and fire agencies and personnel as needed.

81.2.3 CONTROL SYSTEM

- A. METCAD shall utilize a control system based upon Incident Records, with each dispatch ticket being assigned a unique, sequential number to log all incoming and assigned calls for service. Incident numbers are automatically generated by the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Telecommunicators shall be responsible for including all obtainable information for the incident record as indicated in the procedures manual, to include the following:
 1. Incident number (if needed).
 2. Date and time of the request for service.
 3. Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant, if available.
 4. The nature of the incident.
 5. The location of the incident.

6. Badge number and/or unit numbers assigned.
 7. Time of dispatch.
 8. Time of officer arrival.
 9. Time of officer return to service, or completion of call.
 10. Disposition or status of the incident.
- B. Dispatch tickets created through the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system will be retained for seven (7) years.

81.2.4 RADIO COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

- A. The Department recognizes the importance of having an efficient and organized way of determining officers' status and facilitating the exchange of information between field personnel and those assigned to METCAD. The following shall serve as guidance for METCAD and patrol personnel in performing their duties:
1. Officers shall at all times keep METCAD advised of their status: available for calls, busy unless urgent, or out of service. When an officer initiates a traffic stop, field contact, etc., the officer will advise the Telecommunicator of the location, nature of call, status, and whether a backup is necessary.
 2. Communications personnel shall log the status of field units who are unavailable or assigned to a call.
 3. All personnel shall use the full call indicator for each unit when referring to the specific unit number.
 - a. When contacting another agency by radio, use of the full call indicator will serve to identify the unit as a Champaign unit.
 4. Department units shall be assigned to calls based upon their beat or zone of assignment and their availability, as recommended by the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Supervisors may respond on any call, or direct other personnel to respond as required, though it is advisable to coordinate with communications to avoid resource conflicts.
 5. The CAD system is pre-programmed to recommend units based upon call type and availability by beat. However, METCAD personnel must remember that CAD is simply a communications tool, and therefore not an excuse to knowingly dispatch inappropriate personnel. If and/or when there is a question as to which unit should be dispatched to a call, a supervisor should be consulted. In determining the number of personnel to assign to a particular call, the telecommunicator shall consider the nature of the call, its relative danger or significance, the use or likelihood of the use of weapons, whether or not the call is "in progress", and any prior history of calls at the same location.

6. Patrol shift supervisors shall monitor radio traffic to determine if and/or when additional personnel are required, and to then make assignments as necessary. Shift supervisors shall in all cases respond to the scene of serious violent crimes. It is METCAD's responsibility to ensure a supervisor is aware of such instances.
7. All METCAD telecommunicators shall be familiar with the procedures for responding to officer emergency requests for assistance and for the activation of an emergency alarm on an officer radio or in-car mobile computer including but not limited to:
 - a. Attempt to contact the officer to check on his status.
 - b. Assign additional officers to respond to the last known location of the officer.
 - c. Notify a shift supervisor of the alarm activation or of the emergency involving the officer.
 - d. When necessary, switch units not involved in the emergency to another frequency.

81.2.5 RESOURCE DIRECTORIES

- A. The Department recognizes the importance of having an efficient and organized way of determining officer status and facilitating the exchange of information between field personnel and METCAD. Telecommunicators shall have immediate access to the following resources:
1. Daily worksheets prepared by the shift supervisor which identifies on-duty personnel, including shift supervisors, and including shift assignments and unit numbers.
 2. Home and departmental cellular telephone numbers for all Department personnel (via Champaign Police Department Police Services Unit).
 - a. Telecommunicators are not authorized to give out Department employees' home telephone numbers, cellular telephone numbers, or residential addresses to the public or non-employees.
 3. A map of the Department's jurisdiction and beat structure.
 4. Visual officer status indicators as denoted in the CAD system by color, or acronym.
 5. Telecommunicators may have to contact special services not available within the Department. METCAD will maintain current information for emergency resources including but not limited to:
 - a. Fire fighting services.
 - b. Emergency medical services.
 - c. Environmental/hazardous services.

- d. Helicopter services.
 - e. Towing services.
 - f. Other public utilities.
 - g. Taxi cabs.
6. Telecommunicators shall have immediate access to tactical dispatch plans. These plans include, but are not limited to, procedures to be followed in directing resources and obtaining information on crimes in progress such as bank robberies, pursuits, etc.

81.2.6 CALLS FOR INFORMATION OR SERVICES

- A. Telecommunicators occasionally receive calls requesting information or services. It is important for telecommunicators to first ascertain if the call is of an urgent nature, or requires referral to an informational entity or service organization. Proper interview techniques shall be employed to ensure appropriate assessment of the response needed. At the very least telecommunicators shall determine:
- 1. The nature of the problem/inquiry.
 - 2. Agency or entity best suited to meet their need/s.
 - 3. The victim/witness should be advised of the response to be expected, which may include:
 - a. The identity of the agency or department which will be responding.
 - b. The identity of the agency or jurisdiction to whom the information is being referred, and what assistance can be reasonably expected of them.

81.2.7 VICTIM / WITNESS ASSISTANCE

- A. Telecommunicators may be called upon to answer requests for services from victims/witnesses of crimes who require immediate attention to their needs. This may occur after normal business hours thereby requiring the telecommunicator to refer the caller to the appropriate resource.
- B. Telecommunicators will have immediate access to resources in the Champaign County area which are available for victims/witness requests, including but not limited to:
- 1. Champaign County State's Attorney Office Victim/Witness Units.
 - 2. Crisis referral hot lines, including 24-hour per day numbers for counseling and assistance.
 - 3. Local mental health services.
- C. Callers may be referred to a shift supervisor, who will make a determination as to the immediacy of a police response or of the type of service required.
- D. See Policy 55.2, Victim / Witness Assistance Operations.

81.2.8 RECORDING

- A. METCAD is equipped with a recording system allowing for the recording of all incoming and outgoing telephone calls, as well as radio transmissions between METCAD personnel and field units and officers communicating car-to-car.
- B. Communication recordings are routinely held for a maximum of 180 days.
- C. The recordings shall be preserved on a secure hard drive. Maintenance of the recordings shall be the responsibility of the METCAD Director or his designee.
- D. Access to these recordings is limited to Communications Supervisors and Police Supervisors. Recordings will be forwarded to Police Supervisors upon written request.
- E. A Communications Supervisor must approve all requests for copies or preservation requests.
- F. METCAD is equipped with a digital data recorder at each workstation, which allows for immediate playback of 9-1-1, radio communications, and telephone conversations. This system may be utilized at any time for Official Purposes Only without obtaining prior approval.

81.2.9 LEADS and NCIC

- A. As a vital service to the communications operation, the Department has entered into certain agreements with other law enforcement information services. These systems shall be monitored at all times for incoming information and messages, and consist of the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) administered by the Illinois State Police, and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- B. All METCAD and Police Department employees shall be required to adhere to all LEADS and NCIC guidelines, and use these systems for official law enforcement purposes only.
- C. Any employee who is uncertain of the appropriate use of these systems shall consult with a supervisor or LEADS Coordinator prior to entering information, sending messages, or conducting inquiries.

81.2.10 ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- A. Cellular phones.
- 1. Selected Department vehicles and individuals are issued cellular phones. Employees may utilize cell phones when on duty as a method for alternative communication to carry out official duties.
 - 2. A roster of assigned cell phones is available to METCAD, through the Police Services Unit. Mobile phone numbers shall not be published or given out to the public unless operationally necessary.

3. Employees are accountable for ensuring that cell phone use is consistent with City Administrative policy governing the use of cell phones.
4. Personnel who are issued a Departmental cell phone are required to maintain the phone and report any problems and/or defects.

B. E-mail and Internet Access.

1. Employees may utilize e-mail as an alternative method of communication. All employees are assigned an e-mail address.
2. E-mail may be used in the normal day-to-day business operation of the Department to carry out directives and communicate with City employees and citizens.
3. Employees are expected, at a minimum, to check their Departmental e-mail account at the beginning and conclusion of each day of work.
4. The City of Champaign has established rules and procedures governing the use of Departmental computers and Internet access.

C. Department Telephones.

1. All employees shall set up an active telephone voicemail account at the beginning of their employment with the City.
2. Employees are expected, at a minimum, to check their Department voicemail account at the beginning and conclusion of each work day.

C. Desktop computers and Mobile Data Computers (MDCs)

1. The Department encourages the use of desktop computers and mobile data terminal devices whenever it is necessary and appropriate to carry out official duties. Accessing or transmitting messages other than for official duties or unauthorized personal messages is not permitted.
2. The Deputy Chief of Professional Standards may conduct periodic audits of MDC messages to ensure compliance with this and other City directives.
3. With the exception of Windows updates and anti-virus software updates, only software and/or programs loaded by City of Champaign IT personnel or the department's IT administrator or their designee are allowed. Unauthorized software or other files may not be downloaded to any computer provided to employees by the Department.

81.2.11 EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

- A. Delivering emergency notifications is a legitimate law enforcement function. Requests for emergency notifications may come from sources such as citizens, hospitals, medical examiners, and other law enforcement agencies.

- B. All requests for emergency notification shall result in the creation of a dispatch ticket.
- C. If there is any doubt as to the legitimacy of a request, the telecommunicator shall confirm the request with the originating agency.

81.2.12 MISDIRECTED EMERGENCY CALLS

- A. The Department responds to emergency calls on a priority basis. This sometimes includes responding to emergency calls where proper jurisdiction cannot immediately be determined.
- B. Occasionally, METCAD receives emergency telephone calls which are obviously intended for, or under the jurisdiction of, another law enforcement agency or public service agency. In those cases of emergency situations or need for prompt police assistance, the Telecommunicator involved will:
 1. Preferably, transfer the call to the appropriate agency while staying on the telephone line with the caller until the request for assistance has been processed by the other agency, or
 2. If necessary, obtain all pertinent information from the caller and relay the information immediately to the appropriate agency via telephone or radio.

81.2.13 ALARM MONITORING AND RESPONSE

- A. Alarms, which are either telephoned or transmitted electronically to control locations other than the Department and are subsequently telephoned to METCAD, shall be dispatched accordingly.
- B. Department personnel will respond to all security alarms within the City limits as outlined below.
 1. Customarily, upon receipt of a security alarm, unless on the do-not-respond list, METCAD will dispatch an officer to the location of the alarm. Unless advised otherwise by the primary responding officer, a back-up officer shall also be assigned to the alarm.
 2. When dispatching an alarm, METCAD will give the type of alarm, the address, the business or resident name, and any other pertinent information.
 3. At the direction of the responding officers, METCAD shall advise a key holder of the status of the alarm and any action needed.
 4. A police shift supervisor or METCAD supervisor may, in the event of severe weather or other extreme or unusual circumstances, alter established procedures for the dispatch and response to security alarms.

81.2.14 ALTERNATE CALL RECEIPT PROCEDURES

- A. On occasion, calls are received which do not require the dispatch of a patrol officer and can be effectively handled by telephone.

- B. Whenever extreme weather conditions exist or call volume exceeds the number of available field units, a field supervisor may direct certain non-emergency reports be forwarded to an officer assigned to the police facility who will take the reports in person or over the telephone.
 - 1. In cases which could be reported by telephone, but a citizen requests that a police officer respond to the scene, a shift supervisor shall make the determination as to whether or not a police officer will respond to the scene to take the report.
- C. Reports taken by telephone will generally be restricted to non-crime reports and property crimes where the suspect is not known or is no longer at the scene.
- D. When a report is taken by teleserve which requires follow-up investigation, the officer taking the report is responsible for delivering the report to a shift supervisor and communicating the need for another officer to be assigned to complete the follow-up investigation.
- E. In cases where a teleserve report is taken and either a subject or vehicle involved in the offense expected to be found locally, the officer taking the report will cause the description to be transmitted in a timely manner, by radio or MDC, to appropriate patrol units.
- F. In cases where there is physical evidence to be seized or processed, the officer taking the telephone report will request that either an officer or Crime Scene Technician, whichever is appropriate, respond and process the physical evidence in accordance with Champaign Police policies 83.4 and 84.1

81.2.15 EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

- A. METCAD authorizes the use of emergency first aid instructions over the telephone.
- B. METCAD telecommunicators receive initial certification training as authorized by the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- C. Telecommunicators utilize computer-based medical protocol cards approved by the authorizing agencies. Protocol cards are available to telecommunications personnel at each dispatch position.
- D. Re-certification training of all telecommunications personnel is conducted every 24 months.