ELIZABETH POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS

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SUBJECT: TTY/TDD COMMUNICATION

EFFECTIVE DATE: **March 6, 2023**	ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: **NJSACOP COMMUNICATIONS: 3.1.12**
BY THE ORDER OF: **CHIEF GIACOMO SACCA**	
BY AUTHORITY OF: **POLICE DIRECTOR EARL J. GRAVES**	
SUPERSEDES ORDER #:	

PURPOSE: The purpose of this document is to describe procedures for the operation of the equipment used, and call handling procedures used to provide access for persons with speech or hearing impairment.

POLICY: It shall be the policy of the Elizabeth Police Department Communications Center to provide telephone emergency services to individuals with disabilities that are as effective as those provided to others. In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Elizabeth Police Department Communications Center will not discriminate based on disability in our services, programs, or activities. Individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired or other persons, also known as TTY/TDDs, will be provided direct access to the department 9-1-1 services.

PROCEDURE:

I. **TTY/TTD EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION**

A. The Elizabeth Police Department Communications Center shall be equipped with one TTY/TDD located at each emergency answering position (one per telephone location).

B. At a minimum, every TTY/TTD shall be preprogrammed with both the Standard English and American Sign Language (ASL) messages contained below.

Standard English	American Sign Language
911 WHERE DO YOU NEED HELP Q GA	911 HERE PROBLEM WHERE Q GA
WHAT IS YOUR PHONE NUMBER Q GA	UR PH NBR Q GA
WHAT YOUR EMERGENCY Q GA	PROBLEM WHAT Q GA
WHAT IS YOUR ADDRESS Q GA	LIVE U WHERE Q GA

C. Procedures for activation of these messages shall be posted at all TTY/TDDs.

D. In the event a TTY/TDD malfunctions, the Telecommunicator should use a backup device if available. If no back up device is available, the 9-1-1 call shall be transferred to the Union County Communications Center. The Elizabeth Police Department Telecommunicator shall introduce the call to the Telecommunicator at the Union County Communications Center and advise of the need to utilize the TTY/TTD equipment to process the call.

   1. Any equipment malfunctions must be brought to the attention of the Communications Center supervisor for repair or replacement.

E. In the event of a power failure, the TTY/TDD equipment shall operate on uninterruptible power supply, or by using the department's power failure contingency plan. Measures shall be taken to ensure that the TTY/TDD remains functional throughout the power failure.

II. **TESTING**

A. TTY/TDD equipment shall be tested monthly and shall be documented. Documentation shall include:

   1. Name & Title of employee conducting the test call;

   2. Date & Time;

   3. Silent Call and/or beeping tones;

   4. Time required to establish contact;

   5. Initiated from internal (inside center) or external (from field) location;

   6. Format of Call (English vs. American Sign Language);

7. Copies of TTY/TDD printout shall be attached to documentation as evidence of the testing procedure.

III. IDENTIFICATION OF INCOMING TTY/TDD CALLS

A. Telecommunicators shall be aware that TTY/TDD users may be deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired or other persons.

B. When initially answering the emergency calls, Telecommunicators shall follow the established phone answering procedures. However, if the Telecommunicator is unable to immediately (within two attempts by voice) establish voice communications, but determines the line is silent (or open), or the Telecommunicator hears beeping tones, they should immediately initiate a TTY/TDD call response.

C. Likewise, when a Telecommunicator hears a voice recording that advises with a message that this is a TTY/TDD call, the Telecommunicator should immediately respond by initiating a TTY/TDD call response.

D. Automatic call detection equipment will only detect when TTY/TDD tones are present.

E. Accordingly, all silent calls should be challenged with a TTY/TDD.

IV. INITIATING A RESPONSE TO AN INCOMING TTY/TDD CALL

A. Direct Connect Mode or Integrated System

1. When initiating a response with a TTY/TDD, which is directly connected to a phone line or integrated in computer-based system, the Telecommunicator should respond by turning on the TTY/TDD (direct connect) or opening the TTY/TDD screen, and send a preprogrammed message or type an approved greeting such as 911 GA.

2. The Telecommunicator should then handle the call in accordance with the department established procedures for the call type identified.

B. Acoustic Coupler Mode

1. When initiating a response with at TTY/TDD that is not directly connected to a phone line, the Telecommunicator should respond by placing the handset in the acoustic coupler (rubber cups on top of TTY/TDD) making sure that the handset is positioned correctly (typically with the cord to the left of the equipment). It may be helpful to label the couplers "mouthpiece" and "earpiece" in advance to expedite this process.

C. The Telecommunicator should then turn the TTY/TDD power button on and send the preprogrammed greeting.

D. Voice Carry Over (VCO) / Hearing Carry Over (HCO) Mode - Telecommunicators must be prepared to handle calls received via the TTY/TDD in which the caller requests communications to be in either the VCO or HCO format.

E. Once the TTY/TDD caller responds, the Telecommunicator should continue to follow the procedures for handling the call in accordance with established procedures for

that call type.

F.   Voice Carry Over (VCO) / Hearing Carry Over (HCO) Mode- Telecommunicators must be prepared to handle calls received via the TTY/TDD in which the caller requests communications to be in either the VCO or HCO format.

V.   VOICE CARRY OVER

A.   VCO is an acronym representing when a TTY/TDD caller uses their own voice to speak with the Telecommunicator rather than type. The caller reads the reply from the Telecommunicator on the TTY/TDD screen.

1.   When a caller requests this format for their communications, the Telecommunicator must listen to the caller speak, but then use the TTY/TDD to respond.

2.   This method requires the Telecommunicator to switch from voice to TTY mode on a single call.

B.   Hearing Carry Over

1.   HCO is an acronym for Hearing Carry Over when a TTY/TDD caller will listen with a telephone receiver rather than read the message. The caller types their side of the conversation.

2.   When a caller requests this format for their communications, the Telecommunicator must use the TTY/TDD to receive the caller's message but should speak to the caller instead of typing.

3.   This method requires the Telecommunicator to switch from TTY to voice mode on a single call.

VI.   RELAY SERVICE CALLS

A.   On occasion, a TTY/TDD caller may contact our services through the use of a Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). PSAPs are prohibited from requiring callers go through a third party (such as the TRS) to gain access to 9-1-1 services, however, if Telecommunicators receive a call via a TRS it should be handled according to established procedures for that call type.

B.   Telecommunicators should follow the established protocol of the TRS by speaking to the relay operator as if speaking to the caller directly (communicating in first person) and the relay operator will type exactly what the Telecommunicator speaks.

C.   Prior to disconnecting from the TRS operator, advise the caller that they may contact the department directly in the future by dialing 9-1-1.

VII.   DISCONNECTED CALLS

A.   If, during the course of receiving an emergency call the call is disconnected, the Telecommunicator shall implement established call-back procedures.

1.   If the Telecommunicator has already established contact with the TTY/TDD caller but loses the connection, the Telecommunicator shall immediately request that emergency services be dispatched to the location (if they have not already)

and shall attempt to call the TTY/TDD caller back by using the TTY/TDD equipment.

IX.   TTY/TDD ETIQUETTE

A.   Telecommunicators shall use proper TTY/TDD etiquette/protocol while communicating using a TTY/TDD. Proper etiquette or protocol is as follows:

1.   It is extremely important to type the term GA when you are through with your statement and want a response from the person on the other end of the line. The term GA means go ahead, it's your turn to talk.

2.   Tone of voice is not transmitted on a TTY/TDD, so it is necessary to type the letter Q (or QQ) when asking a question (plus GA to request a response).

3.   When getting ready to end the conversation, a caller may type GASK, which means I am through, do you have anything else to say?

4.   SKSK means, bye, I am hanging up now. Telecommunicators shall stay on the line with the TTY/TDD caller as long as it is safe for the caller to do so. If it becomes unsafe for the caller to stay on the line ask them to lay the receiver down and exit the area/building.

X.   PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION & TESTING

A.   Testing call takers and their equipment is the one of the most effective ways to ensure compliance with the ADA's requirement that accessibility features are maintained in operable working condition. The tests should be designed to ascertain whether TTY/TDD equipment functions properly and whether personnel have been adequately trained to recognize TTY/TDD calls quickly, to operate TTY/TDD equipment, and to conduct TTY/TDD conversations.

1.   Newly appointed personnel assigned to the communications function shall receive training and testing on the use of the TTY equipment.

B.   TTY/TDD equipment shall be tested monthly to determine operational readiness and a record of the test shall be made.

XI.   REFRESHER TRAINING

A.   Refresher training at a minimum, every six months, per the U.S. Department of Justice Technical Assistance Access for 9-1-1 and Telephone Emergency Services requirements.

B.   Refresher training may consist of the following:

- o   Roll Call Briefings
- o   Memorandums
- o   Test Call Programs
- o   Refresher Training Courses

- Comprehensive Training Courses