



# FAIRBURN GEORGIA POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS MANUAL



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## CHAPTER 15      Communications

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### S.O.P. 15-1 COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES (GENERAL)

#### I. PURPOSE

The Fairburn Police Department has a Service Agreement with the Fulton County Department of Emergency Services (FCDES). As such, the FCDES is the Public Safety Answering Point for all emergency services within the City of Fairburn. The FCDES shall provide 24-hour, toll-free telephone access for emergency calls for service. The staffing plan for the FCDES always requires an on-duty supervisor.

The FCDES is the primary interface for all calls requesting assistance. All calls are answered and prioritized by Communications Officers for service and entered on Computer Aided-Dispatch (CAD) for processing.

The FCDES Operations center equips each Communications Officer workstation with specialized storage. This storage platform provides recording of all incident data with easy retrieval and storage capabilities, allowing for optimization of incident retrieval and reconstruction. With the utilization of this platform, it continuously records all emergency and non-emergency telephone calls and radio transmissions, thus allowing Communications Officers to immediately play back all recordings.

All broadcasts of calls and assignments from the FCDES shall be considered an officer's primary work assignment. Any apparent problem associated with a call received should be reported by

the officer to their supervisor. Patrol supervisors are charged with immediately correcting any obvious problems. Units may be directed to perform law enforcement duties within the boundaries of the City of Fairburn.

## II. RULES AND REGULATIONS

### A. Priority Calls

To manage calls for service, the communication personnel shall prioritize calls for dispatch. This priority system is for use internally within the dispatch center and is not intended to determine the response manner for the individual officer. The priority system is as follows:

- Priority 1 – those calls requiring immediate dispatch (e.g., crimes in progress, accidents with injuries, officer needs assistance). A patrol supervisor will respond to these calls to observe and assume command of the call if the incident escalates.
- Priority 2 – those calls requiring immediate dispatch, but not of an emergency nature (e.g., accidents without injuries, suspect has left scene).
- Priority 3 – routine calls for law enforcement service requiring the presence of a law enforcement officer (e.g., thefts, burglaries, and other crimes against property).
- Priority 4 – general information calls for which an on-the-scene officer is not requested or required.

### B. Call Stacking

Priority 1 and Priority 2 calls shall be dispatched immediately. When a unit is not available to respond to a Priority 1 and 2 call, Communications Officers will notify the Patrol Supervisor. The Patrol Supervisor shall be responsible for deciding how the call is to be handled.

Priority 3 calls will be dispatched after Priority 1 and 2 calls are completed. Whenever a significant delay may exist, the complainant, if possible, will be notified of the delay by the Communications Officer.

Felony In Progress Calls- a broadcast of all felony-in-progress and emergency calls involving a life-threatening situation will be made on the primary channel. This will allow any unit within proximity to respond. A Patrol Supervisor shall respond to these calls to observe and assume command of the call if the incident escalates.

Either a patrol unit or Communications Officer can initiate an “emergency radio traffic only” status. Patrol units initiating this status shall cancel it as soon as possible. If an immediate response from the patrol unit is not received, the Communications Officer shall initiate contact through another unit on the scene or the closest available unit to determine the status of the original unit.

Back-Up Situations- at least two officers will be dispatched to the following types of calls:

- All crimes-in-progress calls

- All calls where the suspect is still at or near the scene
- Any call where participants may be armed or dangerous
- All calls involving mentally disturbed persons
- Major accidents or disasters
- Disturbance calls (e.g., intoxicated persons, domestic violence, loud parties)
- 911 Hang Ups

This section is not intended to restrict the use of back-up or additional law enforcement units at the scene of any incident. At the discretion of the Communications Officer or Patrol Supervisor, back-up units may be dispatched to any call. If back-up units are dispatched to an unusual situation by the Communications Officer, the Patrol Supervisor should be immediately notified.

#### C. Other Necessary Transmissions

Communications Officers shall transmit the following information to field units as it becomes available:

- Amber Alert/Levi's Call information
- Information on Missing/Endangered Persons
- Reports of major crimes occurring in nearby jurisdictions or when it is believed the perpetrator may be in the vicinity.
- Weather Watches and Warnings as broadcasted by the National Weather Service and received either through GCIC or Weather Radio.
- Any other information that Officers should know to fulfill their duties.

#### D. Equipment Operation and Maintenance

Federal Communications Commission Licensing- This Agency shall maintain any licenses necessary for the operation of communications and speed detection equipment. These licenses will be maintained by the appropriate divisions.

All FCC Regulations shall be adhered to. Examples include: no profanity on the radio, including private "talk-around" channels, use of the radio only for official communications, and maintenance of the radios within manufacturer's specifications.

Recordings of transmissions and telephones- all radio transmissions and phone lines shall be recorded automatically on a 24-hour basis.

All transmissions on the 700/800 MHz system are monitored, recorded, and maintained at the FCDES.

Internal review of E-911 and radio recordings may be conducted by Command Staff personnel or by other police personnel with approval of the Chief of Police. External requests must be sent through the same channels under an Open Records Request.

Law Enforcement Teletype Information- the computer terminal interfaces with the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This terminal shall only be used for sending and receiving official law enforcement messages. It is the responsibility of the Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) to enter information into the terminal and to relay necessary information to officers.

#### E. Radio Demeanor and Courtesy

All personnel shall speak in a normal conversational tone and volume when using the radio to allow the receiving persons to clearly understand the information.

Pronunciation- officers shall use proper pronunciation and the authorized phonetic alphabet for clarity.

Tone- effective communications often depend on the tone of voice. Officers shall refrain from displaying emotions such as irritation, disgust, or sarcasm by words or inflection.

Officers shall not use slang, profanity, or discourteous or argumentative language over the radio.

Officers shall keep their transmissions brief by broadcasting only necessary information and planning their transmissions for brevity.

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
EFFECTIVE: 05/19/2008**

**S.O.P. 15-1 COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES (GENERAL)**

**I. PROCEDURES**

**A. Receiving and Dispatched Calls**

Patrol and investigative units will check "on-duty" on the primary radio frequency or by signing on to FREEDOM via their Mobile Computer Terminal (MCT). Patrol units should sign on to the MCT at the beginning of shift. The Patrol Supervisor shall submit a daily roster to the Communications Center advising of all units that are "on-duty", to include the assigned zone. Investigative units may wait to check "on-duty" until they are preparing to engage in field work.

Any required changes in beat or zone assignment should be handled via radio and CAD messaging.

All field units shall remain on the primary radio channel with the following exceptions:

- i. When directed by the Communications Officer.
- ii. When directed by a supervisor.
- iii. When necessary for the performance of their duties.

If Officers will not be able to monitor the primary channel, they shall notify a Patrol Supervisor and the dispatch center before changing to another radio frequency.

Patrol units will acknowledge receipt of assignment over the radio. Patrol units may notify communications when they arrive at the scene of each call by using the MCT or over the radio. Patrol units will notify the dispatch center of any change in the nature of complaint via the radio. The completion of each call, service status and disposition upon completion should be transmitted through the MCT, if available. If the MCT is not available, Patrol units will provide the information over the radio.

If a unit fails to respond to the radio after being called three separate times within a minute, while in-service, the Patrol Supervisor shall be notified. It is the responsibility of the Patrol Supervisor to initiate proper action.

When checking "out-of-service", officers are to do so via the radio. The Patrol Supervisor can also advise the dispatch center when all his respective units have ended their tour of duty. All special assignments must be approved by the Patrol Supervisor.

As soon as practical after activating the vehicle's emergency lights to stop another vehicle, officers shall give the location, tag number, state of registration, and may include the make, model, and color of the vehicle. Communications Officers shall check the vehicle license plate through GCIC/NCIC and give a response to the officer via the radio and/or a CAD message. Officers may notify communications they are capable of checking GCIC/NCIC, as to free up the dispatch from unnecessary or excessive radio traffic.

Call signs are assigned by the shift assignment, rank, and tenure with the Agency. Call signs are subject to change depending on shift assignment. When any changes occur to call signs, a member of the Command Staff will provide the Communications Center with an updated Agency roster and call signs.

## **II. OPERATIONS**

- A. This agency has a service agreement with Fulton County Emergency Services for dispatch purposes. The policy set forth follows the agreement and policy of Fulton County Emergency Services.

Radio signals- radio codes/signals shall be used by all personnel to ensure uniformity and brevity of radio transmissions. If a clear and understandable code does not explain the assignment, plain English shall be used, with a minimum number of repetitions.

During large emergency situations requiring assistance from outside agencies, "plain talk" English will be used to ensure that all users are able to understand.

Emergency Traffic- whenever an emergency transmission is made by any unit or the Fulton County Communications Officer, all non-emergency traffic on that channel shall cease until the emergency traffic condition is lifted. It shall be the responsibility of the Communications Officer to notify units returning from an "out-of-service" status of the emergency traffic conditions.

In-Progress Calls- In the event a caller reports an in-progress incident, the Communications Officer shall attempt to keep the caller on the line until the first unit arrives on the scene. Additional information, such as direction of travel, type of vehicle involved, and descriptions of suspects should be obtained and transmitted to field officers as they become known.

Vehicle and Foot Pursuits- It shall be the responsibility of the Communications Officer to coordinate communication of information during pursuit situations. Officers not involved in the actual pursuit shall hold radio traffic unless it is emergency traffic or critical to the pursuit in progress.

Coordination of Communication with Other Agencies- This Agency will extend its full cooperation to all agencies requesting communications services within the limits of its available resources.

Conflict between Communications Center and Police personnel- Disagreements between Communications Officers and Patrol Officers concerning the manner of dispatching or responding to calls shall not be discussed over the radio. If the Patrol Supervisor is unable to contact a Communications Supervisor to resolve the disagreement, the Patrol Supervisor shall have the authority to override the Communications Officer concerning the unit(s) dispatched and manner of response. The conflict should be reported up to the appropriate Police Division Commander to communicate with the Communications Center Operations Supervisor.

If a patrol officer questions the way a call was dispatched, the officer shall respond to the call, and discuss the matter with their supervisor later. The patrol officer's supervisor and the Communications Supervisor shall resolve problems between communications officers and patrol officers.