


# GAINESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER

	<b>TITLE</b> Communications Functions and Radio Procedures		<b>ACCREDITATION</b> CALEA 41.2.1.a.b.c
	<b>PROponent UNIT</b> GPD CCC Liaison-Patrol Support Bureau		<b>PRIOR REVISIONS</b> 12/01/98; 11/16/99; 04/29/08, 09/05/08, 04/14/20
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- I. **PURPOSE:** This Order describes the operational capabilities of, and support provided by, the Combined Communications Center (CCC) and establishes regulations and procedures for dispatch and radio operations.
  
- II. **POLICY:** The Gainesville Police Department shall, utilize the Alachua County Combined Communications Center, through an Interlocal agreement. The Combined Communications Center has agreed to maintain the necessary resources and capabilities for the efficient and effective receiving, processing, dispatching and responding to calls-for-service.
  
- III. **DEFINITIONS:**
  - A. **BOLO**: Be On the Look Out.
  - B. **CAD**: Computer Aided Dispatch system.
  - C. **CCC**: Combined Communication Center, the Gainesville-Alachua County joint call taking and dispatch entity.
  - D. **CCC Dispatcher**: Radio district dispatcher for the Combined Communication Center.
  - E. **CJIS**: The Gainesville Police Department Criminal Justice Information System.
  - F. **Teleserve/ Front Desk Officer**: A Department unit consisting of members who complete police reports with information received from the complainant via the telephone or in person at police headquarters.
  - G. **District**: A specific geographical area comprised of several patrol areas.
  - H. **FCIC**: Florida Crime Information Center.

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- I. **Field Unit**: An on-duty member who works outside of police headquarters on a regular basis (e.g., patrol officers, FSTs) or on an irregular basis (e.g., investigators, traffic unit). This includes area units, but specifically excludes Special Investigations Division and Internal Affairs Unit investigators and sworn and non-sworn administrative members.
- J. **HIT**: An NCIC, FCIC, or CJIS response indicating possible wanted status of a person or stolen status of property.
- K. **Hold/Holding**: The authorized delay of dispatching a call for service.
- L. **NCIC**: National Crime Information Center.
- M. **Patching**: The combining of two or more talk groups on the 800 MHz police radio system enabling personnel from different agencies or radio districts to communicate with one another on the police radio.
- N. **Radio and Communications Liaison**: The designee of the Patrol Support Bureau Commander(s) will serve as the Department's liaison to the Combined Communications Center staff regarding relevant issues and problems. Any complaint by a Department member regarding the Combined Communications Center shall be forwarded to such designee.
- O. **Second Party Verification**: A post-input query of a teletype entry into FCIC/NCIC to ensure the entered information is complete, accurate, and valid, as mandated by FDLE.
- P. **District**: The geographical division of the City of Gainesville representing the west and east parts of the City.
- Q. **Talk Group**: A specific "channel" on the 800 MHz police radio system used by members to communicate with one another.
- R. **Zone**: A geographical subdivision of a sector.
- S. **Zone Unit**: An on-duty police officer assigned to a specific geographical area within a sector.

#### IV. PROCEDURE:

**GPD Liaison**: The designee of the Patrol Support Commander will serve as the Department's liaison to the Combined Communications Center staff regarding relevant issues and problems. Any complaint by a Department member regarding the Combined Communications Center shall be forwarded to such designee.

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**A. Reference Information:** The CCC maintains the following information. Where applicable, the GPD section that maintains and/or promulgates the relevant information shall provide current listings to the CCC:

1. Maps detailing the service areas;
2. Contact information for emergency and support service agencies (such as fire, rescue, medical examiner, public works, animal control, and tow trucks);
3. Law Enforcement Call Handling Guide
4. NOTE: Current duty rosters listing all on-duty personnel with their geographic and vehicle assignments will be given on a daily basis by Operations Supervisors.

**B. Calls for Service:**

1. **Calls Received at GPD:** Department members who receive requests at the Department for emergency public safety services will normally refer the call to the Combined Communications Center for processing.

**NOTE:** Depending on the nature of the call and the workload at the Front Desk, complaints received either by phone or in-person that fall under GPD jurisdiction may be entered and/or handled by the Front Desk personnel, or referred to the Communications Center for screening/routing.

- i. **Emergencies:** Members receiving a report of an emergency (regardless of jurisdiction) shall do everything possible to obtain the location, nature of the complaint, the complainant's name, and contact number before transferring the call, in case the transfer is incomplete. Members shall then:
    - a. Transfer the complainant to the CCC or other jurisdictional law enforcement agency, as appropriate.
    - b. Ensure that the transfer went through, and that the correct information was relayed.
  - ii. **Other Jurisdictions/Agencies:** When receiving calls for service that do not fall under the purview of the Gainesville Police Department, Department personnel shall promptly direct or relay the information to the CCC or to the appropriate agency responsible for the particular service.
2. **Front Desk:** Calls that meet certain criteria may be handled by telephone via Tel-Serve (Front Desk).

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- i. **Criteria:** Conditions indicating that a call may be appropriate for a telephone response may include:
    - a Police presence is not required to maintain order,
    - b Crime scene that does not require protection or processing, in limited circumstance, TelServe (Front Desk) may take the report and send a field unit to the scene for processing,
    - c Low monetary loss,
    - d No immediate threat of violence (Anything related to domestic violence requires a field unit response),
    - e No suspect on-scene and no suspect information, in limited circumstances, TelServe (Front Desk) may take reports involving suspect information that do not need additional follow-up or that can be follow-up on by a field unit or detective.
    - f In limited circumstances, TelServe (Front Desk) may take reports requiring follow-up that can be follow-up on by a field unit or detective,
    - g Information report only (e.g., for insurance purposes).
  - ii. **Procedure:**
    - a These calls may be received directly by TelServe (Front Desk), forwarded by the Combined Communications Center according to criteria identified in the Combined Communications Center Law Enforcement Call-Handling Guide, or forwarded by another GPD member.
    - b If a member working a TelServe position determines that a call merits a field response, the member shall refer the call back to Combined Communications Center for dispatch after consulting with a Patrol supervisor.
    - c A patrol supervisor may direct a call for service to the front desk, regardless of above criteria, if they believe it can be handled correctly by Tel-Serve personnel.
- C. Recording / Playback of Emergency Calls and Radio Transmissions:** The Combined Communication Center maintains a recording system that records telephone and radio transmissions. The recording system also allows for immediate playback of emergency telephone calls and primary radio transmissions.
- 1. **Security:** The Combined Communications Center maintains the recordings for at least 30 days.

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2. **Review Criteria:** A review of recordings shall be permitted for the purpose of training or conducting a legitimate criminal or internal investigation.
3. **Recording Requests / Review Procedures:** To obtain permission to review or receive a copy of recorded radio or telephone conversation, a member shall make the request via email to the Combined Communications Center CAD/Audio Specialist(s).

Any requests for recordings maintained by the Combined Communications Center pursuant to public records law shall be forwarded to the Combined Communications Center for review and processing.

- D. Back-Up Communications Procedures:** The communication function and necessary personnel shall be transferred to another locale as determined by the nature of the emergency and the Combined Communications Center procedures.

**E. Radio System:**

1. **Operation:** The radio system allows a member to interrupt the dispatcher, while the dispatcher is broadcasting, in order to transmit urgent information or call for assistance. However, the radio system does not allow members to interrupt other members while the other member is broadcasting. In order to call for emergency assistance while another member is broadcasting, the member must utilize the Emergency Call Button (ECB).
2. **Inter-Agency Operations:** The communications system is a multi-channel system that provides for two-way radio communication with other agencies.
  - i. **Talk Groups:** There are several common talk groups for inter-agency and intra-agency use.
  - ii. When speaking to units from other agencies, Department members shall use "GPD" and their ID number.
  - iii. **Network Patch Capabilities:** For those instances in which members from different agencies need to communicate with each other, the Combined Communication Center has the capability to patch the radio communications across radio frequencies.

**F. Radio Communication Procedures:**

**1. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- i. Members shall respond to calls for service received from the CCC unless directed otherwise by an authorized supervisor.

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- ii. Members shall notify a supervisor anytime they are unable to respond to a call for service or shall be delayed responding to a call for service.
- iii. Members are responsible for promptly responding to another member's emergency request for assistance.
- iv. The response to a call for service dispatched by the CCC may be delayed, altered, or managed by a sworn supervisor.
- v. The CCC dispatcher shall be notified of any modifications or delays of response to a call for service.
- vi. Any modifications or delays shall be requested to be annotated in the CAD by the CCC dispatcher.
- vii. Members may be assigned duties in any area or jurisdiction of the City of Gainesville.
- viii. Members shall be professional and courteous during any police radio or electronic communications and:
  - ix. Follow all accepted Department rules, practices and customs while communicating on the police radio, and
  - x. Make clear and concise communications during police radio transmissions.
  - xi. Members should use established and approved ten codes, signals, disposition codes and plain talk during police radio transmissions.
  - xii. Members should report problems associated with the dispatching of a call for service to a sworn supervisor, Watch Commander, or the Communications Liaison as soon as possible.

### **2. Radio Traffic Regulations:** Department members shall:

- i. Use the police radio system within the guidelines of the Federal Communications Commission, Combined Communications Center, and Department directives.
  - a. Members shall not use profane, indecent, or obscene language or cause any unlawful or malicious interference with other radio communications.
  - b. Field supervisors shall be responsible for taking the appropriate action when a member violates these laws, rules, or directives.
- ii. Use clear and concise language, and keep communications brief.
- iii. Transmit information only for a police or public safety purpose.

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Members shall not editorialize, offer opinions, or make other such comments about calls or units.

- 3. Radio Designators/CAD Numbers:** A current list of radio designators is maintained by the Combined Communications Center. Changes to CAD designators will originate from GPD and will be sent to the CCC.
- 4. Radio Protocol:** Members shall use their assigned radio designators.
  - i. When initiating contact with the dispatcher, members shall wait for an acknowledgment before proceeding.
  - ii. Members shall respond promptly to calls from the dispatcher.
  - iii. When a radio designator is unknown, personnel referring to and/or communicating with the unit with the unknown designator, shall identify the person by rank and last name and/or GPD ID number.
  - iv. Department members shall not use their own names when communicating with the dispatcher in routine situations.
  - v. Members may make an exception to being acknowledged when announcing a single status change immediately after their radio designator.
- 5. Radio Monitoring:**
  - i. Department members working in an operational capacity shall monitor radio traffic. This includes ALL sworn members working, whether in marked or unmarked capacity.
  - ii. Off-duty personnel driving marked and unmarked fleet vehicles (see G.O. 41.3) shall monitor the radio channel that covers the areas in which they are traveling.

**NOTE:** Absent exigent circumstances, deviations from this procedure shall first be cleared through the commanding officer of the member's assigned unit / bureau.
- 6. Recordings:** Members shall not record or publish the contents of any radio message (or recorded message) without the express permission of the Chief of Police or his designee.

### **G. Dispatch Procedures:**

- 1. Call / Complaint Prioritization/Classification:**
  - i. The Gainesville Police Department, shall establish a formalized police response system that protects the lives and property of the citizens of Gainesville.

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**ii. Call Classification/ Prioritization The CCC adheres to the following priority rankings in dispatching calls for service to members:**

- a** The Alachua County Sheriff's Office Communications Center (CCC) handles law enforcement calls on a prioritization system. Calls are prioritized 1 through 7, with 1 being the most urgent.
- b** Priority 1 - Any call involving injuries or where the threat of serious injury exists.
- c** Priority 2 - Any call involving a serious crime in progress/just occurred where the likelihood of injury does not exist.
- d** Priority 3 - Any call where quick response is needed to preserve a crime or crash scene following an incident that just occurred, apprehend or locate a subject, take charge of a prisoner, prevent further injury or property damage or maintain the peace, etc.
- e** Priority 4 - Any call requiring non-immediate dispatch of personnel for the reporting of a crime.
- f** Priority 5 - GPD calls by phone. A copy of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office COB SOP 5.5- Law Enforcement Call Prioritization/ Holding Calls for Service policy is attached to the end of this order as a reference. [41.2.1.a.b.c]

**2. Unit Deployment:**

- i.** The Combined Communications Center assigns member(s) to a call based on the member's assignment and availability.
- ii.** The first unit dispatched to a call shall be the 'original' unit, unless the dispatcher or a supervisor changes the assignment.
- iii.** When a non-dispatched unit's proximity to a call can significantly decrease response time to an emergency, and/or increase officer safety, that unit shall reference that call and notify the Combined Communications Center of their location.
- iv.** Responding units must advise the dispatcher of their response, arrival, and availability.
- v.** Two sworn members and a supervisor shall be assigned to high-risk calls (as provided for in the Communications' call handling procedures). If no back-up is available, the dispatcher shall advise a field supervisor, who will decide whether to send the original unit without a back-up.

**3. Diversion from Original Call:**



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- i. **Dispatcher's Discretion:** If a higher priority call comes in while officers are enroute to other calls, the dispatcher may reassign units.
  - ii. **Officer's Observation:** Department members who observe an event or receive a citizen complaint while enroute to assigned calls, may decide to discontinue to the dispatched call when the intervening incident is more urgent or poses a greater risk to life.
    - a. The dispatcher shall be notified immediately of the change and based on the priority system and unit availability, either reassign the original call or hold it for an available unit.
    - b. If, based on available information, the member chooses not to handle the observed incident, the member shall notify dispatch of the situation and, if circumstances permit, give the citizen instructions for obtaining or awaiting assistance.
4. **Emergency or Serious Call Information:** When assigning a serious or an emergency call, the dispatcher shall broadcast pertinent information, as soon as it is available, to all field units.
- i. Available details, such as elapsed time from occurrence to report, suspect's direction and mode of travel, condition and number of suspects, reported injuries, and/or the presence of weapons shall be relayed.
  - ii. Revised information shall continue to be broadcast until the dispatched unit's arrival. The on-scene unit will then be responsible for further updates.
5. **Officer / Member Safety:** Sworn personnel in the immediate area are encouraged to check on other Department members who are conducting a traffic stop, on-site investigation, etc.
- i. If a dispatcher cannot raise a Department member, the alert tone may be used in an attempt to raise the unit.
  - ii. If the unit cannot be raised, another unit (s) will be sent to check on the status of the on-scene member and a field supervisor shall be notified
6. **Supervision:**
- i. **Field Response:**
    - a. Supervisors are dispatched to calls according to criteria identified in the Combined Communications Center policies, procedures, and Law Enforcement Call-Handling Guide.

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- b Supervisors will assess critical incident and other emergency scenes upon arrival and assume command if and when necessary.
- c Supervisors should respond to scenes when circumstances indicate their presence is needed.

The same criteria identify calls that require, at a minimum, supervisory notification.

- d Supervisors shall also respond to field units' requests for assistance, when on-scene assessment is indicated, and for other routine purposes.
- ii. **Monitoring Field Activities:** Field supervisors shall remain aware of field officers' assignments and status. Field supervisors normally refers to patrol supervisors, such as Sergeants, Acting Sergeants, Patrol Lieutenants, and FST supervisors.

Supervisors shall, when practical, monitor such assignments and ensure that adequate responses are deployed.

7. **Reporting Arrival:** Members shall advise the dispatcher when they arrive at the location to which they have been dispatched, or to which they advised they were enroute via radio or computer.

Members shall also notify the dispatcher prior to changing their location during the course of a call. The member will advise the dispatcher when they arrive at the new location via radio or computer.

8. **Changing Channels:** Field units must advise the dispatcher they are changing channels.
- i. Members must notify the Combined Communications Center before utilizing or switching to an inter-agency or special operations channel.
  - ii. Members may request to speak with dispatchers or communications supervisors on other channels and shall wait for acknowledgement before switching channels.
9. **Observed Situations:** A member who observes a non-dispatched situation requiring police assistance, shall inform the dispatcher of their location, the nature of the situation, and other important details.

10. **Traffic Stops:**

- i. When making a traffic stop, sworn personnel shall initially contact the dispatcher with their radio designator and the appropriate code. [CALEA 81.2.5.a]
- ii. After being acknowledged, the unit shall supply the following information in the listed order: location, tag, and description of vehicle. If the officer is aware of high-

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risk circumstances such as the vehicle being stolen or suspect of a particular crime, they shall also provide this information.

- iii. When the stop is complete, the unit will go back in service, and provide the appropriate code for the action taken via their radio or computer.
- 11. Requesting Medical Response:** When medical treatment is requested/needed, Department members shall contact the dispatcher, request "EMS," and supply the following information when applicable:
- i. Whether the patient is conscious and breathing,
  - ii. The patient's apparent condition / symptoms / complaints,
  - iii. Whether special equipment is needed to extricate the subject,
  - iv. Number of patients,
  - v. Whether the situation is an emergency or urgent.
- 12. Requesting the Fire Department:** When requesting a response from Gainesville Fire-Rescue or Alachua County Fire Rescue, members shall provide the following information, when applicable:
- i. Location/access,
  - ii. Type of object burning,
  - iii. If fire and/or smoke is seen,
  - iv. Size of building and portion affected,
  - v. Whether the structure/vehicle on fire is occupied,
  - vi. Number and type of injuries.
- 13. Back up Units:** The dispatcher should send a unit to back up another unit on police calls when reasonable and warranted.
- i. Unless the call is a mandatory two-unit call, back-up may be canceled by the original officer.
  - ii. Supervisors shall have the authority to initiate the dispatching of a back-up unit based on the information or type of call dispatched. Supervisors may also override an officer's decision to cancel a back-up.

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- iii. **Officer-Initiated:** The assigned member has the responsibility to assess the situation, evaluate the need for, and request additional assistance if needed.
  - a When requesting back-up, members shall contact the dispatcher, and state whether the response should be routine or emergency.

If the member does not specify "routine response" and the dispatcher cannot determine the type of back-up needed, the request should be processed as an emergency request.
  - b When an individual radio Emergency Call Button (ECB) is activated, the dispatcher shall place the channel on emergency traffic, send back-up units, and attempt to contact the member to determine if the activation is valid or accidental.
- iv. **At the Police Station**
  - a **Front Desk:** When sworn or non-sworn members assigned to the front desk need assistance from sworn members, the following shall occur:
    - 1) **Emergencies:** When the member requests assistance via Communications due to an existing emergency, Communications will dispatch unit(s) to respond.

Sworn Members within hearing distance shall respond when they reasonably believe another member is in distress or needs immediate assistance.
    - 2) **Routine:** Front desk personnel shall request assistance from the Combined Communications Center.

Depending upon the call, the Combined Communications Center will identify and send the most appropriate unit(s) to assist, or to handle the call.
  - b **Other Locations in the Building:** If members need police back-up, they shall when possible, request assistance giving the circumstances and their exact location.
    - 1) Members within hearing distance will respond when they reasonably believe another member is in distress or needs immediate assistance.
    - 2) The Combined Communications Center will also dispatch the closest available assistance.

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14. **“Priority” Transmissions:** Field units shall use the term "priority" to indicate an immediate need to transmit urgent information when incidents do not warrant emergency traffic.
15. **Emergency Radio Traffic (10-33):** All radio transmissions on the designated channel shall be limited to broadcasts pertaining to the incident prompting the use of emergency traffic.
  - i. **Initiation:** Either communications or operational personnel may initiate a broadcast of emergency traffic.
    - a **Communications:** Emergency traffic will be broadcast followed by the dispatch and management of the relevant call.
    - b **Officer:** Shall request “emergency traffic” or “10-33”, give the location (if unknown to dispatch), and provide information regarding the request and/or circumstances.
  - ii. **Notification:** Communication personnel will announce on all channels, the channel designated for emergency traffic, the information related to the request and/or situation, and designate an alternate channel for normal operations.
  - iii. **Non-Involved Field Units:** The units not involved in the relevant incident shall switch to the alternate patrol channel designated by the Combined Communications Center.

If all available channels are on emergency traffic, units shall remain on their primary channel and wait for a channel to clear or instructions from the Combined Communications Center.
  - iv. **Radio Traffic:**
    - a Units not assigned to the relevant call may only transmit urgent messages pertaining to the incident/situation on the emergency channel.
    - b When field units have information pertaining to the relevant situation, the field units shall state their radio designator and the word “**reference**” on the designated emergency channel.
  - v. **Supervisory Notification:** Communications personnel shall ensure that the shift commander or a patrol supervisor is notified when an emergency traffic situation exists.
  - vi. **Maintaining / Terminating Restrictions:**

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- a Communications personnel shall ensure that restrictions on radio transmissions are maintained.
- b Supervisors shall continue to monitor and evaluate the necessity for the use of the designated emergency traffic channel.
- c The initiating member, original member dispatched, or other members on scene shall cancel emergency traffic as soon as practical.

**H. Teletype Channel:** The teletype channel is a resource that is utilized by members to receive and disseminate information including, but not limited to, the following:

1. **Wanted Notifications:** The dispatcher shall immediately notify the field unit of the possible want and ask the field unit if they need/wish to request a back-up unit.
  - i. The dispatcher shall advise the officer that confidential information exists by using the code "1065-1035."
  - ii. When the officer advises it is safe to broadcast, the dispatcher shall use the code "10-99" to inform members an outstanding warrant may exist.
  - iii. **Verification:** Members who have received an initial want hit shall request the teletype operator to verify the existence of the warrant as well as extradition with the entering agency. Until verified, a computer want shall not be used as the sole basis for an arrest; however, depending on the severity of the crime the subject may be wanted for, the suspect may be handcuffed.
2. **BOLO Broadcasts:** Department members should contact the Communications Center by telephone or computer to broadcast non-emergency BOLO's.
  - i. Short BOLO's, information about emergency situations, or information regarding recent incidents may be transmitted by field units over a dispatch channel.
  - ii. Members shall request (and receive) clearance from the dispatcher operating the channel to be used prior to making the broadcast.
3. **Trespass Files Inquiry:** Department members may request that the teletype channel operator the trespass files by location or name to determine if a person has been issued a trespass warning.
4. **Tow Log:** A log of all vehicles towed by GPD and area tow truck services (in the city limits) is maintained at the Combined Communications Center.
  - i. Members shall inquire with the Combined Communications Center, when taking a stolen vehicle report, to determine if the vehicle in question may have been towed.

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- ii. Members initiating a [contractual wrecker] tow shall report all pertinent information to the teletype operator for entry into CAD.
5. **Criminal History Information:** Normally, the member should call the teletype operator for criminal history data.
- i. **Confidentiality:** Criminal history information is confidential and for law enforcement use only. Members are responsible for the security and dissemination of the information they request.
  - ii. **Contact:** Department members may request a summary of a subject's criminal history via the teletype operator. This should normally be done by phone.
  - iii. **Response:** Only a summary of criminal activity may be broadcast over the radio.
  - iv. Officers who want/need a copy of a suspect's criminal history shall obtain it through normal agency protocol or the GPD records division.
6. **Release:** Messages sent or received on the teletype channel shall be regarded as official Departmental business and shall not be divulged to persons outside the Department unless necessary for Department operations.
7. **Other Requests:**
- i. **Telephone Contacts:** Members may request that the teletype operator make contact with specified persons when necessary in the performance of a law enforcement function.
  - ii. Members may request the cross referencing of addresses and phone numbers, information on premise histories, concealed weapons permits, noise violations, domestic violence injunctions, and other types of information via the teletype operator.
- I. **Officer Safety Procedures:**
- 1. The Combined Communications Center must be notified whenever a member is using another member's radio or a pool portable radio because each portable radio transmits the ID number of the member to which the radio is assigned.
  - 2. **Routine Safety Inquiries:**
    - i. The dispatcher shall, within the first five minutes of the arrival of field unit(s) on the scene of any call, conduct a unit check if no additional radio transmission has been received from them.
    - ii. The dispatcher shall send sworn personnel to check on units that do not answer.

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3. **Emergency Radio “Roll-Call”:** An emergency roll-call may be used when an unidentified Department member asks for help.
  - i. The dispatcher shall activate the alert tone, announce the emergency roll-call, and then raise each unit by transmitting each unit’s radio designator.
  - ii. Only emergency transmissions may be made during the roll-call.
  - iii. Department members shall acknowledge with their radio designator only.
  - iv. The dispatcher shall assign sworn personnel to check on members who do not answer.
  
4. **Non-Emergency Radio "Roll-Call":** A non-emergency roll-call may be used to account for units during times of slow activity, when operations are shifted to a new frequency, or when there is a failure of the computer dispatch system.
  - i. The dispatcher shall use the alert tone and raise each unit by transmitting each unit’s radio designators.
  - ii. Department members shall acknowledge with their radio designator and location.
  - iii. The dispatcher shall assign sworn personnel to check on members who do not answer.
  
5. **Emergency Call Button (ECB):** May be activated by any Department member who is in need of emergency assistance and/or is unable to talk on the radio.

**J. Alert Tone:**

1. A steady alert tone (a high-pitched tone) shall be used by the dispatcher to alert members that an urgent dispatch is pending, when a radio channel is placed on emergency traffic, or to contact personnel who fail to respond to a dispatcher.
2. A variable warble alert tone shall be used to announce an ECB activation or that a member is in a trouble situation.
3. A pulsing alert tone shall be used to announce special, all-frequency broadcasts, such as channels being restricted, out-of-service, or other important information.
4. When an alert tone is sounded, all radio communications shall discontinue until the dispatcher has completed the urgent dispatch or announcement.

- K. Clearance/Disposition Codes:** Members shall promptly return to service after completing a call and provide the proper disposition code.



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1. Members clearing calls-for-service shall enter the appropriate disposition code into Visinet or advise via radio. If necessary, any additional information regarding how the call was managed should be added in the "ADD CMNT" button within the Visinet call screen and not the comment line in the call clearance screen prior to clearing the call.
2. In those instances where more than one report is generated by the original member, a clearance code shall be given for each report.

### **L. Radio Failure:** If a member is unable to transmit they shall:

1. Attempt to determine if the source of the problem is with the radio (i.e. check your battery, microphone connection, channel setting or other possible failures.)
2. Listen for radio transmissions or instructions, if no instructions are heard, stop attempting to transmit and switch to channel C-11.

This channel shall be operating in emergency mode only. Restrict communications on C-11 to essential traffic only. Member shall terminate all non-priority patrol functions (i.e. routine traffic stops).

3. Members shall check their MCT and Visinet for further instructions from a field supervisor.
4. Supervisor Response
  - i. Verify primary radio channels are inoperative. (See steps 1-2 above)
  - ii. Switch to channel C-11 and attempt to raise the Combined Communications Center. All radio transmissions shall be preceded with GPD and CAD designator (i.e. "GPD S123")
  - iii. Determine if you have Instant Message capabilities via the MC and Visinet. Real time information/instructions can be provided to field units and communications via MCT utilizing an "ALL" message.
  - iv. Coordinate instructions/directions with other supervisor and the Patrol Lieutenant.
  - v. The Patrol Lieutenant or designee shall respond to or call Combined Communications Center (utilizing conference call phone number, 352-955-1809) for the Coordination of Public Safety Response.
  - vi. The Patrol Lieutenant shall send out a Command Staff page.

### **M. CAD Failure:**

1. **Notification:** If the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system fails, the dispatcher will issue a pulsing alert tone and then make an all-frequency announcement.

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2. **Minimizing Radio Traffic:** Department members will restrict radio traffic to essential transmissions during the transition period from CAD to the manual system.
  3. **Field Unit Security Check:** A roll-call of Department members may be necessary to verify each unit's location and status.
  4. **Announcing Service Resumption:** The dispatcher will advise when the system has returned to service.
- N. Care and Maintenance of Departmental Equipment:** Members shall use Department communication equipment in an efficient, effective, and lawful manner.
1. **Department Members' Responsibilities:**
    - i. Are responsible for keeping their equipment charged and for obtaining prompt repairs regarding any malfunctions.
    - ii. Shall not repair or modify any Department radio equipment.
  2. **Repairs:**
    - i. Repairs, modifications, and/or adjustments shall only be made by authorized radio technicians.
    - ii. When repairs or adjustments are needed, the member assigned or using the equipment shall take it to the Property Section.
  3. **Pool Radios:** When a member's radio is out for repair, he/she may check out a pool radio from his/her respective areas. Portable radios should be available in operational subcomponents of the Department.
    - i. The issuing supervisor shall sign in/out on the radio sign in/out sheet and record the pool radio number in case of ECB activation by the borrowing member,
    - ii. The borrowing member shall notify Communications that he/she has a pool radio, return the radio by the end of the shift (even if he/she must check it out on his/her next tour of duty) to ensure its availability for the next shift.
    - iii. Any deviation from this rule must be evaluated and approved by a commander/designee.

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**By Order of**

*Signed Original on File in the  
Accreditation Unit*

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**Tony R. Jones  
Chief of Police**



**ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**Technical Services Division/Communications Operations Bureau**  
**5.5 – Law Enforcement Call Prioritization / Holding Calls for Service**

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PUB: 04/20/21  
STATUS: Current

- I. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 10, 2015  
**RESCINDS:** New
- II. **SCOPE AND PURPOSE** – This procedure applies to all Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) Communications Operations Bureau (COB) personnel and establishes policies and procedures for call prioritization and call holding for law enforcement radio dispatchers working Gainesville Police Department (GPD) and ACSO radio channels. [PSCAP 6.2.3M]
- III. **POLICY** – The ACSO will have a policy to ensure that the highest priority calls are dispatched first and that all calls are held only when necessary. Calls will be prioritized in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible protection of life safety and provide the best possible customer service to the citizens of Alachua County. [PSCAP 6.2.3M]
- IV. **DEFINITIONS**
  - A. **CODE FOUR** – A condition under which a call for service exists, but the necessary resources to send to it are not currently available. Indicated in calls by the notation “C4” followed by the ID number of the patrol supervisor who was notified. Synonymous with “holding calls” or “calls holding.”
  - B. **SNA** – Sector Not Available. In CAD narrative, indicates a call holding where neither the indicated zone nor the other zones in the sector have an available unit.
  - C. **F/PSTNA** – Field/Police Service Technician Not Available. In CAD narrative, indicates a call holding which should be handled by a FST or FST, but none is currently available.
  - D. **NCA** - No Cars Available. In CAD narrative, indicates a call holding where no units are available.
  - E. **PSN** – Patrol Supervisor Notified. Used to indicate in CAD narrative that a patrol supervisor is aware of a holding call.
  - F. **NO BU** – No Backup Unit Available. In CAD narrative, indicates that a dispatched call should have had an additional unit sent, but did not, as none were available at the time of dispatch.
- V. **CALL PRIORITIZATION** – The COB handles law enforcement calls on a priority system. The purpose of the call priority system is to ensure that law enforcement units are dispatched to the calls that represent the highest risk to life safety first, followed by risk to property. Calls for service must be categorized according to their nature in order to ensure maximum effectiveness of the law enforcement mission. [PSCAP 6.2.3M a & b]
  - A. Calls are prioritized 1 through 7, with 1 being the most urgent.

1. Priority 1 – Any call involving injuries or where the threat of serious injury exists. [PSCAP 6.2.3M b]
  2. Priority 2 – Any call involving a serious crime in progress/just occurred where the likelihood of injury does not exist. [PSCAP 6.2.3M b]
  3. Priority 3 – Any call where quick response is needed to preserve a crime or crash scene following an incident that just occurred, apprehend or locate a subject, take charge of a prisoner, prevent further injury or property damage or maintain the peace, etc. [PSCAP 6.2.3M b]
  4. Priority 4 – Any call requiring non-immediate dispatch of personnel for the reporting of a crime. [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]
  5. Priority 5 – ACSO and GPD calls by phone. [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]
  6. Priority 6 – ACSO calls in the lobby. [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]
  7. Priority 7 – ACSO calls handled by phone that are to be handled by a sworn deputy. [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]
- B. Call prioritization provides the COB with a mechanism that will ensure that law enforcement units are dispatched according to the greatest need without delay. [PSCAP 6.2.3M a]
- C. Calls for service with the highest level of urgency as determined by the nature and circumstances of the call will be handled ahead of less urgent calls. (PSCAP 6.2.3M b)
1. Dispatchers are required to review each call received on their terminal to evaluate if the signal and priority are appropriate, make necessary changes to call priority, and determine whether the call will be dispatched or redirected for phone reporting.
- D. Priority 1 and 2 calls cannot be held. [PSCAP 6.2.3M b]
1. If no units are available, the dispatcher will give a general broadcast of the call on all primary channels requesting any unit that can clear, and notify the appropriate Patrol Supervisor.
  2. Units assigned to lower priority calls or on meal breaks may be diverted by the dispatcher to respond to Priority 1 and 2 calls.

## **VI. DISPATCHING AND HOLDING CALLS [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]**

- A. When possible, calls should be dispatched to the unit assigned to the zone in which the call falls.
1. Calls should be screened by the dispatcher to determine if they should be handled by an FST/FST or by phone instead of sending a sworn unit in person.
  2. If the call requires an in-person response from a sworn unit, and the appropriate zone unit is available, and no higher-priority calls are holding (either in that zone or in another zone that the unit in question may respond to), that unit should be sent.
  3. If the unit is unavailable, the dispatcher should weigh the priority of the holding call against how soon the unit is likely to clear, and make a decision as to whether the call should be held or dispatched to an adjoining zone.
    - a. If the situation is questionable, seek patrol supervisor approval or guidance.

4. Holding calls can be dispatched to adjacent zones or other zones in the same sector or district if the zone unit is unavailable.
5. For GPD – Dispatch zone first, then team, then district. [PSCAP 6.1.3]
  - a. For holding priority 1 or 2 calls, send and notify.
  - b. For holding priority 3 or below calls, seek approval before sending.
6. For ACSO calls by phone
  - a. If Teleserve is staffed, all calls by phone should be handled by that unit(s).
  - b. If Teleserve is not available, FSTs should be utilized for calls by phone within their capability.
  - c. Calls by phone requiring a sworn deputy should be dispatched to Charlie zone, then Alpha zone, and lastly Echo zone, in that order based on unit availability.

#### **B. Call Holding Time Limits**

1. All law enforcement calls received by COB must be acted on (meaning the call must be dispatched or the Patrol Supervisors notified of the call holding and notated in the narrative of the CAD call) within the following time parameters:
  - a. Priority 1 – two (2) minutes [PSCAP 6.2.3M b.]
  - b. Priority 2 – five (5) minutes [PSCAP 6.2.3M b.]
  - c. Priority 3 – thirty (30) minutes [PSAP 6.2.3M b.]
  - d. Priority 4 – sixty (60) minutes [PSCAP 6.2.3M c.]
  - e. Priority 5 and below – one hundred twenty (120) minutes [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]

#### **C. Code 4 Back-up Status**

1. If a call requires two (2) units and only one (1) is available:
  - a. The dispatcher may ask for “*any unit that can clear to back [unit] on a [signal...] at [location], advise.*”
    - i. It is important to advise the location so that nearby units can better identify whether they should or can respond to the call.
  - b. If no one responds to the request for a back-up unit the dispatcher should notify a patrol supervisor who will either authorize the unit to respond alone or to hold the call until a backup can be located.
  - c. Patrol supervisors are not to be dispatched as backup units, but may voluntarily assign themselves until another unit can be located.

#### **D. Calls**

1. Priority 1 or 2 calls must be dispatched immediately. If no units are available, broadcast the call in accordance with VI.D.1. If no units respond, notify a supervisor. Priority 1 calls must be acted on (dispatched or supervisor notified) within two (2) minutes. Priority 2 calls must be acted on within five (5) minutes. [PSCAP 6.2.3M b]
  - a. Priority 1 law enforcement calls must be dispatched.

- b. Priority 1 law enforcement standbys (such as medical calls where no law enforcement problem is occurring) must be acted on during the two (2) minute time limit. This action can be dispatching the call, or it can be conferring with ACFR/GFR dispatch to determine if their responders believe law enforcement will be needed, and acting in accordance with their response. It is permissible in these instances to hold the call until ACFR/GFR can make the determination. A patrol supervisor should be notified of the situation.
  - c. Patrol supervisors will monitor the calls holding screen. When available, patrol supervisors will make notations in the narrative indicating awareness of the call holding and any special instructions related to the call.
2. Patrol supervisors need to be notified of all calls holding unless: [PSCAP 6.2.3M c]
- a. Priority 5 calls that are directed to the GPD Front Desk to handle.
  - b. Priority 6 calls are designated thus because the caller is physically at ACSO's station. Priority 6 calls should be evaluated based on their circumstances, not their priority, and handled accordingly. A supervisor should be notified of all holding calls where the caller is at ACSO station, both because of the customer-service ramifications and the potential risk to records personnel.
  - c. All call notifications to supervisors should be noted in the CAD narrative of the call, to include the ID of the supervisor who was notified.
3. GPD Specific [PSCAP 6.1.3]
- a. Prior to the expiration of the holding time limit, the GPD radio operator will ask the appropriate GPD patrol supervisor to call a communications supervisor on one of the designated supervisor phone lines reference Code 4 notification.
  - b. The GPD radio operator will notify the communications supervisor that a patrol supervisor has been requested to call in for Code 4 status.
  - c. The COB supervisor will review the holding calls with the patrol supervisor and follow the direction given.
  - d. The COB supervisor will document the instructions from the patrol supervisor in each CAD narrative, and will also ensure the GPD radio operators are made aware of the instructions.
  - e. Dependent upon call load and activity, the COB supervisor may direct the GPD radio operator to handle the Code 4 notification and make the appropriate documentation in CAD.

## **E. Callbacks**

1. If the call does not require immediate dispatch, phone contact should be made with the complainant to advise them of the delay and an approximate estimated time of response.
2. If the complainant is satisfied by receiving notice of a delay in response, indicate in the remarks field and dispatch the first available zone unit.
3. During major incidents, call-takers should be instructed to notify complainants who report low priority calls that law enforcement is working a major incident and there may be a delay in response.

