

Narragansett Police Department

40 Caswell Street, Narragansett, RI 02882

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Policy 400.03

Communications

01 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the communications component of the Department; to mandate the authority and responsibility for communications functions within the Department's organizational structure; and to provide guidelines for Department personnel on communications operations and procedures.

02 Policy

The primary objective of the Narragansett Communications Division (NCD) is to satisfy the immediate communications and informational needs of the Police and Fire Department in the timeliest and most efficient manner possible. The NCD maintains a comprehensive reporting system to record requests for service, which includes the continuous monitoring of the status of field units, so as to ensure both safety and the prompt delivery of public safety services. The focus of this policy is on police operations.

03 Procedures

A. Authority and Responsibility

1. The NCD operates under the following lines of command and authority:
 - a. The Captain-Executive Officer is responsible for the overall administration of the NCD.
 - b. The dayshift Patrol Lieutenant is the police liaison for the NCD. He/she will interface between the NCD and the Captain-Executive Officer. She/he is responsible for ensuring NCD compliance with police department rules and regulations.
 - c. Responsibility for the immediate supervision of all dispatcher personnel working during a shift will belong to the on-duty patrol division Officer-in-Charge (OIC).
2. All radio communications will be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.
 - a. The Narragansett Police Department will maintain all appropriate FCC licenses.
 - b. FCC rules and regulations are searchable at the following website:
<https://www.fcc.gov/wireless/bureau-divisions/technologies-systems-and-innovation-division/rules-regulations-title-47>
3. The NCD responsibilities include:
 - a. The Continuous, 24 hours a day/ 7 days per week reception, coordination, and dispatching of radio traffic.
 - b. The reception and dispatching of public safety radio communications.
 - c. The monitoring and coordination of public safety manpower.

- d. The facilitating of communications with other agencies.
 - e. The recording of incident data and the transmission and reception of data to and from state, local and Federal law enforcement entities and systems.
 - f. Reception of data from RILETS, NCIC, BCI, etc.
 - g. Any other such duties as assigned by the Chief of Police.
5. NCD dispatchers have the authority to use any available officer, regardless of beat or assignment, to meet the primary objective of the rapid delivery of emergency services. This is based on the premise that the dispatcher is in the best position to make an immediate determination of officer availability, the seriousness of the call and the number of officers to be dispatched.
 6. Geographic beats are to be respected as long as they do not hinder service response in emergency situations.
 7. The orders, instructions and allocation of personnel issued by dispatchers shall have the full force and effect of an order from the Chief of Police and shall be followed as given unless changed or modified by a sworn supervisor.
 8. The patrol OIC will have the final determination of which and how many officers respond to a call.
 9. The Narragansett Police Department provides toll-free telephone access, (within the Town of Narragansett), twenty-four (24) hours a day. In addition to the 789-1011 & 789-1012 lines, the department participates in the Rhode Island Enhanced 911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System (E911) and maintains two 911 emergency lines.
 10. The Department is equipped with a Text Telephone (TTY) in order to receive emergency and non-emergency calls from the hearing impaired.
 11. Dispatch personnel will diligently monitor the CAD system status timer fields for all units being monitored by the CAD.
 12. Each dispatcher is responsible for maintaining a thorough working proficiency with the CAD system and in staying informed of any updates or changes to the system.
 13. Whenever any outside agency notifies the Narragansett Police Department that their officers or agents will be operating in our town, it is imperative that the call-taker immediately transfer the call via landline to the Officer-in-Charge of the Patrol Division (OIC). If the call-taker is unable to reach the OIC or a supervisor, the call-taker shall gather all pertinent information, such as the location(s) where the officer(s) or agent(s) will be, how they might be identified, and the name and phone number of a contact person within the outside agency. The call-taker shall then notify the OIC or a supervisor as soon as possible who shall then make all appropriate Department notifications.

B. General Radio Transmission Protocols and Procedures

1. The Narragansett Police Department subscribes to a plain language format of radio transmissions that include a minimal amount of Codes and Signals as the use of such codes and signals may make it difficult to effectively and efficiently coordinate and communicate with other public safety service entities should the need arise. Furthermore, the use of a plain-language format assures the accurate flow of information through fewer requests for repeats; fewer mistakes in interpretation or

translation; and fewer code and signal language substitutions. The only approved codes and approved signal is as follows:

- a. Officers will use the 10 code (10-4) to acknowledge reception of a radio message from dispatch or another unit.
 - b. Dispatch and officers will use Code 45 to indicate a subject with an active warrant.
 - c. Dispatch will use response Codes in accordance with policy
 - d. Dispatch and officers will use Signal 7 to indicate a motor vehicle search in accordance with policy.
2. Adherence to the following protocols and procedures by all employees who use the radio system will serve to ensure its efficient use as well as promote the professional image of our agency.
- a. False calls, fraudulent distress signals, superfluous communication, obscene, indecent and/or profane language are specifically prohibited.
 - b. Refrain from displaying emotions, by words or voice inflection, that reveal excitement, irritation, disgust or sarcasm.
 - c. Appropriate language and manner of address shall be used at all times. Additionally, employees using the radio will refrain from:
 - i. Using slang language.
 - ii. Engaging in personal commentary of any type.
 - iii. Referring to other parties on a first name basis.
 - iv. Uttering angry remarks.
 - v. Utilizing the radio system for any non-official purposes.
3. Simple phrases and short direct answers to questions are best for radio transmissions. Laboring explanations are best saved for face-to-face situations unless absolutely necessary under a given set of circumstances.
4. When a department vehicle is being operated by an authorized person and is equipped with a police radio, the operator shall be sure that the radio is in working order and shall monitor the radio while in the patrol vehicle.
5. Field units will not transmit within 200 yards of a blasting operations area.
6. The following procedures apply specifically to Department issued portable radios.
- a. Department owned and leased radios will only be issued to officers who require such equipment for the performance of their duties.
 - b. Officers shall keep their portables in a state of operational readiness and turned on when away from any other police radio.
 - c. Officers shall not store portable radios in a personal vehicle except while transporting them to and from work.
 - d. Officers shall report any lost, stolen or defective radios to a supervisor.
 - e. No radio will be issued without the express permission of the Chief of Police.
 - f. The Dayshift Lieutenant shall maintain a current list of all department radios.
 - g. An annual inventory of the department portable radios will be conducted by the Dayshift Lieutenant or his/her designee.

7. The department approved call signs are as follows.
 - a. Officers shall use their department issued digit badge number as their respective radio call sign.
 - b. Dispatch will be referred to as "Station G."
 - c. When communicating via radio with other agencies, officers shall identify themselves first by department followed by call sign. Example; "Narragansett Police to South Kingston Police".
8. On-duty, non-patrol officers are responsible for maintaining contact with dispatch personnel and their immediate supervisor during their tour of duty.
9. The phonetic alphabet shall be used to spell out unusual names, locations or letters on registration plates. Either the international or law enforcement phonetic alphabet is authorized (See Attachment A below).
10. Officers/dispatchers shall give numbers in groups of three. Example: A VIN #276890009877 should be given as 276-890-009-887.
11. Do not transmit any false or misleading messages over the radio system.
12. Do not use superfluous or redundant words with a code. Jargon such as citizens band language or television/street lingo should not be used.
13. Radios shall never be used for illegal activities.

C. The following general procedures will apply to radio transmissions that occur between officers and dispatchers.

1. When dispatching a single unit call, the dispatcher will call the officers badge number, wait for the officer to respond, and then advise the officer of the location, and the nature of the call. The officer will acknowledge with a clear 10-4.
2. For a two-unit call, the dispatcher will call both officers by badge numbers with the primary unit first. When the officers acknowledge, (in the order they were called), dispatch will provide them with the location and nature of the call.
3. Only badge numbers will be used to identify personnel over the radio. Names will not normally be used.
4. Dispatchers shall use a response code when dispatching each call. If no code is given the response code shall be Code Three (3).
5. After the primary unit and any other units are assigned, the dispatcher shall provide the responding units with any additional information that is essential to ensure the safety of the officers or that may serve to aid in the expeditious handling of the complaint.
6. Dispatchers shall use clear and concise information. They will not provide information via radio, which is not essential to the officer's safety and the investigation of a crime. If time and circumstances allow, officers/dispatchers should use the MDT to relay information, which may be considered sensitive or too lengthy for radio transmission.

7. Dispatch will call an officer/unit twice. If no reply is received, then the dispatcher will wait one minute before calling again. If no response is received at that time, dispatch will send another vehicle to the unit's last known location to check the officer's status/wellbeing and will then notify the OIC.
8. Only one unit will usually be dispatched to non-emergency calls for service. Some calls for service may require additional units to facilitate the handling of the call or to ensure the safety of the officers on the scene. Incidents in which more than one officer will be dispatched include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. An assault in progress or when information that an assault is likely to occur exists
 - b. Any call for service in which weapons may be involved.
 - c. Domestic disturbances.
 - d. Felony vehicle stops.
 - e. DUI motor vehicle stops.
 - f. Suicide attempts or threats.
 - g. Crimes in progress.
 - h. Fleeing suspects.
 - i. Barricaded suspects
 - j. Hostage situations
 - k. Situations involving emotionally disturbed persons.
 - l. Activation of the "panic button" alarm on a portable radio by any employee; whenever a possible duress situation is detected due to the nature of a transmission; or when additional units are specifically requested by an employee.
 - Whenever dispatch personnel receive an activation of a portable radio panic button, the status of the employee to whom the portable radio has been assigned will be ascertained immediately. If no response is received, additional personnel will be dispatched to the last known location of the employee in question. Alternative forms of communication may also be considered when an employee fails to respond subsequent to a panic button activation, including cell phone and telephone notifications, contacting the location where an officer was last assigned or dispatched, etc.
 - m. Any other incident in which a dispatcher feels that an emergency situation exists or is likely to exist.
9. First responders shall notify dispatch as soon as practicable and request the appropriate type of assistance required (i.e., supervisory personnel, specialized Department personnel, emergency medical services, fire apparatus, etc.) whenever an emergency situation arises and/or where the notification of supervisory personnel is specifically mandated by Department policy. In turn, the dispatcher shall immediately notify the OIC and shall dispatch a supervisor to the scene whenever circumstances and/or emergency situations arise which meet any of the following criteria;
 - a. Accidents involving police vehicles.
 - b. Incidents involving building fires and/or suspected arson.
 - c. Incidents involving death, the possibility of death or serious personnel injury.
 - d. Incidents involving any injury to a police officer.
 - e. Incidents involving the commission of a major crime.

- f. Incidents involving an officer requiring assistance.
 - g. High risk situations.
 - h. Vehicular pursuits.
 - i. Reportable use of force incidents.
10. Additionally, the OIC or a supervisor shall be notified of any situation where the dispatcher or any sworn personnel have concluded that the need for an on-scene supervisor exists. Accordingly, whenever the OIC or a supervisor determines that a supervisor is required at the scene, or whenever on-scene personnel specifically request a supervisor, the dispatcher shall immediately direct a supervisor to respond to the scene if one is not already en route.
11. Dispatchers shall not give any first-aid instruction over the phone.
12. The dispatcher shall not make suggestions as to what actions may or should be taken by officers in the field.
13. Officers shall reply promptly when they are called over the radio.
14. Upon arrival at the location of dispatched or officer initiated call for service, responding units will inform the dispatcher of their arrival. When departing the location of a call for service, responding units will inform the dispatcher of their departure and provide the appropriate disposition of the call for service.
15. Officers initiating traffic stops, field interviews, or checks of disabled or abandoned motor vehicles will inform the communications center prior to the stop. Officers will provide their badge number, location and registration plate. The dispatcher or officer shall enter the officer, location, vehicle registration number, and time in the dispatch log.
16. All Officers will advise dispatch, via radio, of their status when:
- a. Acknowledging a call.
 - b. Arriving at the scene of an incident
 - c. Completing the call and returning to service.
 - d. Reporting incidents and conditions.
 - e. Making vehicle, pedestrian or suspect stops.
 - f. Assisting motorists.
 - g. On a call for an extended period of time.
 - h. Going out of service or returning to service for any reason.
 - i. Responding to the vehicle maintenance garage or into the station.
17. Officers observing hazards, accidents, crimes or other incidents occurring within town will be reported via the radio.
18. Officers must keep dispatch advised of their availability and activity at all times.
19. Radio communications must be maintained. Officers will answer radio calls promptly. The receiving party will acknowledge all transmissions.

20. Whenever on patrol, an officer who is going to be away from his/her vehicle will advise dispatch of the fact that he/she will be on portable radio.
21. When requesting license data or RILETS data, officers must give dispatch the name (last name first) of the person being checked and his/her date of birth.

D. The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System

1. The purpose of CAD system utilization is to ensure that the following objectives are met:
 - a. The capturing and recording of complaint data.
 - b. The capturing and recording of officer workload data.
 - c. Increasing the level of officer safety.
 - d. Improving resource allocation.
 - e. Eliminating the duplication of records processing.
 - f. Maximizing the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of police services delivered to the community.
2. Certain information will be recorded for all requests for police service. This information will be entered into the IMC CAD system located in the communications center. This information shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. A call number for the service request as assigned by CAD.
 - b. The date and time of the service request.
 - c. The name and address, or exact location of the complainant (if possible).
 - d. The nature of the service request.
 - e. The location of the reported incident.
 - f. The time the request was dispatched
 - g. The identification of officer(s) assigned as the primary and backup units.
 - h. The time of officer arrival.
 - i. The time the officers returned to service.
 - j. The disposition or status of the reported incident.
 - k. Any pertinent information including, but not limited to, suspect description(s) and vehicle description(s).
 - l. Dispatch will assign a case number to officers for; arrests, accidents, field interview reports and incidents when necessary.
 - m. The CAD system will be used to record when officers are out of service and when they return to service.
3. As much relevant information as possible should be obtained by dispatch personnel to enhance officer safety and assist officers in anticipating the conditions to be encountered at the scene. Dispatch personnel should take care to obtain as much relevant information as possible during in-progress or potentially serious incidents and this information should be promptly relayed to responding patrol units.
4. Dispatch personnel should determine early in a conversation the location of the incident so that the call can be directed immediately to the appropriate agency, if the incident has occurred outside of the Town of Narragansett. In non-emergency, misdirected calls, the caller will be provided with the

telephone number of the appropriate agency. In the case of misdirected emergency calls, the appropriate agency will be contacted.

5. Callers will be informed of the nature of the response by the police department, e.g., immediate response, delayed response, request was forwarded to appropriate agency, etc.
6. In the event that the primary officer finds that the type of call originally dispatched differs from the circumstances found at the scene, the original classification of the incident and the report/ no report status shall be amended in the CAD system, as appropriate.
7. The CAD system displays the current status of each unit on duty that responds to calls for service as their primary function. These units are required to advise dispatch of their location and status, including when they are out of service, throughout their tour of duty.

E. Access to Department Resources

1. The following resources are immediately accessible to dispatch personnel.
 - a. A current duty roster for all department personnel (IMC).
 - b. IMC officer status indicators including the designated officer-in-charge.
 - c. The OIC will be available to dispatch at all times.
 - d. A current listing of the telephone numbers of all department employees.
 - e. A listing of telephone contact numbers for local police, fire and rescue departments.
 - f. Procedures for contacting animal control, and other agencies that are used to provide service to local citizens, (ex. utility companies, public works, etc.).
 - g. A map of the town including the outline of patrol areas shall be kept in the communications center to be used as an aid when needed to determine the proper units to be dispatched.
 - h. Tactical dispatching plans (ex. bank robbery, critical incident response plan).
 - i. Copy of department policy and procedures manual (In Power-DMS).

F. Telephone Communications

1. Proper application of the following guidelines will allow for telephone conversations to be more pleasant and will ensure that callers are receiving efficient professional service. At all times be professional and control the conversation.
 - a. Identify yourself and this department upon answering the phone. Example; “Narragansett Police, Officer Jones, or Dispatcher Smith” speaking clearly and slowly.
 - b. Be sure to obtain the nature of the call, the location, the caller’s name and phone number. Obtain any other information, which may be needed by the officers responding.
 - c. Explain what your action will be as the result of the phone call. Example; “I will send an officer to see you at your home”.
 - d. Explain any delays.
 - e. Properly log this information into the IMC System.
 - f. False calls, fraudulent distress signals, superfluous communications and obscene and/or profane language are specifically prohibited.
 - g. Officers/dispatchers will not use words or voice inflections, which reflect or indicate sarcasm or irritation.

G. Emergency Notifications

1. Delivering of death notifications will be done in accordance with the “Death Notification” policy.
2. The O.I.C will determine which other notifications are “emergency” notifications. The department will make every reasonable effort to assist other law enforcement agencies.
3. Dispatchers should confirm the nature of the message and obtain information necessary to identify and re-contact the person making the request.
4. The assigned officer will be informed of the reason for the notification.

NOTE: This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer’s civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

By Order of:

Chief of Police

Attachment “A”

Law Enforcement Phonetic Alphabet	International Phonetic Alphabet
A-Adam	A-Alpha
B-Boy	B-Bravo
C-Charles	C-Charlie
D-David	D-Delta
E-Edward	E-Echo
F-Frank	F-Foxtrot
G-George	G-Golf
H-Henry	H-Hotel
I-Ida	I-India
J-John	J-Juliet
K-King	K-Kilo
L-Lincoln	L-Lima
M-Mary	M-Mike
N-Nora	N-November
O-Ocean	O-Oscar
P-Paul	P-Papa
Q-Queen	Q-Quebec
R-Robert	R-Romeo
S-Sam	S-Sierra
T-Tom	T-Tango
U-Union	U-Uniform
V-Victor	V-Victor
W-William	W-Whiskey
X-X-ray	X-X-ray
Y-Young	Y-Yankee
Z-Zebra	Z-Zulu