

**University of Chicago Police Department  
PROCEDURAL ORDER**

		<b>Effective Date:</b> January 23, 2023	<b>Number:</b> <b>PO 701-10</b>
<b>Subject</b> Call-Handling Procedures			
<b>References:</b> CALEA Communications 6.2.7, 6.2.8, 6.5.2			
<b>Reevaluation Date</b>			<b>No. Pages:</b> 9
<b>Amends:</b> 30 NOV 2022 Version		23 SEP 2015 (ODP)	<b>Rescinds:</b>
<b>Approved By:</b> Kyle L. Bowman, Chief of Police		Signature: Signed document on file in Accreditation Office.	

**I. PURPOSE**

The UCPD Emergency Communications Center (ECC) is a 24-hour emergency dispatch center, operating within the Strategic Operations Center. The following procedures shall be adhered to when handling calls.

**II. PROCEDURES**

**A. Conduct of Call Takers/Dispatchers**

1. Maintain control of the conversation
2. Treat every caller with courtesy and respect
3. Speak in a calm, competent and decisive tone of voice
4. Display an interest in the caller
5. Ensure responder, caller and/or patient safety
6. Never give legal advice
7. Avoid using jargon, slang or abbreviations used among public safety personnel when speaking to the general public
8. Terminate calls positively and courteously

**B. Answering Emergency Calls**

1. Emergency and seven-digit emergency numbers have answering priority over administrative lines and every attempt to answer emergency lines within 10 seconds, shall be made. Any routine call in progress shall be placed on hold until each incoming emergency line is answered to determine if it is an emergency call. Ask the caller if they can hold before placing them on hold, and wait for acknowledgement.

2. Emergency calls will be answered, "University of Chicago Emergency Communications Center (Last Name)." Conforming with national practice and ensures uniformity.
3. Non-emergency calls will be answered, "University of Chicago Police (Last Name)."

C. Placing Emergency Calls on Hold

1. Emergency calls may be placed on hold when the call taker/dispatcher is extremely busy with multiple emergency calls. However, the decision to do this must not jeopardize the responder, caller, and/or public safety. The goal is to manage call volume effectively, as a large influx of calls in a brief period of time may exceed available resources.
2. All waits, holds, transfers or other delays will be explained to the caller so they understand what is happening. Failing to advise a caller that they are being placed on hold often causes the caller to think that the call taker/dispatcher has hung up, resulting in another incoming call from them.

D. Information Gathering

1. Verify all information on the screen (i.e. a well-known location which calls frequently).
2. The "5W+H+WH technique" (who, what, where, when, why, how, weapons and hazards) should be used to gather information about the nature and location of the emergency.
3. Pre-arrival instructions for police and fire emergencies will be provided by the call taker/dispatcher. The call needs to be monitored long enough to make sure that all is covered.
4. Supervisors or other personnel, if available, will be asked to assist in making contact or relaying information to any other party if it is necessary to ensure proper handling of the call.

E. Communications with Responders

1. Call takers/dispatchers will instruct callers to remain on the line while responders are contacted. The exception is when caller and/or patient safety is jeopardized.
2. Call takers/dispatchers will update responders when pertinent new information is obtained.

3. Call takers/dispatchers will contact both EMS and police for suicide and attempt suicide calls.
  4. Call takers/dispatchers will contact both EMS and police for human poisoning calls. The Poison Control center may be contacted as needed.
  5. Call takers/dispatchers will contact both EMS and police for drug overdose calls. The Poison Control center may be contacted as needed.
  6. Call takers/dispatchers will handle any incident involving injury resulting from criminal conduct (stabbing, shooting, etc.) by contacting police first, then EMS immediately after. Call takers/dispatchers will advise EMS that the police have been contacted.
  7. Call takers/dispatchers will handle any non-criminal incident with known or unknown injury (i.e. traffic crash) by contacting police first, then EMS and fire subsequently as required.
- F. Multiple Calls for the Same Incident  
Call takers/dispatchers will ensure that the current caller does not have a different emergency or have additional important information about the same incident. Call takers/dispatchers will relay any new information they receive from a separate caller.
- G. Non-Emergency and Prank, Emergency Calls
1. Call takers/dispatchers will inform non-emergency callers to use the administrative line for the agency, and may give that number to the caller if there is time to do so.
  2. Call takers/dispatchers will verify information.
  3. Call takers/dispatchers will handle prank and non-emergency calls firmly by reinforcing the proper use of the emergency line.
- H. Emergency Calls from Other Jurisdictions
1. Answering an emergency call from another jurisdiction brings responsibility for providing enhanced emergency services to the caller, who may never get the chance to place another call. When calls for emergency service or assistance are received and another agency has jurisdiction, all necessary information shall be obtained. This information will be relayed immediately to the concerned agency. If at all possible, an emergency call should not be transferred.

2. If an emergency call must be transferred, explain the reason(s) to the caller and give the operator (if one is used) enough information to transfer the call correctly.

I. Abandoned and Hang Up Calls

1. Call takers/dispatchers will call back immediately using the Automatic Number Identification (ANI). If the number is busy after two call back attempts, an officer will be sent to that location.
2. Call takers/dispatchers will ask to speak with a responsible party, preferably an adult, to determine if an emergency exists.
3. If the phone is answered but there is no voice communication, attempt to establish communications using the TTY.
4. If the phone rings but there is no answer on the first attempted call back, send an officer to that location.
5. If contact is made, but call takers/dispatchers sense that something is wrong, immediately send an officer to check on the situation.

J. Silent/No Voice Emergency Calls

1. Call takers/dispatchers will repeat the standard greeting.
2. If there is no reply, call takers/dispatchers will ask the caller to press a key on the phone or make a noise.
3. If there is still no reply, call takers/dispatchers will attempt to establish communications by using the TTY, as it is possible that a TTY caller has failed to signal.
4. If none of these procedures elicits a response, send an officer.
5. If the silent call is from a wireless phone, the call taker/dispatcher will stay on the line long enough to determine whether the call is an emergency, and if possible, notify a supervisor before disconnecting the call.

K. Traffic/Transportation Incidents

Call takers/dispatchers will notify police and, if needed, Environmental Health and Safety, on the basis of the information provided by the caller. Call takers/dispatchers will determine the presence of hazards, such as smoke, leaking fluids, etc.

L. Victim/Witness Information Procedures

Call takers/dispatchers are often the first contact a victim or witness has with the police after a crime or critical incident occurs.

1. Call takers/dispatchers are charged with assisting the public and treating all victims and witnesses with fairness, compassion, and dignity.
2. Call takers/dispatchers shall work to ensure the initial contact sets a proper tone by using a supportive and empathic approach to assisting the victim or witness.
3. Call takers/dispatchers shall provide comprehensive information and other relevant assistance whenever a victim or witness calls the police to report a crime or other critical incident.

M. Call Prioritization

1. Proper call prioritization is essential to ensure necessary resources are dispatched to meet emergency needs.
2. Call takers shall be diligent in questioning callers to assess the true nature of a situation and determine if an emergency exists. Care must be exercised to evaluate all information received from the caller and not rely on screaming or call demeanor to determine if an emergency exists.
3. Call takers, assisted by the Computer Aided Dispatch System, will prioritize calls and assign units as follows:

Priority 1 (P1): Calls where life is known to be in immediate danger or in progress felonies or just occurred felonies.

- a. “In-progress” includes just occurred events where the offender may be in the area and prompt dispatch is necessary for citizen safety or apprehension.
- b. “Just occurred” generally refers to less than five minutes from occurrence to reporting.
- c. Two officers and a supervisor shall be dispatched. The supervisor should advise if they will or will not respond to the call. If the primary supervisor is not available, other supervisors may be cross-dispatched.
- d. Officers responding should advise if they need further backup. If a supervisor is not responding to the scene, the dispatcher may dispatch further units, unless the primary officer signals “disregard back-up”.

Priority 2 (P2): Calls that may turn into life threatening situations but it is not known that human life is in immediate danger and in-progress or just occurred non-felony crimes.

- a. All "in-progress" forgery/fraud calls will also be classified and dispatched as Priority 2.
- b. Two officers shall be dispatched. Supervisors should be notified and respond as they deem necessary.
- c. Officers responding should advise if they need further backup or a supervisor.

Priority 3 (P3): Calls that pose no immediate threat to life or property.

- a. One officer or community service officer will be dispatched.
- b. Officers or community service officers responding should advise if they need further backup or other assistance such as traffic direction.

N. Priority Dispatching

1. Calls will be dispatched based on their established priority rating.
2. Generally, calls in the same priority will be dispatched on a first come, first served basis, based on available units. However, consideration may be given to dispatching a field unit which is closest to a pending call to avoid cross beat dispatching and efficiently deploy available resources.

O. Call Holding Threshold

1. Priority 1 calls shall be dispatched immediately. In the event that an emergency call for service is received and the zone car is unavailable, the next closest unit will be dispatched, even if it means calling a car from another district. The dispatcher shall notify the manager or supervisors if no units are available for a Priority 1 call.
2. Priority 2 calls shall be dispatched as soon as a unit becomes available. In the event that other high priority calls for services are received and the zone car is unavailable, the Supervisor will be notified. If the assigned zone car would be unavailable for more than 10 minutes, based upon the type of call the zone car is handling, the Supervisor will have the call holding assigned to the next closest unit (including a unit from another district if necessary) or in certain instances, handle the call themselves.

3. Priority 3 calls shall be dispatched as soon as a unit becomes available. However, the dispatcher shall notify the manager or supervisors if a Priority 3 call has been holding for 30 minutes or longer.
4. Patrol supervisors are responsible for assigning calls for service for dispatch and determining which calls can be held for dispatch pending unit availability. Dispatchers are to make notations in CAD notes explaining calls held by a supervisor or if there no units are available for dispatch.

P. Non-English Speaking Caller

A language line for Dispatch is utilized to eliminate language barriers. If the call taker/dispatcher does not have an approved language certification on file they may communicate briefly with the non-English speaking caller as they are connecting to the Language Line, trying to determine the circumstances and location of the incident.

1. Upon receipt of a call from a non-English speaking reporting party, the call taker/dispatcher will take the following steps:
  - a. Dial 1-888-808-9008
  - b. Enter the 8-digit PIN Number 76561768 at the prompt, then clearly state the language needed. If the language is not known, the interpreter will conduct a brief interview to determine what language the caller speaks.
  - c. Any significant information should be confirmed with the translator once they have joined the conversation.
2. Working with the Language Line Operator:
  - a. When a Language Line interpreter is accessed, the interpreter shall be advised to relay to the caller what is occurring with their call and to stay on the line until the call is complete. Brief questions should be asked and after each, the interpreter relay the question to the caller in their Language, relay the answer back in English.
  - b. If the connection with Language Line is delayed, or the interview is not progressing, an incident shall be created. As the situation is determined from interview, the incident shall be upgraded or downgraded accordingly, and a fire/EMS incident created.
  - c. The Language Line should be utilized as long as necessary to conclude the call safely.

Q. Calls from Elderly and Children Callers

Calls from the elderly and children may present special challenges. Sensitivity must be shown if the caller is having difficulty hearing, is experiencing confusion or has some physical limitations. Callers may be afraid, not understand the seriousness of the call, or think that they will get into trouble for calling. It is important that call takers use good judgment to determine the nature of the incident and the priority of the response. Call takers should accommodate their vocabulary to the level of understanding of the caller, not make assumptions and ask specific questions. A call taker that is having difficulty obtaining information from an elderly or child caller should forward the call to their immediate supervisor.

R. Calls from Difficult Callers- Under Substance Influence, Mental Issues, Obscene

1. Calls that are received from intoxicated, profoundly emotional, incapacitated, or obscene callers or those who may be suffering from mental health issues may have a real need for police or medical service and should initially be handled in a manner as any other calls for service.
2. Calls for which the nature cannot be determined shall be dispatched as a well-being check or unknown problem, with any further information becoming available, being relayed to the responding UCPD unit.
3. Office of Emergency Management and Communications will be contacted, for any call in which a fire or medical problem is indicated.
4. Any call during which the dispatcher is unable to take control within a reasonable length of time the call shall be forwarded to the on-duty supervisor or police supervisory personnel, as appropriate.

S. Calls for Non-UCPD University Departments or Personnel

Calls received, which are intended for University Departments or Personnel, which are not related to UCPD, will be transferred to the appropriate University office or phone, if Dispatch call volume allows. Customer service being the goal.

T. **TTY/TDD ACCESS PROCEDURES**

ECC is equipped with Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) in accordance with the Emergency Telephone System Act (50 ILCS 750/6.1) to ensure that persons who are hearing or speech impaired have equal access to emergency services.

If a call comes in and it sounds like no one is on the line, but the TDD screen displays, or if the TDD tones are heard, the telecommunicator should first ask the caller (via typing), what is the address of your emergency," followed by "GA" (go ahead) indicating to the caller it is their turn to type. Telecommunicators should process TTY/TDD calls following call taking policy, procedure, and protocol.



1. TTY/TDD Training is provided during initial training for the communications training program and every telecommunicator will be retrained every six months.
2. TTY/TDD Testing will be conducted and documented by an ECC supervisor for the monthly test of the TDD system to ensure equipment is functioning properly.