



| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|------------------------|
|  | LEXINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER | Distribution | General Order Number |
| | | ALL PERSONNEL | 10.04 |
| | | Original Issue Date | Reissue/Effective Date |
| | | 01/06/2024 | 01/06/2024 |
| Order Title: COMMUNICATIONS - OPERATIONS | Accreditation Standard: | Section | |
| | 81.2.3; 81.2.4; 81.2.6; 81.2.10; 81.2.11; 81.2.12; 81.2.13; 82.2.5 VLEPSC: ADM 24.02; 24.05; 24.06; | 10 | |
| | | Rescinds: | |
| Section Title SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES |  Angela M. Greene, Chief of Police | | |

This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this general order is to establish a written directive that describes the Lexington Police Department’s procedures and guidelines regarding the operation of the Communications Section.

II. POLICY

The Communications Section of the Lexington Police Department shall be operated in an efficient and routine manner. Instructions given by dispatchers shall be considered to be instructions from the shift supervisor, and must be complied with, as would other orders.

III. DEFINITIONS

Communications System: Conveys information from the public to the Lexington Police Department through the Dispatch personnel to the field officer who responds to the call for assistance, to other law enforcement, emergency services and public service agencies, and to the Records Unit.

ID or Radio Number: This is the number assigned to members of this Police Department for the length of their assignment, by rank or position, and will be used as the officer's radio call number and as a badge number.

CAD Computer Aided Dispatch record management system where Communications Unit personnel enter information into a computerized database. This information is then relayed to personnel as necessary.

NCIC: The National Crime Information Center is a computer system controlled and operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington DC, that gives law enforcement agencies access to information on warrants, criminal histories, stolen property, and missing persons statewide and nationwide.

VCIN: The Virginia Criminal Information Network is the state-wide system used by law enforcement personnel to maintain law enforcement-related information across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. General

1. The Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center shall operate twenty-four (24) hours a day for emergency and routine telephone calls.
2. The Communications Manual will be maintained by the Regional Communications Center Director that will detail procedures for performing telephone, radio, teletype, and automated data communication functions.
3. The use of unprofessional language, arguing, and unauthorized communications over the radio, is strictly prohibited. The Dispatcher will take control of the radio frequency and initiate the proper code to correct offenders.
4. The Dispatcher will prioritize Police radio traffic giving attention to the most serious call first.
5. The Dispatcher may impose radio silence for handling serious calls.
6. Dispatchers shall brief their relief concerning unit status, prisoners, significant cases in progress and any other information necessary to properly carry out their duties.
7. At the start of the shift, the dispatchers shall inspect the equipment to ensure it is in proper working order. Any time that equipment is not functional, the appropriate repair service shall be notified.
8. At the end of their shift, the Dispatchers shall ensure that the dispatch area is neat and orderly.

B. Telephone Procedure

1. "911" Calls

- a. "911; What is the location of your emergency."
- b. If an emergency exists, the dispatcher shall:
 - Obtain sufficient information to dispatch appropriate police, paramedic, fire and ambulance response,
 - Obtain information to complete a computerized complaint entry and generate a call number,
 - Remain in contact with the complainant, if possible, and relay appropriate info to responding units.
- c. If no emergency exists, the dispatcher shall:
 - Advise the caller to dial the routine police line if it is a police matter,
 - Advise the caller that they have reached an emergency number if it is not an emergency matter and terminate the call.

2. Misdirected Calls

- a. If a misdirected "911" call is received:
 - Communication Personnel shall transfer such calls to the appropriate agency.
 - Communication Personnel shall stay on the line until the agency answers or in case the caller disconnects before being connected.
- b. If a misdirected routine call is received:
 - Communication Personnel shall direct the caller to the appropriate agency by providing the appropriate phone number to the caller.
- c. When an emergency (911) call is received for service outside the Town of Lexington, the appropriate agency will be contacted:
 - The 911 dispatcher shall obtain as much information as possible from the complainant and will relay it to the proper agency.
 - Under no circumstance shall personnel tell a caller to redial in an emergency situation.

3. Routine Calls

- a. Routine calls for the Lexington Police Department directed by the auto attendant to communications will be answered "Lexington Police Department, Dispatcher (last name). How may I help you?"

- b. Calls for Lexington Police Department Personnel shall be directed to the proper office/telephone extension or voicemail.

4. Collect Telephone Calls

The dispatcher shall accept all collect calls for any employee of this police department or from anyone calling on behalf of an employee. Under normal circumstances, no other collect calls will be accepted.

5. Communicating with Hearing or Speech Impaired Persons

- a. The Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center/Lexington Police Department is equipped to communicate with hearing and/or speech impaired persons.
- b. The Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center has a seven (7) digit TTY device that interfaces with 911.
- c. The Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center also retains 1-800 telephone number that enables a hearing person to communicate with a hearing and/or speech impaired person.

Note: This 1-800 telephone service is available (24) hours per day, (365) days per year.

C. Requests for Service by Telephone, Mail, or Email

- 1. The Lexington Police Department may receive incident report information by telephone, through the mail, or email in lieu of on-scene response by a field officer for the following types of complaints:
 - a. Lost/stolen marker plate
 - b. Lost/stolen cell phone
 - c. Damaged mailbox
- 2. The above types of calls shall be entered into CAD in the following manner:
 - a. Telephone Complaints: Telephone calls received by Dispatch personnel will be turned over to the bureau that normally would investigate the complaint. If no Officer is available, enough information should be obtained so that an Officer can telephone the complainant, witness, etc. back when available;
 - b. Mail or Email Complaints: All mail complaints received by the Records Unit or by Command Staff will be turned over to the Patrol Division Commander

that normally would investigate the complaint, for distribution to their personnel.

D. Radio Procedures

1. Initial transmissions shall be identified as to the person transmitting and the person contacted, (e.g., Central to 2100).
2. Under normal circumstances, the dispatcher should wait to be acknowledged before continuing to transmit or request information.
3. Officers will advise the dispatcher by radio whenever they are going to initiate any police activity.
4. The dispatcher will record the information and show the officer out of service.
5. When an incident involves units from other jurisdictions the Dispatcher or field supervisor will determine the appropriate radio channel to assure coordination and control of all field units.

E. Complaint and Dispatch Procedures

1. The dispatcher taking a complaint will obtain sufficient information to dispatch appropriate police, paramedic, fire, and ambulance response.
2. The dispatcher will make an CAD entry at the time the call is received.
3. A computer-generated numbering system will be utilized to record requests for service in the CAD System, as entered by Dispatch Personnel, and will record the following information:
 - Call or Incident Number
 - Date and time of request,
 - Time of dispatch,
 - Time of officer's arrival,
 - Time of officer's return to service,
 - Time other services (fire, ambulance, etc.) dispatched.
 - Name, address and phone number of complainant (name will be requested by dispatcher - refusal will be noted),
 - Type of incident will be recorded and a dispatch code will be assigned depending on the type of incident and according to incident code list in the in-house computer system.
 - Location of incident, including specific addresses and, where applicable, names of business,
 - Officer assigned as primary responder,
 - Officers assigned as backup,
 - Registration number of any motor vehicle involved in the incident,

- Name or ID of Dispatcher or person taking call.
- Disposition or Status of the call
- Assignment of case numbers as needed.

NOTE: Detailed instructions for the operations of the CAD system are available on-line with the program.

4. The dispatcher shall provide the assigned unit and backup units with the following information, if known:
 - Type of call,
 - Status of call (e.g., active, inactive),
 - Location of call,
 - Identity of complainant,
 - Risk factors (e.g., weapons present, history of violence, etc.),
 - Additional information the dispatcher believes would be helpful,
 - Information requested by the assigned Officers.

F. Priority of Calls

1. Priority will determine the order in which pending calls will be displayed on the status screen and determine the order in which they should be dispatched.
2. **High** indicates a highest level of response. **Low** indicates the lowest level of response.
3. Priority Codes are programmed into the CAD Table Files to automatically suggest call priority
4. **High:** Immediate response of unit as recommended by CAD,
 - All active crimes in progress, or having just occurred within minutes of the being reported,
 - Active situations where there are injuries,
 - Active situations where there is a possibility of injuries.
5. **Medium:** The area officer or additional officer will respond to non-active complaints within their assigned patrol boundaries. These calls should not be stacked and should be delegated to other Officers as manpower allows.
6. **Low:** Non-priority complaints that will be responded to by the area officers or additional officers. Under normal circumstances there will be no time limit if the complaint is stacked.

G. Multiple Officer Response

1. Some calls may require response by several field units if the problem is to be dealt with effectively and safely. The Dispatch personnel will obtain enough information from the caller to categorize the call for service and will assign additional field units to an incident if there is reason to believe they may be needed to handle the situation.
2. When police units respond to the Dispatcher, only verbal responses will be acknowledged by the Dispatcher. If after an appropriate time, the unit fails to respond. Dispatch personnel will call the unit and make sure the unit is clear and has received the call.
3. The following will be used as a guide to multiple field unit response:
 - a. An assault on an officer or an officer's call for assistance;
 - b. On-scene arrest for a felony or violent misdemeanor;
 - c. Resistance to an arrest;
 - d. Use of force;
 - e. Any crime in progress;
 - f. A fleeing suspect;
 - g. Any call involving weapons, other than simple calls on hunters;
 - h. Domestic disputes;
 - i. Mentally unbalanced person investigations;
 - j. Burglary/Robbery alarms;
 - k. Motor Vehicle accident with potential for traffic problems;
 - l. First Aid calls where CPR or other backup assistance may be required;
 - m. Upon request of the responding field unit, if based upon the officer's judgment there is a need for additional field units to respond;
 - n. Any calls where, in the judgment of a Supervisor or the Dispatcher, there is a need for additional field unit(s) to respond;
4. Any additional Patrol or Detective units dispatched on a call are expected to clear the scene as soon as it has been determined that their presence is no longer needed to deal with the situation.

H. Supervisor Response

1. In order to assume command, a supervisor shall be dispatched and will respond to the scene of the following incidents, whenever possible:
 - a. All sudden and untimely deaths;
 - b. All shooting calls, other than calls on hunters;
 - c. Verified robbery calls;
 - d. Burglaries in progress;
 - e. Serious assaults;
 - f. Serious injury accidents/fatal accidents;
 - g. Major fire calls;
 - h. Natural disaster calls;

- i. Reports of sexual assault;
- j. Hostage or barricaded suspect calls;
- k. Officer-needs-assistance calls;
- l. Kidnapping;
- m. Incidents in which municipal property is damaged in excess of five hundred (\$500.00) dollars;
- n. All motor vehicle accidents involving Department vehicles;
- o. Incidents involving large groups, strikers, protesters, etc.;
- p. Bomb threats.

I. Radio Check

1. Radio checks serve three purposes:
 - a. It verifies that the units checked are available for calls.
 - b. It verifies that both base and mobile radio equipment are operating properly.
 - c. The absence of a response by an Officer may indicate radio problems or other kinds of problems.
2. Radio checks will be utilized at the following times:
 - a. Any time that a unit on call status has not been heard from for thirty (30) minutes.
 - b. Any time that a unit responding to a dangerous complaint, or making a vehicle stop, fails to give a status report, via radio or telephone, within five minutes of signing out of the vehicle.
3. FCC call letters should be auto transmitted via morse code and given out every thirty (30) minutes per FCC regulations.

J. Specific Response

Personnel shall adhere to the below listed guidelines and refer to specific dispatch protocols listed in the DISPATCH OPERATIONAL MANUAL.

K. EMS Emergencies

1. The Lexington Fire Department is Lexington's medical first responders.
2. When the Lexington Fire Department is dispatched to a medical emergency, officers should only respond to said medical emergency and render aid under the following conditions:
 - a. If in close proximity,
 - b. if dispatched,
 - c. If requested by the EMS personnel,

- d. If a crime is suspected.

L. Alarms

1. Lexington Police Department does not accept direct monitoring of security alarms. Upon receipt of any alarm from a central station service, the dispatcher will:
 - a. Obtain all details necessary to determine the proper response,
 - b. Dispatch one officer to respond and one officer as a back-up unit, if necessary and any other agency that is appropriate,
 - c. Telephone the location involved to determine the status of the alarms and any other pertinent details, and report this information to the responding units,
 - d. In the event of a bank or robbery alarm, obtain the name and clothing description of an employee. Instruct that employee to exit the facility and meet the responding officers to confirm that there is no crime in progress,
 - e. Contact the key holder or the alarm company, whichever is appropriate, and request that the key holder meet the responding officers at the scene, if the business or home is unoccupied.

M. Cell Phone Notifications for Specialty Units

Dispatch has the responsibility for notifying the proper Specialty Units when directed or required. Individuals who are assigned cell phones may be contacted by dialing the proper number. All cell phone numbers will be listed in Rockbridge Regional Public Safety Communications Center.

N. Public Works Notifications

1. Snow call-out,
 - a. The Public Works foreman will be notified whenever frozen precipitation begins to accumulate on roadways or if icy conditions develop.
2. Unsafe Highway Conditions
 - a. Public Works will be notified in all instances involving town roadways that involve the safety of the public or liability of the City of Lexington.
 - b. The State DOT will be notified of problems concerning state highways.
 - c. During non-duty hours, the Public Works will be notified of serious problems concerning city roads.
 - d. Non-emergency problems will be logged through CAD Dispatch and relayed to the Public Works during business hours.

O. Stolen Motor Vehicles

1. Information regarding motor vehicles stolen in the Department's jurisdictional area will be collected from the appropriate case report and entered into the VCIN/NCIC System in accordance with the established format.

Note: The entries will be updated and/or canceled when appropriate.

2. Information received from neighboring police agencies regarding motor vehicles stolen within the immediate time proximity will be disseminated via radio to all patrol units.

P. Emergency Messages

1. Requests for delivering emergency messages received from outside agencies and/or private citizens will generally be accepted.
2. Emergency messages will normally be limited to:
 - a. Notification of illness or death,
 - b. Checking on the welfare of an individual unable to be contacted by a family member or friend (i.e. attempts to locate),
 - c. Notification for outside agencies regarding ongoing investigations.
3. Any questions regarding the appropriateness of a specific request will be directed to the shift supervisor for review and authorization.
4. Attempts to locate for private citizens and notifications for outside agencies regarding criminal matters will be assigned a call number and will be documented by the assigned officer.
5. Notifications for outside agencies regarding non-criminal matters will be recorded as call numbers in CAD.

Q. Emergency Medical Dispatch

1. This Rockbridge Regional Communicaitons Center only authorizes those Dispatch Personnel trained in emergency first aid to give life saving information over the telephone or radio. Those who have been trained will have immediate access to the emergency medical guidelines maintained in Dispatch. In cases involving cardiac and/or respiratory arrest where time is of the essence, such information might be given out based on evaluation of the situation by the dispatcher taking the call. The following should be considered:
 - a. The EMD Certification of the dispatcher with CPR protocol,
 - b. The age and emotional state of the caller,
 - c. The caller's ability to understand and follow instructions.

2. If the decision is made to give CPR instructions over the telephone, the instructions will comply with the following guidelines:
 - a. After securing the necessary dispatch information have the caller remain on the line and advise them help is on the way,
 - b. Activate the EMS response based on the EMS protocol,
 - c. Access the appropriate pre-arrival instructions, and begin instruction with the caller. If the caller is hesitant or refuses; encourage them to help,
 - d. If the caller declines, attempt to stay on the line with them to update the victim's condition until EMS units arrive,
 - e. Pre-arrival instruction will be given as presented on-line or by hard copy,
 - f. Do not instruct caller by memory or personal experience,
 - g. Once pre-arrival instruction has begun, the dispatcher will remain dedicated to the caller until EMS arrive and take over.
 - h. Situations encountered where a call above is received and other dispatch traffic is heavy, or dispatcher is alone, request assistance through the radio intercom or whatever means available to handle other dispatch activities,
 - i. Pre-arrival instructions are located in the CAD with a hardcopy version in Dispatch
 - j. Dispatch will indicate in the CAD call narrative that instruction was given or notation of complainant refusal or other condition preventing instruction.

R. Requests For Service From Victims or Witnesses

1. Public Safety Communications personnel may receive calls for assistance from victims or witnesses involved in ongoing Lexington Police Department cases. When such calls are received the call taker will:
 - a. Determine whether the call requires an emergency or non- emergency response;
 - b. Take down all applicable information and forward to the dispatcher to assign an officer for follow- up;
 - c. Provide information to the victim or witness about the agency's response including law enforcement services and/or referral to other service agencies, whether the call is an initial call or a subsequent call for information.
2. Dispatch personnel will be familiar with the Victim/Witness services as outlined in Lexington General Orders [6.14: Victim Witness Assistance – Administration](#) and [6.15: Victim Witness Assistance - Operations](#).