



## Radio Procedure

### .01 Policy

It is the policy of the Bladensburg Police Department that all voice (radio) communications shall be in "Plain Language." While it is the intent of the policy to require plain language usage, some Ten or Signal codes that are officer safety related or are of a short, routine nature shall remain in affect and be used as indicated in the directive and on an Officer/Communications discretionary basis. This policy supports the National Incident Management System (NIMS) "plain language" compliancy requirements.

Employees shall adhere to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations. False calls or distress signals; unnecessary, unidentified or misleading communications; obscene or profane language; humorous remarks or slang; or the transmission of unassigned radio unit numbers are prohibited.

Transmissions on police radios shall be restricted to official departmental business. Talkgroups may be recorded by Bladensburg or Prince George's County Public Safety Communications at anytime.

### .02 Terms

**Zone:** Primary zone controlled by communications and used to dispatch calls for service.

**B Zone:** Zone used by field units for tactical operations or car-to-car communications.

**C Zone:** Zone used for tactical operations and coordinated by the operations or on-duty incident commander.

**Major Incident (MI) Zone:** Zone used for major incidents and controlled by Prince George's County communications. Officers may not use this zone without authorization.

**Talkgroup:** A virtual radio channel that is the primary means of communication for the department (formerly known as a channel).

### .03 Governing Legislation and Reference

Governing Legislation:

Federal Communications Commission, Private Land Mobile Radio Services, 47 C.F.R. Part 90.

Use of County Public Safety Communications System MOU (March 2010).

Forms: N/A

Reference:

Appendix A—Ten Codes.

Appendix B—Signal Codes.

Appendix C—Phonetic Alphabet.

### .04 Procedure

#### A. General Communication Procedures

All radio communications will be conducted using plain English. In order to maintain brevity and professionalism on the radio, the Department will be using the definitions already established on the current code list. For example, under the new system, instead of using Signal 7 the user would state, "Suspicious Person."

Communication exchanges will be verbally acknowledged.

When transmitting, employees will:

- Speak clear and concise;
- Minimize background noise; and,
- Use unit numbers or ID numbers instead of names.

Confidential or sensitive information shall not be transmitted unless immediate communication is essential for the successful resolution of a situation.

Rules for alternative talkgroup use are the same as normal transmissions. Transmissions will be limited to those necessary to accomplish the assignment.

#### A Zone (DIS)

Unless authorized by the Operations Commander all officers must remain on the "A" Zone Bladensburg talkgroup. On-duty patrol

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officers will notify communications prior to leaving A Zone.

### B Zone (TAC)

B Zone is used for car-to-car operational communications. B Zone may be used for short term tactical operations. Officers will notify the dispatcher before using B Zone.

### C Zone (SAT)

C Zone is used for extended tactical operations. The Operations Commander through the on-duty incident commander shall coordinate extended operations on the C Zone.

### Other Zones

Officers shall not use other zones unless they are assigned to the unit the zone is assigned to or it is operationally necessary.

## B. Emergency Procedure—Radio Failure

### Failsoft

Failsoft is the condition that occurs when there is a radio system failure. The radio stops operating in trunking mode.

To prevent a condition that stops all communication, the system enters Failsoft. In failsoft mode, all transmitters (channels) turn on and operate in a conventional repeater mode. The radios will automatically switch to a predetermined frequency. Several talkgroups will share a frequency. The officer should be able to communicate with dispatch via one of the primary dispatch channels.

### Emergency Calls

When the emergency call button on the radio is activated, communications will receive an alert tone and the officer's identification. The microphone of the portable radio used to declare the emergency will remain open for ten seconds. Only communications and the activating officer will be able to talk on the radio during those ten seconds.

## C. Officer's Responsibilities

Officers shall:

- Keep the dispatcher informed of their status at all times;
- Advise the dispatcher when responding to or present at the scene of an incident;
- Clear all assignments through communications as quickly as practical;

- When a call alert page is received, respond to communications on the talkgroup that he or she was paged from; and,
- Notify the on-duty supervisor immediately when their police radio is lost or stolen.

Officers shall not:

- Make any alterations to the police radio; or,
- Transmit on talkgroups 8D9 or 8F4 unless authorized to do so by Prince George's County SOD or a Prince George's County Police Commander. These talkgroups are reserved for SOD tactical operations.

## D. Clearing Calls for Service

When an officer clears a call, he or she shall give the appropriate CAD clearance code. If a report is written, the ID number of the officer responsible for writing the report shall be given.

## E. Communications with Other Jurisdictions and Agencies.

When an officer communicates with another jurisdiction, he or she shall:

- Use plain English (no 10-codes or signal codes);
- Identify themselves as "Bladensburg Police" followed by their ID number or call sign, for example, "Bladensburg Police #123 to XYZ County;" and,
- Keep communications brief and clear, without excessive talk.

### Off-Duty

Off-duty officers traveling outside of Bladensburg shall communicate with other jurisdictions only when they come upon an incident that would require a 911 call.

### On-Duty

On-duty officer shall not communicate with other jurisdictions or agencies unless operationally necessary or supervisor permission has been obtained.

## F. Equipment

Employees are responsible for the security of the hand-held radio and any related attachments and shall not permit unauthorized use or misuse of the radio or related equipment.

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Employees shall promptly report a malfunctioning radio to their supervisor for action. Employees should obtain a replacement hand-held radio from the Operations Commander, if available.

Officers shall ensure that they have a fully charged battery for their hand-held radio when they start their tour of duty. A "dead battery" can prove to be a serious problem and can be avoided with proper planning.

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HISTORY: Adopted September 1, 2012

This General Order supersedes all other orders and memoranda in conflict therewith.

Authority:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles L. Owens". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

Charles L. Owens  
Chief of Police