



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND
OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Police / Fire Radio Operations*

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505 Police / Fire Radio Operations

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505-A Police/Fire Radio Operations

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505-B Police/Fire Radio Operations

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Approved By:

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the use of radio when communicating with police and fire personnel. All radio traffic will be handled in a professional manner by using the procedures set forth in this manual.

II. PROCEDURE

A. RADIO PRIORITY

1. The radio will be the first priority of a Communications Officer and will be closely monitored at all times. All radio traffic will be as A-Accurate, B-Brief and C-Clear as possible. Units calling Station will not be told to "stand by" until the nature of their traffic is known.
2. The following radio talk groups will be monitored at all times:
Police Channel 1 (MBP CH1), Police Emergency Channel (MBP Emerg), Fire Channel 1 (MBF DSP), Myrtle Beach – Horry County Channel, Fire Emergency (MBFD Emerg). Other talk groups will be monitored as necessary. The unselected volumes on these talk groups shall be kept at a volume sufficient enough to hear traffic on these channels, or muted so as not to interfere with the monitoring of the main channels.
3. If a unit is heard calling on a talk group that is normally not monitored and no exigent circumstance exists, then that unit should be directed back to the appropriate channel.

B. RADIO RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility of a Communications Officer is to transmit available information to responding units to ensure they have the necessary information to respond to the call in the safest and most efficient manner possible.

C. RADIO TRANSMISSIONS

1. The Communications Officer will strive to keep all emotion out of their voice during each transmission. The Communications Officer controls the tone of the call. If the Communications Officer becomes excited, panicked, flustered, agitated or in any way too emotional it will affect the responding units. Each Communications Officer will speak in a clear voice with distinct enunciation and with sufficient volume to be easily understood at all times. The microphone must be keyed 2-3 seconds before beginning a transmission to ensure repeater activation. Radio headsets are provided to each Communications Officer and must be worn by the primary Police and Fire Dispatcher at all times.

D. DIGITAL RADIO RECORDINGS

1. Radio communications in the Communications Center are recorded. Recordings are retained at a minimum to State requirements.
2. Officers are permitted to request radio recordings needed for cases/investigations/court. The officer should email the request to a Communications Supervisor with the Report or CAD Event number. The Communications Supervisor will download the recording to the 30-day storage case folder on the PDNAS Drive. Officers may then upload recordings that are needed as evidence to Evidence.com.
3. If recordings are needed for internal review of a foot pursuit, use of force, or internal investigation, etc., a request will be submitted to a Communications Supervisor with the Report or CAD Event number. The audio files can be burned to a CD or emailed to the requesting supervisor.

E. VIEWPOINT

Communications Officers have the ability to immediately playback radio recordings for the previous two hours using Viewpoint. A Communications Officer needing access to a recording that is more than two hours old should contact a Communications Supervisor.

All Communications Officers have the ability to “tag” recordings within Viewpoint to be easily retrieved at a later time.

F. CENTRACOM

Communications Officers have the capability to identify officers via alias identifier and immediately playback radio traffic using the Centracom system. No telephone recordings are captured on the Centracom system. The instant retrieval at each Centracom work station only captures radio traffic for that position, and only for the selected radio channel. Communications Officers can use this immediate playback to review radio traffic as needed. They do not have the ability to “tag” recordings in the Centracom system.

G. PERSONAL RECORDINGS PROHIBITED

Personal recordings of conversations or activity within the Communications Center is prohibited except as authorized by the Chief of Police or the Support Services Captain. Employees are strictly prohibited from saving any audio files to the desktop or to any personal recording equipment. If a recording needs to be saved for later referral, the employee should “tag” the call in Viewpoint and send a request to a Communications Corporal or Communications Sergeant. If Viewpoint is down, the employee shall make note of the date and time of the phone call so the recording can be searched for later.

H. MULTIPLE TRANSMISSIONS AT ONCE

When two or more units transmit simultaneously and no unit number or radio identifier is available, the Communications Officer will acknowledge with “Two units transmitting” or “Multiple units transmitting.” If one unit can be determined by either voice or radio alias identifier, then the Communications Officer will also acknowledge that unit by number. That will let the other unit(s) know there were several transmissions at once. Once the Communications Officer knows the acknowledged unit does not have emergency traffic then that unit should be told to standby so the other unit(s) calling can be acknowledged. Example: Several units transmit at once. The Communications Officer can tell by the radio alias identifier that one of the units was 268. The Communications Officer will say “Multiple units transmitting, 268?” 268 says “Copy a tag?” The Communications Officer should advise “Standby 268, Other unit?” This gives the other unit a chance to transmit in case there is an urgent situation.

I. EXCESSIVE OR UNPROFESSIONAL TERMS

The Communications Officer should avoid excessive terms when transmitting on the radio. This includes phrases such as "I have a", "Will you respond to", "If you could", "Thanks", "Be advised", "Possibly," etc. The word "notified" rather than "en route" will be used when other agencies or people are requested. Unprofessional phrases and slang shall not be used on the radio.

J. RADIO PROTOCOL

The Communications Officer will not argue with any unit while broadcasting. Should a problem arise with a unit, the Communications Officer will advise the Communications Corporal or Sergeant. Communications Officers shall not go directly to the Officer or Patrol Supervisor unless no one in their chain of command is available.

K. TRANSMITTING ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE

The officers should transmit their own attempt to locate messages or BOLO's whenever possible. After a Communications Officer has received an attempt to locate or BOLO via officer, telephone, or NCIC teletype which involves officer safety and where it is believed the suspect may be in the Myrtle Beach area, the Communications Officer will broadcast the information over the radio to all units and enter the information in the CAD BOLO module.

L. PLAIN LANGUAGE / TEN CODES

The Myrtle Beach Police Department uses plain language radio traffic. The Communications Officer will use the phonetic alphabet when applicable. Certain codes are used for officer safety reasons to supplement plain language. Officers should use plain speech for race/sex. Communications Officers shall use approved codes whenever needed. The signals, ten codes, and phonetic alphabet used by the Myrtle Beach Police Department are as follows:

10-0	Use caution	10-51	Tow/wrecker
10-3	Radio silence	10-52	Ambulance needed
10-4	OK	10-57	Leaving Scene of Accident

10-7	Out of service	10-60	Assault
10-8	In service	10-61	Shooting incident
10-10	Fight in progress	10-62	Homicide
10-15	Disturbance/Disorderly	10-84	Burglary
10-16	Criminal Domestic	10-85	Burglary auto
10-22	Disregard	10-87	Larceny
10-26	Detaining suspect	10-93	Sexually related crime
10-32	Gun Call	10-97	Wanted Person
10-35	Armed robbery	10-95	Under Arrest
10-37	Suspicious circumstances	10-99	Stolen vehicle
10-38	Traffic stop	SIG 10	Narcotics related
10-50	Motor Vehicle Accident	SIG 60	Emergency Backup
		SIG 61	Routine Backup
		SIG 70	Gang-Related Activity

A Alpha	J Juliet	S Sierra
B Bravo	K Kilo	T Tango
C Charlie	L Lima	U Uniform
D Delta	M Mike	V Victor
E Echo	N Novemb	W Whiskey
F Foxtrot	O Oscar	X X-Ray
G Golf	P Papa	Y Yankee
H Hotel	Q Quebec	Z Zulu
I India	R Romeo	

Code 96 = Mental condition

Code 97 = Wanted person

Code 97 NOEX = Wanted person, no extradition

Code 16 = Juvenile

Terrorist Screening Center hits:

T1 = Handling Code 1 – arrest warrant

T2 = Handling Code 2 – possible Dept. Homeland Security detainer

T3 = Handling Code 3 – terrorist watch list

T4 = Handling Code 4 – person of national security interest

M. TRAFFIC ON POLICE AND FIRE FREQUENCIES

Radio traffic on the police and fire frequencies will be handled as follows.

1. When the Communications Center calls a police or fire unit, the communications officer will preface each transmission with "Unit #, Station." (Example: 268, Station or Engine 631, Station) Partial call numbers, such as 68, shall not be used to call or acknowledge a police unit. Partial unit numbers, such as Engine 61 or Truck 44, may be used when calling or acknowledging fire units, as long as the apparatus type is always included. (Example "61" alone is not acceptable, as it is unclear whether the intended unit is Engine 661 or Medic 61).
2. When a police or fire unit calls Station, the communications officer will acknowledge with the complete call or unit number.
3. The communications officer will call a unit by number and wait for a response before transmitting a message. Each unit should call Station and wait for a response before transmitting a message unless exigent circumstances exist.
4. When giving out report numbers it is not necessary to include the two-digit year or all of the zeros at the beginning of the number. The number should be repeated twice, leaving off the year. Example: 12-001234 would be given out as "1234," repeated twice.
5. When giving out CAD Event numbers, the full number to include the year and month shall be given out twice. Example: 1204-02367 would be given out as "1204-02367," repeated twice.
6. When a positive response is received through NCIC and matches the person inquired upon, the communications officer will relay the information to the inquiring officer. This includes data from such files as Wanted, Protective Order, VGTOF, Sex Offender, Supervised Released status, etc. If a positive response is received from the Wanted Persons file, the phrase Code 97 shall be used for officer safety. If a positive response is received from the VGTOF file pertaining to a gang member only, the phrase Signal 70 shall be used for officer safety. It is not acceptable to use either phrase "Is your mic secure" or "Secure your mic" prior to transmitting information from the Wanted Persons file.

N. UNACKNOWLEDGED RADIO CONTACT

1. Police - If a Communications Officer is unable to make radio contact with an officer after three attempts, the Communications Officer will advise the officer's supervisor and announce a lookout for the officer on Channel 1. The Communications Officer will attempt to radio the officer on Channel 2, via cell phone, and via MCT message (if available). The Patrol supervisor will take appropriate action to locate the missing officer and notify Communications when contact has been made.
2. Fire – If a Communications Officer is unable to make radio contact with a fire unit after three attempts, the Communications Officer will notify the Battalion Chief. The Battalion Chief will take appropriate action to locate the unit and notify Communications when contact has been made. If the attempt to make radio contact was to dispatch a call for service, the Communications Officer will dispatch the next due unit, in accordance with the MBFD SOG's.

O. CALL SEQUENCE

When a request for police or fire service is received, the Communications Officer will assign the proper unit, according to beat or station assignments. The Communications Officer will dispatch calls in this sequence:

1. The Communications Officer will advise the nature of the incident before giving the location.
2. The Communications Officer will advise the location:
 - a. When giving out a numerical address for a residence, the Communications Officer will advise the location, enunciating each individual digit of the address separately. Example: 950 White St. shall be transmitted as Nine Five Zero White Street.
 - b. When giving out a numerical address for a business, the Communications Officer will advise the location, giving the business name first, followed by the numerical address, enunciating each individual digit of the address separately. Example: Walmart 541 Seaboard St. shall be transmitted as Walmart Five Four One Seaboard Street.
3. The Communications Officer will advise any additional information pertinent to the call such as suspect, vehicle description, direction of travel, and weapons, person to contact, etc. The Communications Officer will give additional information as

concisely as possible by summarizing the notes and information provided and not reading all the notes verbatim over the radio.

4. The Communications Officer dispatching a call is responsible for relaying any Alert or Premise note information attached to the incident location to the police officers or firefighters responding. If the information is found to be invalid, the Communications Supervisor should be notified to delete or correct the information.
5. If the CAD location information has incorrect information or is missing a business name, the Communications Supervisor should be notified of the verified name/ phone number in order to make the corrections.

P. EMERGENCY ALERT BUTTONS

Police portable and mobile radios are equipped with emergency alert buttons. When the emergency button is activated, the radio monitor in the Communications Center will display the call number of the officer if it is a portable radio or the vehicle unit number. Spare radios have been assigned radio numbers. When an emergency button is activated on these radios, the radio number will be displayed on the monitor. The Equipment Technician will keep a record of spare radios assigned and notify the Communications Sergeant when a spare is issued. When an emergency button is activated, a tone will be emitted from the radio console. The emergency channel (either police or fire) will flash with a red box around it. The console will display the call number or vehicle number of the radio. The unit number on the scroll bar will be red.

The following procedure shall be followed when a police radio emergency button is activated:

1. Emergency Alert Activation – Known Location

In the event an emergency alarm is activated by an officer actively on a call or signed out at a known location, use the following procedure:

- a. The emergency tone shall be silenced.
- b. On the emergency channel, immediately broadcast, “(Unit number) at (location), go ahead with your emergency traffic.”
- c. If an emergency truly exists or the officer cannot be raised on the radio after two attempts, the communications officer will immediately broadcast on Channel 1 that an emergency radio

activation has been received from (specify unit number) and will immediately route back up officers to the location the unit is signed out. Radio silence shall be called on Channel 1 until backup officers arrive at the location and advise the emergency is over.

- d. If the emergency activation is determined to be accidental, through verification with the unit that activated the emergency button, the Emergency channel will be reset.

2. Emergency Alert Activation – Unknown Location

Use the procedures if an emergency radio alarm is activated by an officer whose location is unknown:

- a. The emergency tone shall be silenced.
- b. On the emergency channel, the communication officer will immediately broadcast, “(Unit number), go ahead with your location and emergency traffic.” If no answer, then repeat.
- c. If there is no answer on the second broadcast, the communications officer will go to Channel 1 and broadcast that an emergency activation has been received from (identify Unit number) and that the unit has not acknowledged on the emergency channel. Units shall be routed to the last known location. If no last known location is known, advise a patrol supervisor. The patrol supervisor will determine if radio silence shall be called until the activating unit is located.

3. Silencing and resetting the alarm

The alarm will be silenced and reset on the radio console by:

- a. Click on the red cross icon on the channel with the flashing ID.
- b. Click on the “acknowledge” icon located at the bottom left of the screen.
- c. Click on the “knockdown” icon located at the bottom right of the screen.
- d. Click on “Close.”

4. Emergency Alert Buttons – Myrtle Beach Fire Department

If an emergency alert button is activated, the communications officer will immediately attempt to contact the unit via radio on the

emergency channel, using the wording "(Unit number) proceed with your traffic." If no response is received after two attempts, the Battalion Chief shall be notified and the following actions will take place:

- a. If the unit is assigned to a fire scene, the dispatcher will call the on-scene commander and alert him which unit number transmitted a distress signal and did not respond to attempts to raise him. The on-scene commander will then be responsible for coordinating rescue operations by switching to the emergency channel and trying to ascertain the location of the unit in trouble and will send whatever assistance is necessary to mitigate the situation.
- b. If the unit is assigned to an EMS call, it shall be presumed that they are being threatened and the dispatcher will notify MBPD first (regardless of the jurisdiction of the unit's location, unless on a mutual aid call completely outside of the normal response boundaries of MBFD). If the call is in the contract area, notify HCPD second. Additionally, the shift commander, an engine, and a medic unit will be sent to a staging area near the location of the call and await the arrival of the police. No further attempts to reach this unit will be made until the arrival of MBPD or HCPD.
- c. If the unit is on the air in a normal service mode, an additional attempt to contact the unit will be made as described as above. If the unit does not reply, notify MBPD first (HCPD second, if in contract area) and advise PD of the last known location. The shift commander and one engine and a medic unit should be sent to the last known location or direction of travel of the unit sending the distress signal.

Q. MBFD- Responding to calls of MAYDAY

1. Mayday is an international distress signal in voice procedure radio communications which signals a life-threatening emergency. The call consists of the word "Mayday" stated three times in succession. This is done to prevent the message from being mistaken for a similar-sounding phrase under noisy environmental conditions and to distinguish it from a call about a Mayday message that had already been called. Firefighters use the Mayday call when they are disoriented, lost, injured, out of or low on air, trapped, or whenever they have an emergency and need assistance or rescue. A Mayday message is not used for a routine message or an urgent radio transmission. It is reserved for situations that necessitate immediate attention because the firefighter's life is in jeopardy.

2. Once the fire dispatcher receives the Mayday, he/she will obtain & record all of the LUNAR information from the firefighter calling the Mayday:
 - a. L = Location
 - b. U = Unit
 - c. N = Name
 - d. A = Assignment & Air Supply
 - e. R = Resources Needed
3. The fire dispatcher will confirm that the incident commander is aware of the Mayday. The dispatcher will also record any additional information the firefighter may give, such as size of the hose line, as this may aid the Rapid Intervention Crew, RIC, in locating the firefighter. The fire dispatcher will direct the firefighter to activate his PASS (Personal Alert Safety System) device, if he has not already done so. The dispatcher must correctly relay the LUNAR information to the incident commander with 100% accuracy. The incident commander will communicate directly with the Mayday firefighter and receive periodic status updates from the firefighter as well as the RIC. The fire dispatcher will be prepared to assist the incident commander with a PAR (Personnel Accountability Report) request.
4. The Mayday and RIC operation will remain on the TAC channel it was radioed in on. All other radio communications will be moved to another TAC channel. Continue to manage the tactical objectives of the incident. (We must always remember that if we can put the fire out and vent the products of combustion quickly, we will eliminate some of the deadly conditions for the Mayday firefighter and the RIC.) The fire dispatcher should get an additional communications officer or supervisor to assist with managing multiple radio channels to ensure that full attention can be given to each operation.

R. RADIO FAILURE

1. Modes of operation:

Wide Area Trunking – normal operation of the voice and data network. This would be normal operations.

Site Trunking – loss of system Zone controllers.

Failsoft – total loss of trunking capability and repeater channels are assigned to various agencies based on a Failsoft plan that is programmed into the radios.

In the event of any system malfunction, communications staff will notify the Communications Lieutenant and a Horry County Dispatch supervisor. Horry County Dispatch will notify Motorola

technical staff that will respond to mitigate impact to radio system users.

2. Loss of tower site:

The loss of a single tower site within the voice or data network may or may not require alternate communications methods by dispatchers or units in the field. Coverage in the area surrounding the non-functioning tower site may be limited to none, but normal system operation will continue at other tower sites.

3. Site Trunking mode:

If the zone controller loses communication with any site, that site reverts to site trunking. When this occurs, communication occurs only with the radios within your trunking site. The mobile/portable display shows the currently selected zone/channel combination and Site trunking.

Course of action:

- a. Dispatch will move to the back-up tab on the console, select channel and operate as normal.
- b. Patrol units will not have to make any change.

4. Failsoft:

The Failsoft system ensures continuous radio communication during a trunked system failure. If a trunking system fails completely, the radio goes into Failsoft operation. During Failsoft operation, your radio transmits and receives in conventional operation on a predetermined frequency. You hear a medium-pitched tone and the display shows Failsoft.

Course of action:

The radios automatically switch to a predetermined Failsoft frequency for dispatch and patrol.

5. Complete system failure:

In the event of complete voice and data systems failure, "OUT OF RANGE" will be displayed on radios and in the field.

Course of action:

- a. Use of conventional SCTAC channel, MBPD will use SCTAC1 and MBFD 8TAC93. Dispatch would notify police and fire, via laptop and any other alternate means to move to the appropriate channel. These are in Zone 8; SCTAC. The Communications

section would contact Dennison Coomer at 803.528.8126 and advise that these channels are in use.

- b. If SCTAC is not available; DIRECT radio would be used. MBPD will use SCDIR1 and MBFD SCDIR3. Direct communication is radio to radio and works for a distance of 1-3 miles, depending on the landscape. Dispatch would notify police and fire, via laptop and any other alternate means to move to the appropriate channel. These are in Zone 8; SCDIR.
- c. If Palmetto 800 sites are still operational, the Communications Lieutenant or designee, may contact the Palmetto 800 Network Operations Center at 800.353.0101. They would explain there is a Horry County system or site failure and that two trunked talkgroups (Police/Fire) are temporarily needed for operations. Confirm the assigned talkgroups are in Zone 11, 12 or 13, which are programmed into our radios.

S. MULTI-AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

The Myrtle Beach Police and Fire Departments' mobile and portable radios have the capability to communicate with each other on their radios. They can also communicate with other agencies in the area. The Communications Center Centracom radio system can communicate with other agencies also. In the event of telephone failure, the Communications Center has a radio channel directly from MB Communications Center to Horry County 9-1-1 Center.

T. CLEARING RADIO TRAFFIC IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS—POLICE

- 1. When a situation exists where life is jeopardized or serious personal injury is present or likely to occur, or whenever requested, the Communications Officer shall limit all radio traffic on a particular channel to the situation for which traffic is being held. The Communications Officer will announce, "Radio Silence/10-3 for unit ###." Once the emergency situation has ended and the Communications Officer has been advised to resume radio traffic, announce "Radio Silence/10-3 has been lifted on Channel 1." Also, make this announcement on Channel 2 for the units that were not involved in the emergency situation.
- 2. If an officer inadvertently interrupts radio silence on Channel 1, the dispatcher will briefly state "Radio Silence or 10-3" so the officer knows to switch to Channel 2 for other emergency traffic.
- 3. When radio silence has been called on Channel 1, radio traffic on Channel 2 should be limited to emergency/urgent traffic only. The

communications officers shall acknowledge units calling in on Channel 2 with "(Unit number), go ahead with your emergency traffic." This does not include traffic stops or suspicious persons, unless the officer identifies it as an emergency.

4. Calls for service shall be dispatched over MCT's, if available, or held if not a Priority. Only Priority calls shall be voice dispatched on Channel 2 while radio traffic on Channel 1 is being held. The Communications Officer shall attempt to get a unit on Channel 2 first and only interrupt the held traffic on Channel 1 if absolutely necessary and as briefly as possible. Example: After unsuccessfully trying to get a unit on Channel 2 to respond to a priority call, the Communication Officer will interrupt radio silence on Channel 1 by first announcing, "Emergency traffic," and then directing the unit to switch to Channel 2.
5. If radio silence extends beyond 5-7 minutes on Channel 1, the dispatcher will attempt to get personnel to open a second radio channel for routine radio traffic. We will take into consideration how busy the radio is when making this decision and if personnel are available for a 2nd channel. Officers will be notified on Channel 2 that the channel is open for all traffic.

U. POLICE FREQUENCY AUTHORIZATION

Any unauthorized, unusual, or nuisance transmissions shall be reported to the Communications Corporal or Communications Sergeant. There are other people and agencies that have the ability and authorization to transmit on the Police radio channels. However, if a Communications Officer is not sure whether or not a transmission is authorized then a supervisor should be contacted.

V. CALLING IN THE SHIFT

The Communications Officer is responsible for calling in the shift when authorized and requested to do so by a Patrol supervisor. The Communications Officer will announce, "Dayshift/Nightshift return to Station for end of tour of duty," repeated twice.