
Purpose

It is the purpose of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to establish standard communications procedures that will insure the universal, accurate and timely dissemination of operational and emergency communications between citizens, deputies and supervisors.

Policy

The Cecil County Sheriff's Office recognizes that the police radio is a vital public safety resource, and thus provides members with twenty-four hour, continuous two-way radio communications. In accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements, transmissions on all channels are restricted to official affairs of the Office. False calls or distress signals, superfluous or unidentified communications, obscene or profane language, transmission of unassigned call signals or any other unprofessional conduct is strictly prohibited.

Procedure

Contents:

- I. Duties and Responsibilities
- II. Radio Procedures and Protocol
- III. Lookouts
- IV. Communications Codes
- V. Anonymous, Reluctant and Sex Crime Complainants/Victims
- VI. Requests for Assistance from Other Agencies
- VII. Security and Review of Recorded Conversation
- VIII. Protective Orders
- IV. Electronic Surveillance

- I. Duties and Responsibilities
 - A. Communications Center

By virtue of a Memorandum of Understanding the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services provides twenty-four hour, continuous two-way radio communications between members of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office and the Communications Center; including access to multiple channels for inter jurisdictional or joint communications with police, fire, ambulance and other local government agencies.

- 1. To promote quick and easy access by citizens seeking emergency services, the Emergency Communications Center has designated 9-1-1 as the

single emergency telephone number for twenty-four hour, toll free access to all Cecil County Emergency Services.

2. The Emergency Communications Center maintains a twenty-four hour computer link with all local state and federal Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS & NCIC) to facilitate police investigations.
3. The Emergency Communication Center maintains the equipment necessary to provide the immediate playback of recorded telephone and radio conversations from the communications console.
4. The Communication Center dispatches for 5 police agencies within the County and the county fire/EMS departments. Deputies will limit access in the center to official business and will keep the noise level to a minimum. Cellular devices are to be placed in silent mode while in the Communications Center.

B. Telecommunicator

1. The primary responsibility of the Telecommunicator is to process and dispatch calls for police service and maintain accurate unit status for all deputies operating on the radio channel.
2. Computer queries and requests are a secondary responsibility. Authorized requests and queries from field personnel will be honored when airtime and resources permit.
3. The Telecommunicator will not make tactical decisions. The patrol supervisor, or senior deputy, will be notified of the request for tactical assistance and direction.

C. Communications Supervisor (Shift Supervisor)

1. Has supervisory authority/responsibility for personnel in the communications center.
2. Responsible for ensuring communications personnel comply with all Sheriff's Office policy and procedure.
3. Responsible, along with the patrol supervisor, for maintaining radio protocol and proper decorum of their respective personnel.
4. The Communications Supervisor is responsible for making notifications, coordinating Dispatch operations with other counties and outside agencies,

and ensuring the mission of the Communications Center is performed professionally.

D. Patrol Supervisor

1. The patrol supervisor is responsible for ensuring proper deployment, radio protocol and compliance with all Sheriff's Office rules, policies and procedures.
2. Supervisors will ensure that a schedule of the on-coming shift, which includes the names of the on-duty supervisor and on-duty personnel are provided to dispatch, so personnel on duty can be displayed in communications.

E. On-Duty Personnel

1. Deputies operating on a specific channel will inform Dispatch of their unit status at all times.
2. It is especially important for deputies to indicate their arrival and clear calls for service via radio, as this communication is critical to officer safety.
3. Deputies traveling out of the county for training, court, transports, etc., will notify the Dispatch of their status.
4. Deputies executing search warrants or conducting covert operations including raids and stakeouts will notify Dispatch by telephone just prior to the start of the operation and;
5. Provide the identification numbers of the units involved,
6. The name and unit radio designation of the deputy in charge, and approximate times/duration
7. Dispatch will be notified at the conclusion of the detail.

F. Off-Duty Personnel

1. Off-duty deputies operating an agency vehicle will monitor the radio, and will notify dispatch the unit is in service off duty (10-8 OD)

II. Radio Procedures and Protocol

The Patrol Division Commander serves as office liaison with the Emergency Communications Center and is responsible for maintaining the Sheriff's Office unit radio

designation system, and coordinating the entry of radio designators into the Computer Aided Dispatch System.

A. Radio Designation System

1. Deputies agency identification number will be used as a radio identification number, to be used for both on and off-duty use.

B. Use

1. To ensure interoperability between responding agencies, and at the recommendation of the National Incident Management System Integration Center, “Common Language” will be used in radio communications. Radio transmissions will be concise, and will not contain any inappropriate terms or slang. Deputies should use generally accepted call types in their radio transmissions when appropriate.
2. The police radio is for official business use only. FCC regulations prohibit misuse (including profane language, inappropriate transmissions, clicking microphone buttons, intentionally covering other users, etc.) of public safety radios.
3. Radio misuse is a serious and potentially dangerous breach of safety protocol, and is not tolerated. Idle or personal conversations are prohibited.
4. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining radio protocol and identifying individuals misusing the radio.
5. Members identified misusing the radio or radio system will be subject to corrective action.
6. If a radio transmission is non-essential and lengthy, deputies should use a TAC channel.

C. Brief and Concise

1. Radio transmissions will be brief and concise using the phonetic alphabet, appropriate signals and clearance codes.
2. Radio messages will be acknowledged promptly.
3. Deputies will record, in writing, addresses, suspect description, etc., before acknowledging receipt of the message.

D. Telephone Use Instead of Radio

1. Radio airtime is a premium resource. Deputies making notifications and other routine communications will use the telephone in lieu of the radio when available.

E. Switching Channels

1. Deputies will notify dispatch when they switch from their primary radio channel to another channel. Deputies responding to a call or assisting law enforcement officers in another agency will switch to the channel of the agency being assisted.
2. Deputies will notify the Maryland State Police PCO whenever they are responding to an MSP dispatched call, or assisting Troopers with a call for police service, or other incident requiring coordinated police communications.

F. Traffic Stops and Suspicious Conditions

1. Deputies calling out on traffic stops or a suspicious condition will notify dispatch of their identification number and the activity.
2. The dispatcher will acknowledge the unit, and the deputy will then provide a location and other pertinent information concerning the situation. The deputy should indicate the need for backup at this time.

G. Requesting Computer Checks

1. Deputies will initially announce the type of computer check they intend to request, "100 dispatch, copy a license and warrant check" or "100 dispatch copy for a wanted check". When the dispatcher advises to proceed with the request, the deputy will state in the following order:
 2. Person checks: Last name, first name, middle name, race (use White, Black, Asian, Indian or unknown), sex, date of birth
 3. Vehicle checks: State of registration, tag number or; VIN and vehicle make, model.
 4. Dispatch will provide information requested that may include:
 5. Compulsory insurance information
 5. Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program (VEIP) for suspended tags

6. Tag pick-up orders from Maryland State Police
7. Driving record histories
8. Driving point totals
9. Insurance company and policy number
10. Criminal History Information will not be requested from or provided by dispatch at any time.

H. Notification of Relatives

1. Deputies on the scene of an accident will not request the dispatcher to notify relatives of persons involved in a collision; hospital staff or deputies will notify relatives.
2. Deputies may request the Duty Officer to make routine notifications on behalf of citizens.

III. Lookouts (BOLO)

Lookouts must be timely, complete, and accurate to serve as an investigative aid; lookouts for fleeing suspects may serve as probable cause for arrest and will be broadcast as soon as practical. All other lookouts (e.g., missing persons, runaways, hit-and-run occurred earlier, etc.) will be dispatched as soon as airtime permits and not when units are involved in a call of a serious nature.

A. Types of Lookouts

1. Deputies may place lookouts for individuals wanted for a specific crime or a vehicle when probable cause for arrest without a warrant exists. Lookouts must state the specific crime and must be associated with a written report.
2. Deputy welfare lookouts are permissible, but will not be used in lieu of a lookout for an individual who is wanted for a specific crime. Due to the potential danger to deputies, dispatch should relay all welfare lookouts to all allied police agencies.
3. Lookouts for crimes where no probable cause for arrest exists (stop and obtain information) may be broadcast, but the initiating deputy is responsible for clarifying there is not sufficient information to arrest. The following phrase is to be included with the lookout: "No probable cause exists for arrest." All relevant information regarding the crime will be

included. This category includes crimes for which probable cause exists but arrest without a warrant cannot legally be made. This type of lookout must also be associated with a report number.

4. Traffic lookouts, such as reports from citizens of DUI/DWI in progress and aggressive or reckless driving will be broadcast with as much information as possible.
5. Traffic lookouts will be self-canceling at the end of the initiating deputy's tour of duty unless a report is written and a request is made for dispatch to continue broadcasts of the lookout to subsequent patrol shifts.

B. Procedures for Placing and Canceling Lookouts

1. When an immediate broadcast is necessary, deputies will notify the dispatch, to copy a lookout for (state the charge).” Dispatch will then proceed with the information obtained from the deputy and all deputies on duty will then acknowledge receipt of the look out.

IV. Communication Codes

Deputies will utilize the following radio codes and signals.

A. Phonetic Alphabet

When it is necessary to spell out words or otherwise use letters in radio transmissions, the following phonetic code words will be used:

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 – November	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	

1. When transmitting a name over the radio, the phonetic alphabet will be used.

B. Caution Codes

To provide the safest environment for deputies during violator contacts, specific codes have been established to broadcast information to deputies about individuals that is contained in CRIMINAL HISTORY FILES.

1. The information given to support the use of a caution code should have some verifiable foundation from which it is offered. Materials contained in data base files, e.g. CJIS or other supporting information (e.g. Investigative reports or arrest records) may be used as justification for a caution code descriptor.
2. The codes for broadcasting officer safety information are as follows:

CODE NARRATIVE

A Armed

B Dangerous

C Mental

D Armed/Mental

E Suicidal

F Armed/Suicidal

G Resists Arrest

H Armed/Resists

I Dangerous/Resists

J Mental/Resists

K Suicidal/Resists

L Approach with Caution

M Assaults Police Officers

N Drug User/Seller

3. The code “N”, by itself, does not constitute probable cause or a reasonable articulable suspicion that the person is involved in criminal conduct.

C. EMERGENCY BUTTON

1. When a deputy activates the emergency button on his/her portable or vehicle radio, the dispatch will immediately respond by checking the status of the deputy: *“Dispatch to (unit # i.e. 0000) check your display and advise”*
 - a) The activating deputy will immediately respond if able
 - b) The dispatcher will clear/reset the alarm if it was accidental
2. If there is no response or the deputy request back up, dispatch will immediately dispatch any available unit to respond to the deputies last known location.

D. Disposition Codes

1. To assist with CAD record keeping, the following codes will be utilized to designate the disposition of incidents, calls for service, traffic and criminal enforcement activities.
 - a) Clear, Report required
 - b) Clear, No report required

E. The selection, including the number of units assigned for dispatch to calls is completed by the CAD system. All addresses and intersections have been entered, so that the appropriate deputy will be dispatched, in-turn, and according to patrol area.

1. In the event the assigned deputy is out of service or on another call, CAD will automatically make the adjustment and recommend the next closest deputy for dispatch.

F. Supervisors will back-up certain Part One Crimes, Serious Personal Injury Accidents, Fatal Accidents, DOA’s, and calls requiring CID or Crime Lab, etc.

1. At any time after initial dispatch, the on-duty patrol supervisor may modify the number of units responding.
2. Without exception, during serious incidents, the on-duty supervisor will be notified by dispatch with incident information, and updates.

G. Recording of Status

1. Dispatch will log radio-transmitted activities of law enforcement personnel on and off-duty.
2. Deputies shall communicate with dispatch upon arrival at the scene of an incident, when clearing the scene, when making vehicle or pedestrian stops and other times deemed appropriate by the deputy.

V. Anonymous, Reluctant, and Sex Crime Complainants/Victims

A. Anonymous Complainant

An anonymous complainant is one who refuses to give the call taker a name, address and phone number. Callers are encouraged to provide identification information, however it is not required. All calls will be handled as if full disclosure was made. The fact that a person does not identify himself or herself does not negate the necessity to respond to a call for service. The deputy may obtain the identification information via telephone.

B. Reluctant Complainant

A reluctant complainant is one who provides their identity, but requests the information be kept confidential. The dispatcher will not broadcast the identity of a reluctant complainant. The deputy may obtain the identification information via telephone. Complainant information will not be divulged to suspects.

C. Sex Crime Complainants/Victims

1. The dispatcher will not broadcast the identity of a sex crime complainant/victim over the air. If a deputy requires this information, the deputy will call the Duty Officer.

VI. Requests for Assistance from Other Agencies

A. Deputies must provide the following information, if available, when requesting the assistance of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office:

1. Traffic and non-traffic related injuries
2. Location
3. Type of assistance
4. What if any suspect information is available

B. Deputies must advise of any other hazards that responding units should be aware of (i.e. HAZMAT, etc.)

C. Traffic Signal Malfunctions

1. The Maryland State Highway Administration will be notified by the dispatch supervisor promptly of any signal malfunction reported to dispatch by a citizen; or upon discovery by a deputy.
2. Should the citizen(s) report indicate that the signal malfunction is a potential traffic hazard, dispatch shall dispatch a deputy to investigate.
3. Should the citizen(s) report indicate that the signal malfunction is not a potential traffic hazard and is not inhibiting the flow of traffic, dispatch may dispatch a deputy to investigate the malfunction after notifying the Maryland State Highway Administration.

D. Crossing Jurisdictional Lines

1. When entering neighboring jurisdictions, on-duty units will notify dispatch of their destination, car number, and authorization.
2. In exigent circumstances (e.g., surveillance of criminal suspects), a deputy will notify dispatch. Dispatch will then notify the neighboring jurisdiction and the appropriate Cecil County Sheriff's Office Supervisor.
3. In criminal investigative matters, deputies will request assistance from the neighboring police jurisdiction via the telephone.
4. In all cases, dispatch will be notified upon the return of the deputy(s) to the county.

VII. Security and Review of Recorded Conversation

Recordings of radio and telephone communications are an indispensable resource during training, criminal and internal investigations, and audits of the agency's delivery of services.

A. Security

1. All telephone and radio transmissions shall be recorded on electronic media by the Department of Emergency Services
2. Transmissions will be stored on hard drives for ninety (90) days
3. Upon written request to the Administrator, of the Department of Emergency Services, individual telephone and radio transmission tapes

may be retained indefinitely until the incident is adjudicated or otherwise resolved

B. Requests for Review of Recorded Conversation

1. Sworn members of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office may request a copy of the recording of the information transmitted over police radio or recorded telephone lines from the Department of Emergency Services in the following circumstances:
 - a) Administrative review
 - b) Criminal or Internal Investigation
 - c) Court
 - d) Training
2. Sworn members of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office requesting a copy of the recording from the Department of Emergency Services will complete a brief, CCSO SO-134 (Memorandum) detailing what information is needed, to include the approximate location, start and end times of the incident.
3. Written requests must be approved in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor and Division Lieutenant and forwarded to the Department of Emergency Services.
4. All requests should be submitted a minimum of forty-eight, (48) hours prior to the time the recording is needed. Emergency exceptions to this requirement may be made at the discretion of the Division Lieutenant.
5. Any request for a recording under this section for use in a criminal investigation will be requested and followed up with a subpoena from the Circuit or District Court.

VIII. Protective Orders

- A. Once service of a protection order has been successfully administered, dispatch will be provided with the following information for NCIC:
 1. Names
 2. Date of Birth (DOB)
 3. Social Security Number (SSN)
- B. Exigent request for phone location and caller information

IV. Electronic Surveillance

- A. Pursuant to §18 U.S.C 2702(c) request for electronic Surveillance must be made by the investigating police agency.
- B. It is the responsibility of the CCSO duty officer/officer to initiate any cellular surveillance with the appropriate cellular company.