

	<b>PALACIOS POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>	
	<b>Policy 9.1 Communications Procedures</b>	
	<b>Effective Date: 1/04/2021</b>	<b>Replaces: 02/07/2006</b>
	<b>Approved:</b> <i>Milton Rivera</i> <b>Milton Rivera, Chief of Police</b>	
	<b>Reference:</b> TBP: 3.18, 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04, 9.05, 9.06, 9.07, 9.08 and 9.09.	

## I. POLICY

Accurate communication is essential to the operation of any department. The communications center, which functions 24 hours a day, is designed to provide safety and security for police personnel and to respond to the needs of the public. It is essential that every step in our communication process be conducted concisely, effectively, accurately, and properly.

## II. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for responses to calls received through the 911 system.

## III. DEFINITIONS.

- A. 911: The telephone number 911 is used for emergency telephone communications to the department.
- B. Call-Taker: Any employee who answers a 911 call.
- C. Call-Taker Training Manual: The manual produced by the County 911 Emergency District for the purpose of uniform training of Call-Takers within the district's jurisdiction, which includes this department.

## IV. GENERAL

- A. The Communications Center operates 24 hours a day and has 24-hour two-way radio communication with all members of the department operating in the field. (TBP: 9.01, 9.06)
- B. The Communications Center is a secure facility. No unauthorized personnel are allowed inside the facility without the express approval of a communications supervisor. (TBP: 9.02)

- C. All tours or other visits to the facility will be coordinated and approved in advance by the communications supervisor.
- D. Police personnel will limit their access to the Communications Center to business-related tasks and shall not take breaks, do reports, or otherwise visit personnel inside the Center.
- E. The Communications Center has an emergency back-up generator for power, and keeps portable radios and cell phones for communications in the event of a power failure. In the event of an extended power failure that puts in-coming 911 calls at risk, the 911 calls should be transferred to another PSAP and police and fire-call responses initiated by cell phone or portable radio systems.
- F. The back-up generator is maintained by public works and receives a documented test weekly. The communications supervisor will ensure continuing documentation of generator testing. Any failure during a test will be reported to the Chief of Police immediately. (TBP: 9.04)
- G. The dispatch consoles have a recording system that records all telephone and radio transmissions and allows for immediate playback if necessary. (TBP: 9.03)

## **V. ANSWERING CALLS FOR SERVICE**

### **A. Call-Taker Responsibilities**

1. It is the responsibility of call-takers to answer 911 phone calls by saying, "Palacios 9-1-1. What is your emergency?"
2. Priority 1, 2, and 3 or any other calls requiring police action will be taken on 911 lines.
3. All other callers -- such as those asking for directions, jail information, etc. - - will be immediately instructed to call back on a non-emergency number.
4. Call-takers will not put 911 callers on hold until the call has been evaluated and there is a determination that placing the caller on hold will not further enhance the caller's emergency.
5. It is the responsibility of the call-taker to verbally confirm the ANI and ALI of all calls.
6. It is the responsibility of any call-taker who receives a hang-up or other "unknown circumstance" type of call on a 911 line to do the following:
  - a. Dispatch two (2) units to a "priority 2 UNK911" call to the address displayed on the computer screen.
  - b. Call the telephone number that is displayed on the screen and try to establish communication with the caller for the purpose of informing the responding unit(s) of pertinent data. If communication is not reestablished, the units will be so notified by the dispatcher prior to their arrival at the location.
  - c. Dispatch one (1) unit to "UNK911" at pay telephones where there is no answer on call back or indication of any type of disturbance.

- d. Dispatch one (1) unit to “UNK911” from cellular phone to area of X- Y coordinates of caller location if audio indicated a possible disturbance or an emergency situation.
  7. It is the responsibility of any call-taker to transfer all calls that should be directed to another agency and instruct the caller to stay on the line and that a transfer is being made. The call-taker will stay on the line to verify the transfer. Should the caller hang up, the call-taker will continue to contact the needed agency with the information and inform the agency that the caller disconnected before the transfer was completed.
  8. It is the responsibility of the Communication Supervisors to ensure that all call-takers have been trained and are familiar with the Call-Taker Training Manual as well as departmental general orders.
  9. It is the responsibility of each call-taker to have a working knowledge of the Call-Taker Training Manual and adhere to the instructions contained therein.
- B. When call-takers have dispatched officers they shall complete the CAD dispatch screen with all appropriate information.

## **VI. COMPLIANCE WITH FCC RULES AND REGULATIONS**

- A. Employees will comply with FCC regulations relating to the use of radio communications systems.
- B. Employees will follow established guidelines and procedures as outlined below:
1. Communications involving the protection of life and property shall be afforded priority.
  2. False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals, unnecessary and unidentified communications, and the transmission of unassigned call signals are specifically prohibited.
  3. Employees shall monitor the radio frequency on which they intend to transmit for a sufficient period to ensure that their transmissions will not cause interference to others.
  4. The duration of radio transmissions must be restricted to the minimum practical transmission time.

## **VII. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Only English will be spoken. Clear, concise, and controlled language will be used. Obscene, indecent, profane, or slang language, horseplay, and joking are not permitted.
- B. Units calling the station shall identify themselves by their assigned unit number. They should not continue the transmission until acknowledged by the dispatcher.
- C. Units will give their unit number when responding to the dispatcher.

- D. Officers will not call for another employee by name unless their radio or unit number is unknown.
- E. Officers will advise the dispatcher of their arrival on the scene of a dispatched call using proper radio etiquette or by MDT/MDC.
- F. Officers at a scene will notify the dispatcher if they determine that no other units are needed.
- G. If an incident is found to have occurred somewhere other than at the dispatched location, the officer will update their location by radio or via message to dispatcher.
- H. Upon completion of a call, officers will clear the call in the proper manner via radio or MDT/MDC and immediately go back into service.
- I. Lengthy transmissions should not be made on the radio system's primary channels. Long transmissions should be done over a secondary channel when available, as a CAD message, or via a cell phone if available. Transmissions should always be held to a minimum.
- J. Employees will not become engaged in an argument on the radio. Conflict between an officer and a dispatcher should be referred to the employees' immediate supervisors for resolution.
- K. Officers shall refrain from seeking advice from a dispatcher regarding a point of law, enforcement action, or department policy. Officers should consult their immediate supervisor on these matters or obtain the information from their laptop computers.
- L. Communication with interacting agencies will be by telephone. Communication with Air Ambulances Air One will be by radio or cell phone as required.

## **VIII. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

- A. Transmissions regarding emergencies (e.g., pursuits, serious crimes in progress, etc.) will be given priority over all other transmissions. Units not involved in the emergency will stay off the air until the situation has been resolved.
- B. When an "officer needs assistance" call is received, Communications will make a general broadcast to all units and assign two units and a supervisor.

## **IX. MONITORING RADIO CHANNELS**

- A. Field units will continuously monitor their primary channel.
- B. Investigative, support, and special unit personnel will monitor the patrol channel when they are in the field.

- C. Supervisors may monitor additional frequencies; however, they will remain available on their primary channel.

## **X. RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISORS**

- A. Supervisors will carefully monitor and supervise the use of the radio to assist their officers as needed.
- B. Supervisors are responsible for the radio conduct of their subordinates and should immediately correct improper radio procedures.
- C. Supervisors may be assigned calls when other units are not available.
- D. Supervisors will respond to any call from subordinates and proceed to a scene when requested.

## **XI. CALL HISTORY**

- A. A report containing the following information will be created and maintained regarding each request for police services (call for service) and for officer-initiated activity:
  - 1. Case or service number;
  - 2. Date and time of request;
  - 3. Name and address of complainant, if possible;
  - 4. Type of incident reported;
  - 5. Location of incident reported;
  - 6. Identification of officer(s) assigned as primary and backup;
  - 7. Time of dispatch;
  - 8. Time of officer arrival;
  - 9. Time of officer return to service;
  - 10. Disposition or status of reported incident.

## **XII. RADIO UNIT DESIGNATIONS**

### **A. Field Units**

- 1. Patrol units shall be identified by a three-digit number. The first digit shows the shift number and the last two digits indicate the area assignment of the officer.
- 2. Motorcycles, accident investigator vehicles, and lake units are identified by a three-digit number within the 800 series.

## **ASSIGNMENTS OF CALLS FOR SERVICE**

### **A. Call Priority**

1. The Communications center maintains a listing of the types of calls by priority. Priority 1 calls are those that require an immediate response to prevent injury or loss of life. Some Priority 1 calls are dispatched as emergency calls with a Code 3 response. Other calls are classified as Priority 2, 3, and 4 depending on the nature of the call and which ones should be handled first.
2. The Chief of Police shall establish the call-priority list.

B. Assignment of Priority Calls

1. Units Available/Units Not Available
  - a. Calls for service shall be assigned to the in-service officer responsible for the area in which the call is located. When area officers are not available, the nearest area officer will be selected. Officer safety and call priority will be the primary considerations when selecting alternate area officers.
  - b. Supervisors will monitor dispatching of Priority 1 calls and ensure that officers are immediately available or will quickly become available to respond.
2. Backup Units
  - a. Backups are assigned to ensure officer safety, to help secure crime scenes, and to check the area for suspects. Most calls categorized as Priority 1 will require a backup. The decision to send a backup on a Priority 2 call is decided on a call-by-call basis. However, supervisors or on-scene officers may authorize the response of additional units if they feel backup is needed.
3. General broadcasts can be used for DWI's, auto theft information, warrant information, missing persons, serious weather, and to alert officers of a pending call.

C. In responding to victim/witness calls for information or service, Communications Center personnel will determine whether an emergency or non-emergency response is required and inform the victim/witness of the department's response.

D. Death messages, messages from other criminal justice agencies, and "check welfare" calls will each be entered as a call for service that requires officer response.

E. To improve the use of patrol time, the desk officer will take calls for service that can be handled over the telephone. This does not preclude patrol officers from responding to this type of call for service.

**XIII. COMMUNICATION OFFICER TRAINING** (TBP: 3.18)

A. TCIC and NCIC Operations

1. The Communications Center has access to TCIC and NCIC systems. (TBP: 9.07)
  2. All call-takers will be trained in TCIC/NCIC Full Access and will comply with all rules and regulations regarding operation of the systems.
- B. Communications officers are required to take the TCOLE Basic Telecommunications Officer Course, and they shall also receive initial or refresher training in the following (TBP 9.09):
1. Operations of the computer aided dispatch system
  2. City and departmental policies
  3. Communicating with persons who have mental health challenges
  4. Crisis communications
  5. The Palacios Police Department Use of Force Policy
  6. De-escalation strategies

**XIV. WARRANT MAINTENANCE** (TBP: 9.08)

- A. The department maintains the original of all traffic and criminal warrants originating from our department.
- B. The department will comply with all TCIC/NCIC requirements for warrant maintenance, entry, removal, and auditing.
- C. All warrants are maintained in the file cabinet marked "Warrants" in alphabetical order of the wanted person, last name first. Class C city and traffic warrants are maintained separately from Class B and above warrants.
- D. New Warrant Entry
1. New warrants shall be directed to the communications supervisor, who shall inspect the warrant for validity on its face and enter the warrant into the appropriate computer system. The date, time, and initials of the person entering the data into TCIC/NCIC will be placed on the back of the warrant and the warrant will be filed in the proper warrant file.
  2. Only members of the Communications Division are allowed access to the warrant file.
- E. Confirmation of Warrants
1. When an officer of this agency or any other agency requests a warrant confirmation, the Communications Officer will attempt to locate the original warrant in the warrant file.
  2. If the original warrant is located, the Communications Officer shall confirm the presence of the warrant and provide any identifying information, such as description, driver's license number, or other identifying numbers that will help to ensure that the proper person has been stopped.

3. If the officer states that it is the correct person and that an arrest has been made, the Communications Officer will provide the warrant number, date of warrant, charge, amount of bond, and their name.
4. If the officer is from this agency, the officer will pick up the original of the warrant before delivering the prisoner to the jail. If the officer is from another jurisdiction, the Communications Officer will teletype the warrant information to the appropriate location and place the original warrant on the communications supervisor's desk for pick up by detectives.
5. Communications Officers will not confirm a warrant without physically locating the original of the warrant.

#### F. Removal of Warrants

1. After a warrant has been confirmed and an officer has arrested the individual, the Communications Officer will make a copy of the warrant before it is picked up by the officer. The Communications Officer will remove the warrant from the TCIC/NCIC computer file, note the time and date of the removal, put his/her initials on the front of the copy, and place the copy on the communications supervisor's desk.
2. The communications supervisor will run a computer check to ensure the warrant has been removed from the respective files.
3. Original warrants that have been served by other jurisdictions shall be sent back to the originating officer for delivery to the appropriate court.

#### G. File Audits

1. To ensure the integrity of the warrant file, the communications supervisor will conduct audits as required by TCIC/NCIC.
2. The communications supervisor will also conduct an audit every year of all warrants in the file to ensure they are still valid.
3. Traffic and Class C warrants that have not been served within five years will be returned to the court for disposition.