

## SUPPORT SERVICES

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### RADIO COMMUNICATION

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish operational procedures in the use of radio communication equipment operated by the North Little Rock Police Department. The provisions of this policy apply to all members of the Department who use Departmental radio equipment, as well as dispatchers who operate on police talk groups.

**Policy Statement:** It is the policy of the North Little Rock Police Department to maintain a professional image and conform with FCC regulations and AWIN policies and operating procedures through the transmission of communications directly related to the protection of life and property and for official public safety activity.

**Summary of Change:** Added AWIN references (Policy Statement, sec. 2.4 and 7.8). Removed section 5 regarding DVP. Changed timeframe for radio issuance notification (sec. 8.2). New format.

**Definitions:**

**Preparatory phrases** - Words at the beginning of a radio transmission that prepares radio transmission recipients for a specific type of information.

**Procedure:**

**1. Radio System Design**

- 1.1 The City of North Little Rock is currently using an 800 MHz trunked public safety radio system as well as some conventional 800 MHz frequencies.
- 1.2 There are a number of frequencies which are shared with other agencies. Talk groups are not assigned to any particular frequency in the system. When a user transmits on a particular talk group, the computer finds a frequency in the shared group of twenty that is not being used and assigns all radios on that talk group to that frequency for the duration of the transmission.
- 1.3 If all frequencies are being used by the participating agencies and any user tries to make a radio transmission, the user will get a busy signal (steady tone) and cannot transmit.
  - 1.3.1 Members will not use alternate radio channels to conduct unnecessary radio conversations.
  - 1.3.2 Members will use only those channels for which they are authorized and only for the purpose of conducting police business in accordance with Policy Directive 35-15, Selection and Use of Talk Groups.
  - 1.3.3 Long and rambling explanations during a radio transmission are rarely necessary. Transmissions should be limited to essential and relevant information only and restricted to the minimum practical transmission time.
  - 1.3.4 If there is a need to broadcast lengthy information on the primary dispatch talk group, the message should be broadcast in segments, listening between segments for priority traffic or requests to repeat part of the message.
- 1.4 Each radio has a unique ID number assigned to it. The ID number provides the ability to track transmissions, provide the identity of the assigned officer when the emergency status is engaged, and disable a radio's use when necessary.
- 1.5 The new APX 6000 portable radios are equipped with GPS tracking to assist in locating officers in emergencies. In order for the system to function properly, only GPS antennas may be used on these radios. Officers must either use the supplied 700/800 GPS antenna, or a stubby 700/800 GPS antenna. Antennas without the GPS designation are not authorized for use on the APX 6000 portable radios.

**2 Operational Procedures**

- 2.1 In light of our Department's ability to communicate with outside law enforcement agencies on a shared radio system, it is becoming increasingly important to standardize radio transmissions. This agency will adopt the use of professional, plain language radio transmissions and forego the use of 10 codes and 900 codes which are not universally recognized.
  - 2.1.1 Plain language will consist of accurate, concise and clear words and preparatory phrases.
  - 2.1.2 Professional plain language does not include the use of slang phrases. For example, a disturbance or altercation will not be referred to as a "ruckus," and a vehicle accident will not be referred to as a "fender bender."
- 2.2 Preparatory phrases will be used whenever possible during self-initiated activity and should always be preceded by the member's assigned unit number. This aids in streamlining radio transmissions, results in reduced radio traffic and enables the receiver of the transmission to anticipate and prepare for the remainder of the transmission. Examples of preparatory phrases include, but are not limited to the following:

- 2.2.1 Out of service ..... at location;
- 2.2.2 Back in service..... nature of call;
- 2.2.3 LPN check ..... plate number;
- 2.2.4 Warrant check..... name of individual; and/or
- 2.2.5 Traffic..... nature of activity.
- 2.3 The following is a list of preferred plain language phrases to be used in place of commonly used codes:
  - 2.3.1 Copy (10-4);
  - 2.3.2 Out of service (10-7);
  - 2.3.3 Transporting (10-15);
  - 2.3.4 Wants and warrants (10-50);
  - 2.3.5 Net directed (10-63);
  - 2.3.6 On scene (10-97);
  - 2.3.7 On break (10-10); and/or
  - 2.3.8 In service (10-8).
- 2.4 Use of frequencies licensed by the City of North Little Rock must be in accordance with the FCC rules and regulations as well as AWIN polices and operating procedures. A violation of FCC rules and regulations constitutes a violation of the Department's Standards of Conduct.
  - 2.4.1 False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals, unnecessary and unidentified communications (i.e.: mike popping and music), obscene, indecent or profane language, and the transmission of unassigned call signs are prohibited.
- 2.5 The use of slang, jargon, words or phrases that are derogatory or offensive on the basis of race, sex, nationality, or religion is prohibited and will not be tolerated. The use of words or voice inflections that convey irritation or disgust is also prohibited.
- 2.6 Names should be used in radio transmissions only when the message requires the use of the name.
  - 2.6.1 When transmitting names of victims, discretion will be used when it is necessary to protect the identity of the individual or the sensitive nature of the information. Officers may use telephones to transmit sensitive information if necessary.
- 2.7 Members will use the radio call sign assigned to them in all transmissions between members. (Refer to PD 35-16)
  - 2.7.1 When called, members will respond with their radio identifier and current location. When "on scene," it is permissible for members to respond by transmitting "go ahead."
  - 2.7.2 When members initiate a communication with dispatchers or other members, they should wait for an acknowledgment (i.e.: "go ahead") before transmitting their message. Members should broadcast all information at a rate which will allow for the copy of the transmission.
  - 2.7.3 When members receive transmissions from dispatchers or other members, they should acknowledge each transmission to confirm receiving the message.
- 2.8 Members should be professional and courteous in voice and attitude when using the radio and relay only essential information.
- 2.9 If an off duty officer is attempting to contact an on duty officer, contact may be initiated on Dispatch 1. Once contact is made, the traffic should be moved to another channel so as not to interfere with the dispatching of calls for service.
- 2.10 Police and dispatch personnel will use military time and the phonetic alphabet in a manner consistent with training in all transmissions. Police and dispatch personnel will not use "10 series" or "900 series" codes while transmitting on the radio.
- 2.11 Police supervisors will advise the Communication Center supervisor a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours prior to any field activity which would require added dispatchers.
- 2.12 Members will check into service as soon as possible at the beginning of the tour of duty and promptly advise communication of any status change.
- 2.13 During a scheduled break members are required to monitor their radio. Members are subject to being called off break if call load and unit availability make it necessary.
- 2.14 During a meal break, members are not required to monitor their radio.
- 2.15 Although not restricted, verbal courtesies should be kept to a minimum on the air.
- 2.16 Members will not use personal radio codes for car-to-car transmissions, e.g., "A12 meet me at location 2."
- 2.17 Abbreviations such as VIN and BOLO may be used during radio transmissions.
- 2.18 In the event the radio system experiences some major outage, members will operate on the "BACKUP" channel.
- 2.19 Units equipped with MCT/MDT's should utilize the messaging function to relay additional or lengthy information, when practical

### **3 Emergency transmission**

- 3.1 All radios are equipped with an emergency button. In the event of an emergency which requires exclusive use of the assigned talk group, the unit with the emergency should press the emergency button and as soon as possible, announce the unit number, location, and nature of the emergency. Once done, a NET OPERATION is declared.
- 3.2 Members who accidentally activate the emergency button should promptly notify the dispatcher in order to reset the talk groups. Turning the radio off and back on will not reset the emergency status.
- 3.3 Emergency transmissions take precedence over all other traffic, except higher levels of emergencies.

### **4 Net Operations**

- 4.1 If there is a need to restrict traffic on a talk group or channel, communications will direct the net by sounding the alert tone and announce "all units, the net is directed."
- 4.2 Communications personnel will be responsible for declaring the beginning and ending of emergency radio traffic and on what channels it is to be observed.
- 4.3 Units needing the net directed will request that communications direct the net. When there is no longer a need for a directed net, a unit involved in the incident will immediately notify communications to release the net.
- 4.4 The dispatcher will release the net by sounding the alert tone and announcing on the primary and secondary talk groups "All units, the net has been released, resume normal traffic."
- 4.5 While the net is directed, units will not transmit on the restricted talk group unless they are directly involved in the ongoing incident or have traffic that is at least as important as the ongoing incident. Transmissions will be kept brief and restricted to essential messages only.
- 4.6 When the need no longer exists, emergency radio traffic may be terminated by a field supervisor, any member who is on the scene of the event, or a dispatcher with concurrence from a field supervisor.

### **5 Dispatching of Calls**

- 5.1 Call priorities are the level of urgency associated with the calls for police service. Call priorities are the determining factor in the order which calls are dispatched. Dispatch personnel will base call priority on the information they receive from the caller.
- 5.2 Call response will be designated CODE THREE for calls which are emergencies where circumstances or results call for immediate action to protect lives or intercede in the commission of a felony. All other calls will be answered expediently while complying with all traffic laws.
- 5.3 In emergency situations, dispatchers have the authority to call a unit or units off of calls and dispatch them to higher priority calls.
  - 5.3.1 The dispatcher must notify a field supervisor immediately after dispatching the unit(s). In situations other than emergencies, the dispatcher will notify a field supervisor who will make the decision on reassigning personnel.
- 5.4 Members dispatched on a call for service will be obligated to handle the call and take appropriate reports.
  - 5.4.1 When arriving at the scene of a call, members will advise communications that they are "on scene." Upon completion of a call, members will immediately return to an "in service" status.
- 5.5 Members will notify dispatch upon clearing from a call if the call type is different from original dispatch.
- 5.6 Unless dispatched, members will not leave their assigned area without the approval of a field supervisor. Unless dispatched, units are not to leave their assigned districts to act as a backup unit.
  - 5.6.1 If a unit is dispatched and another unit is closer to the scene, the closer unit should advise communications of their location. The dispatcher will determine which unit will respond to the call.
- 5.7 Once a scene is secure, any backup units that are no longer needed should return to "in service" status.

### **6 Officer Safety**

- 6.1 Certain circumstances will dictate the need for officers to exercise a modicum of discretion when utilizing plain language so as not to offend the person with whom the officer is dealing. For example, an officer should refrain from using the term "mentally ill" in a radio transmission if the subject can hear the radio transmission. This may exacerbate the situation resulting in an aggravated and unwelcome response from the individual.
- 6.2 When checking wants and warrants on individuals, officer safety would best be served if the results of the warrant check were "veiled" to prevent alerting suspects of a "hit." Dispatchers will therefore respond to warrant checks in the following manner:
  - 6.2.1 A "negative" response will be used by dispatch to indicate that no wants or warrants exist.
  - 6.2.2 An "unconfirmed" response will be used by dispatch indicating that a possible want or warrant exists. This will allow the officer to take the precautionary measures deemed necessary such as handcuffing the suspect and

should not alert the suspect of a possible "wanted." Once precautionary measures have been taken, the officer may then request dispatch to confirm.

- 6.3 Officer needs assistance - Means that an officer needs assistance or ascertains a foreseeable need of assistance in dealing with a situation where no immediate danger is present. In such cases, officers will request a "back-up" in lieu of the 900 code "930."
- 6.4 Officer needs help - Means that immediate aid is needed by another officer for his or her own safety or that of another person, or when an officer feels that additional personnel are needed to control an extremely serious situation. In such cases, officers will request "help" in lieu of the 900 code "931."
- 6.5 All officers making traffic stops, investigating suspicious activity or engaging in high risk activity will advise communications of their location prior to exiting their vehicle whenever practical, or as soon thereafter as possible.

## **7 Radio Accountability and Repair**

- 7.1 Portable radios will be issued by the Support Services Division designee.
- 7.2 The Support Services Division designee will be responsible for reporting the serial number of the radio issued and to whom it was issued. The Support Services Division designee will forward a list to the Communications Center by the end of each business day indicating any radio changes made that day.
- 7.3 Members transferred to different assignments requiring different talk groups will turn their radio in to the Support Service Division designee where a new radio will be assigned.
- 7.4 Portable radios in need of repair will be returned to the Support Services Division designee. The designee will issue the employee a spare radio, if needed, and make arrangements to have the inoperable radio sent to the shop for repair.
- 7.5 The Support Services Division designee will be responsible for notifying communications of the ID number of the spare radio and to whom the radio was issued.
- 7.6 Field units will advise the Communication Center when they are using a portable radio other than their assigned radio.
- 7.7 The Support Services Division designee will be responsible for maintaining a log of all radios issued or sent for repair. All radios returned from the shop will be turned in to the Support Services Division designee prior to being reissued.
- 7.8 When a radio needs to be reprogrammed, the unit or Division Commander will send a request to the Support Service Division designee. The designee will complete a radio change request and forward the request to the AWIN radio manager for approval. Once approved, the request will be forwarded to the radio shop. The radio will then be processed like a radio of that type in need of any other repair.
- 7.9 The fleet manager is responsible for ensuring that the MCT and vehicle radios are maintained and repaired as needed.
- 7.9.1 The fleet manager will forward changes to radio and MCT to the Communications Center at the first of each month for inclusion into the ID database.

## **8. Phonetic alphabet**

8.1 The phonetic alphabet used by members as follows:

A - Adam	N - Nora
B - Baker	O - Ocean
C - Charles	P - Paul
D - David	Q - Queen
E - Edward	R - Robert
F - Frank	S - Sam
G -George	T - Tom
H - Henry	U - Union
I - Ida	V - Victor
J - John	W -William
K - King	X - X-Ray
L - Lincoln	Y - Young
M - Mary	Z - Zebra

**9 Military Time**

9.1 When transmitting time related information, all times should be broadcast in military (24 hour) time. The following are examples which demonstrate the conversion from a 12 hour clock to a 24 hour clock.

0000	12:00 AM
0030	12:30 AM
0100	1:00 AM
0200	2:00 AM
1100	11:00 AM
1200	12:00 PM
1215	12:15 PM
1300	1:00 PM
1345	1:45 PM
1400	2:00 PM
2300	11:00 PM
2359	11:59 PM

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