
SUPPORT SERVICES

RADIO COMMUNICATION

Purpose: This policy aims to establish operational procedures for using 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 in 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 the official public safety activity.

Summary of Changes: Added the use of 10 codes and 900 codes.

Definitions:

Procedure:

1. Radio System Design

- 1.1 The City of North Little Rock uses an 800 MHz trunked public safety radio system and some conventional 800 MHz frequencies.
- 1.2 Several frequencies are shared with other agencies. However, talk groups are not assigned to any particular frequency in the system. Instead, when a user transmits to a specific group of talk, the computer finds a frequency in the shared group of twenty that is not being used and assigns all radios for the transmission duration.
- 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 conduct police business following Policy Directive 35-15, Selection and Use of Talk Groups.
 - 1.3.3 Long and rambling explanations during a radio transmission are rarely necessary. Instead, communications 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 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, give the identity of the designated officer when the emergency status is engaged, and disable a radio's use when necessary.
- 1.5 The APX 6000 portable radios are equipped with GPS tracking to locate officers in emergencies. Only GPS antennas may be used on these radios for the system to function correctly. 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 on the APX 6000 portable radios.

2. Operational Procedures

- 2.1 The use of frequencies licensed by the City of North Little Rock must follow the FCC rules and regulations and AWIN policies and operating procedures. A violation of FCC rules and regulations constitutes a violation of the department's Standards of Conduct.
 - 2.1.1 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.
- 2.2 The use of slang, jargon, words, or phrases derogatory or offensive based on race, sex, nationality, or religion is prohibited and will not be tolerated. In addition, the use of words or voice inflections that convey irritation or disgust is also prohibited.

- 2.3 Names should be used in radio transmissions only when the message requires the use of the name.
 - 2.3.1 When transmitting victims' names, discretion will be used when necessary to protect the individual's identity or the sensitive nature of the information. Officers may use telephones to transmit sensitive information if necessary.
- 2.4 Members will use the radio call sign assigned to them in all transmissions between members. (Refer to PD 35-16)
 - 2.4.1 When called, members will respond with their radio identifier and current location.
 - 2.4.2 When members initiate 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 that will allow understanding of the transmission.
 - 2.4.3 When members receive transmissions from dispatchers or other members, they should acknowledge each transmission to confirm receiving the message.
- 2.5 Members should be professional and courteous in voice and attitude when using the radio and relay only essential information.
- 2.6 If an off-duty officer attempts to contact an on-duty officer, contact may be initiated on channel 1. Once contact is made, the traffic should be moved to another channel to not interfere with the dispatching of calls.
- 2.7 Police and dispatch personnel will use military time and the phonetic alphabet consistent with training in all transmissions. Police and dispatch personnel will use "10 series" or "900 series" codes while transmitting on the radio.
- 2.8 Police supervisors will advise the Communication Center supervisor a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours before any field activity, which would require added dispatchers.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 Although not restricted, officers should keep verbal courtesies to a minimum on the air.
- 2.12 Members will not use personal radio codes for car-to-car transmissions, e.g., "A12, meet me at location 2."
- 2.13 If the radio system experiences some major outage, members will operate on the "BACKUP" channel.
- 2.14 Units equipped with MCT/MDTs should utilize the messaging function to relay additional lengthy information when practical.

3. Emergency transmission

- 3.1 All radios are equipped with an emergency button. In an emergency that 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. Turning the radio off and back on will not reset the emergency status.
- 3.3 Emergency transmissions take precedence over all other traffic, except for 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 announcing "all units, the net is directed."
- 4.2 Communications personnel will be responsible for declaring the beginning and end of emergency radio traffic and 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 to 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 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 in 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 that 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 while complying with all traffic laws.
- 5.3 In emergencies, 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 inform a field supervisor who will decide to reassign personnel.
- 5.4 Members will notify dispatch upon clearing from a call if the call type is different from the original dispatch.
- 5.5 Unless dispatched, members will not leave their assigned area without the approval of a field supervisor. Additionally, units are not to leave their designated districts to act as backup units unless dispatched.
 - 5.5.1 If a unit is dispatched and another unit is closer to the scene, the more immediate unit should advise communications of their location. The dispatcher will determine which unit will respond to the call.
- 5.6 Once a scene is secure, backup units that are no longer needed should return to "10-8 (in-service)" status.

6. Officer Safety

- 6.1 Certain circumstances will dictate the need for officers to exercise discretion when utilizing plain language 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 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 warrants exist.
 - 6.2.2 An "unconfirmed" response will be used by dispatch, indicating that a possible warrant exists. This will allow the officer to take the necessary preventive measures, such as handcuffing the suspect, and should not alert the suspect of a possible "warrant."
- 6.3 Officer needs assistance - This means that an officer needs assistance or ascertains a foreseeable need for help in dealing with a situation where no immediate danger is present. In such cases, officers will request a "930."
- 6.4 Officer needs help - This means that another officer needs immediate aid for their 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" or "931."
- 6.5 All officers making traffic stops, investigating suspicious activity, or engaging in high-risk activities will advise communications of their location before exiting their vehicle whenever practical or possible.

7. Radio Accountability and Repair

- 7.1 The Support Services Division designee will issue portable radios.
- 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. In addition, 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 into 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 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. In addition, members will turn in all radios returned from the shop to the Support Services Division designee before 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 needing any other repair.

7.9 The fleet manager ensures that the MCT and vehicle radios are maintained and repaired.

7.9.1 The fleet manager will forward changes to radio and MCT to the Communications Center on the first of each month for inclusion into the ID database.

8. Phonetic alphabet

8.1 The phonetic alphabet used by members is 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	12:00am
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