

## CHAPTER 81 COMMUNICATIONS

DISCUSSION: The Communications Division is staffed by full-time personnel who provide coverage for the communication function twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week to all citizens in our service area in the most efficient, effective and timely manner possible. This chapter provides guidelines to members of the Hattiesburg Police Department that may have reason to use the communication system. A separate manual, CITY OF HATTIESBURG EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL, provides additional policy and procedures for personnel assigned specifically to the Communications Division and are directly inter-related to this chapter. Communicators have interaction with other entities such as Hattiesburg Fire Department, Emergency Management, NCIC, 911 and government institutions. These lines of communication have created a separate "stand-alone" manual for that division.

### 81.1 COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

#### 81.1.1 Administration

- A. The Communications Division is established as a component of the Operational Support Bureau. The division is managed by a Division Head and is directly supervised by the Bureau Commander. In the absence of a Bureau Commander, the Assistant Chief will assume this role.)
- B. The primary function of personnel assigned to the Communications Division is to:
  - 1. Receive, screen and prioritize calls for service and subsequently dispatch the appropriate response in an efficient and coordinated process.
  - 2. Maintain the current location, status and support to the mobile units in the field with information obtained through the various components of the system. Thus, field units must advise communicators of changes in status and location. (Example: 10-8, 10-7, 10-6, 10-23 at -----, or "Out of the car at -----")
  - 3. Provide other support and assistance, as required, to the public and within the department.
- C. Dispatched calls and other assignments made by a communicator to personnel are considered "official" Police business and are to be treated the same as an order from the Chief. In the same context, officer's request concerning at scene management shall be treated as similar orders by the communicators. Due regard should be given by all parties, when processing these orders, to existing laws and policy.
- D. In the absence of on-duty "administration"; the highest ranking officer or on-duty supervisor is generally considered in command of Police Department communication functions.

- E. Any authority assumed or assigned within the Communications Division by subordinates may only be done so under the delegation of the Division Head.

#### 81.1.2 Communication Systems

- A. Radio Communications: Radio communication is the primary means of relaying emergency and non-emergency information and calls for service. The agency has 24-hour two-way radio capability providing continuous communication between the Communications Division and officers on duty. All field personnel are to maintain constant radio contact with the Communications Division.
- B. Telephone Communications: Twenty-four (24) hour telephone communication provides the necessary link between the public and the Department. The E-911 system provides an easily remembered single emergency phone number for area citizens.
- C. Information Systems: Mississippi Justice Information Center (MJIC) provides access into the state and national data storage computers including the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC).
- D. National Warning System: Messages received over the national warning System (NAWAS) are provided by the United States Army Strategic Communications Command Attack Warning Officers located at the Civil Defense warning Centers.
- E. Paging System: The Hattiesburg Police Department utilizes the Motorola paging system along with Metro Narcotics, Hattiesburg Fire Department, various Voluntary Fire Departments, City Administration, Emergency Management, Schools, Media and EMS.
- F. Cellular Phone: The Hattiesburg Police Department owns and controls the use of several cellular phones.

#### 81.1.3 Personnel

- A. Communications Division is divided into two (2) shifts (A&B), supported by eight (8) positions with each shift responsible for 24hr coverage. A schedule or "Duty Roster" is posted monthly depicting shift rotation and assignment. Request for assignment preference may be submitted to the Communications Division Head, however assignments will be made based on Departmental need.
- B. A communicator has been relieved when the scheduled relief:
  - 1. Is physically located within the Communications Division work area.
  - 2. Has been briefed by the communicator being relieved.

3. Is seated at the console and ready to begin his/her work assignment.
- C. At a minimum, one (1) communicator shall be responsible for training, to ensure that policy and minimum standards for communicators is maintained.
  - D. Communicators will be responsible for maintaining frequency discipline, determining order of priority in transmissions and for directing and controlling the use of all frequencies.
  - E. Communication personnel have a responsibility to the community as a public servant. Communicators have specific duties to fulfill with an obligation to be knowledgeable of all proper functions and procedures. When a call is taken, the first concern is that of the caller. Each situation must be interrogated and evaluated individually, always keeping in mind the importance of the information. The series of events which follow rely heavily on how accurately and conclusively the communicator processes the information. The communicator is responsible for deciding what action is to be taken, what special requirements are demanded and whom to contact concerning the caller's problem.

#### 81.1.4 Alarm Systems

- A. The Hattiesburg Police Department provided no direct monitoring of alarm systems or hardware related system support service.
- B. Communicators shall dispatch available units in response to received alarm activation reports.
- C. Telephone devices such as auto-dialers are not acknowledged as an official form of alarm reporting. However, when received, units shall be dispatched and respond in the same manner as "official" alarms. The communicator will notify the Division Head of the occurrence, who in turn will notify the source of the communicated alarm of the Police Department's position on such devices.

#### 81.1.5 Incident Control Numbers and Information

The Hattiesburg Police Department has established a comprehensive field reporting system that records all request; including those received by phone, in person, self-initiated or otherwise reported to Department personnel. The incident numbers, dates and times are generated by the Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD) software with the following information collected by the communicator.

- A. Location of incident.
- B. Type of incident.

- C. Name, address and return phone number of complainant, if possible.
- D. `Other pertinent information.
- E. Identification of Officers assigned as primary and back-up.
- F. Dispatch of assigned Officers.
- G. Officer's arrival.
- H. Officer's return to service.
- I. Disposition or status of reported incident.

## 81.2 PROCEDURES

### 81.2.1 Call Signs and Talk Paths

- A. The Department has established basic radio procedures and assigned radio call signs in order to comply with Federal Communications Commission Regulations. Professional radio procedures are imperative in providing efficient, effective public safety service and maintaining the safety of Department members.
- B. The Hattiesburg Police Department holds a valid Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license to operate from the control point located at #1 Government Plaza with a call sign of WNSK 507. This call sign is transmitted digitally over the air waves at intervals as an identifier. The following is a list of FCC assigned frequencies:

857.2375  
858.2375  
859.2375  
859.8875  
860.2375  
861.2375

All radio operations shall be conducted IAW FCC regulations. The Communications Division Manager shall ensure that a copy of part 90 of the FCC regulations is maintained on file and that communicators are trained with these regulations in mind.

The FCC has granted the use of verbal designators as a matter of convenience, so that field operators will not have to use the official call sign (WNSK 507) when addressing the Hattiesburg Police Department. The following are the ONLY call designators allowed; any other designation is considered 10-90 traffic and should not receive a response. Exceptions are provided for the above "no response" policy by advising the sender of improper radio use prior to continuing normal radio traffic and/or the transgression occurs in an emergency or other officer safety situation.

1. "Hattiesburg" is the official designation to be used by Department personnel when addressing the Communications Division by radio. (on the air)
  2. Other agencies and users are requested to use "Hattiesburg P.D." when contacting the Department.
  3. "Central Dispatch" is reserved for use by Fire Department Personnel.
- D. Department personnel shall utilize their badge ID number when transmitting or receiving radio messages.

The following talk paths are allocated for use only by personnel as authorized by the Chief of Police. Any member issued a portable transceiver unit possessing unauthorized channels is prohibited from utilizing those channels and is further mandated to return the transceiver for programming. The same holds true for vehicles with regard to frequencies relative to that vehicle's primary assignment.

1. Alpha is intended to provide communications between field Officers (mobile and portables) and Communications.
2. Bravo is intended to provide status checks, warrants, NCIC and other system business.
3. Charlie is intended to provide emergency communication.
4. Delta is intended for use as Law Enforcement Common and can be the designated channel during an organized detail. Communication between officers in the field and other agencies is possible through a "patch" to the State wide Law Enforcement frequency using this talk path.
5. Echo is intended to provide for car to car communication.
6. Foxtrot is intended to provide private (but not secure) communication for NET.
7. Golf is intended to provide private (but not secure) communication for Detective personnel.
8. Hotel, India, Juliet are intended to provide tactical communications for S.T.A.R. team personnel.
9. RP is designated as a repeater (non-trunking) channel used as a primary back-up system.
10. TA is designated as "Talk Around" and may be used as an optional tactical frequency.

### 81.2.2. Radio Terminology

- A. Correct terminology and brevity shall be practiced at all times.
- B. Great care is necessary when giving directions, because street layout or names may cause confusion when applying compass headings. Directions should include points of origin, destination or other landmarks for clarity.
- C. The Phonetic Alphabet recommended by the Association of Public Safety Commission Officers (APCO) and adopted by the Hattiesburg Police Department should be utilized when it becomes necessary to spell words or otherwise use letters in radio transmissions. (Appendix 81-A)
- D. The Hattiesburg Police Radio 10 Codes are to be used to provide brevity, consistency, clarity and some degree of security. Use of the 10 codes is preferred, however strict adherence is not mandated because effective communication can only be achieved when both parties send and receive the same message. In some instances "plain English" may be the better choice to ensure that the intended information is transferred. (Appendix 81-B)
- E. The choice of words and diction used in radio messages determines to a large extent whether the receiver understands the message. Distinctive and forceful words that convey a specific thought or meaning should be used in message construction. Words should be sounded out at a moderate pace clearly and distinctly. Rapid, slurred or other "lazy" speech patterns cause repetitive traffic, misunderstandings, misdirection of services, increased work loads and job stress all of which eventually lead to safety concerns for officers and the public.
- F. Numbers should be given first as individual digits and then repeated by pronouncing the whole number such as the number 186 "one-eight-six", One Hundred Eighty-Six. Unusually long numbers such as those found in vehicle ID's should be given by the digits only unless they are separated by spaces, hyphens, slashes or other recognized dividers.

### 81.2.3 Prohibited Practices

- A. IAW FCC rules and regulations, the Public Safety Radio System shall be used only for official business.
- B. Use of obscenity, sarcasm harsh or abusive language.
- C. Lengthy conversations are to be avoided; telephones should be utilized or a meeting place arranged.
- D. Interception and use or publish the contents of any message without the express permission of the authority within the communication system.

- E. Use of proper names or other unauthorized call signs.
- F. Make adjustments, repairs or alterations to your transceiver to include equipment swaps between individuals without administrative approval.
- G. Transmit superfluous signals, messages or communications of any kind.
- H. Placing of request considered personal in nature with little or no "official" business need. Examples are numerous, but the following should serve to establish the intent: "Call the Squad Room and have ----- step out back.", "Call ----- and tell them I will be there in 5 minutes." or "Call ----- and have them call me in the Squad Room."

#### 81.2.4 Acknowledgement

- A. When checking a compliant, suspicious person/vehicle, traffic stop or any other reason officers SHALL NOT leave the vehicle unless acknowledgement is received from Hattiesburg.
- B. Hattiesburg, when acknowledging a transmission from other units, shall use the proper call sign and also indicate which unit they are acknowledging. (Example: 10-4, P-104.)
- C. As a safety function, in service units are required to respond to all radio traffic directed at that unit. This does not require that the unit be identified by specific call sign. The content of the inquiry often will indicate which unit or units should respond. As example "Unit on Hardy around 17th?" would require response from ALL units in the general area. "Any unit with jumper cables." would only require responses from units so equipped.
- D. Acknowledgement (10-4 or "copy") also indicates an understanding; receivers should not take a chance on an assumption or guess. A request for all or part of the transmission to be repeated should be made for clarity.
- E. Officers because of the portable radios should rarely receive calls for service by telephone. As an officer safety and communication factor, when responding to any such transmitted call officers shall acknowledge their status and response. (Example: P--, 10-8 from the zone, 10-17 to the 10-50 at -----) unless (in the rare case) the call requires a covert response.

#### 81.2.5 Delivery of Messages

- A. The department receives numerous requests from the public to deliver messages. Only those messages of an emergency nature shall be delivered. Telecommunicators shall screen messages to determine the urgency of the request as it applies to life-safety. Once dispatched the message shall be delivered by the officer in the field.

- B. Officers receive a variety of messages during the work day both personnel and business. Except in an emergency or by other necessity the content of messages should not be broadcasted, instead officers should be advised a phone number, point of contact or etc. to receive the content or clarify the message. Non-emergency messages are posted at the front desk, in the officer's work area or where the officer is most likely to receive the message in a timely fashion. Priority and official messages should be delivered to officers in the field via radio.

#### 81.2.6 Scanning

Radio units equipped with scanning capability should be kept in the scan mode unless an officer is involved in radio conversation, in which case scan may cause interference, and then the scan may be deactivated. Once the conversation is terminated the officer will reactivate the scan feature.

#### 81.2.7 Departmental Resources

- A. Communicators shall have either radio or telephone access to on-duty supervisors at all times.
- B. A copy of duty rosters and schedules are located in the Communications Division.
- C. Duty and home telephone numbers of all Department members along with radio/telephone pager access, where appropriate, shall be made available to the Communications Division.
- D. Communicators have access to Department records through CAD.

#### 81.2.8 Alert Tone

A single tone shall be transmitted by a communicator to forewarn or "alert" field units of pending emergency or priority traffic.

#### 81.2.9 Officer Assignment

- A. The Communications Manual provides "Call Guides" which stipulate notifications and responders for each type of call.
- B. Calls not in progress and/or pose no threat of danger to the citizens or officer will be assigned one (1) officer.
- C. Calls in progress and/or calls that there is potential for injury or damage will be assigned two (2) officers.
- D. Additional units may be sent as requested by field personnel.



#### 81.2.10 Supervisor Notification

Upon notification of the following situations, a supervisor shall respond to the scene.

- A. All major crimes, such as robbery, rape, burglary in progress, and etc.
- B. Request from field personnel.
- C. Assistance request from other agencies.
- D. Officer involved incident/accident.
- E. Complaints
- F. Any circumstance in which the dispatcher feels the need for supervisory knowledge or attention.

### 81.3 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

#### 81.3.1 Security

- A. The communications center is classified as a restricted area with limited access. Authorized personnel shall include Communications Personnel and Administrative Staff. The on-duty supervisor is authorized access as needed to assist communications and monitor shift activities.
- B. The door to the Communications work area shall be secured at all times and monitored by communication personnel on duty. Repair, vendor and other "official business" may be granted access by communication personnel.
- C. General visitation is a safety issue and as such is not allowed.
- D. To maintain information security, communicators are not permitted to divulge any police information under any circumstances except to authorize law enforcement personnel acting on behalf of the agency they represent.
- E. Due to work conditions, communicators may have family members or Department personnel bring meal or break items to the work area. However, to avoid distraction the communicator receiving any such visitation must not be the primary police dispatcher during the visit.
- F. Non-employee visitation must be approved in advance by the Communications Division Manager.

#### 81.3.2 Emergency Service Numbers

- A. The Communications Division handles E-911 calls and maintains a listing of emergency service agencies for police, fire, highway, public works, military, animal control and medical.
- B. Included in this phone system is a separate single purpose line for Crime Stoppers. (582-STOP)
- C. Emergency calls may be misdirected to any area in the Department. When on a phone capable of transfer the calling party is to be advised to hold and that their call is being transferred directly to our dispatch. Phones from which a transfer cannot be made or the receiver is not sure how to make a transfer, basic and vital information should be taken down, advise the caller the information will be given to dispatch and if further assistance is needed dial 911.

#### 81.3.3 Alternate Power Source

The Hattiesburg Police Department has an alternate source of electrical power, a generator capable of producing sufficient power to maintain continuous emergency communications. The generator is located and secured in the boiler room with a weekly documented inspection by building maintenance personnel.

#### 81.3.4 Maps

Each work station is supplied with maps of the service area with a listing of city streets, jurisdiction boundaries and beat borders.

#### 81.3.5 Recording and Instant Playback

- A. The communicators have the ability to immediately retrieve recorded conversations if needed to verify information received in both emergency and non-emergency situations.
- B. Any conversation that has evidence or training value shall be brought to the attention of the Communications Division Manager. Acting under the authority of the Chief of Police a duplicate recording may then be made of any incident.
- C. Any authority requesting a duplicate recording should use any identifiers available to assist in proper recording such as date, time, case number, control number, parties involved and an explanation of the incident.
- D. Recordings are to be retained per schedule outlined in the Communications Manual.

#### 81.3.6 Communication Consoles

The communication consoles have multi-channel capability. The communicator has the ability to transmit on each talk path individually or to select any number of talk paths for broadcast.

The Announce Talk Group (ATG) module is for transmitting information to all police field units at once, regardless of the talk path chosen by the individual unit.

#### 81.3.7 Mobile Data Terminals

Officers are afforded the capability of conducting routine police business through the utilization of the M.D.T. It is imperative that the various screens used in this process are filled out properly in order to maintain the quality of the system and insure information is being returned to the officer via the M.D.T.

- A. In addition to following all applicable rules and regulations set forth by the AOM regarding the use of the police radio, officers shall adhere to the following rules governing the use of the M.D.T.:
1. Only officers properly trained in the use of the AS400 and certified on the N.C.I.C. computer may use M.D.T.s.
  2. The M.D.T. will be used for official police business only.
  3. All officers with access to an M.D.T. will log on at the beginning of their shift and sign off when going out of service.
  4. When in service, officers are required to monitor the M.D.T. and acknowledge any messages received.
  5. Officers with access to an M.D.T. will utilize it in accordance with its capabilities found in this chapter.
  6. Any communication dealing with officer safety will be broadcast over voice radio.
  7. M.D.T. users will not make any changes to existing screens. Any modifications to an M.D.T. will be done by Data Processing.
  8. Officers are not to operate the M.D.T. while their vehicle is in motion.
  9. In the event of an M.D.T. malfunction, officers will use the voice radio, in accordance with departmental policy, relating to information contained in N.C.I.C. and the AS400. Officers should notify Data Processing to address any problems or malfunctions that occur.
- B. Officers should bear in mind that a "hit" is only an indication that the item or person checked is stolen or wanted and can only be considered valid after verification by the originating agency. However, it can be used as probable cause for further investigation and for stop and frisk purposes. All hits (positive responses) from local or N.C.I.C. data bases shall be verified by officers prior to making an arrest or taking other enforcement action:

1. Hits on N.C.I.C. wanted persons, stolen articles and missing persons are to be verified by contacting Central Dispatch by radio on channel B.
  2. Hits coming from the local data base (AS400) on active warrants will be verified by contacting front desk by radio on channel B.
  3. Driver's license responses indicating actions do not require verification. Dispatch may be used to interpret the suspensions or other However, Central data if needed.
  4. Officers are afforded the capability of accessing the following information:
    - a. N.C.I.C. (National Crime Information Center)
      - (1) Wanted persons
      - (2) Driver's license checks (by name or number)
      - (3) V.I.N. and tag number checks (stolen vehicle)
      - (4) Stolen property
      - (5) Stolen boat
    - b. Information stored in the AS400, including, but not limited to:
      - (1) Local warrants and BOLOS
      - (2) Name check
      - (3) Address check
      - (4) Property check
      - (5) C .A.D. (limited)
- C. It shall be the responsibility of each Division Commander who has M.D.T.s assigned to his/her division to ensure that subordinates follow proper procedures for using M.D.T.S. In addition, Division Commanders shall conduct monthly administrative security checks with Organizational Support Division personnel for inappropriate use of M.D.T.s.
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the Bureau Commander (or his designee) to choose one person from each Platoon/Division with M.D.T.s to function as a training officer. Each training officer shall be responsible for the training of new officers assigned to his/her Platoon/Division and answer any training related questions. The Organizational

Support Division will be responsible for the training of assigned training officers and N.C.I.C. certification of all officers