



COUNTY OF BUCKS
Department of Emergency Communications
Policies and Procedures

GENERAL PUBLIC SAFETY MANUAL

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General Public Safety

Maintaining System Discipline and Integrity

PURPOSE

To establish a mechanism to maintain discipline and the integrity of the Public Safety Radio System.

DISCUSSION

The Bucks County digital trunked Public Safety Radio system handles over one hundred and thirty (130) agencies. In order to properly service those agencies, it is imperative that radio discipline be maintained. All Public Safety personnel in Bucks County utilize the same pool of channels. Abuse of the system restricts the number of channels available to all Public Safety personnel.

POLICY

All members of emergency service units utilizing the county system, as well as Emergency Communications Department personnel, are responsible for the proper use of the radio at all times.

PROCEDURE

It is the responsibility of the Emergency Communications Department personnel to enforce radio courtesy at all times.

Personnel using the radio for other than official business are wasting valuable airtime and may be placing another provider at unnecessary risk.

Abuse or misuse of the radio system will not be tolerated and all personnel are strongly encouraged to realize the necessity of adhering to the policies and procedures herein and conduct themselves accordingly.

System abuse will be documented via an incident report that will be forwarded to Department management.

Instances of serious and/or constant abuse of the radio or system will be documented with all pertinent facts, and the Director of the Department or designee will forward a memorandum to the chief of the organization involved and to the appropriate communications advisory committee which may recommend initiation of corrective action as they deem appropriate.



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Authority to Dispatch

The authority for Bucks County to perform certain radio dispatching services results from the following sources.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
RULES AND REGULATIONS, VOLUME V, PART 90
Subpart L, "Authorization in the Band 470-512 MHz
(UHF-TV Sharing)"

Under the provisions of the aforementioned, Bucks County developed a "Bucks County Radio System Plan," submitted it to the FCC, and subsequently licensed as a "system" under the call signs of KJW-567 (bases) and KZ5089 (mobiles). The system license is recorded as:

Bucks County, Pennsylvania
Communications Department
Court & Main Streets,
Doylestown, Pennsylvania 18901

In late 1999, a license modification was granted for the digital UHF trunked system and assigned the call sign WPKZ618.

FCC Rules and Regulations restrict the use of the licensed frequencies as follows:

- Base stations must be located within a fifty-mile radius of Center City, Philadelphia.
- Mobiles are permitted to operate with a thirty-mile radius of a base station and may not be operated aboard an aircraft in flight.
- Control stations must be located within the area of operations of the mobile units.

Subpart B, "Public Safety Radio Services"

Specifically, "90.19, Police Radio Service" defines the County's eligibility to be licensed in the service.



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Authority to Dispatch

Subpart H, "Policies Governing the Assignment of Frequencies"

"90.179" permits the "cooperative use of public safety and special emergency land mobile radio stations" provided such cooperative use is accomplished by written agreement.

Subpart N, "Operating Requirements"

Specifically, "90.421," Operation of Mobile Units in Vehicles Not Under the Control of the Licensee" holds the licensee "responsible for taking any necessary precaution to effectively eliminate the possibility of unauthorized operation of transmitters when not under the control of the licensee."

Therefore, the County as the licensee, prohibits the installation of mobile units capable of operation on the frequencies licensed under FCC call signs KJW-567, WPKZ618 and KZ5089 in any vehicle other than those that are:

- Governmentally owned.
- Solely assigned for Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical duties.
- Are authorized to operate by written agreement as per 90.179.

All calls and assignments broadcast from the Bucks County Department of Emergency Communications will be considered to carry the same authority as a departmental order of those agencies the County is delegated to dispatch by written agreement.

Accordingly, certain policies and procedures are necessary to identify the obligations of participants to this cooperative venture. Presented here are the basic obligations of the County and the system users. Additional operational guidelines will be developed as they become necessary.



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Authority to Dispatch

The Bucks County Department of Emergency Communications will furnish such dispatching services as determined appropriate by the Director of the Department of Communications, within the confines of the authority delegated that position by the Bucks County Board of Commissioners. Said dispatching responsibilities will be governed in full accord with those legal obligations as mandated by federal, state and county governments having jurisdiction over such matters.

The day-to-day operation and administration of the system will be governed by standards that are dedicated towards the best interest of the public safety service they are designed to serve.

Participating Agencies will agree to operate in full accord with those legal obligations as mandated by federal, state and county governments having jurisdiction over such matters. Additionally, operations on the radio system will be in accord with the system standards and operational procedures established by the Bucks County Department of Emergency Communications.

Both parties will agree to cooperate in the orderly exchange of information as may become necessary through committees, advisory boards, or other such avenues of intercommunications in the development of system standards and operational procedures applicable to the specific radio service under which these parties are eligible to operate.



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<i>Agreement</i>		

The following agreement must be in place for all system users:

1. THIS AGREEMENT, made this _____ day of _____, _____, between the Commissioners of Bucks County, Pennsylvania through the Department of Communications, hereinafter known as the COUNTY, licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to operate in the police, fire and special emergency portion of the radio spectrum, et al.

AND

The municipality of _____, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, hereinafter referred to as the MUNICIPALITY.

2. THE AUTHORITY to enter into such agreement provided under Part 90.179, "Cooperative Use of Public Safety and Special Emergency Land Mobile Radio Stations" of the Federal Communications Commission Rules and Regulations.
3. THE COUNTY agrees to furnish such dispatching services as determined appropriate by the Director of the Department of Communications, within the confines of the authority delegated that position by the Bucks County Board of Commissioners. Said dispatching responsibilities will be governed in full accord with those legal obligations as mandated by federal, state and county governments having jurisdiction over such matters. The day-to-day operation and administration of the system will be governed by standards that are dedicated to serve.
4. THE MUNICIPALITY agrees to operate in full accord with those legal obligations as mandated by federal, state and county governments having jurisdiction over such matters. Additionally, operations will be in accord with the system standards and operational procedures established by the Bucks County Department of Communications.
5. BOTH PARTIES to this contract agree to cooperate in the orderly exchange of information as may become necessary through committees and/or advisory boards or other such avenues of intercommunications in the development of system standards and operational procedures applicable to the specific radio service under which these parties are eligible to operate.
6. THIS AGREEMENT may be terminated by either party upon sixty (60) days written notice, certified mail, return receipt requested, and cancels any previous agreement or arrangement as of this date.

COUNTY OF BUCKS

By:

Attest:

 Chief Clerk

 Michael Fitzpatrick

 Charles Martin

 Sandra Miller

FOR THE MUNICIPALITY -

Attest:

By:



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General Public Safety

Advisory Boards

PURPOSE

The communications advisory boards were created by members of the Bucks County Public Safety community to recommend administrative direction and operational guidance to the Emergency Communications Department management for the efficient operation of the consolidated Public Safety communications network.

DISCUSSION

In most counties, which have developed countywide communications systems, groups of people representative of the respective public safety community are used to review administrative and operational needs of the communications system. These boards provide the necessary feedback and direction for the department to continuously meet the needs of the Public Safety community.

POLICY

Communications advisory boards are created to recommend administrative direction and operational guidance to the Communications Department management for the efficient operation of the consolidated Public Safety Communications System.

PROCEDURE

The Bucks County Commissioners enacted the following resolution on February 16, 2000.

RESOLVED, that the Bucks County Board of Commissioners, upon the recommendation of the Communications Department, reauthorize the three (3) Advisory Boards to advise the Communications Department. Communications advisory boards are created to recommend administrative direction and operational guidance to the Communications Department management for the efficient operation of the consolidated Public Safety Communications System.

- (1) The Law Enforcement Communications Advisory Board will consist of ten (10) members selected in the following manner:
 - Bucks County Police Chiefs' Association (4 representatives)
 - Bucks County Fraternal Order of Police (2 representatives)
 - Bucks County Police Association (2 representatives)
 - Bucks County District Attorney's Office (1 representative)
 - Bucks County Constable's Association (1 representative)



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Advisory Boards

- (2) The Fire Service Communications Advisory Board will consist of nine (9) members selected in the following manner:
 - Bucks County Fire Chiefs' Association (5 representatives)
 - Bucks County Firemen's Association (2 representatives)
 - Bucks County Fire Marshals (1 representative)
 - Bucks County Fire Police (1 representative)

- (3) The Emergency Medical Services Communications Advisory Board will consist of eight (8) members selected in the following manner:
 - Bucks County Emergency Health Council (7 representatives)
 - Bucks County Emergency Health Services Office (1 representative)

Representatives will be appointed by their respective organizations for a two (2) year term, and reported to the Board of Commissioners through the Department of Communications. Each Advisory Board will yearly elect a chairperson from among its membership. The Department of Emergency Communications will hold ex-officio positions on each of the three (3) Communications Advisory Boards.



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General Public Safety

Municipality Codes

PURPOSE

To identify the numeric code assigned to each Bucks County municipality.

DISCUSSION

Numeric codes have been established to identify each municipality. The number is used throughout the County to identify municipalities in the Computer Aided Dispatch geographic file and as the prefix number for all police department radio identifiers.

POLICY

All municipalities in Bucks County will be identified in the CAD system and Police radio system with the following numeric identifiers.

PROCEDURE

The following numeric codes have been assigned to each municipality in Bucks County:

ID #	Twp./ Boro Name
21	Bedminster Twp.
22	Bensalem Twp.
23	Bridgeton Twp.
24	Bristol Boro
25	Bristol Twp.
26	Buckingham Twp.
27	Chalfont Boro
28	Doylestown Boro
29	Doylestown Twp.
31	Dublin Boro
32	Durham Twp.
33	East Rockhill Twp.
34	Falls Twp.
35	Haycock Twp.
36	Hilltown Twp.
37	Hulmeville Boro
38	Ivyland Boro
39	Langhorne Boro
41	Langhorne Manor Boro
42	Lower Makefield Twp.



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Municipality Codes

43	Lower Southampton Twp.
44	Middletown Twp.
45	Milford Twp.
46	Morrisville Boro.
47	New Britain Boro.
48	New Britain Twp.
49	New Hope Boro.
51	Newtown Boro.
52	Newtown Twp.
53	Nockamixon Twp.
54	Northampton Twp.
55	Penndel Boro.
56	Perkasie Boro.
57	Plumstead Twp.
58	Quakertown Boro.
59	Richland Twp.
61	Richlandtown Boro
62	Riegelsville Boro
63	Sellersville Boro
64	Silverdale Boro
65	Solebury Twp.
66	Springfield Twp.
67	Telford Boro
68	Tinicum Twp.
69	Trumbauersville Boro
71	Tullytown Boro.
72	Upper Makefield Twp.
73	Upper Southampton Twp.
74	Warminster Twp.
75	Warrington Twp.
76	Warwick Twp.
77	West Rockhill Twp.
78	Wrightstown Twp.
79	Yardley Boro.



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General Public Safety

Revisions in Policies and Procedures

PURPOSE

To provide the necessary mechanism for standardization of implementation and revisions of department policies and procedures, this will ultimately better serve the “citizen” whom each of us is dedicated to protect.

DISCUSSION

The development and maintenance of a consolidated communications network policy and procedures manual serves as the communications system's guidelines for establishing dispatching, emergency scene communications and related functions. Guidelines for establishing new policies and revisions of old policies must be standardized so that all system users are aware of the proper steps necessary to make changes.

POLICY

All new departmental policies affecting the Public Safety system users will be in accordance with the following procedure.

PROCEDURE

In using this manual as the controlling mechanism, Emergency Communications Department management procedure will be as follows:

- The Director of Communications or designee WILL NOT consider any changes in Department operational policies and procedures without first having the proposed changes considered by and recommendations submitted from the respective Police, Fire or EMS Communications Advisory Board.
- Any individual department/squad or communications system user who wishes to propose a change or revision in Communications Department policy and procedures must submit the proposed changes in writing to the Director of Communications or designee who will then forward copies of the proposal to the members of the Advisory Board for review. The individual proposing the changes would then be notified in writing of a date, time and meeting place to appear before the Advisory Board to answer questions and offer argument in favor of the proposed changes.
- The Advisory Board will then discuss the merits of the proposed change offer a recommendation on the course of action to the Director of Communications or designee whether to accept or reject the proposed change.



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Revisions in Policies and Procedures

- The Director of Communications or designee will then render a decision on the matter and initiate or deny the recommendation of the Advisory Board.
- The officer and/or communications system user requesting the change or revision will be notified of the director's decision with a statement advising them why a specific course of action was decided upon.
- All departments involved will be advised in writing of all changes in Department policy and its effective date.
- The initiation of this procedure provides all parties concerned with written documentation of all departmental action and does not leave policy or procedural changes to word of mouth.
- The motivation behind this policy is that if a revision is justified for one of the system users, then it may be an asset to the entire system.



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General Public Safety

Basic Rules For Voice Operation

General - The manner in which radio and telephone messages are handled is often a measure of the efficiency of an organization and the attitude of its individuals. Observing simple basic rules will expedite message handling and improve working relationships among all concerned. Application of the general "do's" and "don'ts" outlined here plus specific procedural examples shown elsewhere will lead to professional performance.

Listen before transmitting to make certain the channel is clear, and organize your thoughts before transmitting. The over-eager operator is a source of wasted time and confusion.

Keep all transmissions brief and to the point. Avoid long-winded descriptions and unnecessary repetition. Accuracy, brevity and speed are all important, however, they should be spoken by phrases--not one word at a time.

Speak distinctly and pronounce words carefully. Speak at moderate speed using your conversational tone of voice with natural emphasis and rhythm. Messages should be spoken by phrases--not one word at a time.

Make sure the microphone switch is fully depressed, and pause briefly before starting to talk. This is necessary to allow time for the tones to open the receiver in the radio system. Hold mobile microphones close to but not touching the mouth and talk directly into it--not across it. Talk at the conversational level--don't shout.

Avoid transmitting when sirens are operating at high level. 

Use of official titles and authorized unit and equipment designations must be used in all transmissions.

The use of so-called "10 signals" is not authorized for public safety communications. This is to avoid potential confusion with unit or personal designations. Standard abbreviations and phraseology to be used are listed elsewhere in this publication.



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Basic Rules For Voice Operation

During all radio and telephone operations, remain calm. Be careful to avoid uncivil, angry, abusive, derogatory or sarcastic remarks or language. When faced with such a situation, maintain control, do not attempt to retaliate--proceed with the business at hand. In cases where corrective action is considered necessary, the parties concerned may report the facts and circumstances in writing to the Fire Communications Advisory Board through the Department of Communications.

Do not use preliminary calls simply to establish contact. Unless conditions are known to be difficult, eliminate unnecessary calls. Whenever possible, identify yourself and send your message in a single transmission.

Examples: **Good**

Poor

Unit: Engine 19-1 available

Engine 19-1 to Bucks County

Disp: OK Engine 19-1

Proceed Engine 19-1

Unit:

Engine 19-1 returning available

Disp:

Ok Engine 19-1

All units and stations should assume good signal strength and readability unless otherwise notified. Unless one unit or station cannot clearly hear another or except when tests are being conducted, strength and readability reports will not be requested. When an exchange is necessary, the reply will be a short and concise statement of actual conditions. "Loud and clear," "weak but readable," "strong but distorted," "unreadable," etc. Terminology such as "five by five," "copy o.k.," "ten two," etc. are not to be used.



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General Public Safety

Complaints

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines in order to obtain uniformity in the processing of complaints resulting from the activities of the Bucks County Department of Emergency Communications.

DISCUSSION

This department handles one million phone calls per year. It's safe to say there is at least that many radio transmissions in that time. If our personnel are 99.9% accurate we will make three mistakes a day. Because of this we must have a system in place to field complaints from both system users and the public.

POLICY

This order establishes the procedure for the filing of complaints against the Bucks County Department of Emergency Communications by serviced agencies.

PROCEDURE

A member may initiate a complaint or an employee of any agency serviced by the Bucks County Department of Communications.

Informal Complaints

1. Informal complaints may be directed to the Bucks County Dispatch Center supervisor who will:
 - a. Attempt to resolve the issue in a courteous manner
 - b. Advise how to file a formal complaint if the issue cannot be resolved
 - c. Terminate the call should they be subjected to verbal abuse, provocation, foul language, etc.
 - d. Document the complaint in the complaint database

Formal Complaints

1. Be in writing and with "who, what, when, where, why and how" precisely addressed
2. Contain facts, not opinions, innuendos, lengthy dissertation, etc.
3. Be prepared and processed without unnecessary delay

The superior officer or supervisor having jurisdiction over the complainant must review the complaint



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General Public Safety

Complaints

1. Should the superior feel the complaint is valid and worthy of further investigation, it will be endorsed and forwarded to:

Director
Department of Communications
Administration Building
55 E. Court St.
Doylestown, Pa. 18901

The Director of Communications or designee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by mail.

All complaints will be investigated as follows:

1. The primary goal of any investigation is to ultimately arrive at the truth.
2. A full and fair investigation will be conducted.
3. The complainant will be notified of the results of the inquiry at conclusion.
4. When the complainant is advised of the final results of the investigation and if their allegations have been substantiated, the complainant will be advised of our administrative disciplinary procedures.
5. Complaints will be properly documented in a complaint database,

Anonymous complaints will be considered.



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General Public Safety

Complaint Database

PURPOSE

This policy has been established to provide a tracking mechanism for complaints made against the department.

DISCUSSION

This department receives many complaints from system users and the public. Many of these complaints are unfounded. This policy will allow us to track these complaints and the percentage that were founded. Additionally it allows the department to track trends in problem areas, which can then be addressed through training.

POLICY

Any complaint from a system user or the general public must be documented in the department complaint database regardless of the severity.

PROCEDURE

Immediately upon receipt of a complaint the basic information should be entered into the complaint database located on the "P" drive.

The complaint should then be investigated and the finding of that investigation will then be entered into the database.

The form in the database must be totally completed by the investigating supervisor.



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Printers and Printouts

The Communications Department has station and hardcopy printouts available to all system users through a telephone modem.

The system works as follows:

- A call is entered into CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch)
- The Communications Department computer dials up a dedicated phone line at the station, and when the station modem answers, sends the information on the call to the station's equipment.

Required Equipment for Standalone modem/printer:

- External telephone modem: 2400 baud or higher capable of supporting MNP class 4 or higher data compression.
- Printer and Cable: capable of serial interface

Officers will only receive their own unit or incident histories. Any department requesting printed information of calls outside their jurisdiction must have the request approved by the supervisor of the agency having jurisdiction.

Example of a printout:

- Initial TYPE: Initial incident type
- Initial Alarm level: Fire service only
- Final Alarm level: Final alarm of call
- Final TYPE: same as initial unless additional information has been received that would change the type of call.
- PRI: Priority E and 1-5. E is the highest priority whereas 5 is the lowest priority. When the letter "P" follows the priority, it indicates an in-progress incident. The priority levels affect the order of dispatch.
- DSPO: Disposition of call. This code is used to close out the call and is generally used for statistical purposes.



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Printers and Printouts

- PREM: Premise History. A premise history is a note that the department enters into CAD for an address with a special circumstance.
- EMS BLK: EMS box number
- FIRE BLK: Fire box number
- POLICE BLK: Police sector
- MAP PAGE: ADC map coordinates
- GROUP: Dispatch group (where the call is routed by the CAD computer)
- BEAT: Primary fire station area or police sector
- SCR: Source code. N=10 digit phone call; 9=9-1-1 call, R=Radio.
- LOC: Location of call
- LOC INFO: Added information to the location of call.
- NAME: Name of caller.
- ADDR: Address of caller.
- PHONE: Callers phone number.



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General Public Safety

Mobile Data Terminals
MDT's

PURPOSE

This order establishes the rules governing the use of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) on the Bucks County UHF Radio Network.

DISCUSSION

A Mobile Data Terminal is a computerized self-contained terminal, which can process criminal justice related inquiries such as missing and wanted persons, stolen vehicles, etc. The terminal also possesses the capability to receive dispatch information and send status information from the police unit to the Communications Center. These terminals also allow the user to send messages from one terminal to another as well as from one terminal to the Communications Center.

POLICY

Users will operate the MDT equipment in accordance with all laws, procedures, and guidelines mandated by Federal, State, and County Governments having jurisdiction over such matters. Additionally, operation of the MDT equipment will be in accord with the system standards and operational procedures established by the Bucks County Department of Communications and the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network's (CLEAN) Administrative Regulations.

PROCEDURE

All traffic generated over the system will be made in the performance of the employee's official duties as they relate to the administration of criminal justice, law enforcement, or other duty previously approved, in writing, by the County.

A message that contains information that is unnecessary, excessive, abusive, or personal in nature, or of a subject matter totally unrelated to the employee's official duties is prohibited.

The County will log and archive all messages processed by the MDT system. The retention period for these archives is forty-five (45) days. Periodic analysis of messages will be performed, and any violations will be reported to the appropriate authority for action.

The operators will sign-on to the MDT using there assigned user identification and password at the beginning of the shift. At no time will a person operate the terminal under another's identification. The operator will sign off the MDT during extended time periods when it will not be used and always at the end of their shift.



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Mobile Data Terminals
MDT's

At all times, agencies with MDT equipped units will make every effort to maintain the security of the MDT from unauthorized use.

Any person operating an MDT with access to CLEAN information will have passed the appropriate certification as required under CLEAN Administrative Regulations.

The County will have the authority to disable any MDT when its operation is in violation of the law or an established standard. For an MDT to be disabled, the criteria needed are the same as presented later in this document under "Disabling System Radios."

CAD Related Operations

The operator of the MDT will have the following capabilities when logged in to the MDT system:

Basic CAD – UR, US, IS, IH, WHERE, and WHO (See user guide for detailed information on these commands). MDT users will not be able to retrieve information from another department or class of service (EMS, Fire, and Police). Dispatch personnel are prohibited from sending this information to the MDT user's terminal. Users are able to use the basic commands (except IH) to receive information about another department.

Sending Point to Point messages from terminal to terminal or to the Communications Center (See User's Guide for detailed Information)

A message that contains information that is unnecessary, excessive, abusive, or personal in nature, or of a subject matter totally unrelated to the employee's official duties is prohibited.

The County shall log and archive all messages processed by the MDT system. The retention period for these archives is forty-five (45) days. Periodic analysis of messages shall be performed, and any violations shall be reported to the appropriate authority for action.

NCIC Capabilities: When an officer places themselves out with a tag using the correct format and then transmits the incident the CAD will automatically run the tag through NCIC and CLEAN. However it will not run the tag through a registration query.



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Mobile Data Terminals
MDT's

All traffic generated over the system shall be made in the performance of the employee's official duties as they relate to the administration of criminal justice, law enforcement, or other duty previously approved, in writing, by the County.

Procedures

The process for dispatching calls will be a dual operation of both voice and silent dispatch. The dispatcher will first voice dispatch the call. Then, when he/she strikes the transmit key on their CAD keyboard, the incident will be sent to the officer's MDT. The purpose of this is to maintain that all departments working on the zone are privy to the information being dispatched.

Some incidents may involve "silent dispatch." These incidents require appropriate action by the officer but do not require voice dispatch for safety reasons. Officers are required to handle these incidents according to their agency's policies. Three such examples are PINFO, HSCK and PHONE. For example a dispatcher will dispatch a phone call to an officer by simply using the CAD command DN (dispatch not en route). By doing this the call will go directly to the officer's MDT for the officer to copy and then clear when they have handled the incident.

Self initiated Stops – MDT users will be able to utilize out of service commands and Self initiated commands such as TSTOP (See User's Guide for detailed information). MDT users are required to enter a self-initiated incident using a location that a dispatcher will be able to verify in the CAD.

Self-initiated stops, including traffic stops, performed by officers may be verbalized also so other units on the zone are aware that he/she is on a self initiated stop or incident. However, the officer is not required to notify the county radio dispatcher if they feel the incident is not warranted for broadcast. When and if the officer announces the stop they will also need to verbalize their location so other department units and surrounding departments without an MDT know where the stop is located. The proper verbal transmission for all incidents that an officer chooses to announce over the radio in which they have already entered into the MDT is:

"Unit ID to Bucks MDT Incident Type and location"

Examples: 4489 to Bucks MDT Traffic Stop Brownsville and Beechwood
2911 to Bucks MDT Warrant Service 425 Wells Rd
7611 to Bucks MDT Disabled Vehicle York Rd and Meyer Way



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Mobile Data Terminals
MDT's

By doing this the dispatcher will be cued to look at his status monitor and will be required to acknowledge your (the officer's) transmission.

Status changes for officers will be both voice and CAD operated for in progress or just occurred incidents. If the incident is not in progress or there is no officer life safety threat then the unit will have the option of verbal transmission or CAD initiated status changes such as on scene, change location, transporting, and clear. If, during the course of the call, the priority, nature or severity increases, thereby affecting life and safety, the officer shall transmit this change status.

Unit Contacts: Many types of incidents will automatically generate a unit contact timer that will prompt the dispatcher to check on the assigned unit. Officers have the capability in the MDT to signify themselves as OK (situation is under control) or enter a UC (additional unit contact required). If it is necessary for a unit contact the officer has the responsibility to verbally explain his condition no exceptions.

When an officer changes his/her status through the MDT but an incident number is not generated, the officer is permitted to enter the status change into the MDT without verbally notifying Bucks County Dispatchers.

Status changes, which do not generate an incident number, are HQ, MEAL, PERS, DTL, CWASH, RPT, FOOT, HOC, FUNRL, MECH, PORT, TRNG .

Any change from an officer's primary talk group to another talk group will remain the responsibility of the officer to verbally notify his/her dispatcher. I.e. "7611 to Bucks I am OK and I am going to DATA." Or " 7611 to Bucks I will be switching to Zone 4..."



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General Public Safety

CAD Premise Histories

PURPOSE

This procedure is established to protect the County and the individual or municipality requesting the action and to safeguard the privacy of the residents of Bucks County insofar as is possible.

POLICY

Only the Squad Coordinator or Dispatcher III on duty can make personal premise history entries that are of a potentially libelous nature. All entries will originally be a maximum of five (5) days in duration, after which they will automatically be removed.

PROCEDURE

Entries will include the name of the police officer or other authorized individual requesting the transaction. Further, the requesting person will be advised, that in order to make such action permanent requires that we receive a written request before the time at which the temporary premise history would be removed.

The CAD Staff will enter all permanent personal premise histories. A file will be developed to keep copies of permanent entry requests. Questionable entries that might be construed as an invasion of privacy will be brought to the attention of the Department Head for resolution. In January of each year, those agencies having permanent entries will be required to verify their retention. If no reply is received within two weeks, the entries will be purged from the CAD files.



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General Public Safety

Incident Command System

Implementing the Incident Command System

- A. The I.C.S. should be utilized during any Emergency Incident.
- B. The Incident Commander should designate staff to a Command Post for the incident. In addition, the I.C. should designate a staging area and designate a Staging Sector Officer. The County Communications Center will be advised of the specific location of the Command Post and staging area by the Incident Commander as soon as practical after their designation. The Command Post will be conspicuously marked and easily identifiable by use of a green light, which is easily visible.
- C. The Incident Commander should select a strategic location for the Command Post that has adequate means of communications, is in reasonable proximity to the incident, is identified and accessible, and affords the maximum possible safety to those individuals who must coordinate and manage the incident.
- D. The location of the Command Post will be announced by the County Communications Center and the Incident Commander identified as " _____ " Command. The designation of " _____ " Command will not change for the duration of the incident. An identifier to denote " _____ " Command will be utilized to avoid confusion.
- E. When multiple incidents are in progress, the County Communications Dispatcher will designate the Command identifier to avoid confusion.
 - a. Example: An incident: Deputy 2 on location with a large three story dwelling, heavy fire on the second floor, Deputy 2 establishing West Street Command, Side 1.
 - b. Communications: Attention all companies responding on Tactical Box/Box " _____ ", Deputy 2 is on location with a large three story dwelling, heavy fire on the second floor establishing West Street Command Side 1.
- F. The Incident Commander will be responsible for the overall management of the incident including the development and implementation of strategic decisions. The Incident Commander will organize an Expandable Management Team which is capable of handling the incident, including identifying Sector Officers, preparing a Command Control Chart, and authorizing the addition or release of Units/Agencies at the scene.



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Incident Command System

- G. The Incident Commander will identify areas or functions, which need specific attention and organize those areas or functions as Sectors. A Sector Officer will be designated and remain in command of the Sector until relieved by the Incident Commander. Personnel and Units assigned to a Sector will report directly to the Sector Officer. The Sector Officer will be responsible for providing the Incident Commander with periodic progress reports that contains the current information about the needs and accomplishments of the Sector. Completion of assigned tasks, other pertinent information or changes in condition will be promptly reported to the Incident Commander/Command Post.
- a. Sector Officers will be designated for communications purposes by the function or area of operation for which they are responsible. The Incident Commander will assign the Sector, and the Sector Officer will then answer by the Sector Name (Sector Name should not be followed by Command. There is only one Command at an incident): not the normal unit identifier. All Sector Officers should operate on the Fireground channel. All Units will be required to communicate through their Command Post Officer.
Examples: Sector 2 Staging Sector
 Interior Sector Water Supply Sector
 Roof Sector Haz-Mat Sector
 Evacuation Sector
 - b. Designated Sector Officers and other appropriate Command Personnel will be identified on second or greater alarms, serious Hazardous Materials Incidents or other major incidents as deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander. Appropriate identification will be issued to all personnel on the emergency scene as designated by the Incident Commander.
- H. The Command Post should be manned by the Senior Ranking Officer / Individual from those Agencies who are functioning at the incident scene.
- I. When appropriate, a Command Control Chart will be prepared by the Incident Commander as a tracking tool to provide the current status of the incident, the resources committed and in staging. The Command Control Chart will be kept updated and used to review the incident, identifying potential needs, and provide other Incident Management information. The Incident Commander will use the Command Control Chart by the Command Officer on all incidents of a 2nd alarm or greater, serious Hazardous Material Incidents or other major incidents as deemed appropriate.



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Incident Command System

Incident Command System Operations

- A. As the magnitude or needs of an incident expand, the Incident Commander will establish additional Sectors to handle the various problems being encountered. On larger scale incidents, the Incident Commander may need to create additional layers of Management to maintain a manageable span of control. (The optimum span of control for one individual involved in Emergency Operations is five Subordinate personnel, with an acceptable range of four to seven. This middle layer of Incident Management Personnel may include an Operations Officer, Planning Officer, Logistics Officer, and Financial Officer. Other divisions of the incident will be established as required.
- B. Unless otherwise directed, all responding manpower, equipment, and apparatus from assisting companies or supporting agencies will upon arrival at the emergency scene report to and remain in the designated staging area until being assigned by the Command Post.
- C. Once Command has been established, all vital radio communications at the emergency scene and any requests for additional assistance or supportive services will be directed and controlled through the Command Post. Sector Commanders will not use normal radio identifiers after the establishment and assignment of an Incident Sector Identifier. **THE INCIDENT COMMANDER WILL BE THE ONLY INDIVIDUAL TO AUTHORIZE REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES.**
- D. Throughout the second and greater alarms, Units are called to the scene from the staging area through the Command Post. Only the Incident Commander can order more units to the staging area via County Communications Center.
- E. Transfer of Command - Local Departmental Chain of Command and unity of Command Concepts are to be adhered to at all times.
 - a. Transfer of Command will be accomplished in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures and established Chain of Command of the Emergency Service Agency or Governmental Entity who is in charge of the incident. The Transfer of Command will in general, be by a face-to-face meeting of the two (2) Commanders to review the status of the incident.
 - b. The Incident Status Review should include:
 - a. General Incident Status
 - b. Location, Extent, Conditions of Emergency



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General Public Safety

Incident Command System

- c. Effectiveness of Incident Control Efforts
- d. The County Emergency Communications Dispatcher will be advised when the Transfer of Command has taken place. The Incident Commander will assume the Title of " _____ Command" and the relieved Officer will be reassigned and utilized to the best advantage of the new Incident Commander.

Termination of Command

Incident Command Activities will remain in effect until all apparatus and manpower are released from the scene.



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Emergency Services

Quadrant System

The following is enclosed to make dispatchers aware of apparatus positioning with companies operating with the quadrant system.

The following page illustrates this system.

Letters designates the building sides. The street address of the structure is always designated as Side A.

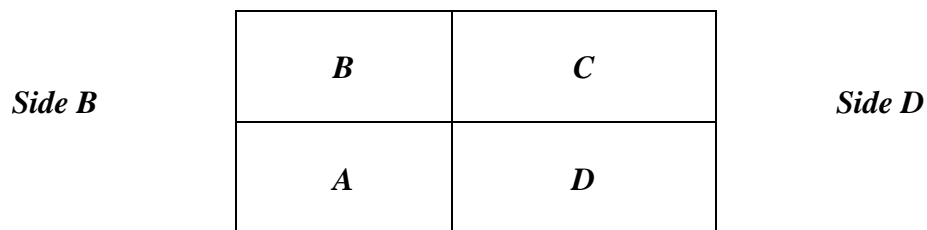
Letters designate interior areas.

Floor numbers designate floor levels.

Side designations and interior areas and their responsibilities go in a clockwise direction.

This operating procedure is flexible and can be utilized with almost any configuration of building, regardless of the size and height; but it must be remembered that coordination of all efforts is the key to a successful emergency scene operation.

Side C



Side A

4th Floor
3rd Floor
2nd Floor
1st Floor



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General Public Safety

Incident Dispatch Team

PURPOSE

The role of the Bucks County Incident Dispatch Team is to provide local, county and state emergency agencies operating in Bucks County with a trained Incident Dispatch Team during critical operations.

DISCUSSION

The intent of this team is to provide well-trained field communicators capable of rapid deployment. This team will assist in planning and tracking accountability through the incident command post and to provide an excellent level of service to the incident commander and agencies requesting the team and to ensure that both on scene and off site communications is established and maintained. They will also ensure that accurate documentation and record keeping are properly completed and accessible to all members of the command post, allowing the incident commander to concentrate on the incident and safety of personnel and the citizens of Bucks County.

POLICY

Any emergency services agency operating in Bucks County may request the mobile command post and Incident Dispatch Team.

The County reserves the right to deny deployment of these resources.

All agencies should allow for up to 60 minutes or more from the time they request the Mobile Command Post to the time it is on scene and operational at the incident.

PROCEDURE

Team Selection

In order to obtain twenty-four hour coverage 365 days a year, four incident dispatch teams will be formed. Each team will be divided into subdivisions called Lower Bucks Team, Central Bucks Team and Upper Bucks Team. Each of the four teams will consist of 6-10 members. Each team will have team leaders who will hold the position of DIII or above. All Team Leaders should be qualified to drive the MCP but this is not a condition.

Team members may be any dispatcher meeting the prerequisites outlined in this policy and are interested in volunteering for participation in the team. They must submit a letter of intent and sign a written statement of commitment to the Team. They must also successfully complete an interview for the position and be selected by a panel consisting of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Operations and their Squad Coordinator. Selections for the team will take into account the individual applicant's past training/experience, proficiency, attendance, quality performance reviews



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Incident Dispatch Team

and seniority. Consideration will be given to cross-trained personnel. No dispatcher with an active Step Two disciplinary action may be considered for the team. Any dispatcher with an active disciplinary action for a misconduct infraction, at any level, will not be eligible for participation on the team. The team will be considered to be available when not on duty for their regular shift. Although members will not be compensated for their on-call status time, they will receive overtime pay for the entire length of time they have actively participated in a deployment or training exercise that in excess of their normal work hours. The teams should include dispatchers from the lower, middle and upper areas of the county. Team members who are working their normally scheduled shift at the time an activation request is received may only respond if the manning levels in the room permit it. Team members are reminded that you are a representative of this agency and are expected to conduct yourselves professionally at all times while deployed. Our goal is to have as many dispatchers and management personnel trained in the Incident Dispatch Team's operations as necessary to provide the benefits of its use to the emergency services community.

Call Outs

Once it has been established that the Mobile Command Post will be deployed a minimum of three team members (depending on the incident size and potential duration) will need to be deployed initially. An on-duty Team Leader will decide how many team members are activated.

1. An on duty Team Leader will take a portable radio and respond to the Command vehicle to prepare it for deployment and then proceed to the location.
2. The on-duty Squad Coordinator or D-III will notify the available Incident Dispatch Team members, by the easiest and most expedient means available, of the incident, type of call and location. (Do not take excessive time explaining specifics so as not to delay the response.)
 - a. Team members will be informed of specific information while enroute to the scene in the Mobile Command Post or upon arrival at the scene.
 - b. Team members will be told where the pick-up point for the Mobile Command Post is. Team members will be informed of the ETA of the MCP if possible. All members must report either directly to the MCP base or to the directed pick-up location. No member is to go directly to the scene. When and if relief dispatchers are needed a pick-up location for these dispatchers will be arranged and their (the dispatchers) safe passage to the scene will be secured. The pickup point for relief dispatchers may be the staging area already designated by law enforcement or emergency services.
 - c. All team members must obey all traffic laws at all times while enroute to the scene of the incident.



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Incident Dispatch Team

- d. All team members must respond to the designated area equipped with their go-bag.
3. If the duty Incident Dispatch Team Leader cannot leave the communications center then the next available Incident Dispatch Team Leader should be notified to respond.
4. The squad Coordinator/D-III on duty will notify the Superintendent of Operations or his designee of the team's deployment. The EMA will also be notified. (If after hours call the on call EMA representative.)

Duties and Responsibilities

Dispatchers working in this capacity will be responsible for obtaining and maintaining all requirements for training as outlined. The Incident Dispatcher will be responsible for working in the mobile command post as direct support to the incident commander and his staff. Dispatch personnel must remain in or with the Mobile Command Post and will not perform any Police, Fire or EMS related activities related to the incident they are operating as an Incident Dispatcher. Incident Dispatchers will follow all safety procedures as outlined in County and department SOP's as well as information in the EVOC class.

Operations

- The mobile command post will be located in a safe location as directed by system users on the scene.
- Use caution when placing apparatus.
 - Do not block access for any additional responding apparatus
 - Consider any obstructions that may limit the proper use of the vehicle including overhead obstructions.
- Obey all traffic laws and EVOC approved apparatus placements.
- Ensure that placement will not jeopardize the safety of the Incident Dispatch personnel.
 - Consider Wind Directions at Hazmat and rising flood waters in flood situations
- The Team Leader will have the final word on the location of the Command Post.
- Follow all set up checklists including phones, faxes and computers
- Check in with the Incident Commander and, if applicable, previously stationed personnel and the Squad Coordinator.
- Dispatchers will need to be completely aware of the situation including hazards, personnel, and resources in service as well as access to available resources.
- Establish Incident Commander needs list for the specific incident.



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Incident Dispatch Team

- Prioritize all actions taken according to life safety and property damage.
- Establish or continue operation of necessary talk groups including the use of tactical channels and the Emergency Band. Relieve non-dispatch personnel and or communications personnel in the dispatch center.
- Establish and announce that the command post is in operation and the proper identification to be used.
- Dispatchers may be required to monitor more than one channel at a time.
- Initiate or continue all documentation including status changes of personnel, location changes, phone calls made, resources obtained, situational changes and any information deemed necessary by the Incident Commander for documentation. This documentation will be entered directly into our CAD system in the command post as well as log forms will be used for proper record keeping and status changes. (Having a hard copy of incident log is necessary to prevent losing vital information)
- Establish and maintain positive inter-agency working conditions – Be a professional at all times.
- Be aware and utilize all available reference manuals.
- Dispatchers will attempt to evenly distribute responsibilities throughout the incident so undue pressure is not placed on any one person.
- The Team Leader will be responsible to monitor and delegate personnel to evenly distribute the workload.
- Conduct briefings for relief dispatchers
 - Relay pertinent information regarding operational activity.
 - Communicate Priorities
 - Communicate procedural issues or changes regarding mobilization
 - Stagger relief whenever possible to allow for the proper flow of information.
- Retain copy of all written documentation done by the IDT. Copies are also given to Incident Commander or his designee.

Training

The Incident Dispatch Team consists of a team leader and qualified dispatchers that have received specialized training required to perform optimal performance of communications and related support to the incident commander at the mobile command post or field site.

Required training for all incident dispatchers and supervisors:

- All required training for Dispatcher I's
- Hazmat R&I
- ICS 100



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Incident Dispatch Team

- Basic Incident Dispatch Class
- Emergency Vehicle Operators Course

Non-Emergency Deployment

There are times when the Mobile Command Post and Incident Dispatch Team may be deployed for non-emergency operations. If emergency operations are necessary while the Command Post is out on a non-emergency assignment the vehicle and team will be immediately relocated to the emergency incident. The Mobile Command Post and Incident Dispatch Team may be deployed to assist with the following non-emergency incident:

1. Funeral Details
2. Special Events
3. Parades
4. Training Details
5. Public Education

To request the Mobile Command Post for non-emergency deployment the agency must contact the Superintendent of Operations for approval. When possible, requests should be made one week or more in advance. Manning for these events may be less than optimal.

Returning and placing the MCP back in service

The responsibility to have the MCP ready for the next deployment is essential to operations. The Team Leader returning the MCP to base is responsible to ensure that the vehicle is ready for deployment.

Uniform Information (Dress Code)

All Incident Dispatch Team personnel will be required to possess a go-bag. Below are the required and suggested contents. All required contents will be provided by the Department of Emergency Communications.

Required: Assigned Incident Dispatch Shirt

Suggested:

1. Blue Work Pants
2. Rain Gear
3. Waterproof Black or Brown Boots
4. Personal Affects (hygiene)
5. Money (enough for one meal)
6. Bottled Water

All personnel will have a separate County ID tag made and placed in the MCP. All personnel are required to wear the ID tag while in service on the MCP.



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Phonetic Alphabet

The following "International Phonetic Alphabet" will be used. Many letters in the English language sound alike. For example: B, C, D, E, V and Z could be confused with one another during a radio transmission. The Phonetic Alphabet consists of words in lieu of letters. They should be given as "A, Alpha"; "B, Bravo"; never "A as in Alpha" or "B as in Bravo".

(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	



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	<i>24 Hour Times</i>	

The twenty-four (24) hour clock system will be used to eliminate confusion resulting from the twelve (12) hour system, which is duplicated in both A.M. and P.M. The expression of time using the 24-hour system consists of a four-digit number. The first two digits indicate the hour and the last two figures represent the minutes past the hour. The hours are numbered consecutively from midnight to midnight or "00" to "24". The system is quite simple. All one has to do is add each hour past noon to twelve; thus 1:00 P.M. becomes 1300 (thirteen hundred), 2:00 P.M. becomes 1400 (fourteen hundred), etc. Some additional samples are as follows:

HOURS	ACTUAL TIME	HOURS	ACTUAL TIME
0100	1:00 AM	1300	1:00 PM
0200	2:00 AM	1400	2:00 PM
0300	3:00 AM	1500	3:00 PM
0400	4:00 AM	1600	4:00 PM
0500	5:00 AM	1700	5:00 PM
0600	6:00 AM	1800	6:00 PM
0700	7:00 AM	1900	7:00 PM
0800	8:00 AM	2000	8:00 PM
0900	9:00 AM	2100	9:00 PM
1000	10:00 AM	2200	10:00 PM
1100	11:00 AM	2300	11:00 PM
1200	12:00 PM	0000	12:00 AM

Examples of use:

- 00:01 HOURS= 1 minute past midnight (zero, zero, zero, one)
- 02:00 HOURS= 2 A.M. (zero, two hundred hours)
- 12:00 HOURS= Noon (Twelve hundred hours)
- 18:00 HOURS= 6 P.M. (Eighteen hundred hours)



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General Public Safety

Bomb Threats

PURPOSE

To establish a policy for the proper handling of bomb threats received either directly or indirectly by the communications center.

DISCUSSION

Because of the potential for major damage and threat to life these incidents must be handled with the utmost efficiency and professionalism. While most of these incidents tend to be a hoax we can never overlook the potential of catastrophic consequences.

POLICY

Bomb threats or reports of bomb threats are a matter to be handled by the police department.

PROCEDURE

When a bomb threat or report of a bomb plant is received, the dispatcher will:

1. Dispatch the appropriate police department to the scene (if no local police, notify P.S.P.).
2. Notify the fire dispatcher as a matter of information. No fire apparatus will be dispatched except when an explosion has occurred, there is a fire, a rescue is apparent, or upon the request of a police officer or fire official
3. The fire dispatcher will notify the chief of the first due company or assistant in the event they are unavailable for any reason as a matter of information.
4. The fire dispatcher will notify the local fire marshal if a full-time fire marshal exists in said community. If no local full-time marshal exists, the Bucks County Fire Marshal or Assistant Fire Marshal will be notified as a point of information.
5. If an actual bomb is found, the following procedures will be followed:
 - A. Notify local or state police if not already notified.
 - B. Notify one of the following bomb squads:
 - a. Philadelphia Bomb Squad
 - b. Fort Dix EOD
 - c. Allentown Bomb Squad
 - C. Fire apparatus will be dispatched
6. If detonation of bomb occurs, notify the following agencies:
 - A. Electric company
 - B. Telephone company
 - C. Water authority
 - D. Local public works



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General Public Safety

Department Records

For the purpose of this document, participating agencies will be considered police departments, fire companies, or emergency medical services units under contract with the County Communications Department, hereafter designated as the Department.

The following are the requirements that must be fulfilled to permit participating agencies access to the records maintained by the Department:

1. Request for records-

- a) Requests for records will be for a specific incident, to include time, date and location of it.
- b) Requests for records will only be accepted only from a chief officer of a fire company or EMS squad, or a staff officer of a police department.

2. Tapes-

- a) All voice tapes are retained for thirty (30) calendar days before they are recycled.
- b) Tapes may be held beyond the thirty (30) days upon written request from the services chief officer. Tape holds accomplished in this manner will hold tapes for forty-five (45) days from receipt of the written request. Tapes will be recycled at the end of the holding term unless a written request for extension is received.
- c) Requests for a copy of a taped incident must be received within the holding time frame and must be accompanied by a blank cassette on which to make the recording.
- d) All recordings will be made using the voice activation (time compression) method unless otherwise specified. Agencies must make allowance for supplying extra tapes when requesting non-compressed recordings. All master tapes will remain the property of the Department. Security of copies of tapes supplied to participating agencies is the sole responsibility of that agency.
- e) Copies of tapes/records will not be supplied in cases where complaints/accusations are made against the Department or its employees.
- f) The Department will continue to use the tapes in course of conducting investigations resulting from official letters of complaint. The results of these investigations will be made known to the complainant agency. The fact that disciplinary action (if any) was taken may be disclosed, but the specific disciplinary action will not.
- g) Any complainant agency may review the tapes described in 2f above, in the Communications Center at a mutually agreeable time with the Department.



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Department Records

3. Exceptions-

The Director of the Department or designee will address exceptions to this policy on an individual basis.



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General Public Safety

Disabling Radios

The Communications Center has the ability to disable any radio from the dispatch console. The unit committing the offense will be advised the radio is being shutoff and the unit is being logged off. In any case no radio will be disabled without the authority of the Squad Coordinator or Dispatcher III on duty. No radio will be disabled without just cause. The dispatcher will give the unit committing the offense a verbal warning and disable the radio only after the second offense occurrence. The following situations constitute just cause:

1. Fire Company is transmitting on a police or squad channel after being warned not to by the dispatcher.
2. Continued use of foul language by any user.

A radio may be disabled for continued horseplay and unprofessional transmissions after the following steps have been taken.

1. Warning after the first offense.
2. After the second offense the unit will be instructed to call communications for the Supervisor on duty that will inform the unit of the offenses committed and advise the unit this will be the FINAL warning and that any further offense will result in the radio being shut off. The Supervisor on duty will also immediately notify a Chief officer of the incident and the consequences should these actions continue.
3. After the third offense the radio will be disabled and a tape made of the offense made for the Fire Chief and the Fire Communications advisory board.

The Public Safety Department is entitled to a hearing with the appropriate Communications advisory board if they feel the radio was disabled without just cause. This hearing will occur within ten (10) working days of the radio being disabled.

1. If it is determined the radio was disabled with just cause, the Fire Company will pay for the cost of making the tape and reprogramming the radio.
2. If it is determined the radio was disabled without just cause; the Communications Department will bear the cost of the tape and the reprogramming.
3. **THE DECISION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD IS FINAL.**



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General Public Safety

ASSIST BUTTONS

PURPOSE

This order establishes the procedures governing the use of the automatic “EMERGENCY ID” alarm capability designed into the mobile and portable radios of the Bucks County UHF Radio System.

DISCUSSION

All radios on the Bucks County Public Safety consolidated communications system are equipped with an emergency assist button. It is vital each and every system user is aware of the procedure for its use.

POLICY

The intent of providing “EMERGENCY ID” in Bucks County is to make available to system users a means by which they may send an alarm to the dispatcher indicating they have an emergency. The transmission of the “EMERGENCY ID” alarm will not occur unless the following elements exist:

- A life threatening situation exists, **and**
- The sender needs help, **and**
- The sender cannot verbally ask for that assistance.

PROCEDURE



All radios are all equipped with assist buttons. It provides the ability to set off an emergency ID alert to the dispatcher, this alerts the dispatchers of a probable need for assistance to the unit the ID is assigned. When this ID goes off the dispatcher will ask the alerting unit to verify its 10-78, this will be done 3 times. Individual manuals address the proper response to these situations.

- 1) The assist button will not be used if units are able to verbally call the dispatcher and ask for an assist.
- 2) The assist button will not be used to call for additional units.
- 3) The assist button may be used only if there is a **LIFE-THREATENING** situation involving any personnel assigned to the unit and the inability to verbally request the assist.

There is always the possibility of accidental hits of the button. Although if this function should become abused the assist button will be disabled.



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General Public Safety

Use of Tactical Channels

PURPOSE

This order establishes the rules governing the use of Tactical Channels 1 through 4 of the Bucks County UHF Radio Network.

DISCUSSION

To establish procedures that will result in a standardized method for control and utilization of these channels.

POLICY

All emergency services in Bucks County may utilize these channels during emergencies, tactical situations or special assignments. The following procedure for allocating the use of these channels must be followed to avoid interference.

PROCEDURE

When an incident occurs requiring a tactical channel, the officer in charge of the incident or detail will contact the County Dispatcher requesting a tactical channel assignment, and the reason it is required.

When the amount of time the channel will be used is known, it will be provided.

When an emergency situation arises, the dispatcher may authorize the use of an available tactical channel for the incident. The Communications Department shift leader will assign non-emergency requests.

If a channel is available, authorization and the channel number to use will be given to the requesting person. The requesting department will immediately notify the dispatcher when the channel is no longer needed.

At any time a tactical channel is requested when all are in use, the communications department shift leader has the authority to have vacated a channel already assigned and being utilized, if the new request is a higher priority than what the channel is currently being used for.

Only Tactical Channel One (TAC 1) may be used for routine communications between system users. If this channel is required for emergency communications, County personnel will broadcast on all primary police zones that it is restricted. When a broadcast restricting TAC 1 is issued, no system user may operate on this channel unless they are directly involved with the incident in which the channel is being used for.



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General

Visitors

PURPOSE

This policy has been established to provide guidelines for employees and visitors while in the operations center.

DISCUSSION

Visits to the dispatch center, especially by officials of police, fire and emergency medical services are encouraged. What better way for the system users to understand the difficulties dispatch staff deal with than to see it first hand.

POLICY

Visits to the Operations Center are permitted provided they are in compliance with the guidelines established by this department.

PROCEDURE

- All visits to the communications center should, whenever possible, occur during normal business hours (0815-1615 hours), Monday thru Friday. Visits after this time must have previous permission from management and no visit may occur after 2200 hours. This procedure will not prohibit on duty system users from entering the operating area if such a visit is in the proper performance of their duties.
- No more than four visitors will be permitted in operations at any one time except when previous arrangements have been procured from management.
- Loud talking and interference with communications by visitors will not be tolerated. If this occurs, the visitor will be immediately asked to leave the room.
- Visitors will not be permitted to remain in operations any longer than 30 minutes, unless previous arrangements have been made.
- Visitors will not under any circumstances be permitted to operate any communications equipment in the center.
- Should a visitor be requested to leave the center and refuses to do so, Courthouse Security will be notified immediately.
- In the event of a major emergency, visitors may be asked to leave the room.
- Pets are not welcome with visitors due to allergies of some employees.



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Recording Requests

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a mechanism for providing agencies and citizens with copies of recordings when requested.

DISCUSSION

For the purpose of this document, participating agencies will be considered police departments, fire companies, or emergency medical services units under contract with the County Communications Department, hereafter designated as the Department.

Non-participating agencies or individuals will be considered anyone other than police departments, fire companies, or emergency medical services units under contract with the County Communications Department

POLICY

All requests for recording copies or copies of incident histories must be conducted in compliance with the following procedure.

PROCEDURE

Participating Agencies

The following are the requirements that must be fulfilled to permit participating agencies access to the records maintained by the Department:

- 1) Request for records-
 - a) Requests for records will be for a specific incident, to include time, date and location.
 - b) Requests for records will be accepted only from the department chief officer of a fire company or EMS squad, or a staff officer of a police department.
- 2) Tapes-
 - a) All voice tapes are retained for two (2) years.
 - b) All recordings will be made using the voice activation (time compression) method unless otherwise specified. Agencies must make allowance for supplying extra duplication equipment when requesting non-compressed recordings.
 - c) All master recordings will remain the property of the Department of Emergency Communication. Security of recorded copies supplied to participating agencies is the sole responsibility of that agency.
 - d) Copies of recordings/records will not be supplied in cases where complaints/accusations are made against the Department or its employees.



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- e) The Department will continue to use the recordings in course of conducting investigations resulting from official letters of complaint. The results of these investigations will be made known to the complainant agency. The fact that disciplinary action (if any) was taken may be disclosed, but the specific disciplinary action will not.
- f) Any complainant agency may review the tapes described in 2e above, in the Communications Center at a mutually agreeable time with the Department.
- 3) Exceptions-
 - a) The Department Director or designee will address exceptions to this policy on an individual and discretionary basis.

Non-Participating Agencies

The following requirements must be fulfilled to permit a non-participating agency or individual access to the records maintained by this Department:

- 1) Request for Records
 - a) Requests for records will be for a specific incident, including time, date, and location.
 - b) No record will be provided or disclosed, transcriptions allowed or playbacks permitted without an original subpoena. The subpoena must be signed by the current Prothonotary or Clerk of Courts and include a raised court seal. A court order signed by a Commonwealth Court or Federal Court Judge is also sufficient for the release of records.
 - c) Printouts - CAD (computer-aided-dispatch) incident records will be available based on the following fee schedule:
 - (1) Current records (within 60 days) = \$25.00/incident
 - (2) Back dated records (over 60 days old) = \$50.00/incident
- 2) Recordings
 - a) All voice tapes will be retained for two (2) years.
 - b) All tapes will remain the property of the Department of Emergency Communications.
 - c) All tapes will physically remain in the Operations' area of this Department.
- 3) Tape playbacks
 - a) The following procedures and fees schedule will apply to all tape playbacks for non-participating agencies and individuals:
 - (1) A copy of the audio transmissions requested will be supplied.
 - (2) A representative(s) of the requesting entity may be present when the recording is copied. If no representative is present, it is extremely important for the requesting party to supply this Department with exact details of what recorded information is needed. Failure to specify may lead to additional costs for a need to redo the recording.



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- (3) In lieu of or in addition to a copy of the tape a Court Reporter can be present when the tape is played back. The requesting party must supply, and pay the fee for, the Court Reporter.
 - (4) The minimum fee is \$100.00. This fee includes set up and the first hour that the playback equipment is in use.
 - (5) An additional fee of \$100.00 will be imposed for every hour or fraction there after that the playback continues beyond and the initial period.
 - (6) All recordings will be made using the voice activation (time compression) method. The above fees are predicated in the tape playback and playback equipment being used in the Department.
 - (7) If a tape record and the playback equipment must be removed from the Department to some other area within the Courthouse/Administration Building, an additional daily flat fee of \$500.00 will be added to the above stated fees. A representative of the Communications Department must accompany any tapes removed from the Operations Area.
 - (8) If a tape record and the playback equipment must be removed from the County Courthouse/Administration Building Complex, a daily flat fee of \$1000.00 will be imposed. Also an insurance bond of \$50,000.00 must be supplied to cover possible damage to the equipment while it is off the Courthouse/Administration Complex. These fees and requirements will be in addition to the above stated playback fee schedule. A representative of the Communications Department must accompany any tapes removed from the Operations Area.
 - (9) All checks are to be made payable to "Bucks County Commissioners". Please supply check or money order. Credit cards or cash will not be accepted.
 - (10) A receipt will be issued for all payments to the Communications Department.
- 4) Court Testimony
 - a) An employee from the Communications Department will be available if subpoenaed to testify in a criminal matter. A fee of \$400.00 (plus expenses) is required if a county employee is to testify in a civil matter. All payments are to be made to the county.
 - 5) Exceptions
 - a) Exceptions to this policy will be addressed on an individual basis at the discretion of the Department Director or designee. The decision of the Department Director or designee will be final.



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*Confidentially of Communicable
Diseases*

Commonwealth Act 1990-148 assures the confidentiality of AIDS or HIV related information. Anytime that we are made aware of a patient having any contagious disease, (AIDS, HIV, HEPATITIS, LEPROSY, TUBERCULOSIS, ETC.) place the following information in the text and transmit as follows:

**** USE ASEPTIC TECHNIQUES IN THE TREATMENT OF THIS PERSON ****

This sentence is all that is needed in the CAD complaint, and in the transmission of this call, to indicate that a patient has a contagious disease.



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Coroner Notification

PURPOSE

To establish a protocol for the proper notification of the Bucks County Coroner's Office.

DISCUSSION

This function is generally the responsibility of law enforcement officials at the scene. If no law enforcement agencies are responding or there will be a long delay in their response to the scene, this would be considered an appropriate occasion to contact the dispatcher for the coroner.

POLICY

Communications Department personnel will make after hour notifications for the Bucks County Coroners Office in accordance to the following procedure. Calls during normal business hours should be referred directly to the Coroners office.

PROCEDURE

Any Emergency Services personnel may contact the Bucks County Coroner's Office when requested to do so by personnel on the scene of an obvious expiration (class 5).

The Communications Department provides dispatch for the Coroner's personnel and will get an ETA for the arrival (or phone contact) of the Deputy Coroner.

Calls for the coroner during normal business hours will be referred to the Coroner's office directly without Communications Center action.



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Paging Policy

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the proper steps to be taken for after hour notifications by Communications Department personnel.

DISCUSSION

Communications Department personnel are responsible for notifications of many of Bucks County's after hour notifications. This must be carried out in a professional manner and in accordance with the policies and procedures, which follow.

POLICY

After Hour calls, usually from 1700 – 0800 hours weekdays and 24 hours on the weekend will be in accordance with the following procedures. Calls during normal working hours will be referred directly to the appropriate office.

PROCEDURE

The following after-hours procedure will be followed for contacting any County agency.

- Any dispatcher can enter a call for after hours. Sufficient information will be included as to the situation or circumstances.
- The dispatcher entering the call will advise the Shift leader of the call.
- The shift leader will be responsible for paging or calling the appropriate on call person, for the agency.
- The number entered in the pager will be (215) 348-6600.
- A record of the page will be recorded in the CAD incident.
- After 10 minutes, if no response, re-page and record this in the CAD incident.
- If there is no response after an additional 10 minutes (total of 20 minutes) an attempt to call the person at their home number, if known or applicable, will be done.
- If there is no response, call the back-up person or supervisor.
- Document all information in the CAD incident.
- Under no circumstances are blind pages to be done for any agency. This means, putting a number in a pager and assuming the on-call person gets the page.