

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Title: *COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OPERATIONS AND RESOURCES* **Procedure: 5.312**

Date Issued:

Revised: December 16, 2008

PURPOSE:

To establish the authority and responsibility of personnel assigned to the communication component for dispatching of radio calls.

To provide guidelines to department personnel on radio operations and communications center procedure.

To provide documentation on the operations and activities of the communication center.

To provide information on non-departmental resources available to communications center personnel including duty rosters.

POLICY:

Department personnel shall utilize the police radio system only for the proper transmission of department information and in accordance with FCC regulations. Messages should be kept professional, concise and as complete as possible. The basic function of communications is to satisfy the immediate information needs of the police department during its normal daily activities and during emergencies. It is the latter situation that places the greatest demands upon the communications system and tests the capabilities of both the equipment and personnel. Department personnel will not misuse or disrupt the radio system by transmitting unauthorized or unprofessional messages.

PROCEDURE:

FUNCTIONS

1. The Communications Division is composed non-sworn personnel under the supervision of the Information Technology Supervisor.

2. The Communications unit is responsible for radio communications, telephone communications, operation of automated data systems.

3. The basic functions of the communication unit include: receipt of emergency requests for service, dispatch and monitoring of police units, recording of incident data, transmission and reception of data to and from the automated state information file, handling walk in complaints and other such duties as assigned by the Supervisor or Staff Officer.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. The communications unit is responsible for all department radio communications including reception, coordination and dispatching of radio traffic.

2. The Police Communications Officer has the authority to use any available officer, regardless of District or assignment, to meet the primary objective of rapid delivery of emergency services. Use of the most available officer is based on the premise that the Police Communications Officer is in the best position to make an immediate determination of officer availability and the seriousness of the call.

3. Geographic Districts are to be respected so long as they do not hinder service response in emergency situations.

4. The authority exercised by the Police Communications Officer is not to be debated, on the radio or by other means, in such a way as to interfere with the delivery of service. Anyone having objections to a particular dispatch is to file such objection to their supervisor.

5. The foregoing is not intended to prevent or interfere with the on duty Supervisor's exercise of their position, authority and responsibility. The Supervisor in charge of the shift will have the final determination of which and how many officers will be assigned to answer a call.

6. Normal communications center shift activities and decisions are the on duty Supervisor's responsibility. The on duty Supervisor is the Police Communications Officer's immediate supervisor.

RADIO PROTOCOL

1. Communications operators and all other department personnel using radio communication will strive to adhere to the following protocol:

Communications operators when dispatching a one unit call will call the unit number, wait for the unit to verbally respond, advise the unit of the location, nature of the call and the complainant's name. The unit will acknowledge.

For a two unit call, the operator will call the primary unit number with a brief indication of the nature of the call, wait for the unit to verbally respond, advise the unit of the location and nature of the call. After the first unit has acknowledged, call a second unit to assist.

2. When officers are called by the operator over the radio, they will promptly reply. If after several attempts, a unit fails to acknowledge, the center will notify the on duty Supervisor.

3. Officers assigned to a patrol unit are required to carry their portable radio with them, turned on, at all times while on duty.

4. Investigators are responsible for maintaining contact with the communications center at all times during their tour of duty.

5. Each officer will use his badge number as his personal radio call number. Radio call numbers will be used to call personnel over the radio. Names will not normally be used.

6. The main police frequency is commonly referred to as OPS 1. Communications Officers may direct officers to switch to OPS 2 or OPS 3 (for officers handling traffic accidents, major incidents, parades and special events) to keep OPS 1 free for emergency dispatches and communication with other units.

7. Officers initiating traffic stops will inform the center of the traffic stop by radio. The dispatcher will enter the location, license number or vehicle description, unit number and time of the stop.

INFORMATION BINDER

1. Information binders will also be maintained, hard copy or electronic, in the communications center concerning information on:

the current officer in charge of the Department;

a current duty roster (schedule) for all Department personnel;

a current listing of the telephone numbers of all Department employees;

a listing of telephone contact numbers for local Police and Fire departments;

contact listings for animal control or other similar type problems; and,

other emergency service agencies that are important to provide service to local citizens.