

Communications

Index Code: 1101
Effective Date: 01/15/10 (revised
~~0/18/2023~~)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for radio communications for the Office of the Sheriff.

II. Policy

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to have continuous two-way communication capability between the Department of Emergency Services and members of the Office of the Sheriff. This will allow for the prompt handling and routing of calls for service, and enhance the safety of all deputies.

III. Procedures

A. All radio operations will be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commissions (FCC) procedures and requirements. The FCC rules and regulations are available on the FCC's website.

B. The Queen Anne's County Department of Emergency Services (DES), Communication Division, provides 24 hour, toll-free voice and TDD telephone access for emergency calls via the 911 System.

C. DES maintains 24 hour, 2-way radio capability, with backup, providing continuous communication with deputies.

D. Through the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD), DES maintains relevant information pertaining to each request for service. The information includes:

1. Case/Incident number
2. Date and time of the request
3. Name and address of the complainant
4. Type of incident reported
5. Location of the incident reported
6. Identification of the deputies assigned
7. Time of dispatch
8. Time of arrival
9. Time the deputy cleared the call
10. Call disposition code
11. Additional notes

IV. Maintaining Radio Contact

A. All deputies, with the exception of the Chief Deputy who is continuously logged-in, will notify DES when they begin and end their tour of duty. They will maintain radio contact with DES throughout their shift.

B. Deputies will notify DES of any changes in their status that would subsequently change their availability or assigned duties.

C. DES will monitor the status of all deputies who are on duty or who are in service off duty.

D. Deputies will keep issued radios turned on and tuned to the appropriate talk group unless the situation warrants otherwise. Deputies assigned to Court Security will utilize an earpiece while court is in session.

E. All non-sworn personnel using agency vehicles will notify DES dispatchers via radio when leaving home or beginning use of that vehicle with 10-41 on duty and 10-42 off duty when returning home or ending use of that vehicle.

V. Call Signs

All personnel that utilize the agency radio system will be assigned a call sign. The call sign will designate the Unit or Squad assigned and the supervisors within that Unit or Squad.

A. Command Staff personnel will be assigned the call signs Q-1 thru Q-9, depending upon their rank.

B. Sworn deputies, other than command staff personnel, will be assigned a call sign beginning with the letter Q followed by a two-digit number, beginning with Q-11.

1. The first position "Q" indicates that this is a Queen Anne's County Unit, or K-9 for deputies with canines assigned.

2. The second position indicates the Unit or Squad as follows:

- a. Patrol Squad One
- b. Patrol Squad Two
- c. Patrol Squad Three
- d. Patrol Squad Four
- e. Courts and Civil Process Unit
- f. Criminal Investigations Unit
- g. Sheriff's Resource Unit
- h. School Resource Unit

3. The third position, if a 1 indicates a sergeant, and if a 2 indicates a Corporal in that Squad or Unit. For example the call sign Q-11 indicates the sergeant in charge of Patrol Squad One. The call sign Q-62 indicates the corporal in the Criminal Investigations Unit.

C. Auxiliary Deputies will utilize call signs starting with "RD" followed by a number.

D. Those personnel assigned to Traffic Safety will utilize a call sign starting with "TS" and followed by a number.

E. If the Agency Chaplain is temporarily assigned a department radio for the duration of an incident, the Chaplain will utilize the call sign "Chaplain 1."

F. The Fleet Manager will assign the call signs, with input from the Division Commanders, and notify DES accordingly. Notification will be made to DES in enough time for them to make the necessary changes in the CAD System.

G. Call signs will be utilized on duty and off duty. They will only be changed upon a permanent transfer to another unit or squad or upon promotion.

VI. Emergency Identifier

All mobile and portable radios utilized by agency personnel are equipped with an Emergency Identifier (EI) button. If personnel using the radio are in distress, they can push this button to send a signal (Signal 13) to DES. They will automatically be moved to another talk group with the DES supervisor, who will attempt to determine if an emergency exists.

If an emergency cannot be confirmed, units will be sent to the location or the last known location of the unit with the EI activation. If it is confirmed, the DES supervisor will start units to assist and ascertain the nature of the emergency. If it is determined to be accidental, the supervisor will request that they "Reset" the

radio. To reset, the operator will need to press and hold the button or turn the radio off and back on.

VII. Information Availability

A. The Office of the Sheriff will ensure that DES has the following information:

- 1. The home address and telephone number(s) of every agency member.
- 2. Agency issued or reimbursed cell phone number.
- 3. Current call-out contacts and schedules,
- 4. Up to date agency written directives.

B. DES will maintain current maps of the County and surrounding areas.

C. DES has immediate access to other emergency service agencies including the Centreville Police Department, the Maryland State Police Centreville Barrack, the Maryland Transportation Authority Police, the Maryland Natural Resources Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Animal Services.

D. DES dispatchers have access to METERS to make inquiries into persons or vehicles at any time.

VIII. Calls for Information and Services

A. The Clerical Staff will answer routine non-emergency calls at Headquarters Monday through Friday (excluding Holidays) from 0800 to 1630 hours. The clerical staff will transfer calls to the appropriate location, such as DES, the Duty Officer, or an employee's extension.

B. After normal business hours, and during weekends and holidays, the automated telephone system will be activated allowing the caller to choose an extension or voice mailbox. Calls for service, or those unsure whom they need to contact, will be directly routed to DES.

C. Calls for service forwarded to DES will be processed using the Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD) program. This program is tied in with the Computer Aided Dispatch System; with back up flip cards available for use. EPD prompts the dispatcher to ask specific questions depending on the call type and situation, allowing for the proper information to be obtained from the caller to aid the deputy in responding to the call.

IX. Victim/Witness Calls

A. Emergency and non-emergency requests for service from victims and witnesses will be handled through DES and the EPD program, which will categorize and prioritize the type response.

B. DES and the Clerical staff will forward all requests for information, or non-emergency services, to the Duty Officer (DO). The DO will attempt to answer the question via telephone, refer them to the appropriate person or agency, or determine that a call for service needs to be generated and a deputy dispatched.

X. Recording and Playback

The Department of Emergency Services (DES) records and retains all radio traffic and emergency telephone lines used by the Office of the Sheriff for a minimum of six months. Recordings will be secured and stored by DES with access limited to command staff personnel only. Upon written request by command staff personnel, recorded conversations will be transferred onto a CD with the approval of the Chief of Communications at DES.

XI. Emergency Messages

Emergency messages will be handled and dispatched through the normal call taking and EPD process. Examples of emergency messages include, but are not limited to, messages and notifications of death or serious illness, or an attempt to locate and check the welfare of an individual.

XII. Misdirected Emergency Calls

DES promptly handles and reroutes misdirected emergency calls via transfer to surrounding counties or other authorities having jurisdiction in the matter.

XIII. Business and Residential Alarms

Calls for residential or business alarms are transferred to DES for Dispatch through the EPD system.

XIV. Security Measures

A. The DES Communications Division is located in a secure area within a secured building. Access is limited to authorized personnel only.

B. All equipment located at DES is secure and protected.

C. DES maintains a generator as an alternate source of power to ensure continued operation of the Communications Division in the event of a failure of the primary power source.

XV. Emergency First Aid

DES Dispatchers are trained in the use of a computer based emergency medical dispatch (EMD) system for giving first aid advice to callers. This service is not under the direction of the Office of the Sheriff.

XVI. Rotation of Calls

Each law enforcement agency in Queen Anne's County is subject to handling all calls for service brought to their attention within their respective jurisdictions. In addition, The Office of the Sheriff and the Maryland State Police (MSP) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governing the assignment of 911 calls in the County. Under that agreement:

A. MSP will have primary responsibility for investigating motor vehicle collisions on State roads.

B. The Office of the Sheriff will have primary responsibility for investigating motor vehicle collisions on County roads and collisions involving Agency and County vehicles.

C. 911 calls, including 911 hang ups, will be rotated between the two agencies with the exception of calls within the jurisdiction of other allied agencies.

D. MSP has primary responsibility for calls for service at State owned or operated facilities.

E. The Office of the Sheriff has primary responsibility for calls for service at County owned or operated facilities.

F. Each agency will be responsible for the investigation of criminal offenses when specifically requested.

These provisions are subject to availability of resources and the first priority is timely response to calls for service.

XVII. 700 Megahertz Radio System

The Office of the Sheriff utilizes a 700 Megahertz radio system for all radio communications. This system is operated and maintained by DES. With this system the capability exists to communicate with other

agencies using a 700-Megahertz system including:

- Queen Anne's County governmental agencies
- Caroline County Sheriff's Office
- Talbot County Sheriff's Office
- Maryland State Police
- Maryland Transportation Authority
- Maryland Natural resources Police
- Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office
- Anne Arundel County Police
- Kent County Sheriff's Office
- Centreville Police Department
- Chestertown Police
- Delaware State Police

XVIII. Cellular Telephones

The Office of the Sheriff provides Cellular telephones to selected staff. Those who do not wish to have an agency cellular telephone may have the agency pay a portion of their personal cellular phone bill, if previously approved by the Chief Deputy. Those with agency supplied or compensated cellular telephones must adhere to the following:

- A. Cellular telephones will be carried at all times when on duty or when utilizing an agency vehicle off duty. The cellular telephones must be charged and turned on.
- B. Cellular telephone numbers are subject to release to the public.
- C. Employees must have their cellular telephone in their possession and monitor them when they are designated as on call.
- D. Bills from both agency supplied phones and reimbursed phones may be subject to public record.

XIX. Recording of Phone Calls

Incoming phone calls that are transferred to an agency extension are not generally recorded. All incoming calls to the agency are otherwise automatically recorded.

- A. Automatically recorded incoming phone calls shall have a periodic electronic noise that serves as the notification and reminder to the caller that the call is being recorded.
- B. Designated agency phone instruments are equipped with a "record a call" function that can be activated by the agency employee. If that function is activated, the agency employee must inform the individual on the end of the line that the call is being recorded

and that notification must itself be recorded.

- C. Whenever a phone call is recorded, the person on the end of the line must be notified of that fact unless lawful exclusions exist that allow the recording without notification.

XX. Emails

Email access is provided by the Office of the Sheriff and Queen Anne's County government as a means of business communication for its employees. Use of the system is a privilege and employees are responsible for ensuring that their use of the email system is consistent with this and Queen Anne's County policies. All Office of the Sheriff emails will have a standard signature line without any additions or deviations.

The font is "Franklin Gothic Book" Font Size 10

Your Name (bolded), Your Job Title
Queen Anne's County Office of the Sheriff
505 Railroad Ave. Centreville MD 21617
Cell: (If issued an agency phone)
T: 410.758.0770 ext (your ext) | F: 410.758.1961



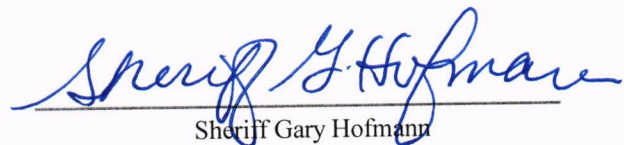
XXI. Alternate Power Source

DES maintains an alternate source of electrical power that is sufficient to ensure continued operation of emergency communication equipment in the event of the failure of the primary power source. This power source is tested in conformance with manufacturer recommendations several times a year. This service is not under the direction of the Office of the Sheriff.

XXII. CALEA References: 81.1.1, 81.1.2, 81.2.1, 81.2.2, 81.2.3a, 81.2.3b, 81.2.3c, 81.2.3d, 81.2.3e, 81.2.3f, 81.2.3g, 81.2.3h, 81.2.3i, 81.2.3j, 81.2.4d, 81.2.5a, 81.2.5b, 81.2.5c, 81.2.5d, 81.2.5e, 81.2.5f, 81.2.5g, 81.2.6a, 81.2.6b, 81.2.7, 81.2.8a, 81.2.8b, 81.2.8c, 81.2.9, 81.2.11, 81.2.12, 81.2.13, 81.3.2 & 81.3.4.

XXIII. Proponent Unit: Support Services Division

XXIV. Cancellation: Directive dated 10/19/21


Sheriff Gary Hofmann