GREENVILLE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

# GENERAL ORDERS

# COMMUNICATIONS

**PURPOSE:**

**Communications** is a critical function in maintaining immediate effective control over field operations. Formula $C^3$ equals effective law enforcement operations: Command, Control and Communications. The basic function of Sheriff's Office Communications is to satisfy immediate information needs of operations personnel in the course of daily activities and during emergency situations. Emergencies place the greatest stress on the communications system and test its capabilities to fulfill its function. Communications must perform its best during emergencies.

**COMMAND AND CONTROL:**

All personnel assigned to Communications are employees of the Sheriff's Office and are subject to all rules and regulations pertaining to the Office. The Uniform Patrol Captain is responsible for the command and control of Communications. The Director of Communications is responsible for the management of Communications. Job descriptions are maintained on all Communications positions to clearly outline each position's specific duties.

**Communications shift supervisors** are responsible for:

1. Daily operations of the Communications Center.
2. Dispatchers assigned to their span of control.
3. Evaluations, commendations, or discipline of Communications personnel.
4. Maintaining a proper staffing level in Communications.
5. Ensuring workflow is not interrupted.

**COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM:**

All radio operations are conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements, and under current FCC licenses.

A list of all Sheriff's Office and other local public safety agencies radio frequencies is available to all personnel on PowerDMS.
The Infrastructure Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the operations of the radios and radio transmitter towers. The coordinator will keep a listing of all interoperable equipment. This equipment will be tested annually and properly documented.
Radio traffic on the primary operations channels and all incoming telephone lines are digitally recorded. All recordings are maintained for a period of three years.

The effectiveness of enforcement and investigative efforts depends heavily upon the information resources available. Therefore, the Sheriff's Office maintains capability to access local, state, and federal criminal justice information systems.

**ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS:**

Cooperation within the Communications Center is essential to the successful operations of the Sheriff's Office and other public safety agencies. Dispatchers cooperate fully in answering incoming calls and ensure that all calls are assigned with courtesy and efficiency.

Calls for service are handled promptly and professionally with the goal of answering 911 lines within 15 seconds or less. Ten Codes and the Phonetic Alphabet are used in all radio transmissions. Priorities in dispatching calls for service are made according to current policy.

Dispatchers maintain the status and location of all field units in their area of responsibility. Emergency calls and certain crimes in progress calls are broadcast on the appropriate channels.

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS:**

The Director of Communications conducts telephone line load studies every month to determine peak hours of incoming telephone calls. The load studies are conducted using procedures outlined in management studies of law enforcement communications centers.

**Additional duties of the Director of Communications**:

1. Prepares budget requests relating to equipment needs.
2. Ensures equipment maintenance contracts are up-to-date.
3. Performs communications research, including analytical reports.
4. Acts as a technical resource.
5. Coordinates services to other agencies.
6. Supervises Communications, Alarm Billing, & Quality Assurance/Tape Research.
7. Responsible for the evacuation plan and mobilization of the Communications Center and relocation of operations to another site during unusual events or critical incidents.

**COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS:**

The Sheriff's Office Communications Center is designated as the primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for Greenville County. This agency maintains emergency, non-emergency, text to 9-1-1, TDD and toll free lines. All lines are monitored twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

The 9-1-1 lines are dedicated trunk lines for emergencies only. Whenever communications personnel receive a non-emergency call on a dedicated emergency line, the caller will be transferred to a non-emergency line as quickly as possible.

Since TDD calls are infrequent, bi-annual training will be conducted by all operators in Communications. TDD skills shall be tested monthly with unannounced test TDD calls being placed to the PSAP.

Communications personnel are often called upon to contact deputies for various reasons. A duty roster of all personnel including supervisors and a telephone listing of all personnel is maintained in the Communications Center for easy access. This list includes on-call personnel.

**Information recorded at the time of all requests for service includes:**

- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of complainant (if possible) and telephone number.
- Type of incident.
- Location of incident.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of deputy arrival.
- Time deputy returns to service.
- Disposition or status of reported incident.

An incident number is assigned to each call for service. This number serves as a case number and is used for filing and retrieving reports attached to an incident.

Whenever on-duty deputies code out-of-service, whether for servicing a call, self-initiated activity, court time or breaks, time out and location are recorded. A record is made of all back-up officers assigned to assist a primary officer. The Communications Center maintains immediate playback of recorded telephone and radio conversations.

The Sheriff's Office does not monitor private security alarm **systems** and does not accept responsibility for automatic dial systems calling emergency numbers with taped messages. Communications personnel have immediate access to tactical dispatching plans, such as for crimes in progress and emergency field operations.

**AUDIO RECORDING SEARCH REQUEST:**

Requests for recorded radio traffic or telephone conversations are made in writing. The requesting Deputy will fill out the request form and then have it signed by their supervisor. The requesting Deputy will then deliver the form to the 911 research coordinator or designee.

The 911 research coordinator will place the recording in the requesting Deputy's "Q" drive file and he/she will be notified by email. If a copy of the recording is needed, it will be the responsibility of the Deputy to transfer the recording to a disc.

When the Solicitors Office requests a recording, it must be in writing. The recording will be placed in the Solicitors Office "G" drive and they will be notified by email.

In the event that an outside agency, except the Solicitors Office, requests a copy of radio traffic or a telephone conversation, the requesting agency will be required to follow the same procedures listed above. The 911 research coordinator will make a hard copy and notify the requesting agency when it is ready to be picked up.

A request to review a tape of agency activities from someone other than Sheriff's Office personnel or from persons outside of the effected agency is referred to the Legal Unit.

The 911 research coordinator maintains a record of all requests to review radio or telephone tapes.

Communications shift supervisors can make recordings in the absence of the 911 research coordinator only in emergency circumstances.

**COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING MANUAL:**

A **Communications Training Manual** is utilized to govern policy/procedures used for performing telephone, radio, NCIC and automated data communication functions. Additionally, the manual includes guidelines for:

- Handling and routing misdirected emergency calls. Gathering additional information at the time of the call to enhance deputy safety
- Gathering information to anticipate conditions at the scene of an incident.
- Emergency message acceptance and delivery.

**The Communications Training Manual details procedures to obtain necessary services external to the Sheriff's Office**. These services include:

- Fire suppression services.
- Hazardous materials containment services.
- EMS
- Cab services.
- Wrecker service.
- Victim/Witness services.

**DISPOSAL OF WORK SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS:**

All documents such as computer printouts, copies of CAD incidents, working notes, or other work related documents which may contain confidential information that could identify citizens, involve investigations, etc. are to be disposed of daily into the provided locked shred containers.

**FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:**

**The Sheriff's Office maintains twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day a week, continuous two-way radio capability providing continuous communications between the Communications Center and deputies on duty.** Access to the Communications Center is limited to personnel assigned to work there and ranking supervisors. All other access is granted by a Communications shift supervisor, the Director of Communications, Uniform Patrol Captain, Majors, or as determined by the Sheriff. Limiting access to unauthorized personnel protects critical equipment and agency records.

The Sheriff's Office maintains a radio system engineered to produce a twelve decibel or greater SINAD ratio to the radio receivers in at least 95% of Greenville County.

The Sheriff's Office maintains multi-channel mobile and portable radio equipment capable of two-way operations on the State regional radio frequency. In addition, specific operations supervisors are equipped with mobile radios designed to communicate with adjacent law enforcement jurisdictions.

Equipment in the Communications Center is continuously monitored for problems. All critical equipment is under maintenance contract and worked on by contract authorized service personnel. Communications personnel will be issued the essential equipment to perform their duties. Any other equipment that employees wish to use must be approved by the Director of Communications.

Plans for back-up resources, such as alternative base stations and telephone receiving points, are maintained in the Communications Training Manual. Back-up equipment is housed at the Greenville County Hot-Site.

Communications can immediately access back-up resources a plug-in/antenna system located in the Communications Center.

Communications personnel maintain a listing of telephone numbers of other emergency services agencies to expedite contacting those agencies.

**An alternate source of power is available to ensure continued operation of emergency communication equipment in the event of a failure of the primary power source.** The back-up generator is inspected and tested weekly, and tested or operated under full load at least once a year. Weekly inspections and full load tests/operations are to be documented.

Detailed, updated maps of Greenville County are maintained in the CAD system. Maps are readily available to Communications personnel.

Indicators of deputy status are visually available to each Communications dispatcher. For safety reasons, dispatchers know where and how long each deputy has been out on a call.

Emergency trunk lines are limited and are kept clear for legitimate public needs. Whenever possible, non-emergency calls received on emergency lines are immediately transferred to numbers appropriate to callers' needs. Non-emergency calls generally consist of:

- Calls not requiring law enforcement services.
- Persons requesting general information.
- Persons requesting information not available in Communications such as bond amounts on detainees in the Detention Center.

See the Communications Training Manual for procedures regarding calls-for-service received via voice over internet.

**ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATIONS** – The Sheriff's Office provides select personnel with cell phones. These phones are restricted to official use only.

**FIELD UNIT PROTOCOL:**

**Radio communication is used only when necessary**. Supervisors detecting excessive traffic are to take appropriate corrective action. All patrol units (except supervisors) will give their location when called by the Communications Center or a supervisor.

**All field units are to monitor the radio at all times when in service or out of their car**. If an in-service unit fails to respond after being called three separate times during a one-minute period, a shift supervisor is notified. Deputies closer to calls are to volunteer for calls.

Communication over the radio is to be conducted on a formal, but brief basis. Except in emergency cases, lengthy messages will be placed over the telephone. There will be no messages of a personal nature over the radio.
All units are to remain on their assigned channel, except when**:**

1. Directed by a dispatcher
2. Directed by a supervisor
3. Necessary for the performance of the enforcement function.

All units will advise the dispatcher of their desire to change channels.

**Calls are dispatched until the end of each shift**. Calls for service are not held over for the oncoming shift, unless specifically authorized by a Uniform Patrol supervisor. All special assignments are to have prior approval of a unit's immediate supervisor. Communications is to be advised prior to each special assignment taking place.

**UNNECCESSARY CONVERSATIONS ARE PROHIBITED** – Arguing or complaining over the radio will not be tolerated. Any deputy/dispatcher complaint involving radio communications is to be resolved tactfully through respective supervisors, either in person or over the telephone.

**Deputies are to obtain case numbers of previous cases from Records (via telephone) and not dispatchers.** Deputies are to refrain from asking Communications to make telephone calls, if calls can be made in any other way.

**VEHICLE STOPS** – When stopping a car, deputies are to always advise Communications, receive acknowledgement and proceed to give specific description and location of stopped vehicle. The following standard procedures are to be used for describing a vehicle stop:

1. Exact location and cross street.
2. License plate and State.
3. Make, model, and color of vehicle.
4. Number of occupants and sex/race.

**BE ON LOOKOUT (BOLO) -** A deputy initiating a BOLO is to first transmit information to a dispatcher, who will air the official BOLO to other cars and stations. The procedure for describing a person is as follows:

1. Race/sex.
2. Height.
3. Age.
4. Weight.
5. Complete description from head downward.

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE –** Of the Ten Codes, 10-41 will be used exclusively for emergency, priority, and routine responses in the following described manner.

**10-41A – Emergency Response – deputy needs emergency assistance:**

1. Communications will hit alert tone three (3) times and broadcast on all channels – 10-41A, the location, and the affected channel.
2. Deputies respond Signal One without airing they are enroute. This will allow the deputy requesting help and the supervisor to communicate with each other without interruption. Deputies will acknowledge their arrival on the scene and apprise the supervisor of the circumstances as soon as possible.

**10-41B – Priority Response – deputy requesting immediate assistance:**

1. Communications broadcasts on all channels the location and affected channel.
2. The primary beat and adjacent beat units of the deputy requesting assistance respond Signal One. Once initial units air their response, other units are to remain off the radio.
3. The supervisor will use discretion in determining which units will continue the Signal One response, and which units will cancel Signal One and respond routine.
4. **Communications personnel may broadcast 10-41B in circumstances where a Deputy needs immediate assistance but is unable to broadcast the request. These situations include, but not limited to, Communications personnel hearing a Deputy in a physical altercation over the radio or a citizen report of a Deputy needing help. In any event where this type of broadcast occurs, the communications personnel must be able to justify their decision. Field Supervisors are to closely monitor these types of broadcast and they have the final determination on the type of response by Deputies.**

**10-41C – Routine Response – Deputy has the scene under control but is requesting non-emergency back-up.**

**DEPUTY RESPONDER SYSTEM:**

**Handheld Emergency Button –** Once the handheld emergency button is activated the Communication Specialist will silence the alert and attempt to raise the deputy listed in emergency status on the radio monitor on all channels. If unable to make contact with the deputy, a road supervisor will be notified and the Communication Specialist must attempt to make contact to the deputy's mobile device.

**Call Timers -** The Communications Center utilizes a CAD based status system so the Communication Specialist can maintain an awareness of all officer locations and activities, and perform safety checks as appropriate. As a general guideline, a CAD timer has been established based on type code for each unit assigned to an incident.

**PHONETIC ALPHABET** - The phonetic alphabet is to be used during transmissions in order to ensure understanding by the receiver:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Alpha | N | November |
| B | Bravo | O | Oscar |
| C | Charlie | P | Papa |
| D | Delta | Q | Quebec |
| E | Echo | R | Romeo |
| F | Foxtrot | S | Sierra |
| G | Golf | T | Tango |
| H | Hotel | U | Uniform |
| I | India | V | Victor |
| J | Juliet | W | Whiskey |
| K | Kilo | X | X-ray |
| L | Lima | Y | Yankee |
| M | Mike | Z | Zulu |

**CALL DISPOSITION CODES** – When completing call assignments, deputies use the following codes designating dispositions for calls for service:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Code 1 | GOA | Gone on arrival |
| Code 2 | UNK | Unfounded |
| Code 3 | HBO | Handled by officer |
| Code 4 | | Miscellaneous Incident Report Card |
| A | | False Alarm Activation |
| B | | Weather Related Alarm |
| Code 5 | | Incident Report Form |
| A | | Online Incident Report |
| Code 6 | | Vehicle Collision Report |
| Code 7 | | Uniform Traffic Ticket |
| Code 8 | | Turned over to other agency |
| Code 9 | CBC | Cancelled by complainant |
| Code 10 | | DHEC Report (Medic use only) |

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** Communications during special events including, but not limited to, parades, entertainment/sporting events, VIP visits and demonstrations, is paramount for the safety of those attending and the Deputies assigned to the event. During these events, a radio channel may be designated as the operational channel at the discretion of the operational supervisor of the event. The Communications Director will be responsible for assigning a communications specialist for the operational channel for the event.

**TACTICAL OPERATIONS:** During tactical operations, a field supervisor will designate a radio channel and a communications specialist will be assigned to that radio channel for the operation as a part of the incident command system. The communications specialist will assist in the coordination of resource management; communications among any outside agencies involved and maintain radio communications. This will facilitate timely and accurate information that will be relayed to command staff. Communications Specialist assigned to these operations must be certified through the SC Criminal Justice Academy in Basic Communications and have successfully completed their probationary training.

**EXTRA PATROL REQUESTS:** Routine requests for extra patrol (house checks, suspicious person, vehicle, etc.) should be carefully screened. Only those that present a real need should be fulfilled.

**CODE RED:**

CODE RED is a telephone notification system, similar to "Reverse 911," for alerting citizens living in specific geographical locations to emergency situations. Examples of system use would be to relay information regarding:

- Hazardous conditions
- Suspect/vehicle descriptions
- Mandatory evacuation or shelter-in-place situations
- Special operations
- Search and rescue of lost children or vulnerable adults

The system activates only those citizens whose phone numbers are published. Citizens with non-published numbers may enter their numbers by accessing the CODE RED website (www.ecnetwork.com).

**NOTE –** Only a supervisor can request an activation of CODE RED. Communications personnel are responsible for activating the alert notification system.

**800 MHz RADIOS:**

The Sheriff's Office has responded to the need for improved communications interoperability by the use of 800 MHz radios. Interoperability refers to the ability of different agencies to communicate with each other across jurisdictions. Natural disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, and wildfires, particularly when they hit heavily populated areas, require a coordinated response from numerous public safety and public service organizations, as do catastrophic events such as plane crashes, train derailments, and widespread power outages. Even in situations more directly related to law enforcement, such as terrorist activity or other incidents requiring a tactical team, ERT, SWAT, Bomb Squad, etc. to respond, multiple agencies may need to be involved.

Whenever multiple agencies are involved, coordination between and across agencies require planning, cooperation, and effective communications.

The Palmetto 800 system allows radio traffic from other agencies to be received on these radios. This radio system provides a way for first responders outside the Greenville County Sheriff's Office to have interoperable communications with the Communications Center when necessary.

Encryption enhances the safety and success of special operations. The Sheriff's Office maintains the ability to encrypt radio transmissions when the transmission is deemed sensitive.

**RAPID DEPLOY:**

Rapid Deploy Radius Plus video, SMS chat and Rapid Locate provides ANI/ALI and supplemental location information which allows a more accurate locate and ability to track a caller within levels of situational awareness.

If Rapid Deploy Radius Plus video application is available to communication specialist and call-takers for use during emergency and non-emergency calls and incidents, including but not limited to:

1. At a Supervisor or deputies request for situational awareness.
2. When a caller is unable to verbally communicate or SMS chat with the communication specialist or call-taker.
3. If the call for service involves an individual in mental crisis that CCRI may be responding to the scene.

Storage of Data produced by functions of Rapid Deploy Radius plus are maintained by Rapid Deploy and available upon request by the agency.

**All images and sounds recorded Rapid Deploy Radius Plus are the exclusive property of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. Accessing, copying, or releasing files for non-law enforcement purposes is strictly prohibited.**

**All access to Rapid Deploy Radius Plus data (images, sounds and metadata must be specifically authorized by the Sheriff or his designee.**

Data recorded by Rapid Deploy Radius Plus mapping is location and other data in 911 System. According to SC Section 23-47-75, "CMRS location information and other data in 911 System not subject to FOIA or disclosure."

**EQUATURE**

Equature Logging System records and stores telephone and radio traffic. Equature's application is available to authorized personnel to monitor live 911 calls. This is not to be used to critique or interrupt communications during the live 911 call. Equature is to be used during the tour of duty of the assigned shift to enhance situational awareness. Unauthorized sharing, listening, recording, or dissemination of 911 calls is strictly prohibited.

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT:**

The purpose of performance measurement is to capture and analyze data to create a strategic plan for Communications. This will ensure the Agency's mission, vision, and goals are met, maintained and surpassed. Performance measurement results will assist in planning, managing, and budgeting as well as assist in reevaluating goals and objectives, adjust priorities, and help promote a process of continuous improvement.

The intended use of performance measurement is to provide timely, accurate, and useful information about the quality and efficiency of service delivery. This performance measurement program will be used as a management tool to identify progress made toward goals and objectives and may also identify ways in which to improve service delivery by pinpointing opportunities for improvement.

Overall performance measurement responsibility for Communications lies with the Director of Communications using the information provided on a monthly basis by personnel assigned to perform Quality Assurance Evaluations.

All elements/functions of Communications may be called upon to contribute to the performance measurement program including data collection, processing, and reporting.

Any employee who is assigned to perform a performance measurement task will have access to resources to obtain the information and guidance necessary for the proper completion of the assigned task.

Personnel responsible for the performance measurement program shall receive introductory training in performance measurement. Thereafter, performance management personnel shall be periodically afforded opportunities to receive additional training in performance management.

A Performance Measurement Summary Report will be completed monthly and will include, but is not limited to, the following call statistics:

- Phone call volume per hour by day of the week.
- Percentage of incoming 911 calls answered in 0-15 seconds.
- Average call duration.

The Director of Communications and/or their designee will conduct a quarterly, documented performance measurement assessment utilizing information from the monthly Performance Measurement Summary Reports. The quarterly report includes an assessment of the following:

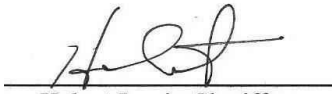
- Trends in performance (compare employee activity to the previous month).
- Training issues.
- Remedial actions.
- Calls-for-Service;
- Employees trained;
- 9-1-1 Answer Times;
- Call processing times;

Personnel assigned to complete Quality Assurance shall collect the data necessary to detail the various measurements indicated above on a monthly basis.

Communications will use previous Communications performance measurements for the benchmarking process due to the unique nature of their activities and make-up.

The Director of Communications shall review the data and analyses provided and provide final data cleaning, critique and analysis. The final report will be forwarded to the Uniform Patrol Captain.

Obtaining feedback from internal staff and outside entities is very important to the success of Communications. The collected data shall be shared with the administrative and supervisory staff of this agency in regularly scheduled staff meetings, by memorandum, or other appropriate means. It is the responsibility of the supervisory staff to disseminate relevant information to affected employees. All employees are encouraged to make pertinent suggestions or comments after reviewing of these reports. Comments should be in written form and forwarded through the chain of command.



Hobart Lewis, Sheriff