

NEW CANAAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS



GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 89-12-65
FILE: SRVS 1-3
AUXILIARY & TECHNICAL

I PURPOSE/POLICY

The purpose of this general order is to provide guidelines for the management and control of the Communications Center of the New Canaan Police Department.

II RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all departmental personnel to adhere to this general order. It is the additional responsibility of the division commanders, supervisors and desk officer/dispatchers to insure its compliance.

III PROCEDURES (ADMINISTRATION)

A The Communications Center is a component of the Staff Services Section and is delegated with the responsibility of the communications function for the police department. The Communications Center is under the direct supervision of the Commander of the Staff Services Division.

B The functions of the Communications Center shall include:

1. Radio Communications
2. Telephone Communications
3. Teletype and Automated Data Communications
4. Audio/video Monitoring

C The desk officer/dispatcher assigned to the Communications Center shall be responsible for:

1. Receiving incoming calls, obtaining essential data, evaluating the situation and initiating an appropriate response. The response can be transferring a call to another department office or outside agency, initiating the dispatch of a patrol officer, entering the necessary information into Computer Aided Dispatch, or taking any action which will result in the satisfactory completion of the request for service.

2. Responding to requests for service from other sections of the police department or other town departments, (i.e. Highway, Ambulance, Fire, etc.) to include accessing the NCIC Computer files, dispatching additional Personnel to a scene or offering any other support as requested.
 3. The Communications Center is designated as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the Town of New Canaan. When the desk officer/dispatcher receives a telephone call via the E-911 system or non-emergency line that he/she determines to be either medical or fire related in nature, the following procedures shall be followed:
 - a. The dispatcher will immediately connect the caller to the Central Medical Emergency Communications Center (CMED) or the Westport Fire Dispatching Center and insure that one of their operators answers the call
 - b. Monitor the communication between the caller and the CMED/Westport Fire Dispatch operator to determine the exact nature and location of reported incident
 - c. Dispatch appropriate police personnel to the scene, as needed, to: insure scene safety, provide emergency medical care, direct traffic or perform other necessary police functions on-scene
 - d. In the event that the call transfer to CMED/Westport Fire Dispatch Center is not possible due to an equipment malfunction, the dispatcher shall dispatch appropriate Fire and EMS personnel to the incident scene and provide emergency medical dispatch (EMD) to the caller as appropriate
 4. Having the authority to use any available personnel, regardless of beat or assignment, to meet the primary objective of expeditious and effective service. Geographic boundaries such as sectors are to be respected as long as they do not hinder such service.
 - a. Use of the appropriate crew and code response (Re: General Order 89-1-54, Patrol) or a serious call is founded on the premise that the desk officer/dispatcher is in the best position to make an immediate determination of the appropriate response.
 - b. The foregoing stipulations are not intended to prevent or interfere with a command officer's exercise of their supervisory position. This order does not prevent an officer who is closer to the call location from volunteering to replace or assist the officer dispatched.
- D** All police department radio communications shall be in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.
- E** Access to the Communications Center shall be limited to authorized personnel only.
1. Authorized personnel shall include:
 - a. Personnel assigned to the Communications Center
 - b. Departmental personnel who need to obtain information from any resource in the Communications Center. However, no documents may be removed without authorization.

- c. Supervisory personnel in order to supervise or conduct official business.
 - d. Any person authorized by the desk officer/dispatcher in order to conduct departmental business and/or repair equipment.
 - 2. Authorized personnel shall leave the Communications Center promptly upon completion of their business.
 - a. In the absence of supervisory personnel, the desk officer/dispatcher is authorized to ask a person(s) to leave the Communications Center.
 - 3. As a general policy, tours may be conducted inside the Communications Center, unless exigent circumstances prevail, and only with the following provisions:
 - a. With the approval of the Commander of the Staff Services Division and/or Shift Supervisor
 - b. Whenever possible, the desk officer/dispatcher on duty is notified in advance of the tour
 - c. The tour is accompanied by a departmental employee.
 - d. The tour is advised to be very quiet, so as to not disturb the desk officer/dispatcher
- F** The Communications Center shall be equipped with a real time recording instrument and will record departmental radio transmissions and telephone conversations received at or originating from the Communications Center.
 - 1. The system (Audiolog) will have the capability of instant playback and will store information on a hard disk.
 - 2. All information stored on the recording instruments will be retained for a minimum of 730 days before being reused or deleted.
- G** Information contained on the Audiolog may be reviewed through use of following procedures:
 - 1. Command Staff & Supervisory personnel may review information contained in the system provided it is in conjunction with official business, such as investigating a complaint of misconduct or supervisory review of a subordinate's activities
 - 2. Officers investigating crimes may review information contained on the system with prior approval from their supervisor
 - 3. The Desk Officer/Dispatcher may query the system in order to replay a radio transmission or phone call to clarify or gain information that was not easily understood on its first transmission
 - 4. The information stored in the Audiolog is stored on its own server that is located in the department's server room and is not to be removed without permission from the Captain of Staff Services. Information contained on the server should be transferred to another media (CD-ROM, flash drive or E-mailed) if they are required to be removed from their designated storage areas

5. As a general rule, information contained on this system is not considered public information and is not for public disclosure. However, information may be released if it assists in furthering an investigation or is in the best interest of the Department. Any release of information to anyone outside the Department shall have prior approval from the Chief of Police

H The Communications Center is equipped with a computer terminal giving the department personnel access to NCIC/NLETS through COLLECT and criminal history files from the State Police Bureau of Identification (SPBI) and the Interstate Identification Index (III)

1. Only COLLECT certified personnel shall be authorized access to the terminal and its databases

2. The terminal shall be used in accordance with the NCIC/NLETS & COLLECT manuals and protocols

IV PROCEDURES (OPERATIONS)

A The Communications Center provides 24 hour, toll-free telephone service, within the Department's jurisdiction. This service includes the "Enhanced" 911 Emergency Telephone System.

B The Communications Center will operate 24 hours a day to provide continuous radio communications to on-duty police personnel.

1. In the event of a failure of the primary transmitter/receiver, the desk officer/dispatcher may utilize available backup equipment for uninterrupted service. The backup equipment shall be tested weekly by the desk officer/dispatcher.

C In order to facilitate communications, the desk officer/dispatcher shall have immediate access to the following departmental resources:

1. The officer in charge

2. The duty roster of all personnel

3. The residential telephone number of every agency member

D There are certain incidents which occur that require immediate attention and may also require additional supervisory, investigative, technical or outside personnel. Said incidents shall be in accordance with General Order 87-7-42, Notification and includes:

1. Homicide

2. Suicide/Untimely death

3. Dangerous situations

4. Injuries to a Police Officer

5. Injuries sustained to a citizen by a police officer

6. Internal Affairs/Litigation

7. Unusual Occurrences

E In order to provide for the safety and security of the citizenry, it may become necessary to utilize services external to the police department. Such services shall be used as appropriate.

1. Services which do not require supervisory approval include:

a. New Canaan Fire Department (Routed through CMED)

- 1) Fires
- 2) Hazardous Materials Incidents
- 3) Motor vehicle accident scenes
- 4) Accidents involving leakage of flammable substances
- 5) Natural gas leaks
- 6) Wires down or arcing
- 7) Flooded basements
- 8) Explosives

b. New Canaan Emergency Medical Service or other Emergency Medical Service (Routed through CMED)

- 1) Medical assistance/emergency transport

c. Northeast Utilities (C.L.& P.)

- 1) Power outages
- 2) Wires down or arcing
- 3) Poles damaged or knocked down
- 4) Natural gas leaks
- 5) Burned out street lights

d. American Telephone & Telegraph (ATT) and/or Total Communications Inc. (TCI)

- 1) Wires down
- 2) Poles damaged or knocked down
- 3) Telephone problems within the police department building

e. New Canaan Water Company

- 1) Water problems (i.e. broken water pipes, fire hydrants, etc.)

f. Private Towing Services

- 1) As assigned from the "On-call Tow List" maintained in the Communications Center

g. Norwalk, and Stamford Hospitals

- 1) Examination/Evaluation of mentally ill persons.

h. Department of Children & Families (DCF)

- 1) Assistance with abuse cases
- 2) Abandoned or neglected children (Re., General Order 88-6-50, Juvenile Operations).

i. Connecticut Medical Examiner's Office

- 1) Death as a result of criminal or violent means.
- 2) Suicide
- 3) Sudden death when in apparent good health.
- 4) Suspicious or unusual circumstances.

j. New Canaan Highway Department

- 1) Hazardous road conditions (i.e. icy streets, potholes, etc.)
- 2) Miscellaneous assistance (i.e. set up barricades, remove animal carcasses from roadway, etc.)

k. Connecticut Department of Transportation (State maintained roads only)

- 1) Hazardous road conditions
- 2) Traffic signal malfunction
- 3) Traffic Control devices missing/damaged
- 4) Remove highway debris

l. Public Works Department

- 1) Repair, maintenance, alterations to department buildings.

m. Tree Warden

- 1) Hazardous trees and limbs

n. Motorola Communications

- 1) Police receiver/transmitter malfunction

2. Services which require supervisory approval include:

- a. Special tactical teams
- b. Bomb Squad
- c. Hazardous materials response team
- d. K-9 Team from outside agencies
- e. Mutual Aid
- f. Red Cross
- g. National Guard/Armed Forces

F An Emergency contact list for stores, office buildings, churches and other commercial buildings shall be accessible through Computer Aided Dispatch and may be used to notify the owner or proprietor of after hour's problems.

G In the event that the desk officer/dispatcher receives a call for service that should be directed to another police, fire department or emergency medical service, it should first be determined if the call is an emergency.

- 1.** If the call is not an emergency, the caller will be given the correct agencies telephone number.
- 2.** If the call is an emergency and cannot be transferred to the appropriate agency using the enhanced 911 system, then all pertinent information shall be taken and entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch System. The information shall then be promptly relayed to the appropriate department or agency.

H Calls for service shall be recorded at the time of the request, using Computer Aided Dispatch.

- 1.** The information entered and/or generated by Computer Aided Dispatch for each call for service includes:
 - a. Date and Time of the request.
 - b. Name, address and phone number of the complainant (if possible).
 - c. Type of incident reported (Offense Code).
 - d. Location of incident reported.
 - e. Time of dispatch (Primary and Back-up Units)
 - f. Time of officer(s) arrival at the scene (Primary and Back-up Units)
 - g. Time of officer(s) return to service (Primary and Back-up Units)
 - h. Disposition or status of reported incident.

- I** The department utilizes a computer generated case numbering system. The system assigns an incident number to each call for service as it is entered into Computer Aided Dispatch.
1. The number assigned serves as a basis for filing and retrieving subsequent reports of the incident.
- J** Desk officers/dispatchers shall obtain as much information as possible on a call for service. The amount of information necessary will depend on the nature of the call. They should obtain sufficient information in order to assure proper recording of the call, to enhance officer safety and assist in anticipating conditions which may be encountered at the scene.
- K** When an officer conducts an administrative function (i.e., not a call for service) a quick call number will be assigned as the activity is entered into Computer Aided Dispatch.
1. Included in this entry are;
 - a. (Beat) Officer ID
 - b. Type of "Internal Function".
 - c. Location
 2. These administrative functions include, but are not limited to the following;
 - a. Dispatch Relief
 - b. Meal/Chow
 - c. Court Duty
 - d. Training
 - e. Transport
 - f. Reports
 3. Administrative activity may be tracked through computer generated reports.
- L** A record will be made when a back-up unit is assigned to assist a primary unit. This is accomplished through Computer Aided Dispatch. The back-up unit will utilize the same case number as assigned to the primary unit. Back-up activity will be tracked through computer generated reports.
- M** The police department utilizes the "Enhanced" 911 emergency phone system to facilitate quick and easy emergency service within its jurisdiction. The 911 phone number is prominently displayed in phone books, public phone booths and on the rear trunk lid of the marked patrol vehicles.
- N** The Department has the capability of immediate playback of recorded telephone and radio conversations.
1. Both phone positions in the Communications Center are equipped with the Audiolog which will record all non-emergency telephone conversations.

2. All emergency (911) telephone conversations and radio transmissions are recorded using the Audiolog. Immediate playback is available on 911 using Palladium Call Recording.
- O** The police department has the responsibility of insuring that it responds, safely and effectively, to residential and commercial alarms.
1. Notification of said alarms include,
 - a. Direct notification from the alarm company
 - b. Complainant at the scene
 - c. The department will not respond to alarm calls which are received by an automatic dialer.
 2. Department Personnel responding to activated alarms shall follow the procedures outlined in the "Alarm Response by Agency Personnel" document, located on the Department server and in General Order manuals located throughout headquarters.
- P** All emergency messages accepted and delivered in person or by telephone by the department, shall be handled as a call for service, and in accordance with General Order 89-1-54, Patrol. Each call shall be judged on their own merit as to the priority they receive.
- Q** Anytime the desk officer/dispatcher receives information concerning the theft of a motor vehicle, said dispatcher shall, upon verification disseminate all pertinent information to the officers in the field.
1. Desk officers/dispatchers shall be responsible for entering stolen vehicle information into the NCIC system as soon as practicable.
 2. Additionally, stolen vehicle information will be disseminated to shift personnel at the start of each shift.

V **PROCEDURES (FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT)**

- A** The capability to maintain communications in all emergency situations dictates that security measures be implemented to protect communications personnel and equipment. Such security measures include:
1. Limiting Access - Access to the Communications Center shall be restricted and in accordance with Section III, E of this general order.
 2. Protecting Equipment
 3. Providing for back-up resources
- B** The desk officer/dispatcher has direct contact with the Emergency Medical Service and Fire Department by use of direct telephone lines. These agencies may also be contacted by using the radio communications system.
1. Additionally, the following telephone numbers are immediately accessible.

- a. Emergency contacts for town-owned facilities
- b. Emergency contacts for stores, businesses, etc.
- c. Towing companies
- d. State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies
- e. Area Hospitals, Power Control Facilities, etc.
- f. Special response teams, (i.e. Tactical, Hazmat, Bomb Squad, etc.)
- g. State Medical Examiner's Office
- h. State Attorney's/Prosecutor's Office
- i. Any other telephone numbers as necessary

C In order to prevent a loss of communications during a power failure, the police department is equipped with a generator, which is automatically activated when the power fails. The generator supplies power to most of the building and the Communications Center, including the radio and telephone system.

1. The generator shall be tested and inspected weekly to ensure uninterrupted operation. The inspection shall be conducted by police maintenance personnel and recorded in an inspection log.

D A map, detailing the department's jurisdictional area is located in the Communications Center and is clearly visible to the communications personnel. In addition to street locations, the map also details:

1. Patrol Beats
2. Parks and landmarks
3. Schools, Town Hall & Police Headquarters

E Computer Aided Dispatch monitors the status of each officer under their control. Information available to the desk officer/dispatcher includes:

1. Units available for service
2. Units assigned to a call for service and if so;
 - a. Type of complaint
 - b. Location
 - c. Case number assigned
 - d. Time call: received, dispatched, arrived, cleared

- F** The Communications Center maintains two telephone systems available for emergency and non-emergency use. The Cisco IP phone(s) are the part of the system designated for non-emergency or routine calls for service. The second part of the system is the enhanced 911 system, authorized by the State of Connecticut for receiving, transferring and placing emergency calls.
1. The enhanced 911 telephone system receives calls on 4 separate lines and is autonomous from the Department's non-emergency phone system, thereby significantly reducing the chance of an emergency caller receiving a busy signal.
 2. If a citizen call on the 911 emergency line, and the desk officer/dispatcher determines that the call is not an emergency, they should give the caller one of the non-emergency numbers and request that they call back, so that the 911 lines remain available. If the caller is unable to call back, the desk officer/dispatcher shall record all of the pertinent information and clear the line as soon as is practicable.
- G** A desk officer/dispatcher shall be assigned to the Communications Center 24-hours a day, providing uninterrupted telephone and radio communications to police personnel and the public.
- H** All uniformed patrol officers assigned to foot patrol or other field duty shall be in constant radio communications with the desk officer/dispatcher through the use of mobile or portable hand-held radios. All police vehicles, marked and unmarked, are equipped with a mobile radio.
1. In order to ensure constant communications, officers in the field, either assigned to a shift or an extra-duty assignment, will carry their issued a portable radio.
 2. Each radio shall be equipped with a shoulder microphone and an emergency button. When depressed, the emergency button will alert the dispatcher (via an audible tone) that the officer has an emergency. When activated, a loud alert tone sounds in the Communications Center and the officer's identification number is displayed on the communications console. The dispatcher responsibilities at that point will be to:
 - a. Immediately attempt to communicate with the officer by radio (or other means if available) and determine whether the activation was accidental or if an actual emergency exists.
 - 1) If the dispatcher is able to communicate with the officer and determines that it was an accidental activation, the dispatcher will then manually reset the alert tone. No further action will be required.
 - 2) If the officer requests emergency assistance, then the dispatcher shall obtain as much essential information from the officer as possible, evaluate the situation and dispatch additional officers, EMS personnel and/or other resources as necessary.
 - 3) If the dispatcher is unable to communicate with the officer in the field, He/She shall:
 - a) Dispatch an officer(s) to the last known location of the field officer and continue attempts to communicate with that officer by radio or other means (if available). The shift supervisor shall also be notified of the situation.

- b) If the responding officer(s) is unable to locate the missing officer, the dispatcher shall dispatch additional personnel, investigative personnel and outside resources to assist in locating the officer. The search will continue until the officer is located.
- 4) Any subsequent investigation, use of force, medical assistance, notifications etc. regarding this type of incident shall be in accordance with established departmental policies and procedures.

VI DISTRIBUTION

This general order will be reproduced in electronic and traditional media. All sworn personnel shall have access to Department general orders through on their individual domain on the department's computer network. This is accomplished using a read-only file in the PowerDMS software.

VII EFFECTIVE DATE

This general order approved by the Police Commission on May 16, 1990 and is effective June 18, 1990.

Revised June 1997
Revised May 2000
Revised August 2003
Reviewed December 2005
Revised August 2009
Revised May 2010
Revised August 2015

Per order,

Leon M. Krolikowski
Chief of Police