


MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

General Order

CHAPTER: 033		TITLE: Communications
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 12, 2014	NO. PAGES: 10	REVIEWED/REVISED: November 29, 2022
 Sheriff of Monroe County		

I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this directive is to establish minimum guidelines for the safe and efficient operation of Communications.

II. **DISCUSSION:** This directive shall apply to all Sheriff's Office personnel. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit the Communications Director from establishing more detailed procedures for the effective and efficient operation of Communications as long as such detailed procedures do not alter, amend, or rescind any portion of this directive. All Communications functions fall under the Communications Director. The Communications Center has 24-hour two-way radio capability 365 days a year. The main functions of Communications are radio communications, telephone communications, teletype and automated data communications, and alarm monitoring where applicable. These functions are further depicted throughout the directive.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A. **Federal Communications Commission:** All radio operations of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission's procedures and requirements.

B. **Access to Communications Centers:** Only authorized personnel shall be allowed access to the Communications Centers of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. Authorized persons are those who operate and command the center and to others specifically authorized.

C. **Line Load Studies:** Annually, The Communications Center Commander and/or their designee shall conduct a study of all calls placed to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office dispatch center in order to determine whether the Office has the proper number of telephone lines, callers are receiving a busy signal, or if calls are going unanswered due to lack of equipment.

D. Digital Recordings

1. All Office radio transmissions and emergency telephone conversations within the Communications Center are to be recorded.
2. Care shall be exercised to assure that digital recordings are not erased.
3. Since recordings are an indispensable source for criminal investigations, internal investigations, training, and audits of the agency's service delivery system, agency radio transmissions and emergency telephone conversations shall be retained in a secured room inside the Communications Center for a period of six months. The Central Records supervisor will be responsible for disseminating public records requests.
4. Recorded conversations may be reviewed by:

- a. Communications personnel who need immediate playback of recorded telephone and/or radio conversations
- b. Personnel authorized by the Sheriff, or Division Commander.
- c. Any person who requests to hear such tape recording in compliance with Florida Statutes. Whenever such tape recorded conversations are reviewed, the Communications Supervisor shall be responsible for maintaining a log depicting who listened to the tape and of the date and time portion of the tape.

E. Requests for Service:

1. All requests for service received by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office shall include:
 - a. Date and time of request;
 - b. Name and address of complainant (if possible) ;
 - c. Type of incident reported; ;
 - d. Location of incident reported; ;
 - e. Identification of officer(s) as primary and backup (if applicable); ;
 - f. Time of dispatch; ;
 - g. Time of deputy's arrival; ;
 - h. Time of deputy's return to service; and;
 - i. Disposition or status of reported incident. ;
2. A complaint control number (CAD) is assigned to each specific call for service.
3. On all calls for service, it shall be the duty of the individual receiving the call to solicit as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the deputy and assist in anticipating conditions to be encountered at the scene. In addition to the above information, the individual receiving the call shall attempt to obtain:
 - a. Whether weapons are involved;
 - b. Whether the suspect is at the scene or in the immediate area;
 - c. Physical and clothing description of suspect;
 - d. Description of suspect's vehicle;
 - e. The number of individuals involved;
 - f. Are there any injuries to any parties involved;
 - g. The suspect's route of escape;
 - h. A brief factual account of what happened;
 - i. Any other pertinent information.
4. A record shall be made of all back-up Deputies assigned to assist the primary Deputy. This shall be accomplished by:
 - a. Preparing a complaint control document for the primary Deputy and writing in those deputies assigned as backup; or

- b. Preparing a separate control document for each backup deputy assigned and utilizing the same control number as in the primary document number.
 5. All subsequent investigations to our original case will be documented on a supplemental report by using our original case number (i.e. recovered property/vehicle, warrant arrest, missing persons and long term investigations.)
- F. All "Out-of-Service" status of Deputies shall be recorded:** Such records will permit the Office to:
1. Evaluate non-patrol time for agency planning purposes
 2. Maintain a level of security for all on duty deputies. Once the deputy is on a call or traffic stop, after four minutes from initial contact, the communications officer will do a code 5 check to confirm deputies' status. This policy is also in effect on all in progress calls and any other calls where it is deemed necessary
 3. Communications officers will conduct a code 5 check on all on duty deputies who are not on a call for service and who have been inactive for a period of one hour
 4. Retain records of vehicles and persons stopped by officers
- G. Emergency Messages:**
1. Whenever an emergency message is received by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office that was intended for another agency, the individual receiving the call shall:
 - a. Receive the call as if it were for the Monroe County Sheriff's Office;
 - b. Immediately relay the call to the appropriate agency; and,
 - c. Notify the caller of the action taken and what to expect.
 2. Whenever an emergency message is received by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and falls under the Office's jurisdiction, the individual receiving the call shall:
 - a. Receive the call and gather information as indicated in this directive.
 - b. Have appropriate law enforcement dispatched for service;
 - c. Notify the caller of the action taken and what to expect.
 3. Emergency notification for citizens:
 - a. Situations in which the agency shall make notifications include the following:
 - 1) Death of a person;
 - 2) Serious injury resulting from a crime or crash; and
 - 3) Serious illness of a family member.
 - b. The Communications Center will obtain complete information from any person who wishes to initiate an emergency notification. Upon receiving information by telephone or teletype for an emergency notification, the communications officer will:
 - 1) Obtain the name and telephone number of the person making the emergency notification request;

- 2) Obtain from the requesting person the name, location, and telephone number of the person to be contacted about the emergency notification;
- 3) Dispatch a deputy to deliver the message as soon as possible; and
- 4) If the deputy is unable to deliver the message, the Communications Center will contact the person who initiated the request, and inform them that the message was not delivered and why.

H. Alarms

1. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office does not monitor private security alarm of a commercial or residential nature; however, the Office does respond to alarms when notified by the various alarm companies.
2. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office does not monitor financial institution alarms, however, the Office does respond to the alarms when notified by the monitoring companies.

I. Be on the Lookout (BOLO): BOLOs are transmitted via the in car computer, Communications personnel shall advise all patrol and traffic deputies of any BOLOs that the Office has received on all channels that are being unutilized. BOLOs that were received since the deputies' last tour of duty will automatically be sent to their in car computers by SmartCop.

J. Written Directives showing procedures for performing telephone, radio, teletype, and automated data communications functions are found in the "Communications Manual." This manual is reviewed and updated annually by the Communications Supervisors.

K. Security of Communications Center: In order to provide and maintain communications in all emergency situations, the following security measures exist to protect communications personnel and equipment.

1. Only authorized personnel shall be allowed access to the Communications' Centers of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. A notice to this effect shall be posted outside the Communications Room door.
2. Generators are located at Communications Centers in case of power failure and are inspected monthly.
3. All equipment of the Communications Centers is located within specially constructed rooms for protective purposes. Equipment that is not located in the Center includes transmitters and antennas, which are in secured fenced in areas and locked buildings to prevent unauthorized access. The radios, antennas and equipment are maintained by the Director of Emergency Communication.

L. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): The Division Communications Supervisor shall cause to be outlined in the Communication's Manual detailed, up-to-date procedures for the following situations:

1. Whenever a special crisis situation exists, Communications personnel shall follow the procedures outlined in GO Chapter 036 (Special Response Teams) of this Operations Manual.
2. Fire equipment: All fire dispatching is done through the Monroe County Sheriff's Office with the exception of the City of Key West. Specific procedures for the dispatching of fire equipment are located in the Communications Operations Manual.
3. Ambulance: All EMS dispatching is done through the Monroe County Office with the exception of the City of Key West. Specific procedures for the dispatching of EMS are located in the Communications Operations Manual.

4. Trauma Star: Trauma Star will be alerted by being toned by radio, called on the radio, and/or called by land line. Once notified, dispatch will refer to the General Operations Manual. This manual has been approved by FAA and is located in the dispatch center.
5. Aircraft: Air support or surveillance assistance will only be dispatched being after requested by a Supervisor. The Supervisor will inform Communications of the type of air support needed.
 - a. If fixed-wing support is required and the Monroe County Sheriff's Office plane is not available, Communications shall contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and advise of the request.
 - b. If helicopter support is required, Communications will contact FWC and advise of the request. Should the FWC be unavailable, Communications shall contact the U.S. Coast Guard Station in the respective District and advise of the request.
6. Wreckers: All wreckers shall be dispatched on a rotation basis. Wreckers are rotated on each call based on software in the CAD System. Exception: if the wrecker chosen is too far away and there is a public safety risk, the closest available wrecker will be called and pulled manually.
7. Cabs: Taxicabs are called upon the request of an individual. Should the individual have no preference, the cab company contacted shall be the next available or closest available.
8. Human Services
 - a. The Division of Youth Services with DJJ shall be contacted for all in-custody juvenile related matters when requested by a Deputy. Phone numbers are available at the Communication Center in the address book and will be provided to the deputy.
 - b. Department of Families and Children: The Abuse Registry shall be contacted at the request of a Deputy for problems related to child abuse or other family matters. The phone number is 1-800-96-ABUSE and will be provided to the deputy.
 - c. Guidance Clinic: Contacted at the request of a Deputy for intoxication-related matters. Phone numbers for the Guidance Clinic are available at the Communications Center. Deputies should call when possible.

M. Required Certifications

1. Definitions
 - a. Primary Service Mode: This mode of service refers to all normal dispatch functions excluding emergency medical dispatch service.
 - b. Advance Service Mode: This mode of service includes all normal dispatch functions included above as well as the supplying of emergency medical dispatch services. At least two (2) dispatchers should be on duty before such service is attempted.
2. Policy and Procedure
 - a. All Monroe County Sheriff's office communications officers will be certified as 9-1-1 Public Safety Telecommunicators by the Florida Department of Health (DOH) in accordance with Florida Statutes. In-house training is conducted with a curriculum that has been approved by DOH. Personnel providing the training are Public Safety Telecommunicator Certified, Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMD) by the Medical Priority Company. The emergency medical dispatch training offered by the Medical Priority Company is a 24 hours course,

which does not include CPR certification (a separate course for CPR is conducted). The Medical Priority EMD course includes a review and explanation of a manual written and provided by the Medical Priority Company. Practical training is minimal. Each dispatcher will obtain 24 hours of re-certification every two years.

- b. All newly hired communications officers will be required to attend and be certified as a 9-1-1 Public Safety Telecommunicator, in Medical Priority EMD, and CPR during the probationary period of one year. New communications officers must work under the direct supervision of a certified 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator at all times and will not be permitted to be assigned to a shift working alone until they are certified.
- c. All new communications officers will be certified/re-certified by the Medical Priority Company in order to establish consistency with training and implementation of the curriculum.
- d. Stages of Instruction:
 - 1) The location of the patient will be the first information obtained and the caller will be advised to stay on the line while the Medics and/or Fire Rescue are dispatched. Medical calls are dispatched by the communications officer at position number two.
 - 2) Information should be obtained from the manual by using the "key" questions, and any further details on the location/address.
 - 3) Determine if pre-arrival instructions can be given. Refusal of the caller to assist can be for various reasons, but it is recommended that the communications officer stay on the line until the first responder arrives. This includes deputies, medics, and/or fire rescue personnel which are verified by the arrival given by radio. At no time should a caller be intimidated into performing or providing assistance.
- e. If the caller is able to assist, follow the instructions in the "Flip Chart" manual.
- f. Continue to update the medics as to the situation and condition of the patient.
- g. It is of the utmost importance for the communications officer to remain calm and reassuring to the caller. Inform them that the ambulance is on the way or that help is on the way without giving specific statements indicating time frames.
- h. If the patient is unconscious and not breathing, then immediately refer to the Flip Chart instructions for CPR for adults, children, and/or infants.
- i. If the patient is choking, immediately refer to the Flip Chart instructions for choking adult, children, and/or infant.
- j. Ascertain from the medics if there is any further information.
- k. Notes on each medical call the "dispatch priorities" which indicate the situation, response order, and priority of the calls will be added to the CAD notes. Medical calls should be handled expeditiously with emphasis on following the instructions from the manual with no deviations.
- l. Callers that claim to be medically trained personnel should be given instructions according to the manual. Apply protocol to all callers. Ascertain if the caller informs you they are medically trained, and if they are going to manage the patient until the medics arrive. Report or copy the information that is given and relay by radio to the medics. Record the name of the person providing the medical information.

- m. Medic and Fire Rescue Jurisdictions are established by Monroe County EMS. A list of each applicable zone coverage will be displayed in the CAD system, the list can also be found in the in the communications center manual.

N. Responding to Calls for Information and Services:

1. Communications Division personnel are likely to receive calls from victims/witnesses who request information or services. In many instances these calls may represent the first contact a victim/witness makes with the agency and Communications Division personnel should be able to provide an appropriate response.
2. Policy and Procedure (Procedures for performing telephone, radio, teletype and automated data are covered in the Communications Manual.
 - a. The complaint intake officer will judge the characteristics of the event to determine whether an emergency or non-emergency response is required.
 - 1) This information will be passed on to the responding deputy and the patrol supervisor.
 - 2) Information regarding the agency's response, including direct law enforcement service and/or referral to other agencies will be provided to the reporting person.
 - 3) Victims or complainants will be referred to the proper agency or organization, or MCSO Victim/Witness pamphlet.
 - b. Communications Center personnel receiving calls for service shall obtain and record the following information at the time of request, this information shall include:
 - 1) Date and time of request
 - 2) Name and address of complainant (if possible)
 - 3) Type of incident reported
 - 4) Location of incident reported
 - 5) Time of dispatch
 - 6) Time of officer arrival
 - 7) Time of officer return to service: and
 - 8) Disposition or status of reported incident

Note: Information shall be recorded for all requests received including those received by telephone, letter, in person, self-initiated by officers; or reported to officers in the field.
 - c. Complaint numbers will be assigned for calls requiring a Written Original Report to the agency. Extra-duty employment, meals, training or administrative details will not generate a complaint number. However, these details will be recorded as deputy activity on the CAD system. All other activities, call or complaints, including traffic stops, and other deputy/employee generated activity will be given a CAD number in the system.
 - d. Obtaining relevant information for each call for law enforcement service is critical for prompt agency respond and officer safety. Communications personnel shall elicit as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the officer(s) responding and assist in the anticipated conditions to be encountered at the scene. Checklist information should include, but not be limited to the following:
 - 1) Nature of incident, and if in progress or not
 - 2) Location of incident
 - 3) Weapons involved
 - 4) Number of persons involved
 - 5) Description of suspect(s)

- 6) Time occurred or lapsed time since incident
 - 7) Injuries involved
 - 8) Complainants name, address and telephone number (if possible)
 - 9) Suspects direction of travel, if no longer on scene
 - 10) Suspects mode of travel
 - 11) Description of vehicle(s)
 - 12) Vehicle license plate number
 - 13) Point of entry/exit
 - 14) Suspects or others intoxicated
 - 15) Additional suspect activities
 - 16) Any prior incidents at this location or involving the same suspects
 - 17) Any additional information about the incident, suspect(s) or activities
- e. A record shall be made of back-up officers assigned to assist a primary officer, back-up officers shall be added to the original incident and will not require a separate CAD code. It is the responsibility of the Communications Officer to be sure all in service units are displayed on their particular unit status screen. Further it is the communications officer's responsibility to check on units when needed.
- f. Daily dissemination of stolen vehicle information. All stolen vehicles, stolen tags, stolen decals and missing persons meeting FCIC/NCIC criteria will be entered in the Teletype and CAD BOLO file. Felony vehicles shall be entered in the Teletype and CAD BOLO file. Information concerning stolen vehicles, etc. are BOLOd by the communications section upon receipt and verification of the information.
- g. Acceptable priority code:
- 1) Priority 1; To be dispatched immediately
 - 2) Priority 2, 3, 4, 5, 6: To be dispatched within 15 minutes
 - 3) In the event that a call cannot be dispatched in the allotted time, the communications officer will notify the on-duty district sergeant and advise of the holding call. Once this is done the communications officer will then place that information in the call notes of the incident to indicate that the information was passed on to explain the necessary delay.
 - 4) While most priority codes have been pre-programmed the call taker must use some discretion. Circumstances such as personal injury, presence of weapons, the perpetrator on scene, etc. would require the priority to be raised. The key word is discretion. DO NOT think that the pre-programmed priority is "locked in concrete". Do not tab through this field without giving it some reasonable thought.
 - 5) Not only do the call types indicate the priority, they are also indicated by the color of the call to correlate with the deputy's response:
 - a) Red indicates a priority 1 call
 - b) Yellow indicates priority 2
 - c) Green indicates priority 3
 - d) Teal indicates priority 4
 - e) Purple indicates priority 5
 - f) White indicates priority 6
 - g) Olive green indicates that a call has been suspended, which means that the unit was pulled to go on another call
 - h) Gray indicates that the call is closed

O. Alternative Report Filing:

1. In most instances a deputy shall be dispatched to the scene or location of a complainant or victim to gather pertinent evidence or information for the completion and submission of an incident report.
2. However, there are incidents where the presence of a deputy on the scene gathering information for a report is not necessary. The same information may be gathered through other means of contact with the reporting party. To facilitate the most efficient use of a deputy's time, reports as outlined below may be taken via the telephone by the deputy.
 - a. Misdemeanor theft, where the suspect is not known and/or on the scene
 - b. Information reports (reports filed to document information of no significant criminal matter)
 - b. Lost/stolen tag, decal sticker
 - c. Lost cellular phones, Handled by the Communication Officer and given a CAD number
 - d. Delayed reporting of misdemeanor crimes
 - e. Complainant is reporting the incident from another jurisdiction
 - f. Initial incident information was received via mail, U.S. mail or email, and phone contact is made with the complainant for report completion
3. Communications may, in the above listed instances, advise the complainant that a deputy will call them. If the complainant request, Communications will dispatch a deputy to the scene to take a report.
4. A response to the scene is required in all cases where the incident is:
 - a. A crime against a person.
 - b. The potential for violence at the scene is possible.
 - c. A felony theft.
 - d. A forcible felony.
 - e. A suspect is known and/or is on the scene.
 - f. Evidence is available for collection and processing.

P. Procedures to initiate entry and removal of F/NCIC, when appropriate, include the following:

1. In accordance with FCIC guidelines the following entries will be made into FCIC.
 - a. Stolen/Recovered vehicles
 - b. Felony Vehicles
 - c. Abandoned/Towed vehicles
 - d. Stolen/Lost guns.
2. The impounding deputy will, when appropriate, contact the Communications Center and ensure that the vehicle has been entered into F/NCIC.
3. In cases involving the recovery of a stolen vehicle originally reported to this agency, the recovering deputy shall contact the Communications Center and request the cancellation of any computer entry which reflects the vehicle is at large.
4. In incidents involving impounded felony vehicles, the case deputy shall contact the Communications Center and authorize cancellation, when applicable, of the computer entry.
5. Abandoned/Towed Vehicles:
 - a. FCIC entry is not necessary for all vehicles with a known owners name and Monroe County address.

- b. FCIC entry will be made for all vehicles if the owner is known or not and the registration indicates the vehicle is from outside of Monroe County.
- c. Exceptions to this rule shall be following a natural or man-made disaster and approval of the Sheriff.
- d. Removal from FCIC - abandoned towed vehicles, FCIC entry may be removed after 90 days.

6. All towed vehicles shall be entered into the CAD System Tow Log.

Q. Lost Property: Communication officers can handle lost property calls via the telephone and can provide a CAD number to the complaint. One exception to this is a lost gun which a deputy has to handle, in reference to F/NCIC entry.

R. Interpreter services:

1. Call-Taker Responsibilities:

- a. When a call-taker receives an emergency call and determines the caller is Limited English Proficiency (LEP), to the best of their ability he/she will inform the LEP caller that an interpreter will be located and remain on the line. The call-taker will immediately contact the language interpreter service on file." After establishing a conference between the call-taker, LEP caller, and interpreter, the call-taker shall process the call (through the interpreter) by following the policies used for all calls for service.
- b. For calls determined not to be an emergency, the call-taker will ask the LEP if they have an interpreter available. If the LEP doesn't have an interpreter available and there is no one in the Communication Center able to interpret, they will dispatch an officer to the scene to further assist the LEP caller.

2. Officer/Responder or Investigator Responsibilities:

- a. Attempt to identify the LEP individual's primary language.
- b. Attempt to ask the LEP if they have someone who can interpret for them. If no one is available and there are no interpreters on duty or available, the Deputy can request an interpreter through the Communications Center. The Communications Center will provide the Deputy with the telephone number for the interpreter needed from the list of interpreters located on our list in Communications.
- c. The use of the interpreter/service will be documented in the CAD notes and also in the report if one is generated.