



ANDERSON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

GO - 200

GENERAL ORDERS

COMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE:

Communications is a critical function in maintaining immediate effective control over field operations. The basic function of 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 Central Communications are employees of Anderson County and, as such, are subject to all rules and regulations pertaining to the County. 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:

The communications system consists of three sub-systems:

1. Radio communication
2. Telephone communication
3. Teletype and automated data communication

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

All radio traffic and incoming emergency telephone lines are recorded. Recordings normally consist of ninety-six (96) hours of recorded traffic and are maintained for 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.

COMMUNICATION 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 all incoming calls and ensure all calls are assigned with courtesy and efficiency.

Calls for service are handled promptly and professionally. Plain Text and the Phonetic Alphabet are used in all radio transmissions. Priorities in dispatching calls for service are made according to current policy.

In order to respond to victim/witness requests for information and/or services, Communications personnel will follow these procedures:

1. Determine if a uniformed patrol officer (or other emergency personnel) should respond, and dispatch if appropriate;
2. Refer to the ACSO Desk Officer, if appropriate; or
3. Provide the caller with agency personnel contact information, if appropriate.

Subsequent requests for victim/witness assistance may be referred to a Communications supervisor for proper handling. These same procedures will be followed during non-business hours.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR:

The Communications Administrative Coordinator or designee maintains a log of all requests to review radio or telephone recordings. The request to review a recording may be made in writing by any deputy. The request to review a tape of agency activities from someone other than Sheriff's Office personnel or from persons outside of the affected agency is referred to the Communications Administrative Coordinator. The requesting party will be required to complete a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS:

The Communications Center provides twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, toll free telephone access for emergency calls for service within Anderson County.

Communications personnel are often called upon to contact deputies for various reasons. A duty roster of all Sheriff's Office personnel, including supervisors, and a telephone listing of all personnel is maintained in the Communications Center for easy reference. This list includes office numbers, cell phone numbers, and specialized or 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

A complaint control 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. These plans detail the criteria for the assignment of the number of field personnel in response to an incident. *Refer to the Communications Procedures Manual for further information.*

Stolen vehicles are highly mobile and often visible. Information on stolen vehicles is disseminated daily, normally on each shift either via roll call or radio.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES MANUAL:

A Communications Procedures Manual is utilized to govern procedures used for performing telephone, radio, Teletype 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 Procedures Manual details procedures to obtain necessary services external to the Sheriff's Office. These services include:

- Fire suppression services
- Hazardous materials containment services
- EMS
- Aircraft services, fixed wing and rotary
- Cab services
- Wrecker service
- Victim/Witness services

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:

The Sheriff's Office maintains twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day a week, 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 or designee. Limiting access to unauthorized personnel protects critical equipment.

Central Communications maintains a radio system engineered to produce a twelve (12) decibel or greater SINAD ratio to the radio receivers in at least 95% of Anderson 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.

Plans for back-up resources, such as alternative base stations and telephone receiving points, are maintained in the Communications Procedure Manual.

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.

Detailed, up-to-date maps of Anderson 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 prisoners in the Detention Center

**FIELD UNIT
PROTOCOL:**

Radio communication is used only when necessary. Supervisors detecting excessive traffic are to take appropriate corrective action. At the beginning of each radio transmission, field units will identify themselves via specific call sign. For example: "County...ALPHA 20."

In order to effectively respond to calls for service, emergency requests for assistance, or an activated emergency alarm, field units are to monitor the radio at all times when in-service. Deputies closer to calls are to volunteer for calls. Communication personnel will monitor, log and coordinate all normal and emergency radio traffic.

NOTE: *If an in-service unit fails to respond after being called three separate times during a one-minute period, a shift supervisor is notified.*

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.

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

Deputies are to obtain case numbers of previous cases from the Records Department (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 vehicle, deputies are to always advise Communications, receive an acknowledgement and proceed to give specific description and location of the stopped vehicle. **The following standard procedures are to be used for describing a vehicle stop:**

1. Exact location and cross street
2. Vehicle color and body style
3. Year and any other identifying information
4. Make, license plate including state and year
5. 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. Weight
4. (Approximate) Age
5. Complete description from head downward

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

Signal 1	Unfounded
Signal 2	Gone on arrival
Signal 3	No action taken
Signal 4	Miscellaneous Report
Signal 5	Incident Report
Signal 6	Traffic Ticket
Signal 7	Turned over to (name agency)
Signal 8	Subject is wanted

Approved by:
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