



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
POLICIES & PROCEDURES**



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OPR:31	
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SUBJECT: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for effective and efficient telecommunications operations. Department personnel should familiarize themselves with the DPS Telecommunications Manual as it provides greater detail concerning department telecommunication operations.

2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Public Safety to provide 24-hour communication between the agency and on-duty personnel, persons requesting police services, and other agencies.

3.0 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Department of Public Safety personnel.

4.0 REFERENCES

- A. Chapter 29 Article 7C, NMSA 1978 – Public Safety Telecommunicator Training**
- B. CALEA Chapter 81 - Communications**

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- A. CAD** – Computer Aided Dispatch.
- B. DPS** – Department of Public Safety.
- C. FCC** – Federal Communications Commission.

6.0 PROCEDURE

A. Telecommunications Operations

1. All DPS telecommunications operations will be conducted under approved FCC regulations.
2. Portable and mobile two-way radios will be utilized by DPS personnel.
3. DPS Telecommunications Centers provide emergency dispatch services to include:
 - a. Two-way radio communication on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis.
 - b. Telephone communication on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis.
 - c. Teletype and automated data communication.

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4. Department telecommunications personnel will conduct operations within the guidelines outlined in the *DPS Telecommunications Manual*, with the understanding that situations are unique and may require a response not found in the manual.
5. All field personnel will maintain contact with their respective telecommunications center via radio and telephone when/if necessary. Field personnel are required to contact the telecommunications center and advise of any changes in their status (e.g. traffic stop, lunch break, at the office, etc.).
6. Telecommunications personnel answering calls for service shall:
 - a. Make an initial inquiry as to whether or not the caller is requesting emergency or non-emergency service.
 - b. Judge the characteristics of the call and make a decision as to its priority, including the number of units to assign, based on the information being given by the reporting party.
 - c. This determination depends on the type of call. In the instance of a domestic violence call, calls involving multiple parties, possible weapons, major incident, or accident calls, the communications personnel will notify a uniform supervisor on duty or on call. Per direction from that supervisor, more officers will be assigned.
 - d. Officers assigned to calls are also authorized to request additional units to assist. With this request, additional units will be assigned as needed.
 - e. Determine the need to dispatch law enforcement or other resources.
 - f. Promptly direct law enforcement services and/or make referrals to other agencies.
 - g. Log all calls for service appropriately in the CAD system.
 - h. In the event of any major call, including domestic violence cases, major crimes, accidents, or any critical incident, communications personnel will notify the appropriate supervisor on duty to respond and assist or take command.
 - i. Telecommunications personnel will contact an available or on-call supervisor when an officer requests such assistance.
 - j. Inform the caller of the type of agency response, including providing law enforcement services, or referrals to other agencies.
7. Telecommunications personnel shall continually maintain contact with field officers and keep an updated status of each using the CAD system, including when personnel are out of service. This method will ensure officer safety as well as maintain an up-to-date listing of officers and supervisors available to respond to calls for service or assist other officers. This may also be accomplished through the use of the officers or the dispatch radio.
 - a. CAD system protocols shall be adhered to for any information input into the system. Refer to the *DPS Telecommunications Manual* for further explanation.
 - b. Telecommunications personnel shall obtain and record relevant information from each request for services or self-initiated activity to include, but not be limited to:

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- i. Control number.
 - ii. Date and time of the request.
 - iii. Name and address of the complainant, if possible.
 - iv. Type of incident.
 - v. Location of incident.
 - vi. Identification of officers assigned as primary and backup.
 - vii. Time of dispatch.
 - viii. Time of officer arrival. Time of officer return to service. Disposition or status of the incident.
8. Refer to Attachment A: DPS Telecommunications Manual for details on emergency responses in situations where a field officer requires assistance due to a duress activation. Information is also offered for non-duress related emergency responses.
 9. The DPS Telecommunications Centers have access to local, state, and federal criminal justice systems utilizing National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Systems (NLETS), National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) and are often requested to perform computer inquiries by employees in the field.
 10. Telecommunications personnel shall complete those requests and provide the results according to established rules and procedures regarding these information systems.
 11. Additional communication services, external to the department, may be required on a regular or occasional basis. These services include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Requests for fire and ambulance services.
 - b. Requests for aircraft, environmental, and disaster assistance services when a request is initiated by a department supervisor. Telecommunications personnel will refer to the *DPS Telecommunications Manual* for procedures for fulfilling these types of requests. The on-call number for the State Office of Emergency Management.
 - c. Requests for information, e.g., road conditions, public information, and victim/witness assistance, etc.
 - d. Telecommunications personnel should be able to respond to initial and subsequent victim/witness requests for information and/or services. Depending on the situation this may involve simply providing individuals with information or if necessary contracting services or obtaining information for them. The information and/or services provided may include, but not be limited to:
 - i. District Attorney's Victim Assistance Program.
 - ii. Children, Youth, and Families Division
 - iii. Local Domestic Violence programs.
 - iv. Local Domestic Violence shelters.
 - v. Local traveler assistance programs.

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- vi. Local Magistrate and District Court information.
 - vii. Central Records to obtain copies of reports.
 - viii. Refer the victim/witness to an officer/agent if necessary.
- e. Have the ability to direct victims/witnesses to other agencies that can provide additional services.
- f. Emergency messages shall be accepted and delivered according to the following criteria:
- i. The agency will assist with emergency messages (deaths, serious injuries, accident notifications, etc.) from official sources or other agencies. No message will be delivered that can not be verified via telephone or teletype with an outside agency.
 - ii. Requests for emergency messages shall be routed from the telecommunications center to the appropriate location for disposition. The patrol supervisor should be notified, if available, of any emergency messages that need to be delivered by an officer/agent. The patrol supervisor will then assign an officer/agent to deliver the emergency message. If no patrol supervisor is available then telecommunications personnel may assign an on-duty officer to handle the notification as soon as they are available.
12. Telecommunications personnel receiving misdirected emergency calls shall take the call, provide the correct phone number (if requested) and immediately redirect the call to the appropriate agency. Telecommunications personnel shall ensure the call is received by the other agency.
13. Only those telecommunications personnel certified to provide emergency first-aid instructions over the phone are authorized to do so.
14. In order to facilitate communications operations, telecommunications personnel shall have the following materials immediately available to them in the Telecommunications Center:
- a. Duty rosters of shift personnel.
 - b. Roster of department supervisors and contact numbers.
 - c. Home phone numbers for all department personnel.
 - d. Written procedures for contacting/requesting emergency and non-emergency contact information for additional resources, such as fire, ambulance, and wrecker service.
 - e. Maps detailing the agency's service area.
 - f. Tactical dispatching plans.
 - g. Any other resource materials necessary to perform the communications function.
15. CAD operations shall be conducted according to the guidelines provided in the *DPS Communications Manual*.
- a. CAD System "Crashes": In the event, the CAD system crashes, the telecommunicator will document all radio transmissions utilizing a written log (attached to this policy and

- b. the manual). The documentation shall include all pertinent information; e.g. time notified, the unit assigned, arrival times, completion time, changes in duty status, etc.

B. Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)

1. PSAP is dedicated to providing emergency medical services to the community. It is recognized that in addition to a quick mobile response, pre-arrival instructions, i.e., Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), provided by emergency communications personnel in an effort to assist the victim can be very beneficial. {PSAP} will maintain an Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Program. This program should result in more effective and efficient use of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) resources and will integrate dispatch directly into service delivery during a medical situation.
2. All Communications Specialists will be EMD trained and certified within one year of completing their probationary period. The initial training class is a 24-hour approved course. A Communications Specialist may not offer EMD instructions under any circumstances unless they are certified. Communications Specialists who have not yet been certified will initiate calls and then turn them over to a certified co-worker.

C. Procedure

1. Communications Specialists providing EMD direction shall follow precisely the instructions on the EMD protocol cards. The following information is always needed when taking an EMD call:
 - a. Locations/Address;
 - b. The exact location of the patient (apartment #, store aisle number, etc.);
 - c. Call back number;
 - d. Medical nature;
 - e. Chief complaint;
 - f. Conscious and/or breathing;
 - g. Age of patient;
 - h. Name of caller; and,
 - i. Any hazards (loose vicious dogs, broken glass, electrical, etc.).
2. The use of proper phone techniques can assist the Communications Specialist in calming the caller and the patient. This enables the Communications Specialist to provide EMD instructions more effectively and more efficient access to the patient by responding units. Communications Specialists should consider being firm and provide precise direction to hysterical and distraught callers.
3. Use the following phone proximity guidelines for patients:
 - a. Adults – If safe to do so, bring the phone next to the patient.

- b. Infants/Children – If safe to do so, bring the infant/child next to the phone.
4. Reassure the caller/patient frequently:
 - a. Do not hang up on the caller unless you have finished the instructions and the protocol card doesn't require staying on the phone until EMS arrives.
 - b. It is okay to put the caller on hold; be sure to let them know that you are doing so.
5. Calming techniques like the use of the caller's name and speaking in a controlled voice will reassure the caller you are in control of the situation. You may also give the caller a job to do, for example: have the caller collect the patient's medication, turn on a porch light, or open a locked front door.
6. Verify your caller is capable of assisting. If the caller seems unable to assist the patient, i.e., an elderly caller who may injure themselves trying to help, do not give pre-arrival instructions.
7. The Communications EMD Supervisor shall ensure that the protocol cards are kept current.
8. EMD instruction shall take priority over routine/non-emergency police and fire calls.
9. The protocol cards shall be kept in a readily accessible binder and one copy at each dispatch position.

D. Rules

1. All communications personnel who have been certified as EMD providers shall administer EMD.
2. EMD providers shall read CPR instructions verbatim and without deviation.
3. EMD providers shall follow the protocol cards and give pre-arrival instructions as written.
4. EMD providers shall keep their certification current through continuing education (8 hours annually) as provided by [PSAP]. If a Communications Specialist does not keep their certification current, they will be expected to recertify on their own time and at their own expense.
5. EMD continuing education will be maintained by the EMD coordinator.
6. Any communications personnel not yet EMD certified who answer a medical call for service shall make a reasonable attempt to turn over the call to a certified EMD provider. Additionally, the Communications Specialist shall generate a CAD event to get rescue started to the address of occurrence.
7. All serious calls, i.e., CPR, serious trauma, etc., shall be printed and turned into the EMD box.

E. Answering incoming Text to 9-1-1 calls

1. The following duties and responsibilities will be followed by all Communications Specialists when answering incoming Text to 9-1-1 calls.

- a. Communications Specialists will answer any text messages with 911 as they do all other 911 calls “911 what is the address of your emergency”?
- b. If the caller is unable to provide an address of the emergency, the Communications Specialist shall ask the caller for their permission to contact the cell carrier to attempt to pinpoint their location (ping). This will only be done if it can be verified that there is truly an emergency.
- c. The Communications Specialist may also ask the caller if they can safely call 911 rather than text unless this is made clear at the onset of the call.
- d. As soon as pertinent information is received, the call will be entered into the CAD system.
- e. If the Communications Specialist is unable to obtain a response to questions at the onset of the call and the text from the caller does not indicate that anyone is in danger, they will attempt to call the phone number displayed in the lower-left corner of the VIPER screen.
- f. If there is no answer, the call will be ended and the call will be entered CAD using the event type code “TEXT”. The call will then be canceled with a note indicating it was a Text to 911 hang up or any other relevant information should be entered into the CAD calls.

F. Communication Barriers

1. Some questions that may be used to overcome communication barriers are:
 - b. Are you able to place a voice call? This may help the dispatcher to determine if the texter is hearing-impaired, hard of hearing, or in a situation where they are unable to place a voice call for other reasons.
 - b. Can you use plain English? This would help determine if the communications barrier is due to the use of texting lingo.
 - c. Do you understand English? This may help to determine if the caller is non-English speaking? See Language Line Usage below.

G. Verifying information

1. Addresses will need to be verified on all Text to 9-1-1 calls. to verify an address, dispatchers should ask/text one of the following questions to verify the location of the emergency. “Verifying you are at 123 Main St” OR “Confirming the address is “123 Main St”. A mistyped or auto-corrected street name by the caller may provide the dispatcher with a wrong address, so every address should be verified in this type of manner.
2. Phone numbers need only be verified if the phone number is not displayed accurately on the telephone screen and there is a question regarding the number they are calling from – i.e., the entire number is being displayed.

H. Transferring calls

1. There will be times when a call will need to be transferred to another agency. In the event the caller needs to be transferred to another PSAP within the state, the call will be

transferred using the transfer keys designed for Text to 9-1-1 transfers.

2. In the event the text caller needs to be transferred to a PSAP that does not have text to 9-1-1 capability, the dispatcher will keep the call and relay all information to the appropriate agency.

I. Language Line usage:

1. Due to the fact Text to 9-1-1 is new technology; there are limitations on non-English speaking callers. However; with the use of a language line, this can be mitigated.
 - a. Procedures for how to handle language barrier calls. If a caller speaks a foreign language, the call will need to be translated by Language Line at this time.
 - b. For this to occur, the caller will need to place a voice call or if they are hearing impaired, they will need to use their relay service to place a voice 911 call. Dispatch will utilize standard processes to connect the caller with Language Line.
2. The following question has been added in Spanish to the drop-down list of questions in the Viper System. "Donde esta el direccion de tu emergencia?" It translates to "What is the address of your emergency".
3. In the event the caller cannot place a voice 9-1-1 call, this question can be asked of Spanish speaking callers. As new information is developed for translation services for these types of calls, techniques, and processes for handling language-related barriers will change.

J. Other Factors, Testing, and Audits:

1. Autocorrect may change words the caller did not intend to type so clarification is only necessary if the meaning of the message cannot be determined.
2. The Communications Specialist should be mindful of the caller's safety if the decision is made to call the cell phone. The safety of the caller needs to be evaluated before placing a call back to them. (We don't want to call someone back that is hiding).
3. Texting takes a little longer so patience with the caller and waiting for responses should be considered.
4. Text messaging can be its own language and a list of commonly used abbreviations are listed at the end of this SOP.

K. Testing

1. Monthly tests shall be completed by each employee.
 - a. Testing should consist of answering a call with the help of a partner and asking several questions.
 - b. Transferring to another agency is recommended to order to become more familiar with the process.
 - c. Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring testing is completed by their team members.

L. Audits

1. Audits will also be completed on these calls to ensure policies are adhered to and processes are being followed.

M. Text Messaging Abbreviations

1. 2DAY Today
2. L8R Later
3. 2MORO Tomorrow
4. LMK Let Me Know
5. 2NTE Tonight
6. MoF Male or Female
7. AEAP As Early as Possible
8. NAGI Not a Good Idea
9. AFAIK As Far as I Know
10. N-A-Y-L In a While
11. AFK Away From Keyboard
12. NM / NVM Never mind / Nothing Much
13. ALAP As Late as Possible
14. NP No Problem
15. ASAP As Soon as Possible
16. OIC Oh I See
17. ATM At the Moment
18. OMW On My Way
19. B4 Before
20. PPL People
21. BC Because
22. PTB Please Text Back
23. BF / GF Boyfriend / Girlfriend
24. RN Right Now
25. BRB Be right back
26. RU /RUOK Are You / Are You Okay
27. BTW By The Way
28. SLAP Sounds Like a Plan

29. CTN Cannot talk now
30. SRSLY Seriously
31. EM? Excuse Me?
32. TY or TU Thank You
33. FB Facebook
34. W8 Wait
35. FYI For Your Information
36. HTH Hope This Helps
37. IDK I Don't Know
38. IU2U It's Up to You
39. IYKWIM If You Know What I Mean
40. IKR I Know Right?
41. JK Just Kidding
42. JC Just Checking
43. JTLYK Just to Let You Know
44. K or KK Okay

N. Telecommunications Personnel

1. Telecommunications personnel is often the first line of contact between the department and the general public; therefore, telecommunications personnel is expected to conduct business in a professional and courteous manner at all times.
2. Call-taking and telecommunicating shall be in accordance with the requirements described in the *DPS Telecommunications Manual* and department policy and procedures.
3. All telecommunications personnel shall be trained and certified by the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy (NMLEA).
4. Telecommunications personnel are required to maintain their certification by meeting all of the NMLEA certification requirements.

O. Communications Security

1. The safety of telecommunications personnel and equipment is of paramount importance; therefore, unauthorized access to the telecommunication center shall be strictly prohibited.
 - a. Physical barriers are the preferred method of restricting access; however, access.
 - b. can be denied by any means available to maintain a safe and professional environment.

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- c. At a minimum, access to Telecommunications Centers must be denied by the use of
- d. signage restricting access to **“AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY”** in bold lettering, conspicuously posted.

P. Equipment and Preparedness

1. Every telecommunications center operation shall be supported by an alternate power source in the event power is lost to the facility. This requirement is to ensure the uninterrupted operation of essential communication equipment until the power can be restored.
2. The alternate power source (generator) shall be maintained in top working condition.
3. The generator shall have monthly documented tests conducted by district personnel. In the event the test is automated, a maintenance log shall reflect these tests, as well as any conducted by district personnel.
4. In the event of a loss of power, or loss of ability to provide radio communications, the nearest district with communication abilities will assume the role of dispatching for the affected district. At the discretion of the Chief, this assignment may be changed to a district with less radio traffic, or more personnel to handle incoming calls.
5. In the event of a lack of manpower, the Chief may choose to assign communications personnel from other districts to assist in communications duties.

Q. Recordings of Telephone and Radio Transmissions Procedures

1. Recordings of radio and telephone transmissions are to be retained for a minimum of 7 years per NMAC rule 7.2710-4.
2. Regional Managers, or their designees, shall implement security measures for maintaining recordings of telephone and radio transmissions. These measures should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Assigned passwords to Supervisors, QA/IPRA personnel for security.
 - b. Archived recordings shall be maintained in a secure location. Director/Deputy Director are responsible for identifying the personnel authorized to access the recordings.
 - c. Director/Deputy Director, or their designees, shall implement guidelines for reviewing recordings. These criteria and procedures shall include, but not be limited to:
 - i. Permission must be obtained from the Regional Manager, or designee, to access recordings.
 - ii. This request must be made through the appropriate chain of command.
 - iii. The Regional Manager or designee will authorize a review of the recording and
 - iv. may request the communications supervisor/QA personnel to make a recording of the initial recording; which can then be reviewed by the requesting individual.
 - v. The Regional Manager or his designee will designate under what conditions the

recording will be disseminated, i.e., if the communications supervisor will transfer the recording back through the chain of command to the person requesting.

R. Warrants

1. The entry, maintenance, validation, and removal of all warrants will be accomplished in accordance with the Federal NCIC Wanted Person File Guidelines.
 - a. All felony, misdemeanor, and petty misdemeanor warrants will be entered into NCIC by an entering agency. These entries will be made in accordance with the NCIC 2000 criteria governing the entry of warrants.
 - b. Original copies of warrants will be stored only at the district office with twenty-four (24) hour coverage by communications personnel. Warrants from sub-districts without this coverage will be housed at the respective district office. After warrants are entered into the system, the original copy will be placed in the filing system. These warrants will be stored so that they are accessible to communications personnel for file maintenance, addition, validation, and removal as needed.
 - c. Upon receiving information from another agency or jurisdiction, the telecommunications staff will respond according to the following criteria:
 - i. When telecommunications personnel receives a request for information, such as a hit confirmation, they will make every effort to check the filing system, verify whether or not the warrant is valid, and respond to the request as quickly as possible; and before a second or third request from the requesting agency. In cases where a second or third request is received, the telecommunications supervisor will review and document the incident and take corrective action as appropriate.
 - ii. After verifying the status of a warrant and sending a reply, telecommunications personnel will follow up on the status of a locate message from a locating agency, so warrants can be removed from the system quickly.
 - d. When telecommunications personnel receives a "hit" on a warrant, they will notify the appropriate officer of the hit, and confirmation when it is received. Telecommunications personnel will keep track of confirmation requests and send second and third requests as needed. Telecommunications personnel will also be responsible for sending a "locate" or status change message to the entity which confirmed the warrant.
 - e. Monthly validation requests from the FBI will be carried out and reported in accordance with NCIC guidelines covering scope and time frames.
 - f. Upon receiving cancellation notices from the appropriate court or jurisdiction, or after service, telecommunications personnel will remove, warrants from NCIC and the file from the manual filing system, as quickly as possible.

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7.0 ATTACHMENTS

A. DPS Telecommunications Manual

B. NMSP Radio Log

8.0 APPROVAL

APPROVED BY: s/ Jason R. Bowie
DPS Cabinet Secretary

DATE: 10-07-21