

Germantown Police Department

Policies and Procedures

Number: 11-9
Effective Date: January 1, 2003
Subject: Radio Operating Procedures
Previous Revisions:

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for operating a police radio in a professional and efficient manner to help in the accurate exchange of information and to help expedite the response of officers to police calls for service, while maintaining the highest level of safety.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Germantown Police Department that all persons using the police radio will follow all established radio operating procedures to help ensure efficiency and safety for all officers.

III. DISCUSSION

Efficient communications is vital to ensure consistent use of radio equipment. The dispatcher is usually the first person a citizen has contact with when requesting assistance concerning a complaint or an emergency. The dispatcher must, at all times, remain calm and execute his/her duties in a professional and efficient manner.

The dispatcher relies on the patrol officer to respond to calls received. The patrol officer, in turn, relies on the dispatcher to provide information and help when needed. Both must work in harmony to obtain one goal. The goal is serving the citizens of Germantown while monitoring the call to ensure safety for responding units.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. It is necessary that the police dispatcher be aware of the activities of all cars in the field. It is also necessary that supervisory personnel be aware of the activities of the units assigned to them:
 - 1. When any police officer receives a call from the police dispatcher, he/she will acknowledge the call, through the police radio, giving the officer(s) immediate location.

2. When officer(s) arrive at the scene of the call, the officer(s) will notify the police dispatcher, through the radio by car number, that they are on the scene.
 3. No police officer(s) will leave their assigned territory or post without permission or instructions from a supervisor, a commanding officer, or the police dispatcher. The permission or instructions should originate or be relayed through the police dispatcher.
 4. No police officer(s) will transport anyone arrested without calling, over the radio, for a supervisor to review the arrest and give them permission to transport. All transport radio information will include beginning and eventually ending mileage.
 5. No police officer(s) will place themselves on a call without permission from the police dispatcher or upon instruction of a supervisor. (Note: Officers should respond to calls for service when their response time would be significantly less than any other dispatched officer(s)).
 6. No police officer(s) will disregard themselves on a call without notifying the police dispatcher of the reason they cannot complete the call and receiving permission from the dispatcher.
 7. No police officer(s) will put themselves on a special assignment without notifying the police dispatcher. The police officer(s) must give the exact location, and the specific nature of the special assignment.
 8. Officer(s) will use their assigned radio number (call number) unless assigned a different number for a special assignment.
- B. The dispatcher must be aware of his/her role and responsibilities in law enforcement.
1. It is the basic responsibility of the dispatcher to obtain and verify pertinent information to ensure the safety of the officer, the caller, others at the scene, and the general public.
 2. To continue to gather pertinent information regarding situational changes from the caller and first arriving field units, and to convey that information to other responding units.
 3. To maintain communications with the caller, if safely possible, until the arrival of appropriate police officer(s).

4. To properly use all resource documents to further assist the field responders.
5. In any aspect of public safety, the dispatcher will need to be able to ask the right questions to direct the necessary resources to the request for assistance.
6. From a law enforcement perspective, the dispatcher can be the primary link between a violent crime and the apprehension of a suspect.
 - a. In some cases, the dispatcher may be the last person a victim talks to before dying. A dying victim may be able to tell you information about an attacker (maybe even their name!) that otherwise might go unknown forever.
 - b. Under less extreme circumstances, information obtained during the initial call receiving phase or post response phase may prove to be crucial to later investigations.
7. The dispatcher who dispatches law enforcement field units must also have a heightened alertness. At 0400 hours, when nothing has been said on the radio for an hour, the dispatcher must still be totally attentive for an officer's cry for help.
8. The dispatcher must remain alert and be constantly aware of the status of the patrol and associated units. When an officer needs assistance, the dispatcher must not only be aware of that unit's location, but also the availability of appropriate back up response units.
9. The dispatcher should be familiar with "red flags" which signal potential danger to law enforcement officers.
 - a. Motor vehicle stops when there are numerous occupants.
 - b. Any mention of possible weapons.
 - c. Vehicle or persons stopped when descriptions match those involved in earlier incidents.
10. When a "red flag" is encountered, the dispatcher must begin to mentally prepare for appropriate actions, which may or may not be required.

C. It is necessary to have established protocols (formats) to dispatch a police call, to handle a broadcast, a traffic violator or a suspicious vehicle (or suspicious person), registration, stolen checks, warrants and driver's license checks, signal "C," and miscellaneous information.

1. The format for dispatching a police call is:

- a. Unit number being dispatched
- b. Proper address of call
- c. Common name
- d. Nature of call
- e. Complainant name
- f. Unit number being dispatched
- g. Acknowledgement of call by unit
- h. Give dispatch time

Example: Give the unit number first (750); then the proper address (9235 Poplar) or the street intersection (Poplar at Village Shops Drive); then a common name, if known (Target Store); then the nature of call (shoplifter in custody); and finally the complainant name, if needed (complainant is Ms. Jones in security); unit number being dispatched (750, headquarters); dispatcher gives the call time (1830 hours).

Example: 750, 2150 Germantown Road South, McDonald's, suspicious 1972 Volkswagen TN Tag ABC123, Complainant is the manager, 750. 750 from headquarters, 1530 hours.

Example: 750 and 751, 1850 Kimbrough, a residential burglary alarm, 750. 750, Headquarters. 751. 1600 Kimbrough. 1500 hours.

Example: 750, Poplar at Village Shops Drive, a two-car accident, no injuries. 750. 750 Poplar at Ashmont. 1500 hours.

Qualifying words and phrases should be avoided. In example - see the reporting party, in reference to, regarding, etc. These words and phrases only make the radio message longer without offering any additional helpful information.

2. All cars broadcasts:

The format for broadcasts is:

- a. Originating agency
- b. Charges

- c. Description of wanted person, vehicle, article, etc.
- d. Last known location or direction
- e. Dispatch time

Example: Start the broadcast with - all cars stand by for a broadcast from Collierville, MPD, SCSD, etc. Start the broadcast with - Wanted by the Collierville P.D. for a hit and run a 1972 yellow Volkswagen with TN tag last seen west on Poplar from Byhalia. 1830 hours.

- 3. The format for a traffic violator:
 - a. Unit number special with traffic violator
 - b. Location tag info
 - c. Dispatch acknowledges with unit number and time

Example: 740 Special Poplar and Dogwood on violator Tennessee tag L (Lincoln), T (Tom), K (King). The dispatcher will respond 740 special and give the officer his time.

Concerning a suspicious vehicle, follow the same format substituting suspicious vehicle in place of traffic violator.

Concerning a suspicious person, follow the same format substituting suspicious person in place of traffic violator and description of the person instead of tag.

- 4. Registration, stolen checks, warrants and driver's license checks:

Format:

- a. Unit number requesting
- b. Identifying number
- c. Description
- d. Status

Examples: 750, TN tag ABC123 1972 Volkswagen to John Doe, 1950 Widgeon Way, Somewhere, TN Expiration 6/1/2001.

750 TN Tag ABC 123 no stolen

750, John Doe, no warrants

750, TN DL 123456789 valid expires 6/1/2001

When an officer requests information from the dispatcher/jailer regarding driver's license status and/or outstanding warrants for a violator or suspect, the dispatcher/jailer will obtain the information as soon as possible. Upon obtaining this information, the dispatcher/jailer will ask the officer if the officer is prepared to accept the information. Example: Is your radio secure? When the officer is in a position to accept the information, the officer will inform the dispatcher/jailer ("Radio secured") who will in turn transmit the information. At this point, the officer will decide whether or not a backup unit is warranted and, if so, request the backup. It will be the responsibility of the officer to ensure that the suspect/violator is unable to listen to radio transmissions, which may alert that individual to his/her potential arrest. The officer may request a backup unit or supervisor at any time from the moment the officer attempts to stop the suspect/violator to the time that the suspect/violator is released. The dispatcher/jailer should not send a backup unit unless specifically requested by the officer or the supervisor, unless an emergency situation dictates it such as the officer transmitting an alert tone, failing to respond to the radio, etc.

Qualifying phrases such as "that tag is registered," "no local," "NCIC," "TCIC," etc., should not be used.

5. Signal "C"

Format:

- a. Shift designation
- b. Give information
- c. Give time

Example: All A, B, C shift cars to Signal C 0600, 1400, 2200 hours

Do not say all 6-2 cars, day shift cars, etc. Use A shift, B shift, or C shift.

6. Miscellaneous information:

Format:

- a. Unit number being called
- b. Give information
- c. Unit number being called

- d. Unit acknowledges
- e. Give time

Example: 700, contact Communications for information, 700. 700 check. 1900 hours.

The dispatcher will broadcast the correct time and station identification call numbers every thirty (30) minutes, on the hour and half hour. Between 0001-0930, the dispatcher will give the time check as follows: 0430 WXX-722.

D. Standard alphabet of names and standard radio codes used by the Germantown Police Dispatcher.

The standard alphabet will be used for spelling the names of people or locations in radio messages. They should always be given as: "A-Adam," "B-Boy;" never give as "A as in Adam," or "B as in Boy;" or "Adam - Boy." This alphabet must be memorized thoroughly by dispatchers and police officers.

A – Adam	N - Nora
B – Boy	O - Ocean
C – Charles	P - Paul
D – David	Q - Queen
E – Edward	R - Robert
F – Frank	S - Sam
G – George	T - Tom
H – Henry	U - Union
I – Ida	V - Victor
J – John	W - William
K – King	X – X-Ray
L – Lincoln	Y - Young
M - Mary	Z - Zebra

Police Department Radio Signals

Code 10	EMERGENCY - RUSH - QUICK ACTION NEEDED
Signal 2	Change to Channel 2 on Radio
Signal 13	“Is everything okay?”
Signal 20	Bomb Threat
Signal H	“Call your home”
Signal J	Respond to jail – emergency
Signal L	Lunch Break
Signal Q	Emergency transmission only

- E.
1. Calls vary in their degree of seriousness, and so it will vary as to how many police cars are sent to the scene and if a supervisor should be sent. On all serious felony calls, at least two cars and a supervisor should be sent to the scene. A felony is any crime that is punishable by a year or more in the state penitentiary. The serious felony calls in which a supervisor should be sent include: homicides, suicides, robberies, sexual assaults, burglaries, arson, aggravated assaults (shootings, stabbing, etc.), child abuse, any call where there is an armed person on the scene, or a traffic fatality. The supervisor will then determine whether detectives or crime scene are needed. If you have any questions as to whether a supervisor is needed on a call, check with the supervisor by radio to make sure he/she is aware of the call.
 2. Calls may be classified as actual offenses or attempts. When taking information on a call, determine whether or not an actual crime has been committed or if it is an attempt. This information should be relayed to the police cars dispatched to the call. If the perpetrator is still on the scene, dispatch the call as a crime in progress. Notify the cars of the full description of the perpetrator, whether or not he/she is armed, type of weapon used, and any vehicle information.
 3. Try to keep the complainant on the phone until the primary police car arrives on the scene. It will be the duty of the primary police car to go directly to the scene. If the perpetrator has left the scene, the primary officer will then render aid to any victim, secure the scene, locate witnesses, and prepare a broadcast to be dispatched to the other police cars.
 4. Patrol supervisors have the discretion to have more or fewer cars dispatched on a call.
 5. There are a few calls that have established response levels:

- a. The dispatcher, upon receiving a 911 hang-up call, will attempt to call back the telephone number displayed on the screen to verify whether or not an emergency exists. If an answer is made at that number and the dispatcher determines that no emergency exists, then a police car will be dispatched to that address to verify the situation. If there is no response upon calling the number, then two police cars will be dispatched to that address and they will consider the situation as an emergency until they can determine otherwise.

In the case of persistent prank 911 hang-up calls from pay telephones, the supervisor may direct that only one car need respond to the call. If there is ever any doubt as to the situation at the origin of the call, then at least two cars should be sent.

- b. Burglary/Intrusion Alarm calls: During the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., we will send only one car on residential alarm calls but will continue to send two cars on commercial alarms. We will still send two cars on all alarm calls from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Hold up and panic alarms will require two cars at any time.
- c. If we receive a call to a hospital or doctor's office in regards to an accident victim from out of our jurisdiction and the dispatchers can determine the accident is being handled or has been handled by the out of town agency, it will not be necessary to send a car to investigate. The dispatcher will advise the hospital or doctor's office that unless they need us, we will not make the scene. If the above information cannot be obtained, we will dispatch a car to investigate.
- d. Bomb Threat: You will only dispatch the patrol supervisor and one patrol unit on a bomb threat. The Fire Department will not be dispatched on a bomb threat unless one of the responding police units requests the Fire Department or there is an explosion or fire.

It is preferred, if time permits, to notify these two officers by telephone of this call rather than using the radio.

- F. The repeater radio frequency and all emergency telephone lines are taped. The officer will use the primary radio frequency unless approval has been received from the patrol shift supervisor.

V. REVIEW PROCESS

An annual review of this policy shall be conducted to determine if it should be revised, cancelled or continued in its present form.

This order shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded by competent authority.