

# **Germantown Police Department**

## **Policies and Procedures**

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**Number:** 13-2  
**Effective Date:** October 9, 2006  
**Subject:** Telephone Answering Procedures  
**Previous Revisions:**

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### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the efficient and professional operation of all telephone systems in the 911 center.

### **II. POLICY**

Germantown Police Department Dispatchers will maintain a professional and courteous demeanor with all callers and are responsible for competently operating the phone system and being familiar with its capabilities.

### **III. ANSWERING PROTOCOL**

- A. Dispatchers shall answer 911 lines with “Germantown 911, where is your emergency?” within three rings.
- B. All 7-digit business lines into the Communications Center will be answered without delay, taking into consideration that any line may have an emergency to report. Such lines shall be answered “Germantown Police or Fire Communications, dispatcher last name”, within 3 rings.
- C. Other internal lines will be answered as soon as possible by stating “Communications, your last name.”
- D. The initial call taker will enter all pertinent call information into the CAD or on a paper log and handle the call until its conclusion, unless properly relieved. If relieved, the call taker will provide the relief the necessary call information to conclude the call.

#### **IV. 911 HANG UP**

- A. In the event a 911 call is received and the caller hangs up without communicating, Dispatchers are responsible for immediately calling back the number on the ANI display and dispatching units to the address on the ALI display. In the event the Call Taker reaches the calling party and is convinced the call is not an emergency, the Call Taker has the authority to cancel one of the responding units.
- B. In the event the line is busy, the call taker will continue to call back the number. The Call Taker will notify the responding units of the status of the contact with the caller, including the inability to make contact.
- C. In the event the call is answered, the call taker will remain on line with the caller until units arrive and update the units regarding the phone contact, to include any activity, conversation, and other pertinent information available.

#### **V. ABUSE HANG UP**

In the event a caller appears to be abusing 911 with continuous hang-ups or inappropriate language or false calls, an officer will be dispatched for action. Until any action is taken regarding the abuse, each call will be treated as any other call. No call will be ignored or handled differently due to suspected abuse.

#### **VI. 911 HANG UP, NO ALI/ANI**

In the event a 911 call is initiated but the ALI/ANI does not capture the phone number and location, the call taker is responsible for obtaining the number from the 911 computer system manually and making contact with the caller. This is done through the “options” menu in the ALI display window. This will not work if the caller used a cellular phone. The call taker must obtain the address from the phone company and dispatch according to procedure.

#### **VII. 911 CALL FROM PAY PHONES**

In the event a 911 hang up call is originated from a pay phone, a call back will be attempted. In the event there is no answer or no appropriate explanation to the 911 call, an officer will be dispatched. In the event the call is placed from a pay phone within a business or school, a call will be placed into the business or school prior to dispatching a unit. Any time a pay phone 911 hang up call has any suspicious activity associated that may indicate a problem, two officers will be dispatched immediately.

#### **VIII. ALI/ANI USE**

##### **A. Confidentiality**

ALI / ANI is for location identification purposes only; this information will not be distributed to any person without the direct purpose of generating a response.

**B. Confirmation**

All ALI/ANI information will be confirmed by asking for the caller's address, and phone number - not asking the caller to confirm an address or phone number on the ALI.

**C. Address Phone Number Errors**

Dispatchers are responsible for reporting ALI/ANI errors by using the proper form in the appropriate time frame.

**D. Address Look Up / Reverse ANI**

In the event an ALI is unavailable, Dispatchers are responsible for attempting to locate the address using the CAD computer files, phone directory, Cole's directory, reverse ANI or any other means.

**IX. CELLULAR/WIRELESS CALLS**

In the event a 911 wireless call is received, correct location information will be determined by asking the caller. In the event the call is a hang up, an attempt to call back the number will be made if the number is available.

**X. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Dispatchers shall not release or discuss any information regarding 911 (or other) calls into or out of the communications facility.

**XI. LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION**

In the event a caller is speaking in a foreign language, dispatch is responsible for contacting the Language Line for assistance.

**XII. OBTAINING CITIZENS' NAMES/ ADDRESSES/ TELEPHONENUMBERS**

Dispatchers are responsible for attempting to obtain and record the address, name and phone number of all callers regardless of the ALI/ANI display or lack of. In the event there are numerous repeat calls for one high visibility incident, it is important that Dispatchers still attempt to record every caller's last name and phone number if possible or reasonable to do so.

**XIII. PBX LINES**

It must be recognized that some privately owned telephone equipment (PBX systems) only furnish the location of the main trunk, therefore all calls placed from a large corporation, educational

institute or such must be handled with regard to the location of the incident given direct attention by asking the exact location of the incident.

#### **XIV. RE-DIALING CITIZENS**

In the event a caller is disconnected, the Dispatcher shall immediately re-dial the citizen. Dispatchers are responsible for calling citizens if requested by the responding or on the scene units. Dispatchers shall also call citizens if the response time is delayed or in the event the caller has requested a call back regarding the officer's response.

#### **XV. RECEIVING COLLECT CALLS**

Collect calls will normally not be accepted. Exceptions to this procedure will be at the discretion of a supervisor.

#### **XVI. SAFETY OF CALLERS/RESPONDERS**

Dispatchers shall be cognizant and mindful of the safety of the callers/responders or others in situations where the caller/others or responding officers may be in danger.

#### **XVII. SILENT CALLS / TDD**

- A. Silent calls where the line light still shows the line is connected, are to be treated as TDD calls and checked by using the TDD telephone.
- B. Dispatchers are responsible for answering TDD calls and operating the TDD equipment as defined in the Vesta user manual. Dispatchers are also responsible for all subsequent follow up calls and dispatching resulting from a TDD request for service or information.
- C. TDD equipment will be tested on a monthly basis and all tests will be documented.

#### **XVIII. TESTING / MAINTENANCE**

Periodic testing and maintenance of the 911 system will be performed as directed/authorized by the Shelby County 911 Authority.

#### **XIX. TRACE/REVERSE ALI**

- A. Dispatchers are responsible for determining when a trace or reverse ALI will be necessary and for carrying out the trace or request for reverse ALI without delay by using the proper procedures and contacting the proper numbers for assistance.
- B. Dispatchers shall not allow the ALI/ANI/trace and reverse ANI information to be used by any responder or other entity for any purpose outside the purpose of responding for a request for an emergency. No information from the

ALI/ANI/trace and reverse ANI will be used for investigation and will not be provided to any person other than those intended to respond to a request for a response.

**XX. Transfers**

- A. In the event a caller must be referred to another agency or department, Dispatchers shall transfer calls for service or requests for information to the proper agency in a timely manner.
- B. It is the responsibility of all Dispatchers to be knowledgeable regarding all responder agencies in the area and how to contact them. Updated contact numbers for city, county, state public safety agencies throughout the state will be kept and the correct jurisdictions and boundaries shall be known.
- E. Upon reaching the transfer agency, Dispatchers shall either complete the transfer by stating their name and agency and advise the called agency of the transfer and any known information before putting the caller through, release the caller if an explanation is not required, or if call volume allows, dispatch may stay on the line and monitor, but must remain silent.
- F. In the event a caller has called 911 inappropriately (i.e. a non emergency question or needing another public agency) the Call Taker will either transfer the caller to the appropriate agency or provide the number for the caller to redial. Under no circumstances will the Call Taker admonish the citizen for inappropriate use of 911, the correct attitude would be to educate or re-direct the caller.

**XXI. REVIEW PROCESS**

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

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