

# Germantown Police Department

## Policies and Procedures

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**Number:** 13-7  
**Effective Date:** October 9, 2006  
**Subject:** Police Radio Procedure  
**Previous Revisions:**

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### **I. ASSIGNMENT OF CALLS**

- A. Police calls for service will be classified based on the call type. The CAD system will assign units based on call type, priority and availability of units. Dispatchers will choose the most appropriate call type based on the information from the caller.
- B. Dispatchers will assign calls to units instead of broadcasting a request for a unit to handle a call unless there is a high priority call or all units are busy.
- C. After assigning a call to a unit, dispatch shall request acknowledgment of the call from the assigned unit(s) followed by the time.
- D. All units assigned to a call, and all units advising dispatch of a changing status, will be immediately posted in the CAD. All status and changes will be kept current in the CAD system.

### **II. ACKNOWLEDGING UNITS**

- A. Dispatch shall acknowledge units by echoing unit numbers.
- B. Dispatch will acknowledge requests and ask that the unit standby to receive the information.
- C. Dispatch shall acknowledge two units calling at once by acknowledging the unit recognized and asking them to stand by while answering the other, or if both units are recognized, by answering the one believed to have priority information. If neither is recognized, state “two cars/units at once” and ask for any priority message to begin.
- D. Dispatch shall not acknowledge any transmission that is clearly unauthorized or considered a prank or joke.

- E. Dispatch is responsible for requiring appropriate acknowledgment from units upon receiving calls or information. Units shall acknowledge dispatch by stating their unit number (and location when assigned to a call); a radio click will not be accepted as acknowledgement.
- F. Dispatch shall complete any communication by giving the time.

### **III. ATTEMPT TO LOCATE (B.O.L.O.)**

Attempt to locate information (B.O.L.O.) will be broadcast to field units upon receipt and in a manner that is logical and providing all pertinent information offered in the Teletype. In the event the information pertains to officer safety, dispatch will require an acknowledgment from all field units.

### **IV. BROADCASTS**

Dispatch shall initiate area broadcasts when requested by proper authority when the information is determined to be relevant to patrol units. The broadcast shall be completed in a timely manner and using appropriate broadcast methods. All broadcasts will be documented accordingly and forwarded for Roll Call briefings when necessary.

### **V. CALL CHECK**

Dispatch shall use the playback equipment (voice logging recorder) when needed to listen to the last radio transmission but shall not rely on this device as a means to gather information in lieu of requesting a repeat.

### **VI. CALL SIGNS**

Dispatchers shall be familiar with call signs of police department personnel. Dispatch will contact department personnel using their assigned radio/call number. The entire number shall be used. (ex. 740, not ..40).

### **VII. CANCELING CALLS**

- A. Citizen Request  
In the event a citizen calls to cancel a call, dispatch may use discretion and cancel the call or inform the primary officer of the request and the officer will determine the course of action to take.

No calls involving domestic violence or other threats or violent crimes will be cancelled by dispatch or the officer, contact will be made to determine the status of the call regardless of the request to cancel.

B. Cancel from alarm company

Dispatchers may disregard an officer if they receive an official cancellation from an alarm company representative.

**VIII. CLOSING OR RESTRICTING THE AIR (SIGNAL Q)**

A. Dispatch will close the air automatically under the following circumstances:

1. Officer needs help
2. Pursuits
3. In progress calls with life threat
4. Tactical operations

B. Dispatch will close or restrict the air upon a request from a supervisor.

C. The air will be opened to normal transmissions at the direction of a supervisor.

D. Dispatch will maintain proper closed or restricted air by answering non-participating units as "Signal Q is in effect. Emergency transmissions only."

**IX. CODES ON RADIO/INFORMATION RETURNS**

A. Plain language is preferred on the radio however the use of known codes is allowed. The following are approved codes:

- Signal 13**-Unit status check
- Signal 20**-Bomb threat
- Signal H**-Call your home
- Signal J**-Jail emergency
- Signal L**-Meal break
- Signal Q**-Radio air closed; Priority
- Signal W**-Wanted person transmissions only

B. Information Returns

When returning information to officers, dispatch shall give the following information:

Drivers license info: Name, status, suspension, revocations, cancellations, and reason for suspension/revocation.

Vehicle license info: Vehicle year, make, model, color, registered owner, address, expiration month and year, flags.

## **X. COMPLAINTS**

In the event a Dispatcher receives a complaint from an officer or wishes to initiate a complaint regarding radio conduct or procedures, all such correspondence shall go through the immediate supervisor.

## **XI. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information received over the radio is considered confidential and shall not be distributed to any person outside the communications center or agency personnel. Personnel will be familiar with and adhere to TBI guidelines regarding confidentiality of information.

## **XII. DISPATCHING ROUTINE CALLS**

- A. Upon the receipt of a call, dispatch shall call the unit number and state the call location and call type. When the officer acknowledges the call, dispatch will give the call time. Dispatch should not give the complainant's name unless necessary or requested by an officer. If the caller requested to remain anonymous the name will not be stated on the radio.
- B. In the event a complainant is not at the response location and wishes contact, the officer will be advised of both the response and contact locations and notified regarding the contact request.
- C. Dispatch will give the officers all information received from the caller. If certain vital information was not available, dispatch shall advise the officer that the information was not available.

## **XIII. DISPATCHING EMERGENCY / PRIORITY CALLS**

- A. In dispatching emergency calls, dispatch shall call the primary unit along with the back up unit(s) and advise the call location and call type. After receiving a response, dispatch shall give the call time.
- B. Dispatch must ensure that all non-emergency transmissions are kept to a minimum during calls where officers may need to request assistance.

- C. Dispatch has the authority to utilize all radio channels (frequencies) as needed. Channel one (1) is to be used for primary dispatch. Channel three (3) and Channel five (5) are available as secondary or informational channels. All of these channels are “repeater” frequencies and have city-wide coverage.
- D. All emergency broadcasts must be timely and provided to the patrol units in the proper manner. Dispatch shall use air breaks when dispatching lengthy emergency broadcasts such as attempt to locate (B.O.L.O.) or notifications. Broadcasts that directly affect officer safety require acknowledgement from each officer.

#### **XIV. FCC GUIDELINES**

Dispatchers are responsible for adhering to FCC rules and regulations. This includes announcing the department call sign at half hour intervals.

#### **XV. FIELD REQUESTS**

Dispatch is responsible for handling field requests in a timely manner and advising the requesting unit of the status of the request. Any request for additional units or additional information shall be immediately handled.

#### **XVI. HOLDING/STACKING CALLS**

- A. Dispatch may hold or stack non-priority calls when necessary or when requested by the officer in charge. Officers should be notified of pending calls when appropriate. Citizens will be notified of any delay in an officer response without offering any specific time frame other than as soon as possible.
- B. Dispatch shall notify the field supervisor periodically of the number of non-emergency calls being held.
- C. In the event more than one call is holding, calls will be dispatched first by priority and next by time received.
- D. No priority call will be held or stacked. In the event units are all out of service, the patrol supervisor must be notified and units will be reassigned or additional responding units found by the supervisor.

#### **XVII. LENGTHY TRANSMISSIONS**

Dispatch is responsible for avoiding lengthy transmissions and for reminding units regarding lengthy transmissions. Dispatch is to recommend the use of a secondary channel when necessary for lengthy transmissions.

## **XVIII. MDT**

Specific department policy/procedure covering the use of MDT's is found in chapter 11, section 13 of the departmental policy and procedure manual. Dispatchers may send messages to field personnel via the CAD / MDT messaging system. When a call is dispatched to a unit that is logged onto the MDT system, the officer automatically receives the call information on his/her MDT. All messages are subject to auditing and will be professional in content.

## **XIX. MANUAL DISPATCH-PAPER SYSTEM**

In the event there is a need to test or use the manual dispatch system, personnel will be responsible for completing an efficient and complete cutover to a manual system of dispatching. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the necessary equipment/forms are available for use when necessary.

## **XX. MAINTAINING RADIO RECORDS**

Radio records will be maintained as established under current guidelines.

## **XXI. MESSAGES**

Dispatchers are responsible for receiving and forwarding messages to department personnel if the member cannot receive the message on the air or over the phone.

Dispatch must ensure the person wishing to speak to an officer who is not available does not have an urgent need that could be handled by another officer. Call takers will request the reason for the call so that the call can be referred or transferred if it can be handled immediately.

## **XXII. NUMBERS, BROADCASTING**

Dispatch will broadcast numbers in a logical manner; lengthy numbers such as VINs will be given in two's.

## **XXIII. PHONETIC ALPHABET**

Dispatch will use the military alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.) in all transmissions requiring letters.

## **XXIV. PRIMARY UNIT**

Dispatch shall notify the primary unit of an area call. If the unit is busy and the call is reassigned, the unit will be notified if it is reasonable to do so.

## **XXV. PRIORITY CALL LEVELS / INFORMATION**

- A. Dispatchers shall obtain enough information from the callers to prioritize calls based on the call type. Call types will have a pre-assigned (CAD) priority designation and required unit response.
- B. Initial priority designation may be changed at any time with dispatcher discretion upon receiving new or additional information.
- C. Officers shall advise the dispatcher when they have a priority radio transmission.

## **XXVI. PRIORITIZATION**

- A. Dispatchers shall prioritize incoming calls for response by assigning the appropriate call type. Request from field units will be handled in a priority manner according to the nature of the request.
- B. In the event an officer is dispatched to a call and a higher priority call is received, dispatch may reassign the officer to the higher priority call.
- C. If an officer is reassigned to a call and the complainant is expecting a response, dispatch must attempt to notify the complainant of the delay.

## **XXVII. PRIVACY OF INFORMATION**

- A. Dispatchers will not release incident information to the media or citizens without approval of supervisory personnel.
- B. Home phone numbers and addresses of any employee are considered private and shall not be released without supervisory approval.

## **XXVIII. PURSUITS**

In the event an officer advises of a foot or vehicle pursuit, the following steps will be followed:

- 29.1 Repeat the unit in pursuit number, location, direction of travel and time.
- 29.2 Close the air using “**Signal Q**”
- 29.3 Notify the patrol supervisor and any other support agencies or personnel.
- 29.3 Repeat critical information, update and coordinate back up units.
- 29.4 Notify surrounding agencies if needed

## **XXIX. RADIO MALFUNCTIONS**

Dispatchers are responsible for proper and timely notification of any malfunctions using notification forms as intended. In the event a radio frequency is down and no communications can be initiated, dispatch shall use a secondary frequency or portable radio.

**XXX. RADIO OPERATION - OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the dispatcher to track and monitor the activities of field personnel and assign calls for service in the most efficient manner. To this end, officers are responsible for updating the dispatcher of their availability and status.

- A. Officers will not leave their assigned area or post or put themselves on “special” without notifying the dispatcher.
- B. When transporting, officers will advise their beginning and ending mileages.
- C. Officers will not place themselves on a call without permission from the dispatcher or field supervisor, unless the call is of a serious nature and their response time would be significantly less than dispatched units. When this occurs, the effect of “cross beat dispatching” begins and the efficiency of service is diminished.
- D. Officers will not disregard themselves on a call for service without notifying the dispatcher of the reason they cannot complete the call.

**XXXI. RECORDING RADIO TRANSMISSIONS (VOICE LOGGING RECORDER)**

Radio transmissions corresponding to a specific call will be logged into the voice logging recorder system automatically under that incident and may be retrieved by supervisory personnel.

**XXXII. RELAYING RADIO TRANSMISSIONS**

Dispatch is responsible for relaying unanswered unit-to-unit transmissions.

**XXXIII. ROLL CALLS/OFFICER SAFETY; DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITY**

In the event any suspicious call for help is received on the radio, dispatch shall clear the channel and ask the unit to repeat. If no response, dispatch shall announce a roll call. In the event one officer does not respond, a response will be generated to the last location known.

**XXXIV. TESTING THE SYSTEM**

The radio system will be periodically tested to ensure proper functioning.



### **XXXV. UNIT STATUS / OFFICER SAFETY**

- A. Dispatch is responsible for attention to officer safety by taking notice of potential danger in a call type, absence of response to calls, no communication within a period of time or any language or codes that would indicate a problem.
- B. In the event dispatch for any reason feels there may be a need to check an officer's status, dispatch is authorized to do so by stating the officer number and the phrase "signal 13". If the officer does not respond to this request the second time, another unit will be sent to check on that officer's last known location.
- C. If dispatch is unable to make radio contact with an officer, after another unit has been sent to the officers last known location, the dispatcher will notify the patrol supervisor and continue to call the officer's number followed by his/her last name every one (1) minute. (ex., 722, officer Smith)
- D. The CAD status monitor will indicate when to check the status of field units. The dispatcher will give a "signal 13" or ask the officer if he/she needs additional time when the status monitor highlights their call number / assignment.

### **XXXVI. UPDATES**

- A. Dispatch is responsible for updating units on information pertaining to a call while the unit is en route to the call.
- B. Dispatch is responsible for updating units on field request status.
- C. Dispatch is responsible for updating CAD with times and pertinent information.

### **XXXVII. WARNING CODES / PHRASES**

Dispatch shall use the following warning or code when requesting to transmit sensitive information, warrant notification with subject present, or other information, understanding that the receipt of such information by parties other than the officer, may cause danger to the officer.

- A. Warning phrase: "Is your radio secure?"
- B. Warning code: **Signal W**, person is wanted.
- C. All warrant information will be given to the officer immediately, including charges, issuing agency and verification (or that verification is ongoing).

**XXXVIII. 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.