

PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS

COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ

CHIEF OF POLICE



| TYPE OF ORDER | NUMBER/SERIES | ISSUE DATE | EFFECTIVE DATE |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| General Order | 400.01 | 2/18/2026 | 2/18/2026 |
| SUBJECT TITLE | | PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES | |
| Communications: Administration, Operations & Procedures | | 4/13/2023; 3/1/2019; 8/20/2018; 7/14/2014; 3/29/2013 | |
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| SUBJECT AREA | | DISTRIBUTION | |
| Support Operations | | All Personnel | |

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the communications component of the Department; to mandate the authority and responsibility for communications functions within the Department’s organizational structure; and to provide guidelines for Department personnel on communications operations and procedures.

POLICY

The primary objective of the Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) is to satisfy the immediate communications and informational needs of the Department in the most timely and efficient manner possible. The PSCC maintains a comprehensive reporting system to record requests for service, which includes the continuous monitoring of the status of field units, so as to ensure both officer safety and the prompt delivery of police Services to the public.

DISCUSSION

The PSCC is responsible for interfacing with local, regional, statewide, and federal law enforcement systems, including the Rhode Island Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (RILETS) and the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC). The efficiency with which information is exchanged affects the quality of law enforcement services that the Department is able to provide. The Department has historically maintained an effective working relationship with the PSCC, which has proven instrumental in achieving the excellent level of service that this Department provides to the community.

PROCEDURE

I. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

A. The PSCC operates under the following lines of command and authority:

1. The Commissioner of Public Safety is responsible for the overall administration of the Department of Communications and the PSCC, and exercises authority through the Director of Communications.
2. The Director of Communications is subject to the direction of the Commissioner of Public Safety and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Communications. The Director of Communications is solely responsible for the management of PSCC personnel, and maintains jurisdiction over the PSCC and all design, procurement, installation, and operation of all municipal Radio, television, teletype, and other associated equipment.
3. The PSCC Crew Chief is responsible for the immediate supervision of all dispatcher personnel working during the shift.

B. All radio communications will be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

1. The Communications Division will maintain all appropriate FCC licenses.
2. A current copy of the FCC rules and regulations will be available at the PSCC.

C. The PSCC responsibilities include:

1. The continuous, 24-hour per day / 7 days per week processing of service requests.
2. The reception and dispatching of police radio communications.
3. The monitoring and coordination of police manpower.
4. The facilitating of communications with other agencies.
5. The recording of incident data, and the transmission and reception of data to and from state, local, and Federal law enforcement entities and systems.
6. Any other such duties as determined by the Director of Communications.

D. The orders, instructions, and allocation of personnel issued by PSCC dispatchers shall have the full force and effect of an order from the Chief of Police, and shall be followed as given unless changed or modified by a sworn supervisor for good cause.

E. The PSCC provides 24-hour, toll-free emergency public safety

communications services telephone access via the Rhode Island Enhanced 911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System (E911).

- F. The PSCC is equipped with a Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) in order to receive emergency and non-emergency calls from the hearing impaired.
- G. The Providence Police Department maintains business and emergency telephone lines. If the PSCC receives an emergency call on a business line, the call will be transferred to the emergency line immediately.
 - 1. Emergency calls received at the PSCC from outside of the Department's jurisdiction shall be handled as follows:
 - a. Calls received via E911 shall be routed to the appropriate agency per PSCC operating procedures.
 - b. When an emergency telephone call is received via other than E911, the call-taker should immediately determine the location of the incident so that the call can be transferred to the appropriate agency if necessary.
 - 2. For misdirected calls of a non-emergency nature, the caller will be provided with the telephone number of the appropriate agency.
- H. In the case of a call concerning a crime in-progress, the call-taker should keep the complainant on the telephone line if the complainant's safety is not jeopardized in so doing. Alternatively, the call-taker may advise the complainant to leave the scene if necessary for safety, and may designate a location for the complainant to meet with responding units. Responding units shall be advised whenever such situations occur.
- I. Call-takers should determine the complainant's identity and contact information as well as the location of the incident as soon as possible in the event that communications with the complainant are terminated prematurely.
- J. Complainants/victims/witnesses will be informed of the nature of the response by the Department; e.g., if police will be responding immediately; if the response will be delayed; that the call or request is being forwarded to the appropriate entity or agency; etc. In cases where an initial or subsequent request for service only requires the imparting of information, call takers shall endeavor to provide complete and accurate information, and shall consult whatever resources (fellow call-takers, supervisors, other agencies, documentation, etc.) that are reasonably available.
 - 1. For vehicle collisions that do not involve City vehicles and that occur on private property where there is no report of injuries or no indication that a criminal offense has occurred, neither the generation of a report number nor the preparation of a report by an officer shall be required. Under these circumstances:

- a. For any such calls for service received, the parties shall be advised to exchange information with each other, and shall be directed to the proper webpage on the Department website in order to complete the appropriate reporting form, and an officer shall not be dispatched to the scene.
 - b. For self-initiated calls for service, officers shall likewise advise the parties to exchange information, and shall direct the parties to the appropriate Department website for reporting purposes.
- K. Whenever any outside agency notifies the PSCC that their officers or agents will be operating in our city, it is imperative that the call-taker immediately transfer the call via landline to the Officer-in-Charge of the Patrol Bureau (OIC). If the call-taker is unable to reach the OIC or a supervisor, the call-taker shall gather all pertinent information, such as the location(s) where the officer(s) or agent(s) will be, how they might be identified, and the name and phone number of a contact person within the outside agency. The PSCC shall then notify the OIC or a supervisor as soon as possible via landline, who shall then make all appropriate Department notifications. Following this procedure will ensure the safety of our officers as well as that of the officer(s) and agent(s) from the outside agency.

II. THE COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH (CAD) SYSTEM

- A. The purpose of CAD system utilization is to ensure that the following objectives are met:
 - 1. The capturing and recording of complaint data.
 - 2. The capturing and recording of officer workload data.
 - 3. Increasing the level of officer safety.
 - 4. Improving resource allocation.
 - 5. Eliminating the duplication of records processing.
 - 6. Maximizing the timeliness, quality, and effectiveness of police services delivered to the community.
- B. When initial and/or follow-up requests for services are received by the PSCC, call-takers must access/reassess the characteristics of the requests to determine whether an emergency or nonemergency response is required, and must subsequently classify the request with the assistance of the CAD system and forward the information to the dispatcher in order to ensure that a broadcast is initiated in a timely manner. In the case of broadcasts by officers pertaining to self-initiated activities, the dispatcher also performs the call-taker function.

Information that is either obtained and recorded by the call-taker or automatically assigned by the CAD system at the time of a request for service includes:

1. A call number for the service request as assigned by CAD.
 2. The date and time of the service request.
 3. The name and address, or exact location of the complainant (if possible).
 4. The type of incident reported.
 5. The exact location of the incident.
 6. The identification of the officer(s) assigned as the primary and backup units.
 7. The time of dispatch.
 8. The time of officer arrival.
 9. The time of the officer's return to service.
 10. The disposition or status of the reported incident.
 11. Any pertinent information including, but not limited to, suspect description(s) and vehicle description(s).
- C. PSCC dispatchers will normally select and dispatch all police units according to patrol area assignment with the assistance of CAD. Backup units are typically assigned from adjoining patrol areas. However, dispatchers have the authority to use any available officer, regardless of beat or assignment, to accomplish the primary objective of the rapid and effective delivery of police services.
- D. In the event that the primary officer finds that the type of call originally dispatched differs from the circumstances found at the scene, the original classification of the incident and the report / no-report status shall be amended in the CAD system, as appropriate.
- E. The CAD system displays the current status of each unit on duty that responds to calls for service as their primary function. These units are required to advise the PSCC of their location and status, including when they are out of service, throughout their tour of duty.
- F. PSCC dispatchers shall not allow officers to check out of service on non-police activities when the CAD system indicates that there are insufficient units available to answer calls for service. The dispatcher shall consult with the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the Patrol Bureau when there is any question about the sufficiency of available units.

- G. PSCC dispatchers will diligently monitor the CAD system status timer fields for all units being monitored by the CAD.
- H. Each dispatcher is responsible for maintaining a thorough working proficiency with the CAD system; familiarity with the information contained in the CAD manuals that are maintained in the PSCC; and in staying informed of any updates or changes to the system.

III. RADIO TRANSMISSION PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

- A. The Providence Police Department subscribes to a plain language format of radio transmissions that includes a minimal amount of “10-Codes”, as the use of such codes may make it difficult to effectively and efficiently coordinate and communicate with other public safety service entities should the need arise. Furthermore, the use of a plain-language format assures the accurate flow of information through fewer requests for repeats; fewer mistakes in interpretation or translation; and fewer code and language substitutions.
- B. Adherence to the following protocols and procedures by all employees who use the radio system will serve to ensure its efficient use as well as promote the professional image of our agency:
 - 1. Listen before transmitting. Interrupting, or “stepping on” a transmission already in progress causes needless repeats, sounds unprofessional, is discourteous, and poses a potential hazard to employee safety.
 - 2. Refrain from displaying emotions, by words or voice inflection, that reveal excitement, irritation, disgust, or sarcasm.
 - 3. Appropriate language and manner of address shall be used at all times. Additionally, employees using the radio will refrain from:
 - a. Using slang language.
 - b. Engaging in personal commentary of any type.
 - c. Referring to other parties on a first name basis.
 - d. Uttering angry remarks.
 - e. Utilizing the radio system for any non-official purposes.
 - 4. Simple phrases and short, direct answers to questions are best for radio transmissions. Laboring explanations are best saved for face-to-face situations unless absolutely necessary under a given set of circumstances.
 - 5. The phonetic alphabet shall be used when transmitting letters.

6. Officers assigned to patrol duty are required to carry their portable radio, turned on and operating properly, at all times while on duty.
 7. On-duty, non-patrol officers are responsible for maintaining contact with the PSCC and/or their immediate supervisors during their tour of duty.
 8. Pre-designated call signs are to be used by employees when sending or acknowledging radio transmissions.
 - a. All personnel who are assigned a portable radio are also assigned a unique, pre-designated portable identification number.
 - b. The Department, in conjunction with the Department of Communications, has pre-designated call signs for each position within the Department. For further information, please refer to the "Revised Radio Call Signs" spreadsheet, located in the "shared/Patrol" folder on the Department computer network "S\:" drive.
 9. All employees shall display mutual consideration and respect toward one another when broadcasting over the radio system.
- C. The following general procedures will apply to radio transmissions that occur between officers and dispatchers:
1. When dispatching a single unit to a call for service, the dispatcher will summon the unit by its pre-designated call sign, wait for the unit to respond, and then advise the unit of the location and the nature of the call. The called unit will acknowledge the dispatcher by broadcasting its call sign and the message, "10-4".
 2. When dispatching a backup unit to a call for service, the dispatcher will summon a backup unit either by requesting a unit by their pre-designated call sign or by issuing a general request for a unit to volunteer as the backup unit. When the backup unit acknowledges the call, the dispatcher will then provide the location, nature of the call, and any other pertinent information to the back-up unit. The back-up unit will then acknowledge the dispatcher by broadcasting its call sign and the message, "10-4".
 3. After the primary unit and any other units are assigned, the dispatcher shall provide the responding units with any additional information that is essential to ensure the safety of the officers or that may serve to aid in the expeditious handling of the complaint.
 4. Upon arrival at the location of a dispatched or officer-initiated call for service, responding units will inform the dispatcher of their arrival. When departing the location of a call for service, responding units will inform the dispatcher of their departure and provide the appropriate disposition of the call for service.

5. Officers shall reply promptly when they are called over the radio. If after several attempts a unit fails to acknowledge, the dispatcher shall notify the OIC.
 6. Units will advise the dispatcher of their status when:
 - a. Acknowledging a call.
 - b. Arriving at the scene of an incident.
 - c. Completing the call and returning to service.
 - d. Reporting incidents and conditions.
 - e. Making vehicle, pedestrian, or suspect stops.
 - f. Assisting motorists.
 - g. On a call for an extended period of time.
 - h. Going out of service or returning to service for any reason.
 - i. Responding to the vehicle maintenance garage or into the station.
 7. The dispatcher shall not make suggestions as to what actions may or should be taken by units in the field.
- D. Only one unit will usually be dispatched to non-emergency calls for service. Some calls for service may require additional units to facilitate the handling of the call or to ensure the safety of the officers on the scene. Incidents in which more than one unit will be dispatched include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. An assault in progress, or when information that an assault is likely to occur exists.
 2. Alarm calls.
 3. Any call for service in which weapons may be involved.
 4. Domestic disturbances.
 5. Felony vehicle stops.
 6. DUI motor vehicle stops.
 7. Suicide attempts or threats.
 8. Crimes in progress.
 9. Fleeing suspects.

10. Activation of the "panic button" alarm of a portable radio by any employee; whenever a possible duress situation is detected due to the nature of a transmission; or when additional units are specifically requested by an employee.
 - a. Whenever PSCC personnel receive an activation of a portable radio panic button, the status of the employee to whom the portable radio has been assigned will be ascertained immediately. If no response is received, additional personnel will be dispatched to the last known location of the employee in question. Alternate forms of communication may also be considered when an employee fails to respond subsequent to a panic button activation, including cell phone and telephone notifications, contacting the location where an officer was last assigned or dispatched, etc.
 11. Barricaded suspects.
 12. Hostage situations.
 13. Situations involving emotionally disturbed persons.
 14. Any other incident in which a dispatcher feels that an emergency situation exists or is likely to exist.
- E. First responders shall notify the PSCC dispatcher as soon as practicable and request the appropriate type of assistance required (i.e., supervisory personnel, specialized Department personnel, emergency medical services, fire apparatus, etc.) whenever an emergency situation arises and/or where the notification of supervisory personnel is specifically mandated by Department directive. In turn, the dispatcher shall immediately notify the OIC and shall dispatch a supervisor to the scene whenever circumstances and/or emergency situations arise which meet any of the following criteria:
1. Accidents involving police vehicles.
 2. Incidents involving building fires and/or suspected arson.
 3. Incidents involving death, the possibility of death, or serious personnel injury.
 4. Incidents involving any Injury to a police officer.
 5. Incidents involving the commission of a major crime.
 6. Incidents involving an officer requiring assistance.
 7. High risk situations.

8. Vehicular pursuits.
 9. Reportable use of force incidents.
- F. Additionally, the OIC or a supervisor shall be notified of any situation where the dispatcher or any sworn personnel have concluded that the need for an on-scene supervisor exists. Accordingly, whenever the OIC or a supervisor determines that a supervisor is required at the scene, or whenever on-scene personnel specifically request a supervisor, the dispatcher shall immediately direct a supervisor to respond to the scene if one is not already en-route.
- G. Police dispatchers shall not give any first-aid instruction over the phone. All calls for service requesting medical assistance will be transferred to Providence Fire Department communications personnel located within the PSCC.

IV. ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

- A. The following resources are immediately accessible to PSCC personnel:
1. A current duty roster for all department personnel.
 2. Officer status indicators.
 3. The OIC will be available to dispatch at all times.
 4. A current listing of the residential telephone numbers of all Department employees.
 5. A listing of telephone contact numbers for local police, fire, and rescue departments.
 6. Procedures for contacting animal control, and other agencies that are used to provide service to local citizens, (ex. utility companies, public works, etc.).
 7. A map of the City of Providence, including the outline of patrol areas, shall be kept in the communications center to be used as an aid when needed to determine the proper units to be dispatched.
 8. Tactical dispatching plans (ex. bank robbery, critical incident response plan).
- B. The PSCC has the capability of immediate playback of recorded radio and telephone communications while maintaining a continuous recording of radio transmissions and emergency telephone conversations.
1. Recordings of all digital radio and telephone lines are archived on digital media for a minimum period of three (3) years, and are stored in a secured area of the PSCC. The Office of Professional Responsibility and the Director of Communications shall have immediate access to said media.

2. With the exception of authorized personnel within the Office of Professional Responsibility, any other sworn personnel wishing to review a recorded conversation for an on-going criminal investigation must make a request to the Department's Communications Liaison assigned to the PSCC, or to a PSCC Crew Chief.

V. PSCC SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. Video Monitoring System.
 1. PSCC personnel are capable of observing security video monitors located in the PSCC on a 24-hour basis.
 2. Unusual circumstances or sightings observed on the monitoring system shall be brought to the attention of the post unit and/or the OIC as soon as possible.
- B. Restricted Access.
 1. All radio and telephone infrastructure will be secured and access will be limited to persons with approval from the Director of Communications and the Chief of Police.
 - a. The PSCC is surrounded by security fencing. Access into the curtilage of the PSCC is restricted by electronic gates which are activated via authorized electronic security passes.
 - b. Access to the PSCC building is restricted to PSCC personnel, sworn officers, or persons approved by the Director of Communications.
 - i. Only PSCC personnel and other persons so designated by the Chief of Police and/or the Commissioner of Public Safety have direct access to the PSCC building through the use of electronic access cards. All other authorized persons may be allowed entrance via the remote activation of an electronic locking system.
- C. The PSCC possesses an emergency power generator in the event of a power failure. The generator is inspected and tested at a full load on a monthly basis to ensure operational readiness.

VI. MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES

- A. The Department utilizes multichannel mobile and portable radio equipment capable of two-way operation on both proprietary 800Mhz frequencies and on joint public safety frequencies.
- B. A listing of the available talkgroups in the "A", "B", and "C" Bank positions may be found in the "shared/Patrol" folder on the Department computer network "S:\\" drive.

VII. EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

- A. The Communications Liaison or a Crew Chief shall determine which notifications are “emergency” notifications. The Department will make every reasonable effort to assist other law enforcement agencies requesting notifications.
- B. Dispatchers should confirm the nature of the message and obtain the identity and contact information of the person making the request.
- C. Officers and/or supervisors who are assigned to carry out the notification shall be completely informed of the nature of the emergency situation that has resulted in the notification request.
- D. Requests by other agencies for pursuit assistance will be handled in accordance with General Order #330.02 *Vehicular Pursuit Policy*.

VIII. RADIO MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- A. Radio Equipment and repair shall be performed by authorized personnel at the PSCC between the hours of 730am to 400pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays.
- B. PSCC personnel shall not transport Department vehicles to or from the radio repair facility. This shall be the responsibility of the affected officer, bureau, or unit.
- C. Only certified technicians employed by the PSCC may procure, adjust, repair, or alter communications equipment.
- D. Department members are responsible for ensuring that portable radios in their possession and/or assigned to them are well-maintained and fully operational at all times.
- E. Communications equipment shall be available for inspection upon request by any supervisor at any reasonable hour. “Communications equipment” shall include:
 - 1. Portable radio with battery.
 - 2. External microphone.
 - 3. Carrying case.
- F. The battery must accompany a portable radio when it is presented for maintenance or repair. New portable radio batteries may be obtained at the PSCC.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oscar L. Perez', written in a cursive style.

COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ
CHIEF OF POLICE