Radio Communications Procedure

**Adopted:** September 2018 **Updated:**

The Polk County Fire Chief’s Association has adopted a standardized procedure for Radio Communications Procedures. The intent is to have each fire department respond in a like manner for the safety purposes of all personnel in the event of a mutual aid call.

**Definitions:  
CAN Report:** Situational Report for Incident Commander and uniform radio report for crews to update IC.The report addresses what you have, what you are doing, and what you need. **C**onditions, **A**ctions, **N**eeds.

**Radio Communications** – The methods for fire and EMS personnel to exchange information

via two-way radios during departmental operations.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this SOG is to define a framework for effective and consistent radio

communication procedures

**Guideline:**

Plain English shall be used to avoid any confusion.

Keep all radio traffic as short and accurate as possible. Listen to the radio before

speaking, someone else may be transmitting at the same time.

For en-route, on-scene (without a size-up), and available radio traffic, simply announce

your status changes.

Example –

Engine 920: “Engine 920 is en-route”.

For all other radio traffic, the following communications order model should be used to

ensure a complete sender/receiver understanding, including requesting Comm Center to track en-route times etc:

Sender calls receiver. Hey you, this is me

Receiver answers sender.

Sender communicates message.

Receiver confirms receipt and echoes essence of message.

Example –

Engine 920: “COMM Center from Engine 920”

COMM Center: “Engine 920 Go Ahead”

Engine 920: “Engine 920 is on-scene, two-story residence, nothing showing,

assuming Clark Command.”

COMM Center: “Copy. E920 is on-scene with a two-story residence, nothing

showing, and assuming Clark Command.”

Personnel shall use the following radio procedures

a. When responding – **“en-route”**

*Example – “Engine 920 is en-route”*

b. When arriving – **“on-scene”**

*Example – “Ladder 925 is on-scene”*

c. When finished with the assignment and the apparatus/equipment are ready for the

next alarm – **“available”**

*Example – “Ambulance 923 is available*”

d. When units are not needed – “**cancel”**

*Example – “Any units not on scene may* ***cancel***”

Companies on-scene shall use the following radio procedures.

a. The working crew is called by the apparatus designation

*Example “Engine 920 is assigned to fire suppression on the second floor”*

b. The engineer remaining with the apparatus, “Engine”, “Ladder”, “Tower”,

etc. will be called as the engineer of the rig designation.

*Example – “Engineer 920 from Engine 920, charge the preconnect*”

**CAN Reports**

When called upon for a CAN report or when assignments are complete the company officer should provide **C**onditions, **A**ctions, **N**eeds.

Example: Truck 950 to Command - conditions are clear2nd floor, search is complete, need additional assignment.

**Emergency**

**Procedures**

Any personnel on the fire ground may request priority access to any radio channel by

declaring “Emergency Traffic”.

After any declaration of “Emergency Traffic” all personnel shall hold radio traffic until the

Incident Commander advises all personnel may resume normal communications.

**Any time there are communication problems in an IDLH atmosphere the crew should exit the structure and resolve the communication problem before re-entering.**

**Providing Mutual Aid**

When providing mutual aid across PSAP boundaries, the following guidelines will be used.

* If units have adjacent PSAP frequencies in their radios, use the system you are providing mutual aid to. Follow these steps:
  + Go en-route with your home PSAP and advise you are switching to the adjacent PSAP system.
  + All further communication including going enroute will go through the PSAP you are providing mutual aid to.
  + Go back in service with both PSAPs.
  + Utilize MDTs to track times.
  + Example: a Johnston-Grimes Engine is providing mutual aid to Urbandale. Johnston-Grimes units have WestCom frequencies in their radios. Johnston-Grimes units will utilize WestCom frequencies.
  + If a unit is dispatched and contacting an adjacent communications center, the responding unit should add their city to the unit name
    - Example:   If Engine 910 from Waukee is contacting Polk County, they should state: Polk County, Waukee Engine 910.
* If units do not have adjacent PSAP frequencies in their radios, utilize the RINO system. The RINO system allows units to stay on their home system and be patched to the RINO thus allowing different PSAP units to communicate with each other. PSAPs should be setting up the RINO when the call for mutual aid occurs between PSAPs. We must recognize that all our metro PSAPs are significantly busy and missing this step can occur. If this step doesn’t occur, follow these steps:
  + When going en-route, request a TAC channel with your home PSAP.
  + Ask for the TAC channel to be patched to RINO.
  + Request for the PSAP you are providing mutual aid to assign a TAC channel and patch it to the RINO.
  + Example: an Ankeny engine is providing mutual aid to Urbandale. Ankeny units do not have West Com frequencies in their radios. If West Com and Polk County PSAPs do not already have the RINO up and running. The Ankeny Engine requests a TAC channel and for Polk County to patch it to the RINO as well as requesting Polk County to contact WestCom to assign a TAC channel and patch it to the RINO.
  + If a unit is dispatched and contacting an adjacent communications center, the responding unit should add their city to the unit name
    - Example:   If Engine 910 from Waukee is contacting Polk County, they should state: Polk County, Waukee Engine 910.

Any time crews are entering an IDLH atmosphere and using a RINO patch, they must test their communications before entry. The RINO patch only works if your radio can connect to your home radio tower system. If communications are not working correctly, work out another plan with the IC prior to entry.