POLK COUNTY
FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

The policy proposed here has been reviewed by the Polk County Fire Chiefs and is intended
to provide the minimum requirements for all Polk County Fire Departments and to
create some level of uniformity to policies in the metro area.

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Radio Communications Procedure

Adopted: September 2018   **Updated: August 2024**

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.
Conditions, **A**ctions, **N**eeds.

Home Emergency Communications Center (Home)- The dispatch center that provides service to the
jurisdiction where the incident is occurring

Native Talk Groups – The channels that the agencies typically use to communicate with their
Home Emergency Communication System

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.

Use MDT Keys as much as possible to go enroute, arrive, etc. to avoid tying up radio channels

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

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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"

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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: command from Truck 950 - 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.

Incident Response Involving Resources from Multiple Dispatch Centers

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

- When public safety responses occur that require resources of a single "home" dispatch center, communications will be handled at the local level on native talk groups, according to local policy and procedures.
- Unless a common talkgroup is assigned, a radio "patch" shall be implemented as necessary for effective communication when public safety responses require the resources of multiple dispatch centers and/or units from different radio systems. It is the responsibility of the "home" dispatch center (the dispatch center that provides service to the jurisdiction where the incident is occurring) to establish a patch and monitor radio communications until the call for service has concluded.
- The interoperable radio talkgroups that may be used in public safety response are Sub-Regional 1 Tactical Talkgroups and Region 1 Tactical Talkgroups.
- When the use of interoperable talkgroups is required, they shall be assigned as available.
- Dispatch personnel shall remain situationally aware of interoperable talkgroup availability.

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Guidelines:

1. Dispatch personnel shall attempt to move all interoperable communications to the "home" dispatch center's radio infrastructure. For example, if a call for service occurs within the jurisdiction of the Polk County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center, units shall be patched to an "SRTACXXX LINK" talkgroup. If a call for service occurs within the jurisdiction of the Des Moines or Westcom Dispatch Centers, units shall be patched to an "SRTACXXX" talkgroup. This concept promotes having all operating units on the radio infrastructure that has been specifically designed for that "home" Dispatch Center's jurisdiction.
2. Once assigned a talkgroup, responding units should communicate with the "home" Dispatch Center.
3. Units should use their Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) to change status and create time stamps (e.g. utilize the "en route" button, "arrive" button, etc.)
4. If a unit is dispatched and contacting a "home" Dispatch Center other than their own, they should add their city name to the unit name (e.g. If Engine 910 from Waukee is contacting the Polk County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center, they should identify themselves as "Waukee Engine 910").
5. At the conclusion of the call for service, units should go back in service with the "home" Dispatch Center and then return to their local talkgroup per normal operating procedures.