

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

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Purpose: *The use of radios can make the fireground an efficient operation, as well as enhancing the safety of firefighters.*

Procedures:

1. The Suburban Fire Service Communications procedure shall be treated as if it was a part of this document.
2. All radio traffic should be restricted to fire department business or related emergencies.
3. All radio traffic should be as short as possible, being clear and concise.
4. No objectionable language shall be used on the radio.
5. Whenever possible, face to face communications shall be used, instead of radio communications.
6. Whenever instructions are given to someone over the radio, the receiver should repeat the gist of the instructions to ensure the proper message has been received.
7. When calling another unit on the radio, give the unit being called a reasonable amount of time to answer before making a second call.
8. After making three (3) unsuccessful attempts to call a unit, assume that one of the two radios is unattended or defective, and do not continue to call for the unit. Do the same if answering a call, and the unit initiating does not hear the response.
9. Listen before speaking on the radio to avoid interrupting conversation in progress.
10. ***All fireground communications should take place on the assigned operations channel,*** unless the incident commander has directed otherwise, because of several fire departments on the scene. Avoid using multiple channels whenever practical to lessen confusion.
11. Fire companies shall signal "In Service" or "In Quarters" when leaving scene, or being canceled. If a unit wishes for a station crew to remain for clean-up, the unit shall request personnel to remain. This is to be done on channel FD TAC 80. If a company will not be immediately returning to the fire station following a response, "In Service" is the recommended signal.
12. If a distress call ("Mayday") goes out on the radio, radio silence on the channel the distress call was made shall be observed without fail unless necessary to rescue personnel. Other channels should be used, such as FD TAC 80, for any other necessary conversation.
13. All career firefighters, when on duty and away from their assigned station, shall have a portable radio with them. The radio shall be left on, and shall be in the scan mode, listening to FIRE 5, JCF PAGE and FD TAC 80.
14. When operating in conjunction with another fire department, do not use channels other than the assigned operations channel. This will avoid missed communications.

Standard Operating Procedures are meant only to be guidelines. Actual conditions may warrant alternative actions.

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15. If a member should investigate a "Smoke in the Area" sighting and is unable to locate the smoke source, do NOT call Radio and advise them to disregard any calls. It is possible that there is a fire, but could not be found, and subsequent dispatches may direct the fire department to the proper location. If the smoke source is found (such as that from a permitted outside fire) then Radio may be informed on the specific location.
16. The last unit to leave the scene shall advise radio to "Clear the Air". This unit is responsible for properly recording incident number and times.
17. When a unit is called while in route to an emergency, that unit will respond with the Unit number and location such as "Unit 8001 to 8033". 8033 would answer "Unit 8033 Blue Lick & South Park". If a unit is canceled, giving the unit's location is not desired, unless that unit is certain it is closer than the unit that is continuing its response.
18. If an apparatus begins its response to a fire run, and is not coming from its assigned station, it is to give the location when calling that they are responding. For example, "8033 is responding from Blue Lick and South Park". The purpose of this is assist chief officers in estimating which units will arrive before others. Giving the location is not necessary if chief officers already know the unit is coming from somewhere other than its assigned station (such as all units at Southern High School on training).
19. Explorers may use fire department radios on official explorer activities, which are supervised by an OFD member. Explorers should use the SIMPLEX channel (preferable) or FD TAC 80.
20. Chief officers and response captains who are available to respond to an incident, but are not actually doing so, should call "On the air" if: 1) they are the duty officer but are not responding to an incident or 2) they are in the area of the first station dispatched to an incident and they do so after the duty officer has called on the air or responding. *(An example of the second situation is this: there's an alarm sounding at Wilt Elementary school. The duty officer is 8005, who is at home, and 8004 is at station 2. After 8005 calls "8009 is responding", 8004 call "on the air". 8009 may want 8004 to respond to the incident in his place due to their locations.)*
21. All apparatus portable radios shall be turned on while responding to an incident while taking caution to avoid feedback. The officer of each apparatus is responsible to ensure portable radios are turned on and have been switched to the operations channel assigned to the incident.
22. Portable radios have an "Out of Range" indicator which gives both and audible and visual signal the radio is in a "dead spot". If, while at the scene of an incident, the "Out of Range" indicator activates, the firefighter shall move back to an area with satisfactory coverage and then inform the incident commander of the matter. The incident commander should consider the use of the SIMPLEX channel to ensure reliable communications.

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