



## Division 03

## Communication and Information Management/Technology

### Chapter 10 – Radio System Use and Station Alerting

January 2009

#### POLICY

This General Order shall establish procedures for the operational use of all radio channels, alerting units/stations via those radio channels, and the procedures for Public Safety Communications (PSC) to utilize when dispatching fire/EMS incidents.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Alert** – the primary means utilized by PSC to notify a station of a call for service by activating the station alerting system, pagers, station printers, and/or announcing the call over the radio.

**Alert Tones** – also referred to as “beeps,” an audible signal utilized by PSC to alert fire/EMS personnel of a pending dispatch of an emergency incident or other important announcement.

**Radio Coverage** – capabilities of existing radio infrastructure. Due to inadequate radio coverage, it may be necessary to handle a given incident on another channel. Fire/EMS personnel shall be cognizant of these capabilities within their area, and request the incident be handled on another channel.

**Types of Alarms** – types of alarms for dispatch purposes listed in this order are defined and listed in General Order 03-11, Standard Response Dispatch Procedure.

#### PROCEDURES

#### 1. Station Alerting and Channel Utilization

Stations and units will be alerted for incidents in accordance with the following standardized guidelines. In addition, the following channel assignments will be utilized unless requested otherwise by an on-scene incident commander or directed otherwise by Public Safety Communications (PSC):

##### Channel 1

Channel 1 is designated as the primary dispatch channel. All incidents will be dispatched via the radio on Channel 1. All fire/EMS units and stations will monitor Channel 1, unless otherwise directed by PSC. Fire/EMS incidents will be announced as follows:

- **Ambulance, Medic and Rescue Local Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by a single alert tone and announced once on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types will be assigned to and shall respond on Channel 2 or 7 unless otherwise directed by PSC. Once the dispatched unit(s) respond, the call will be dispatched a second time on the assigned channel.

- **Local Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by a single alert tone and announced once on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types shall respond and remain on Channel 1 unless otherwise directed by PSC.



- **Street Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by two alert tones and announced on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types will be assigned to and shall respond on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel 3, 4, 8, 9, or 10 unless otherwise directed by PSC. Approximately 45 seconds after the initial dispatch, the call will be announced a second time on Channel 1 and repeated once on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel as outlined below.

- **Box Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by three alert tones and announced on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types will be assigned to and shall respond on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel 3, 4, 8, 9, or 10 unless otherwise directed by PSC. Approximately 45 seconds after the initial dispatch, the call will be announced a second time on Channel 1 and repeated once on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel as outlined below.

- **Special Types of Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by one, two or three alert tones as designated by PSC for the severity and type of incident and announced on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types will be assigned to and shall respond on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel. Approximately 45 seconds after the initial dispatch, the call will be announced a second time on Channel 1 and repeated once on the PSC designated incident scene operational channel as warranted and outlined below.

- **Task Force and Multiple Alarms**

These call types will be preceded by two (Task Force Alarm) or three (Multiple Alarm) alert tones and announced on Channel 1. Units dispatched for these call types will be assigned to and shall respond on Channel 1

and report to the incident staging area unless otherwise directed by PSC or the incident commander. Approximately 45 seconds after the initial dispatch, the call will be announced a second time on Channel 1.

### **Channel 2**

Channel 2 is designated as a primary emergency medical services (EMS) dispatch channel for incidents in Battalions 801, 802, 804, and 806. All units dispatched and responding to an EMS incident will report directly to this assigned channel at the time of dispatch. The Channel 2 dispatcher will acknowledge each unit, and when all units have marked up responding, the Channel 2 dispatcher will re-announce the call. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 3**

Channel 3 is designated as a primary incident scene management channel for incidents involving multiple units in Battalions 803, 805 and 807. All units dispatched and responding to an emergency incident will report directly to the assigned channel at the time of dispatch. 45 seconds after the initial dispatch on Channel 1, the incident will be dispatched on Channel 3. PSC will conduct a roll call of the alerted units on Channel 3 and announce the call a second time. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 4**

Channel 4 is designated as a primary and



back-up incident scene management channel for incidents involving multiple units in Battalions 801, 802, 804 and 806. All units dispatched and responding to an emergency incident will report directly to the assigned channel at the time of dispatch. 45 seconds after the initial dispatch on Channel 1, the incident will be dispatched on Channel 4. PSC will conduct a roll call of the alerted units on Channel 4 and announce the call a second time. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 5**

Channel 5 is designated as a unit-to-unit channel for on scene incident management in Battalions 803, 805 and 807. PSC is unable to monitor the non-repeated radio traffic on this channel and therefore Channel 5 will only be used for emergency operations at the direction of the Incident Commander as a result of structural or land topography interfering with normal radio reception on Channel 3 or when an incident has been deemed “under control” by the Incident Commander and PSC requests the use of Channel 3 for another incident. As directed by the Incident Commander, all units operating under his command will switch to Channel 5 while the Incident Commander remains on Channel 3. All units will remain on the assigned channel until the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service, at which time they shall change to the appropriate channel to go in service, and then switch to Channel 1, silently.

Personnel may also utilize Channel 5 for administrative/non-emergency conversations between units.

### **Channel 6**

Channel 6 is designated as a unit-to-unit channel for on scene incident management in Battalions 801, 802, 804 and 806. PSC is unable to monitor the non-repeated radio traffic on this channel and therefore Channel 6 will only be used for emergency operations at the direction of the Incident Commander as a result of structural or land topography interfering with normal radio reception on Channel 4 or when an incident has been deemed “under control” by the Incident Commander and PSC requests the use of Channel 4 for another incident. As direct by the Incident Commander, all units operating under his command will switch to Channel 6 while the Incident Commander remains on Channel 4. All units will remain on the assigned channel until the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service, at which time they shall change to the appropriate channel to go in service, and then switch to Channel 1, silently.

Personnel may also utilize Channel 6 for administrative/non-emergency conversations between units.

### **Channel 7**

Channel 7 is designated as a primary emergency medical services (EMS) dispatch channel for incidents in Battalions 803, 805 and 807. All units dispatched and responding to an EMS incident will report directly to this assigned channel at the time of dispatch. The Channel 7 dispatcher will acknowledge each unit, and when all units have marked up responding, the Channel 7 dispatcher will re-announce the call. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 8**



Channel 8 is designated as the back-up incident scene management channel for incidents involving multiple units in Battalions 803, 805 and 807. All units dispatched and responding to an emergency incident will report directly to the assigned channel at the time of dispatch. Forty-five (45) seconds after the initial dispatch on Channel 1, the incident will be dispatched/announced on Channel 8, and PSC will conduct a roll call of the alerted units on Channel 8. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 9**

Channel 9 is designated as a primary incident scene management channel for incidents involving multiple units in Stations 810, 831, 841 and 849's response areas. All units dispatched and responding to an emergency incident will report directly to the assigned channel at the time of dispatch. Forty-five (45) seconds after the initial dispatch on Channel 1, the incident will be dispatched on Channel 9, and PSC will conduct a roll call of the alerted units on Channel 9. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

### **Channel 10**

Channel 10 is designated as a primary incident scene management channel for incidents involving multiple units in Stations 801, 811, 812, 834, 844 and 855's response areas. All units dispatched and responding to an emergency incident will report directly to the assigned channel at the time of dispatch. 45 seconds after the initial dispatch on Channel 1, the incident will be dispatched on

Channel 10. PSC will conduct a roll call of the alerted units on Channel 10. All units will remain on the assigned channel, including going in service, and then will switch to Channel 1, silently when the incident is cleared or they have been placed in service.

## **2. Radio Channel Malfunction/Failure**

In the event of a radio channel(s) malfunction or failure, PSC will be responsible for re-assigning the available channel(s) in an effort to maintain efficient communication capabilities with fire/EMS units. PSC will make the appropriate notifications and initiate action to restore the radio capabilities. During these situations, normal radio channel assignments are not likely; therefore, it is critical that all fire/EMS personnel monitor the radio carefully for channel assignments and usage.

## **3. Responsibilities**

PSC will configure the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system to automatically alert the station(s) via the station alerting system, alphanumeric pagers, and CAD printer.

Unit officers are responsible for monitoring and transmitting on the appropriate assigned channel.

Station officers are responsible for reporting problems with any station alerting equipment and/or device. The following actions should be taken:

- Station alerting system – notify PSC Supervisor
- Minitor pagers – take pager to Transcore
- Alphanumeric pagers – contact Logistics



## PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND FIRE/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDERS

- Station printers – notify PSC Supervisor and Information Management
- Station radio – notify PSC Supervisor

### REFERENCES

N/A

### FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A