



Division 03

**Communication and Information
Management/Technology**

**Chapter 13 – UHF Radio Emergency Identifier Activation
Procedure**

January 2009

POLICY

This General Order shall establish procedures for the prompt and appropriate handling of "distress calls" via the Emergency Identifier.

DEFINITIONS

N/A

PROCEDURES

1. Background

Emergency Identifier capability is a standard feature on Fire Department portable radio equipment. It is designed to provide a rapid means to transmit a silent call for help when personnel are in danger or in need of assistance.

In many cases, when such a situation exists, the sender is unable to include a verbal radio transmission due to danger from adversaries, injury, or other limiting factors.

In spite of adverse factors, it is imperative that all "distress calls" via the Emergency Identifier be handled promptly and appropriately. To accomplish this, the following procedures will be strictly adhered to by all fire service personnel.

The Emergency Identifier is a very effective means to transmit a distress signal to Public Safety Communications (PSC). It is, however, only effective when the location of

the sender is known. On emergency incidents, this information is normally available.

In other situations, such as a stop to assist disable motorists or in cases that may involve a level of risk, it is advisable for personnel who handle such matters to inform PSC of their location and purpose.

Note also that on personnel's privately owned radios, the Emergency Identifier is coded to their current work station. If the employee/member's work station changes due to an assignment change, the employee/member must have their radio reprogrammed by PSC. If an employee is detailed for the day to a different station, the employee's supervisors need to be cognizant of the fact that Emergency Identifier activation may be transmitted for an inappropriate unit or location, and they should inform PSC of this possibility.

If such procedures are followed, PSC personnel can quickly send help to personnel in trouble when the Emergency Identifier signal is activated and the signal is confirmed.

2. Emergency Identifier Activation

When personnel are in a situation that poses danger to themselves or others, they shall activate the Emergency Identifier in accordance with the specific procedures of the equipment. Upon receipt of the trouble signal, PSC personnel shall immediately broadcast the following coded confirmation



transmission to verify the validity of the signal:

"Unit/individual radio ID number, verify EI status"

Example: "Engine 855, verify EI status"

NOTE: When PSC transmits the verification check, all other personnel will refrain from noncritical radio transmissions or telephone contacts until the distress signal is confirmed or canceled.

If within five (5) seconds no response is received from the individual or who activated the alarm, PSC will repeat the message:

"Unit/individual radio ID number, verify EI status"

If within five (5) seconds there is no response to the second call, PSC will make the following transmission, which indicates to the sender and to all Departmental personnel monitoring the radio that the distress signal has been verified and help is being sent:

"Unit/individual radio ID number EI signal confirmed"

- REPEAT MESSAGE -

At this time, PSC will immediately notify the appropriate police agency and other necessary support personnel to respond to the location of the unit that activated the distress signal.

NOTE: At any time during the process, the unit/individual that transmitted the distress call may cancel by doing so with a vocal radio transmission explaining the circumstances.

In the event of cancellation, PSC shall announce the following:

"Unit/individual radio ID number EI signal canceled"

- REPEAT MESSAGE IMMEDIATELY -

3. Personnel in the Vicinity of a Confirmed Distress Signal

Departmental personnel within the vicinity of, or responding to, the same call as the unit/individual that activated the Emergency Identifier should attempt to assess the situation from a safe position. If the situation requires assistance that they can safely provide, such as a vehicle accident, they should:

- Proceed to the location.
- Provide aid.
- Notify PSC.

If the situation poses unusual danger to other personnel, they should:

- Remain at a safe distance.
- Update PSC via telephone or radio that cannot be monitored by others who may be endangering the personnel who activated the Emergency Identifier.

Armed Fire Investigators shall make an assessment of the situation from a safe position and initiate reasonable efforts, within their means, to aid personnel in trouble. They shall handle updates in the same manner described above, including the use of police radios when available.

4. Notification

Upon confirmation of a distress call, PSC will immediately make emergency notifications. Departmental notifications shall be handled according to normal procedures after



emergency notifications have been completed.

REFERENCES

N/A

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A