
	<b>GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>		
	<b>Communications</b>		
	<b>GENERAL ORDER</b>	<b>605.1</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>05/02/2016</b>		
<b>Authorized by:</b>	<b>Mark P. Sroka</b> CHIEF OF POLICE	SIGNATURE <i>Mark Sroka</i>	DATE <b>05/02/2016</b>

## **I. DEPARTMENT POLICY**

It is Department policy that all members ensure radio operations are conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements. Use of the City and County radio networks will be for official purposes only. Members using MCP radio frequencies will also abide by the terms of the GPD/MCP agreement governing communications.

In order to be in constant contact with the Public Safety Communications Center, and for their own safety, officers will have their mobile radio tuned to the radio frequency of the police district in which they are presently located, and will tune their portable radio to that same frequency when they exit their vehicle. There is no need to change radio frequency when transporting a prisoner or when entering into another district during a pursuit.

## **II. RADIO PROCEDURES**

### **A. While On-Duty**

1. While on-duty, officers (except for those on a special assignment) will keep the Public Safety Communications Center informed of their status at all times, using the car number assigned to them.

### **B. While Off-Duty**

1. Off-duty officers will call out of service via radio only when officer safety is a concern (i.e., traffic stops, suspicious situations/persons/vehicles) using the letters "O.D." and then their four-digit GPD I.D number (i.e., "O.D. 7737").
2. To conserve air time, off-duty officers enroute to their off-duty part-time place of employment should advise the Public Safety Communications Center of their status via MDC or mobile/portable radio. (See General Order 204.1 – [Secondary Employment](#)).
3. Off-duty officers will call out of service on the primary channel for the MCP district in which they are presently located.

4. When outside of Montgomery County, officers will call out of service using "Montgomery County O.D., followed by their four digit GPD I.D. number.

**C. Covert Operations**

1. Officers conducting covert operations such as raids, stakeouts, etc., will inform the Public Safety Communications Center in advance by telephone of the assignment and of the following information:
  - Car number(s) of the units involved in the operation (i.e, what the officer answers to on the radio),
  - The name of the officer in charge of the operation, and
  - The car number of the "communications car", if one is designated.
2. The Public Safety Communications Center will be notified at the conclusion of the operation.

**D. FCC Regulations**

1. FCC regulations prohibit radio misuse such as profane language, inappropriate transmissions, intentionally "covering" other radio transmissions, and failing to yield to emergency communications. Any misuse of the radio is a serious and potentially dangerous breach of protocol and will not be tolerated.
2. Idle conversations not pertaining to police operations are prohibited because they may interfere with legitimate operational transmissions and compromise officer safety.
3. Supervisors are responsible for the performance of those persons they supervise and for identifying individuals misusing the radio.

**E. Use of the City Radio**

1. Department members communicating by City Radio must be especially sensitive to the fact that this frequency can be monitored by not only other City employees, but by criminals with scanners. Therefore members must use a high degree of tact and discretion to ensure that communications of a sensitive or tactical nature are not disclosed over the frequency on which they are communicating. Idle conversations or conversations not related to City business should not occur.

2. The frequency may be used to request computer information (wanted checks, registration checks and driver's license checks), but criminal history information will not be discussed, unless in the immediate interest of officer safety.
  - Members should use "Plain English" to ensure continuity, uniformity, and discretion.

**F. Use of the County Radio**

1. City officers will operate on the frequency designated for use for the MCP 6<sup>th</sup> District.
2. Most County frequencies can be monitored by citizens; therefore officers must be extremely cautious of their transmissions.
3. The rules below will be followed when communicating via County radio:
  - Messages will be transmitted briefly and concisely, using the established phrase, phonetic alphabet (when necessary), and appropriate classification and clearance codes.
  - Unless for safety reasons, where other officers need to be made aware, officers should change their status via MDC.
  - Radio messages directed to officers will be acknowledged promptly.
  - Officers will advise the dispatcher when they intend to switch from their primary radio frequency to another district's radio frequency, or to a frequency that prevents monitoring the primary frequency.
  - In pursuit situations, officers will remain on the channel where the pursuit started regardless of district entered-unless directed by the Public Safety Communications Center.
  - In order to alert the dispatcher to their status and the immediate need for acknowledgment, officers calling out on a traffic stop or with a suspicious situation, will do so by announcing their car number and activity in the initial contact with the dispatcher. When the dispatcher acknowledges, officers will then provide their exact location and any other pertinent information. In the interest of officer safety, it is recommended that officers write

down or enter in the MDC the tag number(s) of vehicle(s), etc., before they approach the vehicle/ situation/etc., if time permits.

- Officers, when requesting computer information, will announce the nature of their request by stating, “person or vehicle check” and provide the necessary information.
4. When a "Signal 13" (Officer in Trouble) is signaled by an officer or broadcast by a dispatcher, the procedures below will be followed:
- The dispatcher will activate the alert tone and will broadcast the Signal 13, advising responding officers of the location.
  - The Public Safety Communications Center will acknowledge the first two responding officers. Except for an emergency transmission, all other officers will refrain from using the radio.
  - The dispatcher will place a "restricted air" on the channel after verifying the first two officers' response.
5. When clearing dispatched complaints/calls, unless otherwise directed by the dispatcher, responding officer(s) will see the complainant if necessary or requested and advise the Public Safety Communications Center of the appropriate UCR Clearance Code consistent with those listed on their Clearance Cards.
- To ensure accurate classification of calls, officers should refrain from using the 2991 clearance if a clearance that is more suitable can be used.
6. Placing a radio look-out will be done according to the following procedures:
- When an immediate broadcast is necessary, officers will initially contact the dispatcher and in the same transmission, indicate that they would like to place a look-out for the specific offenses, stop-and-obtain, welfare of the officers, etc.
  - When placing a radio look-out for an individual and/or vehicle when no probable cause exists for arrest, the officer must indicate that the look-out is being placed for "stop and

obtain, no probable cause for arrest in reference to...(nature of the event)."

7. "Restricted air" may be requested by an officer and placed by a dispatcher whenever either believes that a situation on the frequency requires the frequency to be restricted to only traffic pertaining to the situation.
  - Because restricted air virtually shuts down the frequency, it should only be used for temporary situations. Officers involved in major incidents should request an alternate frequency from the Public Safety Communications Center.
  - Before the dispatcher advises frequency users of the restricted air, the alert tone will be sounded.
  - Only an officer at the scene of the incident should request cancellation of the restricted air.
8. When placed, a Signal 10-70 means that uniformed patrol officers must avoid an area that is under surveillance. Officers will be advised of a 10-70 by the dispatcher (or by an officer over the air).

### **III. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER PROCESSING OF CALLS**

#### **A. Calls For Service**

1. Calls for service will be received by the Public Safety Communications Center and a police officer(s) will be dispatched for any instance in which protection of life, well-being of the citizen, or the need for police presence is at issue. The type of event, whether it is civil or criminal, the status of the event, the availability of the complainant, and/or whether or not a citizen requests that an officer respond, may be used by a call taker to evaluate and decide whether an officer should be dispatched. County policy states that if a citizen demands a police officer, one will be dispatched. All questionable situations which relate to providing police assistance will be resolved in favor of sending an officer to evaluate the situation for purposes of providing police service or for making an appropriate referral
2. Unless a call is screened-out of the Public Safety Communications Center and referred to a more appropriate agency, the Public Safety Communications Center will process the call in the following manner:

- A sequential and unique control event number will be automatically assigned to the incident by the C.A.D. system upon entry,
- C.A.D. will automatically indicate the date and time that the call was received and entered into the system,
- If possible, the call taker will obtain the complainant's name and address, and the location of the incident or where police are needed,
- The type of incident will be entered by computerized code, along with accompanying remarks,
- After the call has been dispatched, the dispatcher will indicate to whom the call was assigned (primary and back-up officers),
- C.A.D. will automatically indicate the time of dispatch, time of officer arrival at the scene, time of officer return to service, and disposition (clearance code).

**IV. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

**A. Entries**

1. Officers will ensure that they are entered into C.A.D.
2. Officers working off-duty part-time employment will ensure that C.A.D. contains an entry of their status location (See [General Order 204.1 – Secondary Employment](#)).

**B. Listing of Phone Numbers**

1. Whenever a Department member changes their residential phone number, the member will ensure that the Administrative Support Supervisor is notified. The Administrative Support Supervisor ensures that the Public Safety Communications Center is provided with an updated list of residential phone numbers for all members. Additionally, if a member is in possession of a City owned cellular phone, this is also provided to the Public Safety Communications Center.

V. **ANONYMOUS AND RELUCTANT COMPLAINANTS**

A. **Anonymous**

1. An Anonymous Complainant is one who refuses to provide their name, address, or phone number.

B. **Reluctant**

1. A Reluctant Complainant is one who provides their name, address, and phone number, but wants the information to be kept confidential.
2. The dispatcher will not broadcast the identity of a Reluctant Complainant over the air. If an officer needs to talk with the Reluctant Complainant, the officer may obtain the information via telephone or look it up on the MDC in the call.

C. **Complainant Information**

1. A complainant's telephone number will not be released over the air to an officer. An officer wishing the complainant's telephone number will call the Public Safety Communications Center via phone to get it or look it up on the MDC in the call.