

Communication Operations

802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The basic function of the Barstow Communications Center is to satisfy the emergency needs of the community through the identification of emergency calls for service and the distribution of appropriate law enforcement and fire personnel. The Barstow Communications Center is the source of information for law enforcement and fire personnel and the collection of information from the community in assessing emergency needs and safe resolution of those emergencies. Measures and standards of performance are necessary to assess the effectiveness with which any department successfully and appropriately handles all available services to the community.

The Barstow Communications Center shall maintain and support necessary personnel and equipment sufficient to function as the sole dispatch center for law enforcement and fire services within the City of Barstow and the Barstow Fire Protection District. All emergency calls for service, for both law enforcement and fire agencies, shall be prioritized and dispatched in the most expeditious manner possible and without prejudice or favoritism for any class of citizen or agency involved.

802.1.1 FCC COMPLIANCE

The Barstow Communications Center radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and guidelines.

802.2 COMMUNICATION OPERATIONS

The Barstow Communications Center provides 24-hour telephone service to the public for information or assistance that may be needed for emergencies. The ability of citizens to telephone quickly and easily for emergency service is critical. The Barstow Communications Center provides access to the 9-1-1 emergency telephone system as a single emergency telephone system for both police and fire services. The Barstow Communications Center will maintain two-way radio capability through the San Bernardino County Information Services Division (ISD) and County Communication Services by providing continuous communication between the Barstow Communications Center and emergency response personnel.

The Barstow Communications Center is maintained and operated by the Barstow Police Department. All operations and staffing of the Barstow Communications Center shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Police of the Barstow Police Department. The employees of the Barstow Communications Center shall be assigned to the Barstow Police Department and shall report directly to the Police Services Supervisor.

802.2.1 CALL TAKING / CALL REPORTING

Barstow Communications Center personnel shall maintain professionalism and courtesy at all times to the public and City staff while answering telephones, talking over the radio system, and interacting in person. When answering the telephone within the Barstow Communications Center, the dispatcher shall say "BARSTOW POLICE & FIRE, THIS IS (FIRST NAME), MAY I HELP YOU".

It shall be the responsibility of the Barstow Communications Center personnel to record all relevant information for all calls for service of law enforcement and fire agencies under

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the Barstow Communication Center's current jurisdiction. Dispatch personnel will attempt to elicit as much information as possible to enhance the safety of emergency response personnel and assist in anticipating conditions to be encountered at the scene of any reported emergency. Desirable information would include, at a minimum, the following:

- Type of Emergency
- Location(s) of Emergency
- Name, Address, and Telephone Number of Reporting Party
- Weapons Involved
- Hazardous Situations at Scene
- Time Call Received
- Time Call Dispatched
- Number and Identification of Unit(s) Assigned
- Any Additional information to Assist Responding unit(s)

802.2.2 GENERAL CALL TAKING - FIRE

The primary goal for dispatching all emergency response calls is to have the call entered and dispatched within sixty (60) seconds from the time the call is answered. To accomplish this goal the following procedures have been established:

- (a) Location of the victim should always be the first information obtained and verified (Location).
 1. If the location given does not populate in the CAD system, the dispatcher must attempt to obtain a nearest cross street or landmark near the victim's location and enter that information in the call for service.
- (b) The basic nature of the call is all that is needed to determine the correct call-type (Call Type).
 1. If the call is a medical aid and the victim's symptoms are not apparent on the initial report, enter the call as a generic "MA" and update the call type comments with the general symptoms after the call has been entered.
 2. If correctly identifying the specific type of fire (example: Structure vs. Outdoor) is causing a delay in entry, enter the call as the greater of the possible responses and then enter the additional circumstances in the call after it has been entered. The assignment can then be reduced if circumstances warrant.

All calls for service should be dispatched immediately after verifying the location and call type. Additional information should then be updated after the call has been dispatched to ensure immediate response of necessary emergency units are being made as quickly as possible. Additional information may include:

- Reporting party's name, location, and call back number (including original source number, if available).
- Name of any business or commonplace (including apartment complexes, by name, mobile home parks, and any additional landmark names or locations).
- Additional location specifics for larger locations (i.e. malls, parking lots, truck stops, open areas, multiple building units, etc.)

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- **Medical Aid Calls:** Obtain the gender, age, level of consciousness, and whether victim is breathing or not. Also enter the card number for the EMD protocol card used for pre-arrival instructions.
 - If the caller asks you to inform the response crews that the victim has a communicable disease such as AIDS, Hepatitis, or any other Communicable Disease, alert the responding emergency medical unit(s) to "USE UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS".
 - If the caller asks you to inform the response crews that the victim has a communicable airborne pathogen such as Meningitis or Tuberculosis, alert the responding emergency medical unit(s) to "USE AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS".
- **Fire Calls:** Obtain the involvement of the fire including whether the fire is inside, outside, or threatening any structure. If any of these are true, the call should be upgraded to the corresponding call type for the type of structure involved. Any report of smoke or flames seen inside of a structure is considered a working fire and entered as a Fire Commercial or Fire Structure call and the reporting party should be advised to evacuate the building to the best of their ability.
 - "PAR" Personnel Accountability Reporting or "PAC" Personnel Accountability Check - The personnel accountability reporting system is an OSHA requirement to check the status of all personnel involved in a working fire in ten (10) minute intervals, beginning with the first arriving unit. The Safety Officer, Incident Commander, or Captain will initiate a roll call of all companies assigned to the fire incident. Accountability roll call checks will continue for the incident every ten (10) minutes until the Incident Commander or Captain announces they are no longer required. The dispatcher shall document the PAR or PAC in the call history for each incident as reported by the personnel on-scene.
- **Hazardous Materials Calls:** Attempt to identify the nature and if possible the source of the material reported. Include in the call if the material reported is liquid, solid, or gas and any medical symptoms being reported as a result of exposure to the substance. Also attempt to obtain at least an approximate amount or area the material is affecting.
- **Freeway Calls:** The location of freeway calls should be dispatched using the appropriate freeway segment, with as narrow a description, or area, as possible. The location should also include a direction of travel and/or directional relationship to a known point on the freeway, and any affected lane(s) involved if available.
- **Mutual Aid Calls:** Include the location the resource is needed to respond to, the reporting persons name, agency and call back number, the nature of the call they are responding to, any cross streets or landmarks, field contact information, and a radio frequency/channel if available.
- **Burn Permits:** Create a call for service in the CAD system. Obtain caller identification, permit number, and location

CANCELLATION of RESPONSE

Requests to cancel response on medical aid, traffic collision, criminal activity, and rescue calls will only be forwarded to responding units if the request is generated by another public safety responder such as law enforcement or ambulance.

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If a reporting party or patient requests to cancel any **EMS** response, advise the caller that the information will be forwarded to responding unit(s), although the responding units may continue at their discretion.

If another caller reports the patient/victim has left the scene, attempt to obtain a destination and time element, then forward this information to the primary responding unit and allow the engine company supervisor to determine any additional response.

If a reporting party requests to cancel any **FIRE** response, whether a structure is involved or not, advise the caller that the fire department has a "No Cancel" policy on fires and they will continue to respond to check the scene.

802.2.3 INCIDENT DISPATCHING PROCEDURE - FIRE

The following guidelines are utilized whenever an incident is dispatched under normal operational conditions to ensure that units assigned to an event will receive notification in a timely and accurate manner.

STATION ALERTING

- (a) When a call is received and ready to be dispatched, CAD will automatically generate a recommended response based on the call type, equipment needs, and the station order for the location of the call. This recommendation should be cross-checked with the actual status of the available units recommended for the call. If recommended units are not in the station at the time the call is dispatched no station alerting is necessary.
- (b) Once the recommendations are confirmed, all assigned units are then dispatched on the call in CAD. If units are in quarters, the station alerting will be used first. The alert confirmation will be transmitted back to the dispatch center for confirmation of the station alerting system.
- (c) As a secondary alerting system, the responding units will be paged using the San Bernardino County ISD Pager system. The pager message will include the type of call and location.
- (d) Once the initial station alerting and paging alerts have been performed, the following information will be dispatched over the BRFD-1 talk group:
 1. Call Type (i.e. Medical Aid, Residential Fire, Traffic Collision, etc.)
 2. The Location of the Event (include the address, cross-street or intersection, any apartment or space number, and any common-place name)
 3. Any Additional Extenuating Details

OUT OF STATION ALERTING

- (a) If a unit's status is "Available" or "In-Service", pre-code the unit identification over the radio frequency and wait for a response. Announce the call as you would on any standard dispatch. Make sure the unit being dispatched responds to the call for service, if no response within sixty (60) seconds, repeat the call a second time, again make sure the unit responds that the assigned unit acknowledges the call for service. If a unit does not respond within sixty (60) seconds to the second announcement, the next available unit should be dispatched.
- (b) Any changes by responding units should be noted in the call for service and the dispatcher is not responsible for changes in assignment made by field units.

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GENERAL RESPONSE PROCEDURES

- (a) The first arriving unit may increase or decrease the number of units assigned to respond based on the Captains judgment.
- (b) If additional resources are requested by units on scene the dispatcher shall make notification for those additional resources to respond to the scene.
- (c) The Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, or Fire Captain may request a change in response procedure due to circumstances or special conditions which may prevail in changing the call response.
- (d) Whenever any first up unit is out of location or busy in a different area, the closest available unit should be selected by dispatch as the primary unit and sent to the call.
- (e) In certain situations it may be necessary for the dispatcher to ascertain a unit's location before dispatching a call, although this procedure should only be used in limited circumstances and only when the dispatcher believes or knows a unit is in a different location.

802.2.4 UNIT STATUS CODES

Unit Status Conditions:

All front-line fire companies will fall under one of the following three operational status conditions:

- (a) "Out of Service" - Unit is not available for response. Units placing themselves out of service should give an estimated time, a location, and a reason if possible.
- (b) "In Service" - Unit is staffed and available for immediate response on calls for service. In service units may be available from quarters, on the air, or from any specific location.
- (c) "Assigned" - Unit is assigned to a numbered call for service and is committed to a response.

Unit Sub-Status Conditions:

The following are sub-status conditions for all front-line fire companies:

- (a) "In-Quarters" - Unit is available from their home station for all normal response types.
- (b) "Available On Radio" - Unit is available within their normally assigned area, but the unit is out of quarters.
- (c) "Available Out-of-Assignment Area" - Unit is available, but outside their normally assigned area. The unit is considered available on radio from the location given and will be dispatched under the dispatchers discretion based on the current location and nature of the call for service.
- (d) "Dispatched" - Unit has been dispatched to a call for service. If no acknowledgment is received from the unit within 60-seconds of being dispatched, the dispatcher will confirm the unit received the call and is enroute.
- (e) "En-Route" - Unit is traveling to an assigned call for service.
- (f) "On-Scene" - Unit has arrived at scene of dispatched call for service.
- (g) "Staging" - Unit is staging outside the general area of the call for service due to law enforcement instruction or at the discretion of the unit officer-in-charge due to nature of call or clearance from law enforcement units on scene to proceed to call location.

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- (h) "Available On-Scene" - Unit is at assigned call although is available to break-away for emergency traffic or additional call for service.
- (i) "Busy" - Unit is busy on a non-call for service related function and will be considered available for calls, although consideration should be given to type of activity unit is busy on, current location, and additional available units.

802.2.5 OFFICER / FIREFIGHTER DOWN

Officer / Firefighter Down (also known as "11-99") refers specifically to a situation in which a police officer or firefighter is seriously injured or trapped at the scene of an event. Upon notification of an officer or firefighter down, a specific set of procedures shall be initiated by the dispatcher to ensure all personnel are notified and/or aware of the situation and can respond accordingly.

In the event of a report of an officer or firefighter down on the scene of an event, a set procedure has been established to ensure all personnel working the event, responding to the location, or monitoring the radio traffic, are aware of the officer or firefighter down and the appropriate response according to conditions and nature of the circumstances causing the officer or firefighter down alert.

An officer or firefighter down notification may be received through a variety of means. The most common means of notification are from the officer or firefighter themselves or from a fellow officer or firefighter at the scene directly over the radio. The officer or firefighter down may also utilize the emergency alert button on his/her Handheld Radio, which will send out an alert tone over all 800 MHz channels and notify the dispatcher of the HT identifier and location at the Barstow Communications Center. An officer or firefighter down may also be reported by allied agency personnel or citizen at the scene.

802.2.6 OFFICER / FIREFIGHTER DOWN PROCEDURE

An activation of the emergency alert button on the handheld radio will sound an audible alarm in the Barstow Communications Center for all dispatch stations. On the Motorola radio screen, the border for the talk group the handheld is tuned to will flash red and will display the identifier for the handheld activated.

The following procedures are immediately initiated from the Barstow Communications Center for an officer down call:

- (a) The ALERT Tone is sounded briefly over the primary police command and tactical channels.
 - 1. If the Officer Down is received directly from any source other than the radio emergency alert button, the following announcement will be made over all available channels related to the incident: "ALL UNITS, AN OFFICER DOWN HAS BEEN REPORTED ON THE (INCIDENT LOCATION OR INCIDENT DESCRIPTION) INCIDENT". Additional information in reference to the officer(s) exact location, injuries, entrapment, status, or additional pertinent emergency information is relayed to the units after the initial announcement.
 - 2. If an emergency alert activation is received, the following announcement will be made over all available channels related to the incident: "AN EMERGENCY ALERT ACTIVATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED ON THE (INCIDENT LOCATION OR INCIDENT DESCRIPTION) INCIDENT". The unit information for the handheld activated is then researched under the notes in the CAD system and the unit information is then relayed over the air and an attempt is made to raise the officer down with the emergency activation.

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- (b) Once an officer down situation has been verified, the operations for that rescue will be moved to the police primary command channel and all other radio traffic will be diverted to the police tactical channel, which will be utilized for the initial call for service.

If the dispatcher receives information of a "Firefighter Down" the following "Mayday" announcement and procedure shall be used:

- (a) Immediately transmit an alert tone over the primary radio command channel (BRFD-1).
- (b) Announce on all assigned channels:
1. "ALL UNITS ON THE (Name of Incident), STANDBY FOR EMERGENCY TRAFFIC"
 2. "THERE IS A FIREFIGHTER DOWN WITH (Unit Number)"
 3. "RESCUE OPERATIONS NEED TO BE INITIATED"
 4. "ALL UNITS NOT INVOLVED IN THE RESCUE SWITCH TO TACTICAL (TAC) CHANNEL (BRFD-2)"

The fire units on-scene shall conduct a "PAR" Personnel Accountability Report or "PAC" Personnel Accountability Check. This procedure is used during emergency situations as well as regular intervals (10 minutes) while on a fire scene. The Captain for each unit will report that they have their crew in sight or physical contact.

802.3 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Dispatchers assigned to the Barstow Communications Center are responsible for the clear and concise dissemination of information and dispatching of emergency units to calls for service. Dispatchers must always use proper pronunciation and proper English when dispatching calls for service. Dispatchers must remain professional at all times and always be cognizant that they are the life-line between the public and emergency response units; therefore, they must always disseminate accurate and clear information while transmitting to units in the field.

802.3.1 OFFICER IDENTIFICATION

Identification systems are based on factors such as officer identification numbers and unit call signs. Employees should use their entire call sign when initiating communication with the dispatcher. All units, police and fire, shall pre-code when initiating communication with the dispatcher, so that the dispatcher can acknowledge the appropriate unit and so the unit will know they have the attention of the dispatcher. Employees initiating communication with other agencies shall use their entire call sign. This requirement does not apply to continuing conversation between the mobile unit and dispatcher once the mobile unit has been properly identified.

802.4 COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ACCESS AND SECURITY

It is the policy of the Barstow Police Department to maintain a secure Communications Dispatch Center within the Barstow Police Department facility and to maintain supervisory control of all individuals entering or leaving the Barstow Communications Center at any and all times. To accomplish these objectives the Barstow Police Department has adopted the following restrictions governing access to the Barstow Communications Center and dispatch area within the Barstow Police Department.

- (a) Each dispatcher is responsible for assuring the Communications Center entrances are secure during their assigned shift and that the Communications Center remains

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- secure and only accessible to those persons who are authorized access according to this policy.
- (b) Once the Communications Center area has been secured at the beginning of the shift, no person, except those assigned to the Communications Center, shall be permitted to enter or leave the work area without the specific permission of the On-Duty Police Watch-Commander. Such permission may be granted by the On-Duty Police Watch-Commander either in person, via the telephone, or over the radio system. Permission for any employee, other than dispatchers, to enter the Communications Center area for reasons legitimately related to City business may also be granted by the Chief of Police, Police Division Commander(s), or the Police Services Supervisor.
 - (c) Any dispatcher leaving the Barstow Communications Center during their assigned shift shall document the time of departure and the time of return in the CAD system under that employees unit assignment or identification number.
 - (d) Any employee replacing the dispatcher during an approved absence from the work area during an assigned shift will record the time of arrival in and the departure from the Barstow Communications Center work area within the CAD system.
 - (e) Any employee replacing the dispatcher during an approved break or temporary leave from the Barstow Communications Center shall be responsible for maintaining the security and controlled access of the dispatch work area during that time.
 - (f) Any violation or break in security of the Barstow Communications Center at any time during an assigned shift shall be reported immediately to the On-Duty Police Watch-Commander by the dispatcher on-duty or by the employee replacing the dispatcher at any time the break of security or attempted break of security occurs.
 - (g) In addition to the On-Duty Police Watch-Commander, individuals in the following positions shall have limited access to the Barstow Communications Center:
 - 1. Chief of Police
 - 2. Fire Chief
 - 3. Police Division Commander(s)
 - 4. Assistant Fire Chief
 - 5. Police Services Supervisor
 - 6. Information Technology (IT) Department Personnel (as approved by the Chief of Police)

The above listed positions may only have access to those areas of, or records of, the Barstow Communications Center that are allowed by law and/or policy and only for legitimate legal purposes. The unauthorized access, dissemination, or use of any confidential information or records shall be grounds for legal and/or disciplinary action(s).