



Apex Police Department General Order



Title Communications Operational Guidelines		Order Number 1202-20
Effective Date: February 18, 2020	Amends: 1202-14	
CALEA Standard: 81.3.1	Rescinds:	
Reference:	Pages: 6	
Forms:		

Communications Operational Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of this General Order is to define the operational guidelines and personnel responsibilities of the Apex Police Department Communications Center.

Policy

In order to ensure the quality of communication services for the citizens of Apex and field personnel, the Apex Police Department Communications Center will operate under guidelines established in this General Order.

Definitions

Criminal Information and Identification Section (CIIS) – A branch of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) Division of Criminal Information (DCI) that maintains North Carolina’s statewide computer network for the exchange of law enforcement/criminal justice information.

Criminal Justice Information Service (CJIS) – A division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that maintains a repository of criminal history records and fingerprint classification records.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) – A method of dispatching emergency personnel through the assistance of a computer.

Communications Operational Guidelines

Procedure

Telecommunicators Responsibilities

1. Telecommunicators will carry out the duties and responsibilities as outlined in their job description.
2. In addition, the following primary responsibilities will take priority over other duties and responsibilities during normal operations. Under extreme circumstances, primary responsibilities may be prioritized as necessary.
 - Receive, properly document and process all calls for service or assistance in a professional and courteous manner.
 - Process requests from public safety field units and other field units that may need assistance.
 - Keep public safety radio talk groups clear of distractions and control interference that may prevent or adversely affect transmissions.
 - Receive, properly document and process all after-hours calls for selected Town services.
 - Monitor the police facility security camera system.
3. Each Telecommunicator is required to maintain a clean working environment. This includes, but is not limited to, dusting consoles; wiping down keyboards, mice, screens; and ensuring each team cleans up the kitchenette at the end of each shift.
4. The Communications Shift Supervisor will ensure that his/her personnel maintain a clean and professional work environment at ALL times.

Confidentiality

1. Telecommunicators will maintain confidentiality of information according to the following guidelines:
 - All record information obtained through the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) Criminal Information and Identification Section (CIIS) DCI network is confidential and may only be released to authorized personnel as described in the Title 12 of the North Carolina Administrative Code.
 - Telecommunicators will not release names of complainants and/or victims to the general public, including the news media.
 - Telecommunicators may release the following information pertaining to in-progress calls for service:
 - The reported location and nature of the call
 - The agency(ies) responding
 - The time of the incident

Communications Operational Guidelines

- Requests for additional information will be forwarded to the on-duty patrol supervisor
- Telecommunicators will comply with all privacy laws concerning communicable disease information. Information pertaining to such diseases will not be broadcast over any radio channel or frequency.
- Pursuant to [General Order 301 – Code of Conduct](#), telephone numbers and addresses of departmental employees are confidential.
- All Apex Police Department and other law enforcement information and resources are considered confidential and will not be accessed/used for personal use or gain.

Response Times

1. Emergency telephone lines should be answered within two complete ring cycles during normal operations.
2. Public safety radio talk groups should be answered within 10 seconds during normal operations. Every radio call should receive some type of response to notify calling personnel that his/her call has been received.
3. Talk groups other than public safety should be answered within 20 seconds. This includes, but is not limited to, Public Works, Utilities and Parks and Recreation.

Shift Briefings

1. Telecommunicators ending a shift will provide information to the incoming shift regarding ongoing activities, special events, etc.
2. Telecommunicators beginning a shift are responsible for the following:
 - Logging into the assigned CAD terminal, DCI terminal, telephone system and radio
 - Confirming proper console talk group configurations
 - Confirming all equipment at their work station is operational; this includes radios, telephones and computers
 - Confirming the available units on duty and verifying their status in CAD
 - Reviewing any CAD calls discussed or documented during the shift change
 - Reviewing any CAD advisories and BOLO information within CAD or exchanged via email
 - Checking the in-box located in the work room
 - Reading and responding to emails that arrived while off-duty

Use of Personal Electronic & Communication Devices

1. The use of cellular telephones, tablets, two-way pagers, and other personal communication devices are allowed as long as the use does not interfere with operations of the

Communications Operational Guidelines

Communications Center or divert the attention of the Telecommunicator from his/her official duty.

2. Any cellular telephone or other device that is turned on in the Communications Center must be set to vibrate/silent to avoid any disruptions.
3. In the event that an employee must use a personal communication device while on duty, and if staffing allows, the employee will leave the console area and remain mindful of time away from the console to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on coworkers. This time will constitute a "break" and will not exceed the maximum time allotted.
4. Telecommunicators may use small tablet devices for reading during down times, as long as doing so does not interfere with their ability to carry out their job duties. However, the use of personal laptops is prohibited.

Leave Request - Minimum Staffing

Vacation

1. Factors involved in the approval of leave may include, but are not limited to, minimum staffing requirements, school schedules, special events, holidays and natural disasters. In the event of an emergency situation, pre-approved vacation may be cancelled.
2. No more than one Telecommunicator is permitted off per shift. This would include being off for training, vacation and/or comp time.
3. All leave requests will be submitted in the Town of Apex time and attendance system (i.e. ExecuTime) and reviewed by the Communications Shift Supervisor for approval. In the absence of the Communication Shift Supervisor, requests may be reviewed by the Communications Manager.
4. All requests for leave will be considered on a first come first approved basis.
5. Requests that are received at the same time will be generally approved based on seniority; however, the supervisor may consider other circumstances when approving or denying leave requests.
6. No employee will begin his/her leave without first receiving verbal, electronic, written or e-mail approval from his/her supervisor.

Sick Leave

1. Any employee taking sick leave should follow the procedures in [General Order 304 - Leave Time](#).

Communications Operational Guidelines

Minimum Staffing

1. The Communications Center will maintain a minimum staffing level of one Telecommunicator 24-hours a day. The Center will strive to maintain two Telecommunicators between the hours of 0800 and 0000. Situations that may cause staffing to fall below the minimum level may require the use of off-duty personnel as necessary.
2. Shift exchanges among Telecommunicators on different shifts are permissible only if minimum staffing levels are maintained and the shifts being exchanged are between Sunday and Saturday of the same week. Requests must be submitted in the Town of Apex time and attendance system.
3. The Communications Shift Supervisors will review and approve/disapprove a proposed shift exchange in the same manner as a leave request.

Inclement Weather

1. Telecommunicators are deemed “essential” employees and are required to report for duty regardless of weather conditions.
2. All Telecommunicators scheduled for duty will report to work on time.
3. If driving conditions are too hazardous, Telecommunicators may call the Communications Center and request transportation to work.
 - **NOTE:** The inability of the department to provide transportation does NOT relieve the Telecommunicator of the responsibility to report for duty.
4. On-duty Telecommunicators receiving such calls will arrange transportation through the on-duty patrol supervisor.
5. Telecommunicators who fail to report for their assigned shift may be subject to disciplinary action.
6. On-duty Telecommunicators will notify the Communications Manager when personnel scheduled for duty are unable to report for work due to inclement weather conditions.
7. Circumstances may arise where all staff are put on a phone recall status due to weather or other conditions. During this time the Telecommunicator must be available for immediate recall. In these conditions staff will have 60 minutes to respond to the Center after contact.
8. It is the responsibility of the Telecommunicator to ensure that his/her contact information is up-to-date within the employee database and to answer calls from the department.

Communications Operational Guidelines

Communications Center Security and Access Control

1. The Communications Center and all auxiliary facilities and devices will be properly secured to meet operational security requirements and the needs of public safety. (81.3.1)(a)(c)
2. Access to the Communications Center is limited to Telecommunicators and other personnel who have a legitimate reason to be in the center. With the exception of Town of Apex public safety personnel, visitors to the Communications Center will not be allowed to listen to emergency telephone calls (live or recorded). (81.3.1)(a)
3. Access to tower sites and server and equipment rooms are limited to authorized communications and maintenance personnel. Keys to access fences and doors to these facilities are available in the Communications Center in the event that access is needed by public safety personnel due to an emergency situation. (81.3.1)(b)(d))
4. On duty Telecommunicators can provide an access key to an individual that has been approved by the agency from the secure lock box. The access key will be signed out and signed back in using the Vendor and Key log book located in the Communication Center.

Visitors & Tours

1. Personal visitors are not permitted inside the Communications Center. Tours of the center must have prior approval from the Administrative Division Commander, Communications Manager, Deputy Chief of Police, or Chief of Police.

Text in "Green" denotes a significant change in policy

BY ORDER OF:



John W. Letteney
Chief of Police