

**LANCASTER POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL**

<i>Effective Date</i> September 16, 2015		<i>Amended Date</i> July 10, 2017		<i>Directive</i> 9.01.1	
<i>Subject</i> Communication Center					
<i>Reference</i>			<i>Approved</i> Chief of Police		
<i>Distribution</i> All Personnel City Manager City Attorney		<i>TPCA Best Practices Recognition Program Reference</i> 3.18; 9.01; 9.02; 9.03; 9.04; 9.05; 9.06; 9.07		<i>Review Date</i> July 10, 2017	
				<i>Pages</i> 11	

This Operations Directive is for internal use only and does not enhance an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as a creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this Operations Directive, if proven, may only form the basis for a complaint by this Department, and only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

SECTION 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for responses to calls received through the 911 system.

SECTION 2 POLICY

Accurate communication is essential to the operation of any department. The communications center, which functions twenty-four (24) hours a day, is designed to provide safety and security for police personnel and to respond to the needs of the public. It is essential that every step in our communication process be conducted concisely, effectively, accurately, and properly.

SECTION 3 DEFINITIONS

- A. **911:** The telephone number 911 is used for emergency telephone communications to the department.
- B. **E 911:** The enhanced 911 means that when a 911 call is received the address of the caller is displayed. (TPCA 9.05)
- C. **Telecommunicator:** A person acknowledged by the commission and employed by or serving a law enforcement agency that performs law enforcement services on a twenty-four (24) hour basis who receives, processes, and transmits public safety information and criminal justice data for the agency by using a base radio station on a public safety frequency regulated by the Federal Communications Commission or by another method of communication. (Section 1701.001, Texas Occupation Code)
- D. **Open Line 911:** A call received on the 911 system but the caller will not or cannot communicate verbally with the telecommunicator. The address and telephone number of the caller will generally be available.
- E. **Communications Training Manual:** The manual produced by the Lancaster Communications Division for the purpose of uniform training of telecommunicators within the Lancaster Police Department.
- F. **ANI:** Automatic number identification. ANI indicates that the telecommunicator's screen shows the caller's telephone number when the 911 line is answered.

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- G. **ALI:** Automatic location identification. ALI refers to the display on the telecommunicator's screen of the caller's address when the 911 line is answered.
- H. **MCT:** Mobile Computer Terminal
- I. **CAD:** Computer Aided Dispatch

SECTION 4 PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. The Communications Center operates twenty-four (24) hours a day and has twenty-four (24) hour two-way radio communication with all members of the department operating in the field. (TPCA 9.01, 9.06)
2. The Communications Center is a secure facility. No unauthorized personnel are allowed inside the facility without the express approval of a communications supervisor or Division Commander. (TPCA 9.02)
3. All tours or other visits to the facility will be coordinated and approved in advance by the communications supervisor.
4. Police personnel will limit their access to the Communications Center to business related tasks and shall not take breaks, do reports, or otherwise visit personnel within the Communications Center.
5. The Communications Center has an emergency back-up generator for power, and keeps portable radios and cell phones for communications in the event of a power failure. In the event of an extended power failure that puts in-coming 911 calls at risk, the 911 calls will be transferred to the Dallas County Sheriff's Office with police and fire call responses initiated by cell phone or portable radio systems.
6. The back-up generator is maintained by the Lancaster Fire Department and receives a documented test weekly. The Assistant Fire Chief will ensure continuing documentation of generator testing. Any failure during a test will be reported to the Chief of Police immediately. (TBP: 9.04)
7. All communication consoles have a recording/playback system that records all telephone and radio transmissions and allows for immediate playback if necessary. (TPCA 9.03)

B. ANSWERING 911 CALLS FOR SERVICE

1. Call-Taker Responsibilities
 - a. It is the responsibility of telecommunicators to answer all 911 phone calls by saying, "Lancaster 9-1-1. What is the location of your emergency?"
 - b. Priority 1, 2, and 3 or any other calls requiring police action will be taken on E911 lines.

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- c. Non-emergency callers such as those asking for directions, jail information, etc. will be immediately instructed to call back on a non-emergency number.
- d. Telecommunicator should not put 911 callers on hold until the call has been evaluated and it has been determined that placing the caller on hold will not further enhance the caller's emergency.
- e. It is the responsibility of the telecommunicator to verbally confirm the ANI and ALI of all calls.
- f. It is the responsibility of any telecommunicator who receives a hang-up or other "unknown circumstance" type of call on an 911 line to do the following:
 - i. Dispatch two (2) units to an open line 911 call to the address displayed on the computer screen.
 - ii. Call the telephone number that is displayed on the screen and try to establish communication with the caller for the purpose of informing the responding unit(s) of pertinent data. If communication is not reestablished, the units will be so notified by the telecommunicator prior to their arrival at the location.
 - iii. Dispatch two (2) units to an open line 911 call from a cellular phone to area of X- Y coordinates of caller location if audio indicated a possible disturbance or an emergency situation.
- g. It is the responsibility of any telecommunicator to transfer all calls that should be directed to another agency and instruct the caller to stay on the line and that a transfer is being made. The telecommunicator will stay on the line to verify the transfer. Should the caller hang up, the telecommunicator will continue to contact the needed agency with the information and inform the agency that the caller disconnected before the transfer was completed.
- h. It is the responsibility of the Communication Manager to ensure that all telecommunicators have been trained and are familiar with the Communications Training Manual as well as the department general orders.
- i. It is the responsibility of each telecommunicator to have a working knowledge of the Communications Training Manual and adhere to the instructions contained therein.
- j. When telecommunicators have dispatched officers they shall complete the CAD dispatch screen with all appropriate information.

C. COMPLIANCE WITH FCC RULES AND REGULATIONS

- 1. Employees will comply with FCC regulations relating to the use of radio communications systems.
- 2. Employees will follow established guidelines and procedures as outlined by this directive.
- 3. Communications involving the protection of life and property shall be afforded priority.

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4. False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals, unnecessary and unidentified communications, and the transmission of unassigned call signals are specifically prohibited.
5. Employees shall monitor the radio frequency on which they intend to transmit for a sufficient period to ensure that their transmissions will not cause interference to others.
6. The duration of radio transmissions must be restricted to the minimum practical transmission time.

D. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

1. Only English will be spoken. Clear, concise, and controlled language will be used. Obscene, indecent, profane, slang language, horseplay and joking are not permitted.
2. Units calling the station shall identify themselves by their assigned unit number. They should not continue the transmission until acknowledged by the telecommunicator.
3. Units will give their unit number when responding to the telecommunicator.
4. Officers will not call for another employee by name unless their radio or unit number is unknown.
5. Officers will advise the telecommunicator of their arrival on the scene of a dispatched call using proper radio etiquette or by their MCT.
6. Officers at a scene will notify the telecommunicator if they determine that no other units are needed.
7. If an incident is found to have occurred somewhere other than at the dispatched location, the officer will update their location by using their MCT using the "Change" button on the dispatch screen or by notifying the telecommunicator by radio or MCT message.
8. Upon completion of a call, officers will clear the call in the proper manner using their MCT or by notifying the telecommunicator via radio and immediately go back into service.
9. Lengthy transmissions should not be made on the radio system's primary channels. Long transmissions should be done over a secondary channel when available, as a CAD message, or via a cell phone if available. Transmissions should always be held to a minimum.
10. Employees will not become engaged in an argument on the radio. Conflict between an officer and a telecommunicator should be referred to the employees' immediate supervisors for resolution.
11. Officers shall refrain from seeking advice from a telecommunicator regarding a point of law, enforcement action, or department policy. Officers should consult their immediate supervisor on these matters or obtain the information from their laptop computers.
12. Communication with interacting agencies will be by telephone.

E. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

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1. Transmissions regarding emergencies (e.g., pursuits, serious crimes in progress, etc.) will be given priority over all other transmissions. Units not involved in the emergency will stay off the air until the situation has been resolved.
2. When an "Officer Assist" call is received, Communications will make a general broadcast to all units and assign two units and a supervisor.

F. MONITORING RADIO CHANNELS

1. All police units will continuously monitor the primary police channel.

G. RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISORS

1. Supervisors will carefully monitor and supervise the use of the radio to assist their officers as needed.
2. Supervisors are responsible for the radio conduct of their subordinates and should immediately correct improper radio procedures.
3. Supervisors may be assigned calls when other units are not available.
4. Supervisors will respond to any call from subordinates and proceed to a scene when requested.

H. CALL HISTORY

1. A report containing the following information will be created and maintained regarding each request for police services (call for service) and for officer-initiated activity:
 - a. case or service number;
 - b. date and time of request;
 - c. name and address of complainant, if possible;
 - d. type of incident reported;
 - e. location of incident reported;
 - f. identification of officer(s) assigned as primary and backup;
 - g. time of dispatch;
 - h. time of officer arrival;
 - i. time of officer return to service;
 - j. disposition or status of reported incident

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I. RADIO UNIT DESIGNATIONS

1. Patrol Day and Night Shift Units

- a. Patrol units shall be identified by a three-digit number. The first digit shows the shift number (2 for day shift, 3 for night shift), the second digit shows the number of officers assigned to the police district (1 for the first officer assigned to the district, 2 for the second officer assigned to the district, etc.) and the third digit shows the assigned police district number (1 for police district one, 2 for police district two, etc.).

2. All Other Units

- a. Supervisors, Investigators, Detectives and Administration units will be assigned a designated three-digit number and shall identify themselves by their assigned number when using the radio.

J. CALL CODES BY PRIORITIES

1. Priority P – Life Threatening Emergency:

- a. Priority P calls are Life Threatening situations. They are emergency defined as a set of circumstances that require immediate Law Enforcement, Fire and/or EMS response due to the high probability of death or serious injury to a person, or a major crime in progress. This priority requires immediate dispatch. Use the alert tones as appropriate for this priority type.
- b. Priority P calls will be dispatched in the following manner:
 - i. transmit the alert tone in the three (3) beeps, if CAD request to do so;
 - ii. dispatch the recommended units, requires a minimum of two (2) units;
 - iii. telecommunicator will broadcast any updated information to responding units as it becomes available;
 - iv. call must be voice dispatched

2. Priority 1 – In-Progress Crimes Against Persons, Major Accidents:

- a. Priority 1 calls are in progress or just-occurred incidents involving injury or having a high threat to life or bodily harm. The term just occurred normally refers to something that just happened in the past five (5) to seven (7) minutes. Put remarks in the call for service as to the time frame involved. Use the alert tones as appropriate for this priority type.
- b. Priority 1 calls will be dispatched in the following manner:
 - i. dispatch the recommended units, requires a minimum of two (2) units;

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- ii. telecommunicator will notify patrol supervisors if there are not available units;
- iii. telecommunicator will broadcast any updated information to responding units as it becomes available
- iv. call must be voice dispatched

3. Priority 2 – In-Progress Property Crimes:

- a. Priority 2 calls are emergency calls that are in progress or just occurred. The term just occurred normally refers to something that happened in the past five (5) to seven (7) minutes. Put remarks in the call for service as to the time frame involved.
- b. This priority is used for incidents without injury or having high threat to life or bodily harm. These calls require expeditious dispatch to nearest available units.
- c. Priority 2 calls will be dispatched in the following manner:
 - i. dispatch the recommended units;
 - ii. telecommunicator will broadcast any updated information to responding units as it becomes available

4. Priority 3 – Calls with the Potential to be In-Progress, Unknown, Alarms:

- a. Priority 3 calls are calls that are not in progress or non-life threatening, but have the potential to be in progress, but it is not known.
- b. Priority 3 calls will be dispatched in the following manner:
 - i. dispatch the recommended units;
 - ii. telecommunicator will broadcast any updated information if anything changes or call progresses to a higher priority

5. Priority 4 - Crimes Against Person, After the Fact:

- a. Priority 4 calls are non-emergency calls that may require the officer to make a report.
- b. Priority 4 calls will be dispatched in the following manner:
 - i. dispatch the recommended units;
 - ii. no comments need to be aired

6. Priority 5 - Crimes Against Property, After The Fact:

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- a. Priority 5 calls are routine, non-emergency calls that can be taken care of in an expedient fashion or officer initiated activity.
- b. Priority 5 calls will be dispatched in the following manner;
 - i. dispatch the officer that works that particular district, if not available the call can be held up to fifteen (15) minutes for that officer to take their call, after fifteen (15) minutes then dispatch the call to the next recommended unit;
 - ii. if the telecommunicator knows that there will not be a district officer for that district then go ahead and dispatch the call to the next recommended unit;
 - iii. if the telecommunicator knows the district officer has just marked out on meal and it will be longer than fifteen (15) minutes, go ahead and dispatch the call to the next recommended unit;
 - iv. no comments need to be aired

7. Priority – Self-Initiated Activities:

- a. Priority 6 calls are self-initiated activities from which an officer can pre-empted for a higher priority call for service.

8. Altering a Nature Code or Priority Level:

- a. If a nature code accurately describes the call and the telecommunicator finds that due to extenuating or mitigating circumstances the priority is too low; the telecommunicator can increase the priority of that particular call for service. Document in the notes field as to why the priority was increased.
- b. The Lancaster Police Department telecommunicator will not change the nature code of the call for service at the request of someone outside of the department unless additional information is gathered and a follow up call card is created.

K. USE OF EMERGENCY TONES

1. Telecommunicators will use the emergency tones on the following Priority P, 1 and 2 calls:

- a. aggravated assaults (shooting, stabbing, etc.);
- b. traffic accidents involving injuries;
- c. burglary of habitations in-progress;
- d. robbery in-progress;
- e. officer assist;

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f. suicide – if authorized by a supervisor

2. Any call of original dispatch, where information has become available that indicates a threat to life and justifies an emergency response the telecommunicator may use the emergency tones.

3. Telecommunicators will use the emergency tones at the order of any Lancaster Police Department supervisor.

L. ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITY CALLS

1. Units Available/Units Not Available

a. Calls for service shall be assigned to the in-service officer responsible for the area in which the call is located. When area officers are not available, the nearest area officer will be selected. Officer safety and call priority will be the primary considerations when selecting alternate area officers.

b. Supervisors will monitor dispatching of Priority 1 calls and ensure that officers are immediately available or will quickly become available to respond.

c. Death messages, messages from other criminal justice agencies, and “check welfare” calls will each be entered as a call for service that requires officer response.

d. In responding to victim/witness calls for information or service, telecommunicators will determine whether an emergency or non-emergency response is required and inform the victim/witness of the department’s response.

e. Communications radio and telephone conversations recordings will be maintained for ninety (90) days. They are digitally recorded and secured. Reviewing recorded conversations will be conducted:

i. medical calls shall be randomly reviewed;

ii. upon requests by internal and external sources or personnel, such as the District Attorney’s Office, department investigators, Internal Affairs, etc.;

iii. to randomly monitor staff for training purposes

2. No Units Available – Holding Calls For Service

a. Law Enforcement Calls

i. It is the telecommunicator’s responsibility to dispatch law enforcement calls for service as soon as possible after they are received. The holding time of calls is directly related to the number of officers in service. This does not, however, eliminate the telecommunicator’s responsibility to dispatch calls as officers become available.

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- ii. Any time a call is being held and no units are available, the telecommunicator will advise the Patrol Supervisor of the call(s) that are holding.

M. BROADCAST OF MAJOR INCIDENT(S) INFORMATION

1. Whenever a major crime is committed within the City of Lancaster it is imperative the neighboring agencies are notified.
2. Timely notification to the neighboring agencies may increase the chances of apprehending the suspect(s) and be important for officer safety.
3. A teletype can be sent out to the region or statewide area depending on its severity at the request of an officer or supervisor.

N. COMMUNICATION EVACUATION

1. In the event that employees of the Lancaster Police Department Communications Center has to evacuate for any life threatening situation. The employees will need to do the following, not necessarily in the same order.
 - a. Flip the switch, the switch is located at the back console (DSW4) station that is marked "911 Make Busy" from "Normal" to "Transfer."
 - b. Take the communication's cell phone, call Dallas County Sheriff's Office to let them know that the Lancaster Communications Center is having an emergency situation to where the Communication Center is being evacuated and have switched all 911 calls to them until things can return to normal.
 - c. Give Dallas County Sheriff's Office the mobile number so that they can provide the Communication Center calls from 911 that they receive. The calls will then be dispatched from a mobile position.
 - d. Take the police and fire portable radios.
 - e. Take the flashlight.
 - f. Contact the Communications Manager so he or she can respond if needed and assist with communications during the emergency situation.
 - g. At no time will anyone put themselves in any danger doing any of the above that is listed in this section. If the situation is deemed unsafe to do any of the above, just make sure you flip the switch as you are leaving out to take cover, when you are clear of immediate danger and able notify Dallas County Sheriff's Office and make them aware that Lancaster Communications Center has switched the 911 calls over to them as mentioned above.
 - h. The telecommunicator will announce over the radio channels that they have evacuated and will be mobile. Once notified, officers will use their MCT as much as possible to assist

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communications. Officers though will notify communications over the radio of any type of change (status, location, etc.).

- i. This information will be covered during the training process.

O. ACCESS TO NCIC AND TCIC (TPCA 9.07)

1. TCIC and NCIC Operations

- a. The Communications Center has access to TCIC and NCIC systems.
- b. All telecommunicators will be trained in TCIC/NCIC Full Access and will comply with all rules and regulations regarding operation of the systems.

P. TELECOMMUNICATOR'S TRAINING (TPCA 3.18)

1. All telecommunicators and telecommunicator supervisors shall comply with Rule 221.13 "Emergency Telecommunications Proficiency" set by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement in regards to emergency telecommunications proficiency.
2. All telecommunicators and telecommunicator supervisors who have not obtained the Basic Telecommunications Proficiency Certificate shall complete the following training prior to their one year anniversary as a telecommunicator or telecommunicator supervisors:
 - a. successfully complete a forty (40) hour course developed or approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement;
 - b. successfully complete the departments field training course;
 - c. successfully complete TDD/TTY training within the last six (6) months prior to the one year anniversary as a telecommunicator

Q. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. All members of the department shall know and comply with all aspects of this directive.
2. All Division Commanders and supervisory personnel are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions and intent of this directive