



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Contra Costa County Operations

“Patient Focused, Customer Centered, Caregiver Inspired”

<p>SOP #: 211 Field Communications Updated: May 1, 2016</p>	<p>Approved By: Michael Johnson Regional Director</p>
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A. Purpose

American Medical Response utilizes some of the most technologically advanced communications equipment in our industry. Ambulance responses are facilitated and communicated with the use of a combination of alpha-numeric pagers, mobile and portable radios, global positioning satellite (GPS), automatic vehicle locator (AVL), MDT, and cellular telephones. The following procedures have been designed to facilitate the most expeditious and concise method of successful communication with field personnel at all times while in service.

B. Communications Equipment

Radios, pagers, scanners, etc are provided for the readiness and safety of both the crews and the Company to maintain contact with dispatch while on duty.

1. Radios

- a. It is the responsibility of crewmembers to keep their assigned radios with them, to be worn on the utility belt when the crew is out of the unit including at the station.
- b. It is the responsibility of crewmembers to ensure that they receive the radios from the off-going crew or the operations center prior to the beginning of the shift. Missing radios must be reported to the Field Supervisor immediately.

2. Pagers

- a. Each ambulance is assigned an alpha-numeric pager. One crew member must have this device with them at all times while on-duty to receive call data, safety status information, operational messages etc. It is the responsibility of crewmembers to keep their assigned pager with them; to be worn on the utility belt at when the crew is out of the unit.
- b. While on duty, the radio power will be turned on to the loudest "long alert" alarm and the volume at the highest setting.
- c. The pager shall never be set to "vibrate" mode while on duty.

3. Cellular Telephones

- a. Only the following calls will be placed on these issued telephones

- i. Base Station or Trauma Center Contacts
 - ii. Other units for the purpose of business only (responding to a mutual call, etc.)
 - iii. Any of the phone numbers that are already programmed into the cell phone, for business purposes only.
 - iv. At the request of the Operations staff.
- b. It is the responsibility of crewmembers to keep their assigned phone with them; to be worn on the utility belt when the crew is out of the unit.
 - c. No personal phone calls are allowed. Any personal phone calls made with these telephones will be subject to corrective action.
 - d. ONLY THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OR THE OPERATIONS STAFF IS ALLOWED TO CALL TO THIS PHONE.
 - e. Each BLS and each ALS crew will be assigned communication devices at the beginning of the shift.
 - i. Receive the radio(s) and phone from the off going crew or assigned locker or Logistics staff
 - ii. The equipment must be returned to the on coming crew or assigned locker at the end of the shift.
 - iii. Missing/lost communication devices must be reported to the Field Supervisor immediately.

C. Radio Procedures

The purpose of this policy is to identify the specific radio procedure and terminology for the division to minimize misunderstanding and to increase efficiency of radio communications.

1. Radio Etiquette

- a. The following basic rules shall apply to all field personnel when using company radios:
 - i. Brevity (be brief)
 - ii. NO emotion
 - iii. NO unnecessary statements
 - iv. NO arguing
 - v. Adherence to policy for radio procedures
 - vi. Think about what you are going to say BEFORE you speak on the radio
 - vii. Speak as clearly as you can in a normal tone of voice
 - viii. Pause momentarily after keying the microphone prior to speaking
 - ix. Use only clear text or the company approved radio codes noted in this policy
 - x. Do not use slang or short cuts for standard clear text or radio codes
- b. The use of profanity, endearments, controversy, and other factors that will violate FCC policy will not be tolerated.
- c. Tactical channels are for official use only. Banter between crews on those channels will not be tolerated.

2. Unit Identifiers

- a. All field units will identify themselves on ALL radio transmissions with their assigned 2 digit unit identifier preceded with the letter "M"

2. Reporting Status Change

- a. Any time a unit moves from an operations center, station, hospital, post, scene etc. the crew WILL notify the Communications Center of their status (and location if necessary) via radio or via MDT.

D. Size-up Procedures

1. Transport units will often arrive at the scene of an emergency before Fire District resources. If, upon arrival, the emergency scene involves multiple patients, unusual hazards, motor-vehicle collisions, difficult access or any other circumstance that warrant notification of responding units and the Communications Center, a "size-up" report shall be given. The report will clearly and concisely state the initial assessment of the scene and the location.
2. Identify the number of patients if possible
3. For vehicle collisions identify the number of vehicles involved, location on the roadway, and if extrication is necessary.
4. Identify best access for responding units.
5. Identify any hazards
6. Do not establish Incident Command

Ex. "Con Fire, Medic 34 is on scene west-bound highway 4 at the A street off-ramp with two vehicles on the left hand shoulder. All occupants are out of the vehicles. Wires are down on the roadway. Best access is from A street."

7. Ex. "Con Fire, Medic 134 is on scene, we have 5 patients complaining of difficulty breathing due to a strong odor of chemicals in the building. Best access is from the first driveway off of B street."

E. Ordering/Canceling Resources

1. If, upon size-up of a scene, the transporting ambulance crew ascertains that more Fire or EMS units will be necessary to mitigate the emergency, the crew will "recommend" a further resource response to the incoming Incident Commander (usually the first due Fire Captain). It shall be the responsibility of the incoming incident commander to acknowledge the request and approve or modify the recommendation.
 - a. If it is unknown what resources might be necessary, a size-up will suffice until the IC arrives on scene.

- b. Recommendations for resources might include Law Enforcement, Air Ambulances, Ground Ambulances, Fire Engines, Trucks, Rescues, Marine resources, etc.
- c. ALL recommendations for ALL resources shall go through the IC to avoid confusion.

Ex. "Con Fire Medic 34 is on scene west-bound highway 4 at the A Street off ramp with two vehicles blocking the road. One vehicle is on its roof with 4 occupants trapped inside. Recommending 3 more ground ambulances and an air ambulance."

"Con Fire Q183 copies the traffic, Dispatch 3 more ground ambulances an air ambulance, a second engine for the Heli-spot, and a second rescue."

- 2. Transport units may only cancel responding Fire and EMS units to non-complicated EMS-only calls where the transport crew can adequately provide for all patient care.
 - a. The transport crew may "recommend" a cancelation or a reduction in travel code to the incoming IC on multi-unit/larger responses.
 - b. The Fire District has responsibilities on MVA scenes even if there are no injuries and must continue to the scene.
 - c. The Communications Center will not cancel or reduce resources until confirmation is received from the first due Fire Resource.

F. Emergency Radio Procedures

- 1. If crews find themselves in a situation that requires the assistance of law enforcement for protection of the patient or the crew, crews shall use the terminology "**Code 20**" or "**Code 30**." This terminology indicates that the crew is in a situation where they require assistance but are not able to explain or elaborate due to the proximity of patients, family, or bystanders. Requests for the assistance of Law Enforcement do not need to go through the IC if the IC has not yet arrived, and crew, patient, bystander safety is endangered.
 - a. "**Code 20**" shall be declared on the radio in situations where Law enforcement is needed for assistance but not in an emergent time frame. Law Enforcement will be dispatched code 2.
 - b. "**Code 30**" shall be declared on the radio in situations where eminent harm may come to the crew or civilians without immediate law enforcement intervention. This equates to the older code 11-99. If a Code 30 is declared, any and all Law Enforcement units in the area will respond code 3. This is considered a very significant crew emergency.
 - c. If the situation allows for free radio communication, crews will ask for Law Enforcement by the Code that they are requested and the reason for the request.

Ex. Con Fire, Medic 134 requesting PD Code-2 for an uncooperative patient.

D. Enforcement of Policy

1. Violations of this policy are subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

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