

<b>RADIO COMMUNICATIONS</b>		<b>TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 204.01</b>	
<i>Issue</i>	<i>11-05</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>06-13</i>
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The manner in which radio and telephone messages are transmitted is often a measure of the efficiency of an organization and the attitude of its individuals. Following these basic radio procedures will not only aid efficiency and demonstrate professionalism, but will also improve the method in which these messages are conveyed.

### **RADIO PROCEDURES**

Use official titles and authorized radio call signs in all radio transmissions. Keep all transmissions brief and to the point. Avoid lengthy descriptions and unnecessary messages. Be accurate, brief, and clear. Rehearse a message in your mind before transmitting.

Speak distinctly at a moderate speed, using a conversational tone of voice with natural emphasis and rhythm. DO NOT SHOUT. Remain calm. Wait for the grant tone on the radio before speaking.

When calling a unit, this unit's call sign shall be broadcast first followed by the calling unit. This technique is referred to as called-party-first and is designed to reduce missed and repeated calls. An example of this technique is found in Tactical Plan 204.06. The call sign "Dispatch" will be used to identify the dispatch center. The word "copy" will be used to acknowledge a message. Standard terminology that can be used is listed in Tactical Plan 204.04.

### **DISPATCHING**

Under normal circumstances, all requests for fire department service shall be processed and dispatched within sixty-seconds or less. Troy and Clawson Fire stations shall be dispatched in the format listed in Tactical Plan 204.06.

### **RESPONDING**

Once dispatched to an incident, each apparatus shall call "enroute." A station officer shall call "enroute" as soon as possible after the initial dispatch which will enable the dispatch center to contact a command officer in the event a question arises or additional information is received prior to the apparatus responding. Only one officer per station need call "enroute." Tactical plan 213.02 identifies responses which shall be considered a non-emergency response.

### **ARRIVAL & SIZE-UP**

When arriving at the scene, the first unit shall call "arrival" and give an initial size up over the radio. The initial size-up will be either "checking", "smoke showing", or "working fire" depending upon observed conditions. After a further size-up, assignments may be given to arriving units along with a staging area and tactical talk group/channel as appropriate and/or the incident downgraded. Other arriving units need only call "arrival." Other officers arriving at the incident shall announce their arrival on the tactical talk group/channel or preferably face to face at the command post.

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**ESTABLISHING COMMAND**

The senior officer/firefighter at the incident shall be in charge of the incident and shall establish “command,” preceded with the street name or business name to identify that particular incident after a size up has been given.

**INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM**

The Incident Command System shall be utilized at all incidents per the ICS Tactical Plan #201.01.

**RADIO COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS**

The Troy Fire department has the capability of operating on two separate radio communications systems. The primary system is the Oakland Wireless Integrated Network (OakWIN) which is a multisite countywide 700/800 MHz trunked radio system shared by most of the police and fire departments in Oakland County. Information on this system is available in the OakWIN User’s Manual which is available to department personnel. The secondary system is the VHF radio system which is used as a backup for the primary system and for statewide MABAS mutual aid responses. Apparatus is equipped with mobile radios on both systems and a cache of VHF portable radios is available for deployment as needed.

**COMMUNICATIONS AT INCIDENT SCENES**

Communications involving extended or on-scene tactical operations must be conducted on a tactical talk group or conventional channel. After changing talk groups/channels, all units shall acknowledge. The incident commander shall be responsible for monitoring the tactical talk group/channel as well as the dispatch talk group. This is best accomplished by utilizing a mobile radio and a portable radio or two portable radios in the command post.

When issuing orders, the Incident Commander or appropriate supervisor should indicate a specific task to be performed. Orders should tell what to do, not how to do it. When a unit receives an order it should reply with a brief restatement of the order to confirm understanding.

In any structure where trunked radio coverage is an issue or where SCBA radio communications are required, tactical communications shall utilize the conventional “Tactical” channels.

Remote speaker microphones shall be used on portable radios at all incidents and apparatus operators shall utilize the headsets provided with the designated portable radio.

All units are reminded to keep radio traffic to a minimum throughout the incident. Communications should first be attempted face-to-face when practical.

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**PROGRESS REPORT**

During any working incident, the Incident Commander shall provide a timely progress report to the dispatch center. This report shall be given after initial actions have been implemented and may include a more accurate size-up/description of the incident, current fire department actions, corrected address, request for additional resources, fire under control, etc.

**DOWNGRADING AN INCIDENT**

As the incident stabilizes or is determined to no longer be an emergency, it may be downgraded. Downgrading refers to the cancellation, slowing down, or redirecting of responding units. When the IC determines that an emergency no longer exists and/or additional personnel are not required, he/she shall instruct the dispatch center to issue a Code-2, Code-1, or Cancel with a brief reason why/situation report. Further downgrading procedures can be found in Tactical Plan 208.13.

**CANCELLED FIRE ALARMS**

A cancellation request may come from the alarm company, homeowner, or any occupant of the building where the alarm originated.

1. If an activated fire alarm cancellation is received prior to the tone alert, a station shall not be dispatched. Instead, the Duty Officer\* shall be notified of the situation.
2. If a cancellation is received during the tone alert transmission, the station shall be told to disregard and the Duty Officer\* shall be notified of the situation.
3. If a cancellation is received after the tones have been transmitted, but before any fire personnel acknowledge the run, the station shall be cancelled and the Fire Duty Officer\* shall be notified of the situation.
4. If a cancellation is received after the tones have been transmitted and unit(s) have called "enroute," this information shall be relayed to the responding units. The senior responding officer, or the first responding apparatus if no officer is enroute, shall make a determination as to whether or not to downgrade the incident.

\* The Duty Officer will notify the Fire Prevention Division who will follow up and complete a fire report.

**ADDITIONAL ALARM (MABAS-See MABAS Tactical Plan 216.01)**

"Alarm" is defined as an initial and/or subsequent assignment of units or stations to an incident, but should not to be confused with an activated fire alarm. Alarm assignments shall be classified as Box Alarm through 5th Alarm. When the Incident Commander determines additional help is needed, he shall request a Box Alarm (if the incident was dispatched as a still alarm/single station incident), 2nd Alarm, 3rd Alarm, etc., and include a current size-up/situation report and the staging area location.

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The dispatch center shall notify the MABAS Division 3201 Dispatch Center (Oakland County Dispatch) and advise the alarm level, box number, incident type, address/location of the staging area, IC call sign, and any other information as requested, per the MABAS request worksheet.

The Division Dispatch Center will then advise the departments due to respond and provide them with information on the staging area, assigned MABAS talk groups, and any other pertinent information.

Units responding to multiple alarm incidents shall remain on their home dispatch talk group until arrival. The officer shall monitor the MABAS\_D dispatch talk group and the assigned staging talk group while enroute and once on scene.

When receiving MABAS mutual aid, the IC shall transition communications to the assigned MABAS tactical talk groups/conventional channels as soon as possible to permit mutual aid companies to be integrated into the incident communications plan. The MABAS Division Dispatch Center will assign a MABAS Incident profile for multiple alarm incidents.

When the incident is under control and no further resources or mutual aid are required, the incident commander shall advise the local dispatch center that the incident will “be held to a \_\_\_ alarm”. The local dispatch center will in-turn notify the Division Dispatch Center who will in-turn notify all other local dispatch centers.

**CLEARING THE SCENE/TERMINATING COMMAND**

Once operations are complete, a final report shall be given to the dispatch center and “Command” shall be terminated. This means that the incident designation will no longer be referred to since there is, or will shortly be, no one left on scene to command. If a unit(s) will be left on scene to await the arrival of a utility or key holder, etc., either don't terminate command, or reference the particular unit's radio designator. When each apparatus clears the scene it shall call “available” over the radio. Station officers need not call available when clearing a scene with apparatus. An officer shall call “available” if he/she has remained on the scene after apparatus has cleared, i.e., awaiting the arrival of a utility company, building key holder, etc.

**PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Public utilities may not always provide an estimated time of arrival. The calls they receive are prioritized according to that utility's policies. Life threatening emergencies receive the highest priority and other calls are prioritized accordingly. Consumers Energy Company, once called, will respond but will not cancel. DTE Energy will assign crews as they become available and/or a field representative to relieve fire units standing by. DTE will cancel if told to do so and may change a call's priority status if informed that the situation has deteriorated.

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Requests for public utilities should be made after arrival and size-up. When a request is made to the dispatch center to notify a public utility, the following information must be provided to help ensure an accurate and timely response.

#### DTE Energy

- Nature of the incident - primary or secondary line(s); arcing; fire; etc.
- Location of the incident / Correct address - pole to pole or pole to building; pole location; etc.
- Relief - indicate if relief is needed for emergency units standing by at the scene.
- Update - indicate if the situation worsens.

#### Consumers Energy

- Nature of the incident / Cause of the leak - appliance malfunction; damaged from a collision; lightning strike; etc.
- Location of the incident / Correct address - inside or outside of a structure; at the appliance or meter; underground main; etc.

### **COMMUNICATIONS OPERATING LEVELS**

The purpose of communications operating levels is to assist the dispatch center in handling calls for service during peak incident times such as severe weather situations or times when more calls are received than stations or apparatus are available to handle. These operating levels shall be ordered by the Duty Officer, Division Assistant Fire Chief, or Fire Chief. A listing of the various communications operating levels and required procedures is found in Tactical Plan 204.03.

### **RADIO CALL SIGNS**

A list of fire department radio call signs is provided in Tactical Plan 204.02.

### **TERMINOLOGY**

Common terminology can be found in Tactical Plan 204.04.

### **RADIO CHANNELS / TALK GROUPS**

A list of radio channels/talk groups, designations, and usage can be found in Tactical Plan 204.05.

### **MESSAGE EXAMPLES**

Examples of common radio messages are found in Tactical Plan 204.06.