

Communication Operations

800.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of the Communication Center. It addresses the immediate information needs of the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

800.2 POLICY

It is the policy of DSH to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance. DSH provides two-way radio capability providing continuous communication between the Communications Center and DSH employees in the field.

800.3 THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER SECURITY

The communications function is vital and central to all emergency service operations. The safety and security of the Communications Center, its employees and its equipment must be a high priority. Special security procedures should be established in a separate operations manual for the Communications Center.

Access to the Communications Center shall be limited to the Communications Center employees, the Watch Commander, command staff and DSH employees with a specific business-related purpose.

800.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

800.4.1 COMMUNICATIONS SUPERVISOR

The Hospital Police Chief shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to a Communications Supervisor. The Communications Supervisor is directly responsible to a designee of the Hospital Police Chief.

The responsibilities of the Communications Supervisor include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Communications Center in coordination with other supervisors.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining Communication Operator time records.
- (c) Supervising, training and evaluating Communication Operators.
- (d) Ensuring the radio and telephone recording system is operational.
 - 1. Recordings shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law.
- (e) Processing requests for copies of the Communications Center information for release.
- (f) Maintaining the Communications Center database systems.
- (g) Maintaining and updating the Communications Center procedures manual.
- (h) Procedures for specific types of crime reports may be necessary. For example, specific questions and instructions may be necessary when talking with a victim of a sexual assault to ensure that his/her health and safety needs are met, as well as steps that he/she may take to preserve evidence.
- (i) Ensuring Communication Operator compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (j) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided and accepting personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (k) Maintaining a current contact list of State personnel to be notified in the event of a utility service emergency.

800.4.2 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

The Communications Supervisor should establish procedures for:

- (a) Recording all telephone and radio communications and playback issues.
- (b) Storage and retention of recordings.
- (c) Security of audio recordings (e.g., passwords, limited access, authorized reviewers, preservation of recordings past normal retention standards).
- (d) Availability of current information for Communication Operators (e.g., Watch Commander contact, rosters, member tracking methods, member contact, maps, emergency providers, tactical dispatch plans).
- (e) Assignment of employees and safety check intervals.
- (f) Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) instructions.
- (g) Procurement of external services (e.g., fire suppression, ambulances, aircraft, tow trucks, taxis).
- (h) Protection of essential equipment (e.g., surge protectors, gaseous fire suppression systems, uninterruptible power systems, generators)
- (i) Protection of radio transmission lines, antennas and power sources for the Communications Center (e.g., security cameras, fences).
- (j) Handling misdirected, silent and hang-up calls.
- (k) Handling private security alarms, if applicable.
- (l) Radio interoperability issues.

800.4.3 COMMUNICATIONS OPERATORS

Communication Operators report to the Communications Supervisor. The responsibilities of the Communication Operator include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Receiving and handling all incoming and transmitted communications, including:
 - (a) Emergency 9-1-1 lines.
 - (b) Business telephone lines.
- (b) Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Text Telephone (TTY) equipment.
- (c) Radio communications with DSH employees in the field and support resources (e.g., fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), allied agency law enforcement units).
- (d) Other electronic sources of information (e.g., text messages, digital photographs, video).
- (e) Documenting the field activities of DSH employees and support resources (e.g., fire department, EMS, allied agency law enforcement units).
- (f) Inquiry and entry of information through the Communications Center, DSH and other law enforcement database systems (CLETS, DMV, NCIC).
- (g) Monitoring DSH video surveillance systems.
- (h) Maintaining the current status of employees in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.
- (i) Notifying the Watch Commander or supervisor of emergency activity, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Vehicle pursuits.
 - (b) Foot pursuits.
 - (c) Assignment of emergency response.

800.5 CALL HANDLING

DSH provides members of the public with access to the emergency call system for a single emergency telephone number.

When a call for services is received, the Communication Operator will reasonably and quickly attempt to determine whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency, and shall quickly ascertain the call type, location and priority by asking four key questions:

- Where?
- What?
- When?
- Who?

If the Communication Operator determines that the caller has a hearing and/or speech impairment or disability, he/she shall immediately initiate a connection with the individual via available TDD/TTY equipment or Telephone Relay Service (TRS), as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If the Communication Operator determines that the caller is a limited English proficiency (LEP) individual, the he/she should quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a language-appropriate authorized interpreter is available in the Communications Center, the Communication Operator should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter. If no authorized interpreter is available or the Communication Operator is unable to identify the caller's language, he/she will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the communication operator, the LEP individual and the interpreter. If no authorized interpreter is available or the Communication Operator is unable to identify the caller's language, he/she will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the communication operator, the LEP individual and the interpreter. Communication Operators should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

If no authorized interpreter is available or the Communication Operator is unable to identify the caller's language, he/she will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the communication operator, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

Communication Operators should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

800.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered an emergency when there is an immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage, and the timely arrival of public safety assistance is of the utmost importance. A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the Communication Operator has obtained all necessary information to ensure the safety of the responding DSH employees and affected individuals.

Emergency calls should be dispatched immediately. The Watch Commander shall be notified of pending emergency calls for service when DSH employees are unavailable for dispatch.

800.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered a non-emergency call when there is no immediate or potential threat to life or property. A person reporting a non-emergency may be placed on hold, if necessary, to allow the Communication Operator to handle a higher priority or emergency call.

The reporting person should be advised if there will be a delay in the Communication Operator returning to the telephone line or when there will be a delay in the response for service.

800.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

The DSH radio system is for official use only, to be used by Communication Operators to communicate with DSH employees in the field. All transmissions shall be professional and made in a calm, businesslike manner, using proper language and correct procedures. Such transmissions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Employees acknowledging the Communication Operator with their radio identification call signs and current location.
- (b) Communication Operators acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Employees keeping the Communication Operator advised of their status and location.
- (d) Employee and Communication Operator acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

The Communications Supervisor shall be notified of radio procedure violations or other causes for complaint. All complaints and violations will be investigated and reported to the complainant's supervisor and processed through the chain of command.

800.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

DSH radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

800.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

Radio call signs are assigned to DSH employees based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or employee identification number. Communication Operators shall identify themselves on the radio with the appropriate station name or number, and identify the DSH employee by his/her call sign. Employees should use their call signs when initiating communication with the Communication Operator. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the Communication Operator can acknowledge the appropriate DSH employee. Employees initiating communication with other law enforcement or support agencies shall use their entire radio call sign, which includes the department station name or number.

800.7 DOCUMENTATION

It shall be the responsibility of the Communications Center to document all relevant information on calls for service or self-initiated activity. Communication Operators shall attempt to elicit, document and relay as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the employee and assist in anticipating conditions that may be encountered at the scene. Desirable information would include, at a minimum:

- Incident control number.
- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- Type of incident reported.
- Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- Location of incident reported.

- Identification of employees assigned as primary and backup.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of the responding employee's arrival.
- Time of employee's return to service.
- Disposition or status of reported incident.

800.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that becomes available through the Communications Center may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All employees of the Communications Center shall treat information that becomes known to them as confidential and release that information in accordance with the Protected Information Policy.

Automated data, such as Department of Motor Vehicle records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal hospital files or medical information, shall only be made available to authorized law enforcement personnel. Prior to transmitting confidential information via the radio, an admonishment shall be made that confidential information is about to be broadcast.

800.9 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Communication Operators shall receive training consistent with minimum standards established by POST (Pen. Code § 13510).

