

SCHOHARIE COUNTY

EMERGENCY SERVICES

RADIO PROCEDURES



AMENDED:

September 29, 1986
January 27, 1987
November 18, 1994
June 3, 2002
July 23, 2007

ARTICLE I
GENERAL PURPOSE

These procedures are intended to improve the use of the Schoharie County Emergency Services radio system by insuring compliance with good operation practices and reducing the amount and length of radio transmissions.

The Schoharie County Board of Supervisors has designated the Sheriff, Fire Coordinator, and EMS Coordinator as the individual(s) responsible for the operation, maintenance and use of the radio system as appropriate.

Changes to these procedures require the approval of the Sheriff, Fire Coordinator, and EMS Coordinator as well as the Radio Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

All users of the radio system are to comply with these procedures.

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ARTICLE II

DEFINITIONS

1. APPARATUS- A Department (Fire and / or Ambulance) owned vehicle.
2. UNIT – A privately owned vehicle, operated by an officer or other authorized user.
3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – A dispatched Department has received knowledge of an alarm and notification is made to Communication Center by an apparatus or the base station. At which time this department has taken responsibility for the call.
4. RESPONDING - Apparatus is en-route to an alarm and has notified the Communication Center.
5. INCIDENT COMMAND CENTER – A unit, apparatus or base station that has been designated by the officer-in-charge to coordinate communications with the Communication Center.
6. COMMUNICATION CENTER – The Schoharie County operated emergency Communication Center. For radio transmission purposes it shall be referred to by **Schoharie County 911** or its call letters **KEF- 700**, fire frequency, or **KSO-959**, EMS frequency.
7. HOME MONITOR TONES – Tones used to open home monitors and / or pocket pagers, but do not activate a siren.
8. SIREN TONES – Tones used to activate a Department siren.
9. IN SERVICE – Any apparatus that is available to respond to a call, regardless of the physical location of the apparatus. Referred to as 10-8.
10. OUT OF SERVICE – Any apparatus that cannot respond to a call. When a piece of apparatus is out of service a reason shall be given (e.g.: out for repairs, out to a call, etc.). Referred to as 10-7.
11. INCIDENT UNDER CONTROL – Terminology used to replace: non-emergency, respond with caution, respond code 2.
12. UPGRADE – For EMS calls when the responding apparatus requires an immediate response from ALS or another responding unit/apparatus.

ARTICLE III

GENERAL RULES

1. Radio transmissions are to be kept to a minimum and are to be directly related to fire protection and ambulance operations of the County Fire and EMS Departments and the other authorized users of the radio system.
2. Radio messages are to be clear and concise.
3. The telephone instead of the radio shall be used whenever possible, for non-emergency transmissions only.
4. During fires or other emergencies involving Departments in the county, the radio system is to be used for emergency transmissions only.
5. Single transmission messages are to be used whenever possible.
6. The proper radio identification, as shown in the Appendix, is to be used at all times. All identifiers will be pronounced singularly.
7. The Communication Center is to be notified when apparatus are out of service (10-7) and when they are returned to service (10-8). The Communication Center is not to be notified when an apparatus is leaving the station for a drill, when the apparatus remains available for response.
8. The following are examples of transmissions **not permitted** on the Fire Service and EMS radio system:
 - A.) Request to notify family, baby-sitters, employers, hired hands, etc. that the member is at the scene of a fire.
 - B.) Discussions about meals, etc., to be served.
 - C.) **Improper** radio terminology such as “ **In Mobile service**”, “**Clear**,” “**Over**”.
 - D.) Use of the 10 codes not listed in Article X of this Procedure are, **not permitted**.
9. The Fire Coordinator and the Chiefs of the individual Fire Departments, the EMS Coordinator and Officers of the individual EMS Departments have the responsibility to ensure that the Departments and individual members comply with these procedures.

10. Fire Radio Frequencies are emergency frequencies. Channel 1 is Base to Mobile, Channel 2 is Mobil to Mobil. The County has establish a third and fourth frequency for fire-ground use only; **all** procedures shall apply to all four Fire Radio Frequencies.
11. The Communication Center shall have the authority to clear Frequency 1 traffic at any time.
12. All times used on the Fire and EMS Radio Systems shall be given using a 24 hour clock or what is commonly referred to as military time.
13. EMS Radio Frequency is an emergency frequency, all procedures shall apply to this frequency.
14. The Communications Center shall have the authority to clear the EMS frequency traffic at any time.

ARTICLE IV
DISPATCHING OF ALARMS

The dispatching of alarms by the Communication Center shall be in accordance with these procedures. All dispatchers are to be familiar with these procedures.

All alarms dispatched are to be preceded with a preliminary alert to the affected apparatus / department: "(name of department to be dispatched) (nature of alarm or response determinant as appropriate) (location)".

1. The tones of the affected Department are to be transmitted once. Following the transmission of local tones, the location and nature of the alarm are to be given:

"(Name of Department being dispatched) respond to a (nature of alarm) at (location)" and the nearest cross road

2. The Responsibility for a call shall be transferred to a Department when the first apparatus, or base station notifies the Communication Center, via radio, that they are either responding OR acknowledging the call. *(If the responding apparatus would like the Communications Center to continue to activate the tones/siren for further manpower they can make that request at this time.)*

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4. When an EMS agency acknowledges a call, the dispatcher shall provide that agency with the time received on their call for recording purposes.

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- 6 **Phone calls** to the Communication Center **shall not** be an accepted means of acknowledging a call. Phone calls will be accepted for Pump outs and lifting assistance only.

If there is no acknowledgment of the call within three (3) minutes, by either the Base Station or a piece of apparatus, **Step #1** (above) shall be repeated.

If there is no acknowledgment of the call within three (3) minutes of the second set of tones, by either the Base Station or a piece of apparatus, the tones of the affected Department are to be re-transmitted, after transmissions of the tones, the following announcement will be given:

"(Name of Department being dispatched) respond to your station."

3. If no acknowledgment is received three (3) minutes after the third transmission, and no Department apparatus is on the air, the Communication Center shall dispatch the closest available apparatus as per **Step #1**, above.
 - A. In the event the Department does have a **unit** on the air, but no recognized acknowledgment, by the Base Station or a piece of apparatus, has been received by the Communication Center, that **unit** shall have the responsibility to advise the Communication Center what department they want to handle the call.
4. Prior to an initial alarm being sent by the Dispatcher the Dispatcher shall determine and follow specific Automatic Mutual Aid procedures that apply to the alarm. e.i. Hazardous Materials, pre-arranged mutual aid agreement **and will dispatch the call accordingly**.

For EMS calls, the dispatcher shall follow EMD Protocol for determining a proper response. 'A'lpha, 'B'ravo, 'C'harlie, 'D'elta, 'E'cho. The Dispatcher shall also determine and follow specific Automatic Mutual Aid procedures that apply to the alarm as indicated above. When dispatching the EMS provider, the Dispatcher shall indicate a recommended response from the provided information. (name of department dispatched) respond to (nature of the alarm) (location) recommending (response determinant).

5. When a call is canceled through the Communication Center, only "home monitor tones" are to be transmitted, followed by a voice announcement regarding the cancellation of the call.
6. In the event a Dispatcher receives a call of a "**sensitive nature**", the Dispatcher will tone the appropriate Department to respond to their station for a call. No name, location or nature of the alarm shall be announced. The Dispatcher will request the Department to landline for information. Upon receipt of a call from the Department they are to be advised of the nature and location of the call.
7. In the event of a **police action** call, step 6 is to be followed. The Dispatcher will tone the appropriate Department to respond to their station for a police action call. No name, location or nature of the alarm shall be announced. The Dispatcher will request the Department to landline for information. Upon receipt of a call from the Fire/EMS agency they will not be given any information regarding the nature or location of the call. If there is a request for the agency to 'stage' at a location closer to the incident but a safe distance away, they may be provided with that information. When/If the Police request a response to the scene, the Fire/EMS provider will then be given the information to respond.

8. In the event a Fire Department is requested for a **pump-out**, only home monitor tones shall be activated. The Department shall be toned following the same procedure as indicated above. If there is no acknowledgement after the third tone, the Dispatcher shall activate the home monitor tones of the Department, requesting either a Chief or line officer contact Communications. This contact may be made by phone or radio, based on the emergency traffic on the frequency at the time. If there is no reply after three minutes, the Dispatcher shall attempt phone calls to the Chief officers.
9. In the event a Fire Department is requested for **lifting assistance** by an EMS agency, only home monitor tones shall be activated. The monitor tones for the EMS agency shall also be activated and a request for additional crew will be transmitted. These calls shall only be toned twice, not three times. When the Dispatcher announces the call the Dispatcher shall provide the initial EMD priority determinant of the call. (Name of Department), request for lift assist, (location), for a recommended (determinant) call. (Example: Middleburgh Fire request for a lift assist, ABC residence, 123 Main St, for a delta call.)

EMS

Out of Service

An EMS provider shall be considered out of service if it is unable to respond to a call. This includes, but is not limited to:

- * on a call and has **not** called 10-8,
- * out for repairs,
- * covering a pre-planned event and there is no prior understanding that they will be available for calls,

The next closest available EMS Department shall be dispatched to cover the call of those Departments who are out of service. The tones for the 'home' Department shall be activated along with the next closest Department, to alert the 'home' department first responders of the call.

Motor Vehicle Accidents

First unit/apparatus on the scene should provide a patient status. If this is not provided the Dispatcher shall request that information. This information should include:

- number of patients
- extent of injuries
- type of accident (rollover, head on, fixed object, etc)

Two or more patients with minor injuries, a second ambulance (closest available) shall be placed on stand-by at their station.

A second ambulance shall be dispatched to the scene along with the EMS Coordinator, even if the 'home' EMS provider has their own ALS responding, if:

- known head on collision
- two or more serious injuries
- school bus with children

*****If the information on the initial call falls under one of the above categories, the Dispatcher shall not wait for the initial report from the scene to dispatch a second ambulance or EMS Coordinator*

*****If Schoharie Co. ALS is not available for calls, dispatch next available ALS agency to assist, such as Rural Metro, CMT, etc..*

ARTICLE V

RESPONDING TO ALARMS

1. All responding apparatus are to notify the Communication Center of their response, out of service (10-7) and then switch to Channel 2 when possible.
2. Other responding apparatus shall indicate their response, (1223 responding, and Dispatch will repeat 1223 responding). Dispatchers shall repeat all units, and apparatus call numbers and (responding, out of service, in service, etc.) as well as record this information.
3. While responding, each apparatus is to monitor the radio for instructions.
4. The first unit or apparatus on the scene, shall give a preliminary report of
7 conditions to the Communications Center. The Dispatcher shall repeat, record the time,
8 unit and preliminary reported condition. If this report is not received, the Dispatcher shall request the information

A. Incident under control.

5. Upon arrival at the scene, the officer-in-charge shall establish **Incident Command** and notify the Communication Center of same. All Communication Center transmissions shall be transmitted through Incident Command.
 - ie. "8011 establishing command", or "5014 establishing incident command"

If command changes to another unit/apparatus that information shall be relayed to Communications

 - ie: "8011 turning command over to 8012" or "5013 now establishing command"
6. If an apparatus is unable to respond for any reason, or will be delayed in responding, the officer in charge shall be notified, no explanation needed.

ARTICLE VI

MUTUAL AID

- 1.) The Incident Command shall request needed assistance through the Communications Center, specifying the requested Department and requested apparatus.
- 2.) When a request for needed assistance is transmitted by an apparatus, other than the Incident Command, the authority for this request is to be provided to the Communications Center the Dispatcher shall repeat back the request.
- 3.) Mutual Aid apparatus shall be dispatched in the manner prescribed in **Article IV. 2,3,and 4.**
- 4.) If a requested apparatus is not available, the dispatcher shall immediately notify the Incident Command.
- 5.) When responding to a mutual aid request the responding apparatus shall notify the Communication Center.
- 6.) **While responding, apparatus shall monitor the radio for instructions from the Incident Commander.** Radio transmissions are to be limited to an acknowledgement of instructions. When upon arrival on the scene switch to channel 2.
- 7.) When dispatching the requested mutual aid department, send the tones for that department and send the tones for the Fire Coordinator/EMS Coordinator respectively, and then make the announcement.

When dispatching requested mutual aid, second or more ambulance, for an EMS/ambulance call, the Dispatcher shall dispatch the call as follows: (name of department being dispatched) respond as an additional ambulance, (nature of the alarm), (location).

When dispatching mutual aid for an EMS call in which the 'home' EMS provider does not acknowledge after the third tone, dispatched the mutual aid department as follows: (name of department) respond mutual aid, (nature of the alarm), (location)

In the event the call goes to a third EMS agency activate the EMS Coordinators tone so they can monitor the situation. When an ambulance or EMS Coordinator is **en-route**, the dispatcher will re-contact the caller at the first available moment, to advise that assistance is on the way and to obtain an update on the patient status

- 8.) After mutual aid is dispatched, the Communication Center shall have the authority to clear the primary frequency at any time.

ARTICLE VII

RETURNING TO SERVICE

- 1.) When a single apparatus is returning to service, the Communication Center shall be notified in a single transmission.
- 2.) When more than one apparatus is returning to service at the same time, or approximately the same time, a single radio transmission is to be used for all units.
- 3.) An apparatus shall be returned to service, in service (10-8), **when it is available to respond to an alarm, regardless of whether or not it has returned to the station.** If an apparatus is returned to service, before it has returned to the station, no further radio transmission to the Communication Center is to be made upon its arrival at the station.
- 4.) When all apparatus are returned to service, the dispatcher is to give the time in and dispatcher number. If a department requires additional times related to an alarm, those requests shall be made by telephone to the Communication Center.

Due to the nature of the response, EMS responders should record their times as they are given by the Communications Center during the course of the call to avoid phone calls to the Communications Center.

ARTICLE VIII

BASE STATIONS

- 1.) Under most circumstances, there is no need for the Base Station to contact apparatus units at the scene. If apparatus or units at the scene require anything, they will contact the Base Station or the Communications Center.

ARTICLE IX

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.) Announcements of a County wide nature, will be made by the Communication Center each day at 1730 hours. All announcements, except those described in **Article IX number 1-A, 2, 3** must be approved by the Fire Coordinator/EMS Coordinator. In the event an emergency prevents announcement from being made at 1730 hours, the Communication Center shall make the announcement as soon as possible when permitted by the Incident Commander.
 - A.) A special county wide announcement will be made when apparatus is taken out of service, and when it is returned to service. If apparatus remains out of service, it will be included with the county-wide announcement at 1730 hours until returned to service. The first county wide announcement in which an apparatus is reported out of service for which mutual aid has been established, this information will also be announced.
- 2.) No personalized Departmental announcements are to be made through the Communication Center, unless authorized by the Fire/EMS Coordinator.
- 3.) The Communication Center as well as the Director of the Schoharie County Emergency Management Office shall have the authority to direct announcements, of weather related matters that are deemed to be significant and may affect emergency operations within the County, as agreed upon by the Fire Coordinator. When such announcements are required the Dispatcher is to immediately transmit any emergency warnings, such as severe weather warnings and /or Skywarn activation, received by the Communication Center. Emergency announcements shall be preceded by an alert tone for Emergency Management Director and Fire Coordinator. If still in effect, these warnings are to be included as part of the daily 1730 hours announcements.
- 4.) Announcements by individual Departments are to be limited to those concerning the operations of the Department. These announcements are not to be made at; 1200, 1730, 1800 hours. Prior to making an announcement, the Department shall receive clearance to do so from the Communication Center, **via phone** to avoid possible interference with emergency radio traffic.
- 5.) All announcements, by the Communication Center and individual Departments, are to be as brief as possible.
- 6.) Announcements are not to be made when any Department is operating at an emergency, unless the approval of the Incident Commander is obtained.

ARTICLE X

RADIO CODES

1.) To reduce the length of radio transmissions, the following radio codes may be used:

10.4 Message received and understood

10.7 Out of Service

10.8 In Service

10.20 What is your Location?

2.) When these codes are not applicable, the message is to be transmitted as briefly as Possible, eliminating unnecessary words and information.

ARTICLE XI

RADIO IDENTIFICATION

- 1.) The radio identifiers of units and apparatus authorized to operate on the Schoharie County Emergency Services Radio are shown on the attached Appendix. A portion of the attached Appendix shall set forth the process used by the Fire Coordinator/EMS Coordinator in establishing radio identifiers. These identifiers, and only these identifiers, are to be used on the radio. **The names of individuals being contacted or operating the radio are not to be used.**
- 2.) All radio identifiers shall be assigned to authorized units and apparatus, by the **Fire/EMS Coordinator**. The identifiers being issued to units must be associated with the name of the person responsible for that identifier. This information will be submitted to the Fire/EMS Coordinator through the appropriate submission of a line of succession form.
- 3.) Out of County units authorized to operate on the Schoharie County Emergency Services Radio may use their home County identifier.
- 4.) The Communication Center will acknowledge all radio transmissions made to them. If the user is not authorized or the transmission is in violation of this procedure, that information shall be turned over to the Fire/EMS Coordinator, in writing, for review and further action if necessary.
- 5.) The proper radio identification, as shown in the Appendix, is to be used at all times. All identifiers will be pronounced singularly.

ARTICLE XII

RADIO AND SIREN TESTS

- 1.) Radio and siren test shall be conducted by the Communication Center at 1200 hours on Saturdays.
- 2.) Siren tests are not to be conducted while any Department is operating at an emergency unless the approval of the Incident Command has been obtained.
- 3.) Pager tests for the EMS providers who operate mainly on KSO-959, and the administrative pagers shall be performed each week on Monday nights at 1900hrs.

ARTICLE XIII

Special Teams

All special teams will be toned on the primary fire frequency using the Fire Coordinators tones. Each team shall be toned only twice unless a request for further tones is received from Incident Command.

FAST

- 1) Requesting activation of the FAST shall be made through Incident Command and dispatched as follows:

"Schoharie Co. 911 to all FAST members you are requested to respond to (location) for a (incident)."
- 2) The FAST members will contact communications either by phone or radio providing their team number (F6). When the dispatcher has received acknowledgement from five (5) members they will inform incident command that the FAST is responding

FIVES

- 1) Requesting activation of the F.I.V.E.S. Team, shall be made through Incident Command and dispatched as follows:

"Schoharie Co. 911 to all FIVES Team members you are requested to respond to (location) scene of a (incident)"
- 2) Responding Team members shall contact Communications to advise of their response. After a reasonable period of time the Dispatcher shall advise Incident Command of the number of F.I.V.E.S. Team members known to be responding.

HAZMAT

- 1) Requesting activation of the HAZMAT team shall be made through Incident Command.
- 2) The HAZMAT team shall be toned out for an activation by the dispatcher on the primary fire frequency and, with MEVAC ambulance being part of the HAZMAT team, also over the EMS frequency (KSO-959), followed by an announcement to respond to the Fire Coordinators office for a call. When the equipment leaves the office, the dispatcher shall announce to all remaining members to respond to the scene, providing all of the pertinent information.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

- 1) Requesting activation of the Search and Rescue team shall be made through Incident Command.
- 2) The Search and Rescue team shall be toned for activation by the dispatcher on The primary fire frequency. The team shall be directed to respond to the Fire Coordinators office for a call. When the equipment leaves the office, the dispatcher shall announce to all remaining members to respond to the scene, providing all of the pertinent information.

ARTICLE XIV

ENFORCEMENT

- 1.) Any complaint and /or allegation of a violation or abuse of this procedure, or of the Schoharie County Emergency Services Radio system shall be made in writing to the Fire/EMS Coordinator.
- 2.) The Fire/EMS Coordinator shall review all complaints received with the Sheriff.
- 3.) The Fire/EMS Coordinator may, at his discretion, call upon the Committee that developed this procedure, to assist in reviewing a complaint or alleged violation.
- 4.) Upon good cause shown, the Fire/EMS Coordinator may be authorized to revoke any Radio Identifiers, and thereby eliminate the use of the Emergency Services Radio System.

APPENDIX

RADIO IDENTIFIERS

- 1.) Radio identifiers shall be assigned using the following guidelines:

The first two (2) numbers will identify the Department.

The third number will identify the type of vehicle as outlined below:

- 1- Officers
- 2- Engines
- 3- Pumper-Tankers
- 4- Tankers
- 5- Brush
- 6- Miscellaneous
- 7- Ladder
- 8- Snorkel
- 9- Rescue/Ambulance
- 0- EMS personnel

The fourth number will identify the number of the apparatus within the Department.

- 2.) The Officer designators shall be used as follows:

- 11-19 Fire Chiefs and Line officers
- 01- Rescue/EMS Captains
- 2.3 Rescue/EMS Lieutenants
- 4.9 Rescue/EMS Personnel
- 93.99 Rescue/EMS Personnel

- 3.) Fire Captains, Lieutenants, and Rescue/EMS Personnel shall use the radio system to communicate with the Communication Center to report an **unreported emergency**. They may also use the radio system when they serve as **Incident Command** or are instructed by **Incident Command** to use the system. **Fire Captains, Lieutenants and Rescue/EMS Personnel shall not** report in and out of service to the Communication Center.

Rescue/EMS Captains and Lieutenants may use the radio system to notify Communications of their response to a call, communicate with their ambulance or to provide pertinent information relating to the call to the Communications Center.