



Office Of The Sheriff
Allegany County
Maryland

GENERAL ORDER NO: **6-000.00**

TO: All Patrol and Judicial Personnel

RE: **COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OPERATIONS**

PURPOSE: To maintain a 24-hour communications operation designed to receive citizens' calls for service, dispatch deputies and Officers as needed, and to provide information to the public as well as to deputies. Coordination and routing of general departmental inquiries and messages will also be performed by the communications function.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2004

REVISION DATE:

6-001.00 Administration

.01 Communications Component

- A. The Communication Center and all satellite operations are a component of the Police Patrol Division. The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services will be responsible for the operation of the Communications Section.
- B. Notwithstanding any rule of this section, the Sheriff will retain final authority for the operation of the Communications Center and may rescind or suspend any provision herein.
- C. The PCO Supervisor will have the following responsibilities in the Communications Center:
 1. Overall operation of the Communication Center, reporting to the Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services.
 2. Fostering a smooth working relationship with the community, other units within the department, other criminal justice agencies, and the media.

3. Matters concerning operating procedures, training, vacations, discipline, etc.
4. Act as liaison with Maryland State Police personnel controlling entrance into MILES (Maryland Interagency Law Enforcement System).

.02 **Police Communications Operator (PCO):** The PCO is a civilian classification within the Sheriff's Office.

- a. At no time will PCO's represent themselves as a law enforcement officer, either by statement or inference.
- b. PCO's will not give legal advice.
- c. PCO's are under operational supervision of The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services. Administratively, the PCO chain of command will be through the Sheriff of Allegany County.
- d. PCO responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Assisting the The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services in the daily operation of the Communications Center during assigned shifts.
 - (2) Reporting any deficiencies, problems, breakdowns of equipment, or any other difficulty which may influence the efficient operation of the center to the proper authority.
 - (3) Receiving/transmitting radio communications.
 - (4) Monitoring allied agency frequencies for significant traffic.
 - (5) Operation of the MILES terminal.

- (6) Completion of all required records prior to end of shift.
- d. PCO's will not leave the Communications Center prior to the end of the shift without permission from The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services

6-002.00 Maintenance/Security of Communications Center

.01 It is the responsibility of the PCO to establish and maintain a high level of order within and around the Communications Center to assure the minimum interference to the operation, therefore:

- A. Non-Departmental Personnel will not be granted access to the center without permission from The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services
- B. The Duty Officer will take the necessary action to ensure that conversation or noise, other than that required, is kept to a level that normal operations will not be impaired.

6-003.00 Communications Function

.01 The Communications Center functions will include, but not be limited to:

- A. Radio Communications with Allegany County Sheriff's Office, Cumberland City Police personnel and allied agencies as allowed by equipment capabilities and departmental operating procedures.

NOTE: Communications Center personnel must remember that the safety and well being of the Patrol Deputies and Officers is the highest priority.

- B. Telephone Communications; receiving requests for calls for service, routing telephone calls to appropriate personnel, accurate taking and distribution of messages.
- C. Entry of Incidents in the Computer System.
- D. Teletype and automated data communications consists of receiving and sending teletype messages, and accessing automated data communications in support of the departmental law enforcement mission.

E. The Communications Center serves as a link between all County Emergency agencies in procuring necessary external services or assistance. The capacity to rapidly procure such services will be available to center personnel in the form of:

1. Requested assistance/exchange of information may be rapidly obtained from the Maryland State Police via a direct telephone line.
2. Rescue personnel may be requested with the Fire and Rescue Communications.
3. Current telephone numbers will be maintained for other services; i.e., tow truck, locksmiths, etc. Tow trucks will be requested per established departmental policy.

F. Call Prioritization

1. Personnel receiving calls must make judgments as to whether a call requires a physical response from a deputy and whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency call. Calls with the following characteristics will be considered emergency calls, given top priority, and assigned an immediate response:
 - a. Calls for emergency assistance from any police officer in Allegany County.
 - b. Crimes in progress which are causing injury, or in which injury is imminent.
 - c. Felonies in progress.
 - d. Other situations, man-made or natural, in which life or safety is in imminent danger.
2. Non-emergency calls, may at times, have to be prioritized, resulting in a delay of deputy response. Calls will, at times, be of a nature that can best be addressed by another service agency or by independent action of the caller.
3. Communications personnel will keep callers informed of the approximate response time. While Communications personnel will not estimate the exact time of arrival of the deputy or officer, they will advise the caller if there is to be a delay.

4. If the call is of a nature outside the realm of departmental services, Communications personnel will, if at all possible, make suggestions for possible avenues of action, short of giving legal or other professional advice. For referrals to other agencies with appropriate jurisdiction/capabilities to address the call for service, Communications personnel should consult the Community Services Directory maintained in the Center.

6-004.00 Access to Criminal Justice Information Systems

- .01 The Department will maintain equipment which will provide access to criminal justice information systems such as the National Crime Information Center, NLETS, and the Maryland MILES System.
- .02 The use of the MILES/NLETS system will be in accordance with rules and regulations and the controlling authority of the system in use.
- .03 Messages will be as concise as possible and sent upon the designated authority of this department.
- .04 All transmissions via MILES/NLETS are to be considered confidential and shall be divulged only to authorized personnel. Sworn and civilian Communications personnel may review messages as received in accordance with the requirements of their work, but such information will only be used within the context of the performance of law enforcement duties.
- .05 The terminal has the capability of providing a copy of all messages sent and received. The printout can be legally considered probable cause for the arrest of an individual, and is the deputy's best defense against a civil action charging false arrest.
- .06 The FBI requires all persons with terminal access successfully complete a certification course developed for various levels of access. Personnel with NCIC access must be recertified at least once every two years.
 - A. Persons not in compliance will have certification revoked and will be required to successfully complete an initial access course prior to being reactivated. Should deactivation occur, the individual involved must contact the departmental Security Coordinator to regain access to the CJIS system.
- .07 Persons with access to the CJIS system are responsible for password security and information obtained from the various systems using their password. Person assigned a log on ID from CJIS may not share that log on ID with anyone and may not sign on to a terminal for someone else to use.

- .08 Unauthorized use of log on ID to access any system, or a breach of security procedures related to the use of a log on ID may result in criminal prosecution.
- .09 The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services restricts access to the Maryland Criminal Justice Information Systems to criminal justice employees without significant conviction records. All access to CJIS will be governed by CJIS rules, policies, and regulations.
- .10 If a member having access is arrested or indicted, the member will lost access to CJIS until the charges are disposed of in court. The member will permanently lose access if convicted of any felony or misdemeanor and incarcerated.

6-005.00 CJIS Terminal Agency Coordinator

- .01 To establish quality control and ensure compliance with State and NCIC policies and regulations, each terminal agency is required to designate an NCIC Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC). The TAC will be designated by and delegated by The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services to oversee policy, training, regulations, and operations including, but not limited to:
 - A. Monthly validations
 - B. Quality control within the department
 - C. Assuring all NCIC users are NCIC certified
 - D. Communications Center Policy Manual distribution
 - E. ORI assignments
 - F. Newsletter distribution
 - G. Liaison with the Maryland Control Terminal Officer (CTO)
 - H. Coordinate with Maryland and NCIC auditors during departmental audits
 - I. Act as MILES/NCIC coordinator for the department
 - J. Submit proper paperwork/documentation to the Public Safety Data Center upon termination of a user's computer access.

.02 The TAC will appoint an assistant (ATAC) to assist with duties as outlined in this section. Both the TAC and ATAC, will be required to attend a training session on validations and quality control of terminal operations as such appointments are made, and when such training is available.

6-006.00 CJIS System Security

.01 Any member having terminal access and becoming aware of a breach of a security violation, will notify the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Data Security Officer immediately.

A. The member having this knowledge will report the violation either by telephone or in person as soon as possible, followed by a written report within 24 hours. In the absence of the Security Officer, the Security Administrator shall be notified. The written notification shall include:

1. Name of member reporting
2. Name and telephone number of Agency
3. How the problem was discovered
4. A brief description of the problem
5. Estimate of any damage causes

B. The report will be placed in a sealed envelope, marked personal, and mailed to:

DPS 7 CD DATA SECURITY OFFICER
CJIS
P O BOX 5743
PIKESVILLE, MD 21208

C. This matter will be considered confidential and will not be discussed with anyone other than:

1. The CJIS Security Officer
2. The employee ' s immediate supervisor
3. The departmental TAC or ATAC

4. The departmental internal affairs investigator
5. The Sheriff or his designate

D. All personnel are cautioned that the MILES terminal and access to other systems through MILES are specifically provided for use by criminal justice agencies in the pursuit of their lawful duties. No other purpose or intent is permissible.

E. Any request for information received from anyone other than Police personnel will be referred to The Director of the Allegany County Emergency Services.

F. All messages transmitted via the MILES terminal must be logged on appropriate forms in accordance with CJIS rules, regulations and policies.

G. MILES regulations direct that each operator is responsible for messages sent by him/her. Therefore, to provide a strict accounting by MILES authorities when audited, each operator will ensure that only official use of the terminal occurs and that accurate records and distribution of the information is established and maintained.

H. CAUTION: Only bona fide queries will be made of criminal history files via the MILES terminal.

I. All members of the department are cautioned that criminal histories are protected by law and if disclosed without good cause, will place the individual procuring the information in jeopardy of civil litigation. Individuals having knowledge their criminal history was queried are entitled to know which department and member made the inquiry. The individual also has the right to confront the agency and agency member to learn the reason for the inquiry.

6-007.00 Radio Communications

.01 Radio communications between Deputies and Officers in the field provide a vital link. It can be the life line for a deputy or officer finding himself in a dangerous situation. This reason alone dictates that close and attentive operation of the Department's radio system is critical.

- .02 It is imperative that uniform standards of operating procedures be developed in order to provide for the rapid and efficient transmission of messages across radio frequencies.
- .03 Certain radio transmissions are prohibited. They include false calls, fraudulent distress signals, superfluous and unidentified communications, obscene, indecent or profane language, and the transmission of unassigned call signals. Transmissions of this nature are strictly prohibited by Federal Communications, Allegany County Sheriff's Office and Cumberland City Police policies.
- .04 The confidentiality of radio communications is of the utmost importance. The contents of radio communications shall not be divulged to any person or party other than to whom it is addressed, except as specified by FCC, Allegany County Sheriff's Office or Cumberland City Police rules, regulations and policies. Radio communications, written communications, and computer data generally come within the scope of legislation regarding privacy and security of criminal justice information. Stringent criminal and civil penalties may occur for individuals breaching confidentiality and security.
- .05 Radio Operator Responsibilities
 - A. Operators are responsible for monitoring all Allegany County Sheriff's Office and Cumberland City Police radio frequencies.
 - B. It is the responsibility of each PCO to report for duty in time to read the radio logs of the previous shift and become familiar with any activity called to his/her attention by the previous PCO.
 - C. Messages should be removed from the printer as soon as possible and the contents checked to ensure that patrols are alerted to matters of criminal activity and public safety concerns.
 - D. Radio operators, - PCO's, shall, in accordance with FCC, Allegany County Sheriff's Office, and Cumberland City Police regulations:
 - 1. Document unit activities
 - 2. Know the capabilities and limitations of the Communications System.
 - 3. Know the frequencies, station call letters and locations to be monitored.

4. Know the geography of Allegany County, the locations of towns and important areas in the county.
5. Know the various public service agencies within Allegany County and be familiar with their locations, functions, etc.
6. Be familiar with neighboring States and County boundaries and law enforcement jurisdictions.
7. Know the organization and command structure of the Allegany County Sheriff's Office and the Cumberland City Police Department in order to route communications and calls properly.
8. Prevent and disallow the interception, use, or publication of the content of a radio message, MILES message, or telephone message, to anyone other than the person to whom it is intended.
9. Prevent and disallow any official communication or parts of the communications system to be used or obtained by anyone other than those authorized to use and/or receive it, and to ensure that the communications center is used only for official Police business.
10. Operators shall advise the immediate supervisor, for the respected agency, of any message they are requested to dispatch, or of any act they are requested to perform. Operators who may be required to perform the act should enter relative comments about such actions on the daily radio log.

.06 Mobile Radio Operations

- A. While operating a Sheriff's Office vehicle, deputies will maintain radio communications with the Communications Center, while on or off duty and will inform the communications center of their location while out of the vehicle. The location may be designated either by street address or by telephone number.
- B. Units, (on and off duty), will respond to calls and requests from the communications center. On duty units will use portable radios to maintain contact with communications while out of the vehicle.

- C. Mobile operators will become familiar with all communications procedures in this Order. They will be aware of the total communications system of the Department.
- D. Regardless of how trivial the matter, mobile operator will not censure, complain, chew out, or otherwise demean the PCO via the radio. All complaints will be forwarded through channels. PCO's are to report infractions of this rule through channels set forth in this Order.
- E. **DO NOT TRANSMIT WHEN:**
 - 1. **Within 200 yards of blasting operations, or where blasting caps are stored. These areas will usually be posted.**
 - 2. **When advised to stand-by due to your transmission interfering with another transmission which you might not be able to hear.**
 - 3. **When the communications center has issued a "10-3", (stop transmitting except emergencies)**
 - 4. **When another unit or station is already transmitting and your transmission will obviously interfere and cause unintelligible communications.**
- F. Mobile operators will keep the communications center informed of their every status change. When a mobile operator is away from the vehicle, the communications center will be advised of the location, address and/or telephone number.

By Order Of:

David A Goad, Sheriff