

NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Public Safety Communications Center		AOM: S-100
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced: [81.2.3], [81.3.1], [81.2.4.e], [81.2.4.e], [81.2.4.f], [81.2.4], [81.2.4.b], [81.2.3.b], [81.3.1.b], [81.3.1.c&d], [81.3.1.a], [81.2.8.e], [81.2.5.a], [81.2.5.b], [81.2.5.c], [81.2.5.e], [81.2.5.g], [81.2.5.f], [81.2.2], [81.2.11]		Issuing Authority <hr/> Jody Kasper Chief of Police
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I. Introductory Discussion

The Public Safety Communications Center (PSCC) is responsible for all Public Safety communications within the City of Northampton. The essential function of the communications system is to satisfy the immediate public safety and police service needs of the community, both during routine operations and during times of emergency. The speed and accuracy with which information is processed are measures of the department's capability to respond to the needs of the community.

Additionally, the response management function of the communications personnel is of utmost importance to the City of Northampton. The dispatcher is the center of all communication coming into and going out of both the Police and Fire Departments and is responsible for overseeing the safety of Departmental personnel as well as members of the public.

II. Dispatcher Functions [81.2.6]

- A. Dispatchers will insure that access to the PSCC is restricted to authorized personnel only as determined by the Public Safety Communication Center Administrator. All persons entering and leaving the PSCC shall be required to sign a Visitor Log. [81.3.1]
- B. When using any communications equipment, dispatchers shall at all times, conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. The primary functions of dispatchers assigned to the PSCC are:
 - 1. Receive, screen, and prioritize calls for service. Ensure that appropriate public safety resources are directed to all situations requiring police, fire, or medical attention. Ensure that additional public or private agency resources are utilized as necessary and appropriate to specific situations. [81.2.4,e]
 - 2. Support mobile units in the field with information obtained through the various components of the communications system.
 - 3. Provide other support and assistance as required, to the public and to public safety personnel.
 - 4. Obtain and record required information for all requests, including those received by telephone, letter, in person, self-initiated by field personnel, or reported to officers in the field. [81.2.3]
- C. Response Procedures
 - 1. It shall be the responsibility of the dispatcher to obtain information from the caller, which will determine the severity and thus govern the degree of response to any call (refer to *AOM O210 Response to Calls*). Every effort shall be made to obtain the verifiable identity of each caller (especially witnesses, complainants, and/or victims) to aid in the investigation and prosecution of incidents.
 - 2. The dispatcher shall determine which field personnel should be assigned to a call based upon location and availability and shall pass all relevant information to the responding officer clearly, carefully and correctly.
 - 3. The criteria for determining the number of field personnel to be assigned in response to an incident shall be based upon the totality of information received by the dispatcher (refer to *AOM O210 Response to Calls*). [81.2.4,e]
 - 4. Dispatchers should avoid giving callers overly optimistic estimates of response time. No promises should be made concerning how many field personnel will arrive or how quickly they will respond unless it is absolutely certain. If a

delay in response is anticipated, the dispatcher should advise the caller accordingly.

5. The dispatcher should request the **presence of the patrol supervisor** at the scene for the purpose of assuming command based on the seriousness of the incident. [81.2.4,f]

Examples of such incidents include but are not limited to the following:

- a. A shooting or stabbing.
 - b. Bank or armed robberies in progress.
 - c. Subject with a gun or other deadly weapon.
 - d. A bombing, explosion, major fire, or building collapse.
 - e. Hostage situations.
6. The dispatcher shall also request the **presence of the patrol supervisor** at the scene for the following reported incidents:
 - a. Traffic accidents involving a police officer or employee and/or a patrol vehicle.
 - b. Domestic violence involving a police officer or employee (refer to ***AOM P251 tb1 Domestic Violence Involving Department Employees***).
 - c. Incidents in which a police officer or employee is a participant.
 - d. Other situations as deemed necessary by the dispatcher, subject to the seriousness of the incident and the availability of the patrol supervisor. [81.2.4,f]
 7. In the event that the patrol supervisor does not comply with the request to respond to the scene, they shall complete a report detailing the reasons. The report shall be submitted to the Officer-in-Charge of the shift, or in their absence, the Operations Division Commander, prior to the end of the supervisor's shift.

D. Monitoring Field Personnel Status

1. The dispatcher should elicit as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the officer and assist in anticipating conditions to be encountered at the scene.
2. The following information, at a minimum, shall be entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System, whether the call is received through the Dispatch Center or as a result of a self-initiated activity from the officer: [81.2.3] & [81.2.4]
 - a. Incident number.
 - b. Date and time of request.
 - c. Name and address of complainant, if possible.
 - d. Type of incident reported.
 - e. Location of incident reported.

- f. Identification of field personnel assigned as primary and backup.
 - g. Time of dispatch.
 - h. Time of arrival.
 - i. Time of return to service or reporting out of service. [81.2.4b]
 - j. Disposition or status of reported incident.
3. As field personnel are assigned to a Call for Service, the CAD will automatically change the status screen to assigned, arrived or cleared. Each of the previously mentioned status designations will be recorded by the computer as to the exact time the call is received, when the officer is assigned the call, when they arrived and what time they cleared. [81.2.3,b]

III. Public Safety Communication Center Administrator (PSCCA) Responsibilities

- A. It shall be the responsibility of the Public Safety Communication Center Administrator (PSCCA) to ensure the proper functioning of the Communications System and to ensure that communications operations are conducted according to proper procedures.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the PSCCA to oversee all Public Safety Communications Center (Center) equipment (e.g. transmission lines, antennas, etc.) including providing for back-up resources, and conduct periodic inspections of said equipment to ensure that it is in good working order. In the event that the Voice- over Internet Phone system (VOIP) is not operable, the hard wired phone system will be used until such time that the VOIP is operable. [81.3.1,b] [81.3.1,c & d]
- C. It shall be the responsibility of the PSCCA to monitor the security of the Safety Communications Center by restricting access to authorized personnel only. All persons entering the Center shall be required to sign a Visitor Log. A copy of the completed Visitor Log will be forwarded to the Accreditation Manager during the first week of January, May and September. Access to the Center is restricted by a keyless entry sensor that uses Fobs. Dispatchers will be assigned Fobs during their employment. In the event of a misplaced Fob, the dispatcher is to immediately report it to the PSCCA and that Fob will be disabled. When employment has ended, the Fob will be returned to the PSCCA. [81.3.1, a]
- D. Annually, during the first full week in January of each year, the PSCCA shall review all Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licenses issued to the Police Department. If any of the licenses are scheduled to expire within that calendar year, the PSCCA shall file an application for renewal on any and all such licenses. Renewal applications shall be filed with the FCC prior to January 31st of that year. Additionally, on or before January 31st of each year, the PSCCA shall notify the Chief of Police in writing that the license review has been completed, which licenses are scheduled to expire within that year and that

applications for renewal have been filed with the FCC for any and all such licenses due to expire.

The PSCCA shall insure that all FCC radio licenses are posted within the Public Safety Dispatch Center in accordance with FCC regulations. Additionally, the PSCCA shall maintain a file of copies of all radios licenses, radio license applications, radio license renewal applications, and all other correspondence with the FCC.

IV. Logging/Recording of Voice Communications

- A. It shall be the policy of the PSCC to record all voice communications from telephone and radio equipment that originate or are received in the communications center. The purpose of recording such communications is to:
1. Provide a means to verify information received by telephone or radio.
 2. Better provide for the safety of field personnel.
 3. Ensure the integrity of the Department and its employees.
 4. Enable the department to respond to questions regarding the content of voice communications.
 5. Promote professionalism in the use of the department's voice communications systems.
 6. Reduce department, city and employee potential for civil liability.
- B. Recording Procedures
1. Archiving of Recordings: The recordings are saved to a cloud system, and backed up automatically to the EQUATURE DLR for greater than three years. The DLR will be programmed to perform a simultaneous archive of the information to this device, so there is no maintenance required by PSAP Personnel.
 2. DLR Alarms, Monitoring and Services: The status of the DLR will be monitored via the installed broadband internet connection and a remote desktop application. Comtech via helpdesk provided by Ma. State 911 Dept. will be providing local service and support to the PSAP's in Massachusetts.

The recorder is designed to disperse an audible alarm when certain failures occur, such as power supply or hard drive failures. If an audible alarm is heard coming from the backroom by any staff member, it should be reported to Comtech by calling the MA. State 911 Dept. provided help desk immediately.

All Recorded Channels: All radio channels, business/911 lines can be played back using "Viewpoint", installed on the 911 consoles and the administrative position in the Directors office.

V. Authorization to Review Recorded Conversations [81.2.8,c]

- A. Only the PSCCA and authorized Police Department personnel with the rank of Sergeant or above shall have the authority to review telephone or radio transmission. Such review shall be for the purposes of training, investigation, court, or relating to the operations and administration of the Northampton Police Department. Any request on site at the PSCC shall follow the procedure outline in subsection “D” of this section.
- B. The Court Administrator and the Detective Bureau Commander shall be authorized to obtain copies of logger recordings requested by the District Attorney’s office or the Court.
All requests from NPD or the D.A.’s office are by email to:
discoveryrequest@northampton.gov and recordings will be sent digitally via email.
- C. Exceptional requests (outside agencies, legal inquiries, etc.) shall be referred to a Captain or the Chief of Police for authority to review the recordings in question.
- D. A Northampton Public Safety Communications Center Dispatch Recording Release Form must be completed by the requesting party. One copy of the form shall be retained at the PSCC and one copy release with the recording for chain of custody and a copy of a recording of any transmission shall be referred by the PSCCA to the Detective Bureau Commander, the Captain of Operations, or the Chief of Police. A fee will be charged to the requesting party with the exception of appropriate governmental agencies.
- E. Any public information requests regarding dispatch recordings shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police, or the Captain of Operations.

VI. Access to Departmental Resources

- A. PSCC personnel shall have immediate radio or telephone access to the Officer-in-Charge. [81.2.5,a]
- B. The duty roster of each shift shall be provided so as to be immediately available to PSCC personnel. [81.2.5,b]
- C. PSCC personnel shall have immediate access to contact information of all personnel. [81.2.5,c]
- D. A map detailing the Department’s service area shall be visibly available to PSCC personnel at all times. [81.2.5,d]

1. In addition to the map identifying city jurisdictional boundaries and beat/reporting area designations, specific detailed maps/plans of areas and complexes shall be maintained as necessary to ensure proper emergency vehicle response by both police and fire personnel.
- E. PSCC personnel shall be able to monitor officer status by utilizing the computerized field personnel status indicator. By monitoring the status of field personnel, the Dispatcher will know where and how long each of the field personnel has been out on a call, as well as which cars are available for service. [81.2.5,e]
- F. PSCC personnel shall have tactical dispatching plans readily available to them. These plans shall include procedures to be followed in directing resources and obtaining information on crimes in progress, e.g., bank robbery, and on tactical operations, e.g., roadblocks. [81.2.5,g]

VII. Outside Services and Resources [81.2.5,f]

- A. The PSCC shall maintain an updated list of other emergency service agencies' telephone numbers (such as those pertaining to fire, rescue, and ambulance) to be readily available to Communications personnel.
1. Personnel requiring the utilization of outside resources shall obtain approval for the use of such services from their Officer-in-Charge.
 2. Procedures specific to emergency situations shall be maintained in the PSCC.

VIII. Calls For Service Not Originating At The Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC) [81.2.2]

- A. Whenever a call for police service is received at the police station, which requires the dispatching of field personnel, the station officer or Officer-in-Charge (OIC) shall immediately notify the Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC) by telephone or radio and receive an acknowledgement of the receipt of that notification. Whenever field personnel receive a request for police service or self-initiate a police service, they shall immediately notify the PSCC by radio and receive confirmation of the notification. Upon receipt of such notifications, the PSCC shall make the appropriate dispatch log entry. The purpose of this requirement is to insure that all calls for police service, not originating at PSCC, are properly documented.

IX. Delivery of Messages [81.2.11]

- A. Only those messages of an emergency nature shall be delivered by members of this department. Emergency situations shall be defined as follows:

1. Notification of serious or life threatening injuries or illness.
2. Notification of death or serious family circumstances (refer to *AOM 0610 Dead Bodies* and *AOM 0610 tb1 Death Notifications*).
3. Other messages of an emergency nature as authorized by the Officer-in-Charge of the shift.