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		Title: Policy, Radio Communications		

Revision History:				
Rev.	Description of change:	Initiated By:	Approved By:	Effective Date:
-	Initial Creation	S.Weigold	R.Bubemyre	07/27/05

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction as to the issuance of radios, and proper radio communications.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all members of the St. Clair Twp. – New Miami Life Squad regardless of rank or seniority. Members are not permitted to perform any type of radio communications until they have reviewed this policy with their superior officer.

2.2 RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of all members to ensure compliance with this policy, and the responsibility of the senior officers to enforce compliance.


3.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acknowledged – verbiage used to indicate understanding of a message during radio communications

Affirmative – verbiage used to indicate a “YES” response during radio communications

Broadcast – a specialized form of radio communications where a unit or station transmits a message intended for a group of stations or units, and where an immediate reply is not expected. An emergency dispatch is an example of a broadcast.

Cellular Phone – a specialized type of radio intended for communications with other cellular phones and also the fixed telephone network.

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Channel – See “Frequency”

Frequency – as it applies to this policy, a specific point in the radio wave spectrum where radio communications takes place.

Negative – verbiage used to indicate a “NO” response during radio communications

PTT – an acronym referring to “Push To Talk”. This is generally a button on a radio used to initiate a transmission.

Radio – a device capable of sending information in the form of audio or data to another such device via a wireless connection.

Radio Communications – a term referring to the wireless communications between two or more radios. This is normally a two way interface, although not necessarily so. See “Broadcast”.

Radio Operator – the person responsible for initiating a transmission, and ensuring that his radio communications is in compliance with this policy.


Repeater – A device used to receive a radio transmission, amplify it, and retransmit it. A repeater is normally used to extend the range of radio communication.

Station - a term referring to one or the other end of a radio communication. This is generally used to refer to a specific location. A station is considered a permanent, semi-permanent, or fixed temporary installation. A station is generally not moveable. The dispatch center is an example of a station. Incident command at an incident is also a station.

Transmission - a specialized form of radio communications where a unit or station transmits a message intended for a group of stations or units, and where an immediate reply is expected. Notifying the dispatch center that a unit is enroute to a hospital is an example of a transmission.

Unit – a term referring to one or the other end of a radio communication. This is generally used to refer to a specific vehicle, but may also refer to a specific person. In any case, a unit is moveable.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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There are no reference documents applicable to this policy.

5.0 EQUIPMENT USED

No equipment is expressly required for compliance with this policy, but the policy covers the use of department owned and issued equipment as well as personal equipment operated on behalf of the department.

6.0 SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no special safety considerations required by this policy.

7.0 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

There are no special requirements dictated by this policy.

8.0 PROCEDURE

8.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS


8.1.1 LISTEN BEFORE TRANSMISSION

As there are multiple units and stations using the same frequencies, it is imperative that a radio operator takes every precaution to ensure that he is not interfering with other communications in progress. The radio operator should pause and listen for a minimum of two seconds before initiating a transmission in order to ensure a minimum of interference.

8.1.2 ALLOW FOR REPEATER RESPONSE

A repeater does not start to perform its function immediately on activation of the PTT button. There is a definite delay between the transmission of a radio signal from the originating unit or station and the retransmission created by the repeater. In order to prevent clipping the first part of the transmission, the radio operator should pause for at least one second after keying the PTT button, prior to beginning speech.

8.1.3 REMAIN CALM

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Proper completion of radio communications is highly dependant on the quality of the audio presented to the radio. It is imperative that the radio operator remain calm while attempting to perform radio communications. Radio operators failing to remain calm tend to speak in a higher pitch and at louder levels than normal. This higher pitch or louder audio level is generally processed poorly by the initiating radio and as such causes the quality of the transmitted signal to deteriorate.

8.1.4 CLEAR VOICE

By an agreement created by the Butler County EMS Association and the Butler County Fire Chief's Association, radio communications in Butler County are done in "Clear Voice". In general this means radio communications for Fire and EMS agencies should not include signals or codes intended to shorten or mask the meaning behind the message.

8.1.5 REMAIN PROFESSIONAL


Given the widespread use of the internet, information on communications frequencies for any area is generally easy to obtain. Combined with the relative low expense of radio receivers, it is very likely that many people could be listening to radio communications in progress, including the patient the crew is responding to assist. Since many of the people listening to the department's radio communications may never utilize the department's services, the only opinion they can form of the department is from the radio communications they monitor. As such it is imperative that all personnel remain professional at all times during radio communications.

8.1.6 KEEP MESSAGES SHORT

Radio communications of all kinds is inherently susceptible to interference from all manner of sources. In general, the shorter the message, the more likely it is to arrive at the destination intact.

8.1.7 PERSONAL INFORMATION

As was indicated in section 8.1.5, it is very likely that all of the radio communications between department units and other units and

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stations is being monitored. As such, personal information is not to be transmitted at any time. When it is necessary to communicate personal information, crews should utilize landline connections to do so. Note that cellular phone communication is also radio communications. While it isn't as easy to monitor cellular radio traffic as other types of radio traffic, it is possible.

8.2 ISSUANCE OF RADIOS

St. Clair Township – New Miami Life Squad has limited resources at its disposal, and a commercial two way radio is a very expensive device. As such, radios will only be issued to those members (such as officers) that have a position dependant need to have one in their possession. Use of a department issued radio is a privilege that may be revoked at any time.


8.3 USE OF PERSONAL RADIOS

Members with a significant need to do so may use personally owned radios in the course of department operations. Any member using his own radio during department operations does so at his own risk. St. Clair Township – New Miami Life Squad is not responsible for loss or damage to personally owned radios. All radios used in the course of department operations or while representing the department will be used in accordance with this policy.

8.4 ISSUANCE OF RADIO NUMBERS

Members with a significant need to utilize radio communications at times other than when in a unit will generally be issued department radio numbers. The following radio numbers are always in use:

- ? 61 – Chief
- ? 62 – Assistant Chief
- ? 63 – Captain
- ? 64 – Captain
- ? 65 – Captain
- ? 66 – Lieutenant
- ? 67 – Lieutenant

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Other radio numbers may be issued with the authorization of the member's Captain. Numbering for members needing radio numbers not falling into the group above is by three digit number as follows:

Digit One: 1-3 based on level of certification

- ? 1 – Basic
- ? 2 – Intermediate
- ? 3 – Paramedic

Digits Two and Three: Member's two digit employee ID number

As such, a Paramedic with the employee ID number of 13 would identify himself as "St. Clair 313"

8.5 COMMUNICATIONS WITH DISPATCH

When communicating with the dispatch center, members should be aware that all emergency communications for the county departments passes through the dispatch center. As such, the dispatch center is likely to be a busy place, and occasionally, radio communications gets corrupted. Members should be prepared for this, and cooperate as needed to ensure that the communications is passed correctly.


When contacting dispatch, it is appropriate to call the dispatch center by radio, providing the unit ID number, and then wait to be acknowledged before proceeding. For example, the radio traffic for a unit responding to an emergency might be as follows:

- (Unit) "Butler County, this is St. Clair 91"
- (Dispatch) "St. Clair 91, go ahead"
- (Unit) "St. Clair 91 responding to 1234 Any St."
- (Dispatch) "St. Clair 91 responding to 1234 Any St. 1337"

8.6 COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHER UNITS

Communications with other units is generally conducted in the same fashion as with dispatch. The process is:

1. Call the other unit or station and provide calling unit's ID
2. Wait to be acknowledged
3. Pass message(s)

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4. Wait for message to be acknowledged

For example, a unit communication with incident command (a station) for assignment may go as follows:

(unit) "Wehr Rd. Command, this is St. Clair 91"
(station) "This is Wehr Rd Command, go ahead"
(unit) "St. Clair 91 is approaching your scene, requesting assignment"
(station) "That's clear St. Clair 91, position your unit near St. Clair 80. Your patient is still in the car"
(unit) "St. Clair 91 clear"

8.7 COMMUNICATIONS WITH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

While communications with the Emergency Department is conducted by cellular phone, it is in fact still radio communications. As such, all of the provisions of section 8.1 apply

9.0 DOCUMENTATION

Non-compliance with this policy will be documented as needed using the standard department complaint procedure.