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Radio Communications for Public Safety Communicators

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Answering the Call

RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

FOR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATORS





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Chapter 1

Canadian Radio Communications Regulations

Radio Communication Act (1989)

The Radio Communications Act (1989) is the legislation that empowers the Government of Canada to control all types of radio transmitting and receiving equipment. It assigns authority to Radio Inspectors to investigate and seize equipment being used illegally as defined under the act. It also provides severe penalties to persons abusing this legislation. Offences under this act include:

4. (1) No person shall, except under and in accordance with a radio authorization, install, operate or possess radio apparatus, other than:

(a) radio apparatus exempted by or under regulations made under paragraph 6(1)(m); or

(b) radio apparatus that is capable only of the reception of broadcasting and that is not a distribution undertaking.

Idem

(2) No person shall manufacture, import, distribute, lease, offer for sale or sell any radio apparatus, interference-causing equipment or radio-sensitive equipment for which a technical acceptance certificate is required under this Act, otherwise than in accordance with such a certificate.

Idem

(3) No person shall manufacture, import, distribute, lease, offer for sale or sell any radio apparatus, interference-causing equipment or radio-sensitive equipment for which technical standards have been established under paragraph 6(1)(a), unless the apparatus or equipment complies with those standards.

Industry Canada

Industry Canada is the government agency that applies the rules and administers the regulations concerning the licensing and regulation of telecommunication radio systems. It is the government body that ensures all radio installations – permanent, mobile, and portable radio devices – are licensed and operate within certain technical parameters.

All radio equipment capable of transmitting and receiving must be licensed. This means that every portable, mobile, base and repeater radio equipment must have a license that states within which frequencies the equipment is authorized to operate, its power output and geographic coordinates.

This agency, formerly the Department of Communications, also applies rules concerning licensing of radio operators. Most persons who operate a radio transmitter must be licensed. Study guides are available from Industry Canada. Further information can be obtained by calling 1-613-998-4149. There is a small administration fee for the issuing of the license.

Chapter 2: Radio Communication Protocol and Speech Techniques

Protocol Needs

Effective radio communication is the foundation for the exchange of accurate information among the communications center, field personnel, and other agencies. In an emergency situation, radio communications play a vital and active role in relaying information which may ultimately save a life, or lives.

Radio communication is only effective when it is a two-way process. The primary purpose of communication is to establish a common understanding between sender and receiver. True communication can only be achieved if both parties understand the information or message being sent.

During the early stages of an emergency response, a large amount of air time is used. The communications center is busy gathering and relaying information, and notifying appropriate personnel and agencies. Additional air traffic comes from field units acknowledging duties or information, and communicating between themselves or with supervisors and the communications center. In addition, the operator and field units constantly relay updates from the center or the scene in an effort to keep all involved personnel informed of the status of the emergency. Unless correct radio discipline is maintained, critical information may get lost in the rush of on-air transmissions.

The operator's job is to maintain radio control. It is not an easy one. During most emergencies, most personnel's adrenaline and stress levels elevate. Each person with a radio believes the information he/she has to relay is more important than what the next person has to say. When many personnel try to talk at once, messages may not get acknowledged, transmissions may be cut off, and vital information may not be relayed to the person who requires it. The problem is compounded as personnel get angry or frustrated by being unable to perform their jobs because they are unable to get on the radio or use it properly. Proper radio discipline is a vital component to ensure communication problems are kept to a minimum and do not interfere with the successful conclusion of an emergency situation.

Established radio communication protocols ensure that messages are received and understood, and promote

- personnel and public safety,
- effective use of outside resources,
- cooperation between agencies, and
- professionalism and pride.

Personnel and Public Safety

One of the greatest responsibilities of the communication operator is the safety of the field unit personnel and the general public. Effective radio communication allows the operator to know a field unit's location at all times. Personnel can then quickly be advised of any updated information regarding the need for additional services, safety hazards, and medical attention requirements. The relaying of new information assists agency personnel in making decisions or taking actions to ensure their own safety and those of the victim(s) or general public.

Effective Use of Outside Resources

Using standardized radio protocols simplifies communication with outside agencies in requesting their assistance, attendance or cooperation at a scene or situation. Other emergency service agencies or resources are as busy as yours and will appreciate receiving as much information as possible, in the briefest manner possible, to relay to their own personnel. It is imperative always to acknowledge and confirm requests for attendance by outside resources, with an estimated time of arrival (ETA), if possible. If an outside resource requests your assistance, extend them the same courtesy.

Cooperation Between Agencies

Effective radio communications make it easier for other agencies to understand your own departmental requirements. Using standardized radio protocol helps to eliminate costly and timely duplication of services among agencies attending the same emergency or situation.

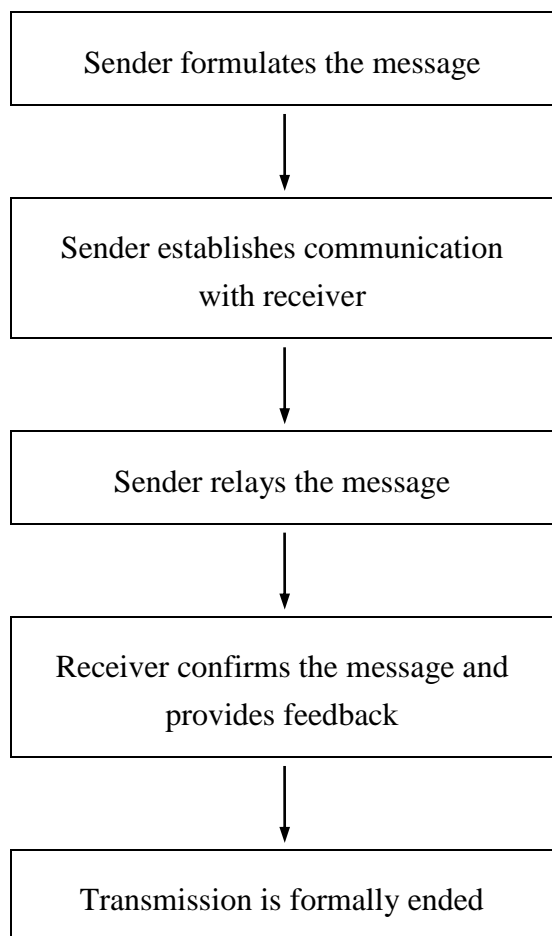
Professionalism

Using established radio protocols and discipline demonstrates an agency's commitment to a professional code of conduct within the industry. Each time a communicator transmits over the air, he/she in essence makes a public broadcast. Professional conduct will assist in developing a better rapport between public safety agencies and the public. The manner in

which an agency's personnel communicate on the air may be the basis for how the agency is judged by the public and other industries. Professionalism is essential for public safety communicators.

Radio Communication Model

The *radio communication model* is a five-step model designed to ensure that radio transmissions are as brief and precise as possible. This model is a major element in the coordination of both routine and emergency incidents, and allows for confirmation and feedback between the sender (operator) and the receiver (field unit) in ensuring messages are relayed and understood. The proper use of the model also reduces the amount of unnecessary on-air transmissions.



1. Sender Formulates the Message.

Before transmitting anything over the air, the operator needs to form a clear mental image of the exact information to send to the field unit. Messages must be clear, concise and as brief as possible. Information should be relayed in a logical and sequential method. On-air

transmissions from the communications center should attempt to answer every question on scene personnel may have. Anticipate the information that will be required, or request and relay it as soon as possible. If you are still attempting to gather information, relay your attempts to the field unit and the approximate time delay involved in gathering it.

2. Sender Establishes Communication with the Receiver.

When the decision is made to transmit the message, the sender must first listen to the transmissions already in progress and determine the priority of his/her message. Listen long enough to establish that your communication will not interfere with ongoing communications, or those of a higher priority. Radio communication is frequently a matter of common sense. If you need to interfere with other radio transmissions, wait for the first break in ongoing transmissions (*listening out*). Failure to *listen out* before transmitting is one of the most common errors in radio communications. Communicators need to be aware that different agencies have unique procedures or language used to interrupt or override radio communications.

In order to send a message or relay information, you must first gain the attention of the receiver. This is done by identifying the receiver with their call sign, identifying yourself and then awaiting confirmation that they are ready to listen or copy. Each agency will have unique call signs or methods used to establish initial communications. Determine what they are and use them.

3. Sender Relays the Message / Information.

When the receiver indicates a readiness to have the message relayed, it must be done in the shortest time possible. Words or phrases that have no effect on the meaning of the message, or to the information, should be avoided. Choose words that are distinct, forceful and convey a definite meaning. If longer messages are necessary, the sender should break at a natural point. This can be done by saying *break* or *stop check*. Breaks in long transmissions allow personnel an opportunity to request a repeat of information that has been missed, as well as allowing other units to interrupt if they become involved in a situation of higher priority.

Differences in word or phrase meaning is a common source of radio communication failure. An example is the word *yes*. *Yes* has many different meanings or interpretations, depending on how it is communicated or conveyed. *Yes* may mean, *Yes, I have heard what you said*, as

opposed to *Yes, I will do what you say*. All doubtful words or phrases must be double checked for accuracy and meaning.

4. Receiver Confirms the Message / Information and Provides Feedback.

Always ensure that the transmission was understood. If the field unit does not acknowledge receipt of the message or information, check to make sure it was received and understood. Do this in the briefest manner possible. Always keep in mind that on-air time is valuable. Do not repeat the entire message if a simple *Did you copy?* will suffice.

Along the same lines, if only part of your transmission was lost or misunderstood, it makes more sense to determine which part needs to be repeated and only transmit from there. Often the phrase, “I say again from... (last part of communication that was understood)” is used.

Example:

Field unit needs clarification only on the street name.

Unit: “Say again name of street”

There is no need to repeat the full address if the unit only needs the name of the street.

5. Transmission is Formally Ended.

This important and final step in radio communication protocol is one of the most frequently forgotten.

The sender and the receiver formally acknowledge the end of their communications by stating:

10-4, Out, or whatever specific term applies to your agency.

This acknowledgment serves two purposes. It allows both the sender and receiver to determine that no further transmissions are required or forthcoming, and that all messages or information have been received and understood. It also determines for others who are listening and waiting to transmit that the air is now clear, and that they are free to transmit their communications without interrupting others.

Accuracy, Brevity, Clarity, Security (ABC'S of Communication)

The ABC'S of radio communication are designed to maintain on-air discipline. *Accuracy, Brevity, Clarity, Security (ABC'S)* are the principles for effective, concise radio communication between operators and field units, which enable agencies to perform duties efficiently and in a professional manner.

A – Accuracy

Be precise in radio transmissions. One word or phrase can change the entire meaning of a transmission. Certain phrases may be unique to one industry or one agency within that industry. Be sure what you are saying is understood. Relay your information in such a way that the receiver will understand exactly what you are saying. If an operator is vague in relaying information, the receiver will need to ask for more details or clarification, thereby wasting valuable on-air time.

B – Brevity

It is essential to limit on-air radio communications. The reason for using brevity is obvious. Efficient radio transmissions are the essential communication link between persons requiring emergency assistance and responding agencies which are the source of that assistance. If a message or information can be relayed in three words and have the necessary impact, there is no need to say it in twenty five words.

C – Clarity

When transmitting on air, speak each word or phrase plainly and clearly to prevent words from running together. Keep your speed, rhythm and rate of speech constant, neither too fast nor too slow. Remember that the receiver of your message/information may be writing it down. Clear and concise enunciation and pronunciation is an advantage when words or phrases need to be spelled over the air. Use the phonetic alphabet as dictated by your agency. Pace yourself using the rhythm of ordinary face to face communications. When separating words or phrases, remember to use *break* or *stop check* rather than using unnecessary sounds such as *er* or *um*.

Use a moderate tone when transmitting. There is no need to shout, to accent syllables or to speak rapidly. The pitch and quality of your voice must be easy to listen to. A voice that is

too high can become extremely unpleasant to listen to, and a voice that is too low may be difficult to understand.

S – Security

Almost every on-air transmission is equivalent to a public broadcast. Radio transmissions can be and are monitored by people who have scanners, including the news media. Be cautious and maintain a sense of confidentiality in incidents where sensitive information has to be sent or received. If information of a confidential or sensitive nature needs to be communicated, follow departmental policy, or request the receiver of the information to contact you by telephone if possible.

Professional and Proficient Radio Communications

Effective on-air radio communication is a critical skill that takes time and experience to develop. The role of any emergency service communications operator carries with it enormous responsibility and is an integral part of an agency's effectiveness in serving the public. The safety of a community's citizens and an agency's personnel is often directly related to the communicator's ability to fulfill his/her responsibilities.

Individual radio communications operators are part of a team and will act, react and interact with other members of that team in various ways. Members may have shared emotional reactions and responses to situations, but may also react and respond differently from other team members.

Regardless of any emotional responses, radio communicators must perform all their duties, in all situations, with professionalism and control. Communicators may find it difficult to control their emotions on the air when they are feeling pushed to their limits, or when they make errors and are embarrassed. Responding in a professional manner to an unprofessional remark, or appearing calm when feeling frightened or scared by an incident, may be difficult, and it may require much time and effort to become skillful at staying in control in such situations, but it is absolutely essential. There is no room for egos, individualism or cute remarks in radio communication.

Appropriate Words and Phrases

The efficient use of radio air time depends to a large extent on articulation of words and phrases used by a communications operator. Transmitting and receiving radio messages/information must follow a standard format. Using anything but the expected and anticipated phraseology will result in confusion. It may also result in unnecessary repetition of a message or inaccuracy of information.

Always transmit in whole – but brief – sentences. Never ramble.

Radio Courtesy

Radio operators should always assume gratitude. *Please, thank you* and *you're welcome*, have absolutely no place in the receiving or transmitting of messages or information. Avoid becoming too familiar with personnel on the air. Remember that outsiders may be listening, and that charming or cute remarks are not so cute when played back from a recording or in a court room.

Naturally, conflicts will happen on air. Always be professional while transmitting, and solve interpersonal conflicts later, either on the telephone or face to face. It is your responsibility as a communications operator to maintain radio control in a professional manner. You will never regret adhering to this standard.

Timing

Before transmitting, pause, listen and ensure that you are not about to interrupt or interfere with on-going communications or those of a higher priority. Use *breaks* or *stop checks* as needed in long transmissions. If you do need to interrupt a transmission already in progress, wait for a natural break to do so and be certain that what you are about to say is actually more important than what is already being communicated.

Chapter 3: Radio Code Systems

Radio Codes

The initial purpose for developing and implementing the use of radio communication codes was an attempt to shorten transmission of messages. It was believed that the use of the 10 Code afforded some degree of privacy. Over the years, emergency service agencies have implemented codes in radio transmissions in an attempt to relay information in secrecy to avoid unwanted detection by the public, the media or other interested parties.

The main concern with the use of codes is the variations from one agency to another. Communication between agencies is often confusing, and the potential for misinterpretation is greater when relying on a code for radio transmissions. Communication operators must always be aware that radio codes relayed from another agency even within their own jurisdiction may have a totally different meaning.

A communication operator who changes agencies or jurisdictions is often required to learn a different code for radio transmissions. During times of stress, this employee runs the risk of reverting back to a former and more familiar code. The potential for risking the safety of department personnel may have severe consequences.

The use of codes in radio communications are widespread and vary considerably from agency to agency. They have almost become part of the language and culture of emergency services. For whatever reason, they have evolved to what they are today and are here to stay in radio communication.

Phonetic Alphabet, Numerals And Times

The phonetic alphabet is used to avoid confusion when transmitting difficult or unusual words. Numerals and time have specific forms that are used in radio communications.

Radio Ten Code – Police (in some jurisdictions)

10-4..... acknowledgment	10-45person in elopee category
10-6..... busy	10-46person in prohibited category
10-7..... out of service	10-61coffee break
10-8..... in service	10-62lunch break
10-9..... repeat required	10-65escorting prisoner
10-10..... negative	10-66prisoner transport
10-14..... prepare to copy	10-67unauthorized listener present
10-20..... location	10-68breathalyzer operator required
10-23..... arrived at scene	10-69checking person/vehicle
10-27..... driver's information	10-80record violence
10-28..... vehicle registration information required	10-81record robbery
10-29..... check records for vehicle/subject	10-82record offensive weapon
10-30..... danger/caution	10-83record b & e
10-33..... officer in trouble	10-84record theft
10-40..... possible hit on	10-85records drugs
10-41..... possible hit on now confirmed with originating agency	10-86record fraud
10-42..... person/vehicle in observation category	10-87record sex
10-43..... person in parole category	10-88record other criminal code
10-44..... person in charged category	10-89record arson

NOTE:

The TEN CODE may change at any time. Different agencies may use a code system unique to themselves, or a combination of several. Communicators must be current and familiar with the TEN CODE used by their agency, and must keep up to date on any changes to it.

Other Codes

CODES 1, 2 and 3 may be used by the communications operator to indicate to the field unit the degree of urgency required in his/her response. The field unit may use the code to

indicate to the communications operator how he/she is responding or wishes to respond to a situation encountered in the field.

CODES 4, 5 and 6 will be used by the field unit or the communications operator to indicate the known or suspected status of the situation.

CODE 1.....Routine

CODE 2.....Respond as quickly as possible without using emergency equipment
and complying with provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act

CODE 3.....Respond at once using Emergency Equipment

CODE 4.....Emergency operation/situation giving calling unit/base station air
control

CODE 5.....Use CAUTION – situation / operation may be dangerous

CODE 6.....Hostage situation

The International Hospital Standard uses the following codes:

CODE BLACK.....Bomb Threat

CODE BLUECardiac Arrest

CODE GREYShock Trauma

CODE GREENEvacuation

CODE ORANGEDisaster

CODE RED.....Fire

CODE WHITE.....Aggressive/Violent Patient

CODE YELLOWMissing Patient

Use of Codes

New and inexperienced communication operators often mix words or phrases with the use of codes. Usually the meaning of the code is repeated using additional or unnecessary words or phrases, defeating the reason for using the code. This should never be done as it is a waste of valuable air time.

Examples:

Incorrect: “Please 10-9 (Repeat) that last part, I didn’t get it all”

Correct: “10-9 all after...”

Incorrect: “Please 10-12 (Stand by) for a minute, I’m extremely busy right now”

Correct: “10-12 for 1 minute”

Radio Communication Words and Phrases.

Procedural Words and Phrases

Although it is difficult to set out precise plain language/clear text phraseology that is standard throughout all emergency services, slang expressions should not be used. Radio communicators are not air traffic controllers, amateur radio operators, or CBers and should not transmit as if they think they are. Refer to the *Industry Canada Study Guide for the Radiotelephone Operator’s Restricted Certificate (Aeronautic)* for appropriate and current terminology and usage.

Word or Phrase	Meaning
ACKNOWLEDGE	Let me know that you have received and understood this message
AFFIRMATIVE.....	Yes or permission granted
BREAK	Indicates the separation between portions of the message. (To be used when there is no clear distinction between the text and other portions of the message.)
CHANNEL	Change to channel ____ before proceeding
CLEARED	Authorized to proceed under the conditions specified
CONFIRM	My version is ... Is that correct?
CORRECTION	An error has been made in this transmission (message indicated). The correct version is....
DISREGARD.....	Consider this transmission as not sent
GO AHEAD	Proceed with your message
HOW DO YOU READ?	Self-explanatory
I SAY AGAIN	Self-explanatory (use instead of “I SAY AGAIN REPEAT”).
MAYDAY.....	The spoken word for distress communications

MAYDAY RELAY	The spoken word for the distress relay signal
MONITOR	Listen on (frequency)
NEGATIVE	No, or that is not correct, or I do not agree
OUT	Conversation is ended and no response is expected
OVER.....	My transmission is ended and I expect a response from you
PAN PAN.....	The spoken word for urgency communications
READ BACK.....	Repeat all of this message back to me exactly as received after I have given “OVER” (Do not use the word “REPEAT”.)
ROGER	I have received all of your last transmission
ROGER NUMBER.....	I have received your message Number
SAY AGAIN.....	Self-explanatory (Do not use the word “REPEAT”)
STAND BY	I must pause for a few seconds or minutes, please wait
SEELONCE	An international expression to indicate that silence has been imposed on the frequency due to a distress situation. The aeronautical phrase is “STOP TRANSMITTING”
SEELONCE FEENEE	An international expression to indicate that the distress situation has ended (The aeronautical phrase is DISTRESS TRAFFIC ENDED)
SEELONCE MAYDAY	An international expression to advise that a distress situation is in progress. (The aeronautical phrase is “STOP TRANSMITTING MAYDAY”)
THAT IS CORRECT	Self-explanatory
VERIFY	Check coding, check text with originator and send correct version
WILCO	Your instructions received, understood and will be complied with
WORDS TWICE	(a) As a request: Communication is difficult; please send each word twice (b) As information: Since communication is difficult, I will send each word twice

From Study Guide for the Radiotelephone Operator’s Restricted Certificate (Aeronautical)

Plain Language/Clear Text

More and more emergency service agencies use and rely on plain language or clear text in radio communications. This method of transmitting messages involves simple and straightforward use of the English language in single words or short phrases. It is generally agreed that the use of plain language/clear text phraseology takes no longer than the use of codes and is more efficient as there is no need to memorize specific codes that may become confusing and easily forgotten under stress. Using plain language/clear text phraseology also eliminates confusion and misinterpretation between agencies.

Example (Fire Service)

Field Unit: “Dispatch, this is Engine 3, Over”

Dispatch: “Unit 3, this is Dispatch, Go Ahead”

Field Unit: “Unit 3 has arrived; require hydro for wires down, Over”

Dispatch: “Unit 3 copy you’ve arrived, request hydro attend, Dispatch Out”

Example (Police Service)

Field Unit: “Radio, Bravo 4”

Dispatch: “Bravo 4”

Field Unit: “At scene, request hydro for wires down”

Dispatch: “Bravo 4, copy, will advise their ETA”

Combinations

Some emergency service agencies supplement plain language/clear text phraseology with the use of codes under certain circumstances. These combinations are often based on the standard 10 Code and / or the standard phonetic alphabet. Codes are often used to indicate injuries, deaths, bomb threats, arson or suspicious fires, or that a department member is in serious danger. Once these combination codes are transmitted, it is an indication that the situation is of a high priority and non essential radio transmissions are to cease until the situation is under control.

Closely related to code words are call signs which are used to identify field officers, on scene commanders, emergency and other agencies and units. This can provide an efficient way of

organizing and monitoring department resources. The communication centre base station may also have a designated call sign such as *Control*, *Dispatch*, *Radio* or *Base*.

As you can see, there is potential for confusion caused by a lack of standardized codes or identifying call signs among emergency agencies. Communications can break down easily. For this reason the use of plain language/clear text phraseology may have a distinct advantage over the use of codes, especially if secrecy is not an issue.

Chapter 4: Radio Dispatching Methods

Information to Dispatch a Call

To dispatch a typical report, you will need to have the following information recorded and forward it to the field units:

Location of Incident

In addition to the address, location information may include a physical description of the site, or perhaps a layout of the building or its surroundings to identify points of entrance, exits or any hazards associated with it, for the purpose of attendance by any emergency personnel. For the purpose of fire attendance, the material composition of the structure and any hazardous components, chemicals or risk-enhancing layouts would apply.

Details of Incident

The information from the call taker should supply all the needed information and incident details.

Name of the Person to Contact

The report for dispatching should make it clear which person should be contacted at the scene.

Suspect Description (police)

In broadcasting the physical description of the suspect, **be specific**. It should include as much of the following information as possible.

- Age or approximate age.
- Sex of suspect.
- Height and weight of suspect.
- Race of suspect.
- Color, length and style of hair.
- Facial hair if any (beard, mustache)
- Indication if eye- or sunglasses worn.

- Specific clothing description from head to toe, including color, style, foot wear, head gear.
- Any known accent or speech impediment.
- Indicate any jewelry noted on suspect; may include earrings, visible wrist or neck jewelry.
- Distinguishing marks or tattoos. If tattoos, be specific in their descriptions and location on the body. Distinguishing marks may include pockmarks, acne or scars.
- Any information on a known criminal record or mental health problems, including known medication for a specific illness such as schizophrenia.
- WEAPONS – Was the suspect *seen* carrying one or was the weapon simulated? If the weapon was seen, supply a full description of the type of weapon.
- In any situation that shows the slightest indication of violence or risk, or escalation to either, *always* include information about weapons whether or not seen or accessible.

Also include any known relationship between the suspect and caller or victim. If more than one suspect is involved, ensure information on each suspect is clearly identified to the applicable individual.

Vehicle Information Broadcast (police)

As with suspect information, be specific in describing the vehicle. A vehicle description should be done in a logical format. For example: 1996 Ford Mustang 2 door sedan, silver with BC license ABC123 relays all of the pertinent information in a simple format.

- Y** Year of vehicle(*Specify year if known, or approximate age of vehicle as in “late-model Ford Taurus”.*)
- M** Make of vehicle.....(*Specify the make, as in Ford, and the model if known, as in Taurus.*)
- M** Model of vehicle(*Specify the model if known, as in Taurus.*)
- S** Style(*Mention whether it is a two-door, four-door, convertible or hatchback, to list four examples.*)
- C** Color of vehicle.....(*If the vehicle is two-toned or multicolored, identify where the colors are on the vehicle as in white over black.*)
- P** Province or State(*Name the province or state on the license plate.*)

- P** Plate.....(*Give the license plate number of the vehicle if known.*)
- A** Additional Info(*Mention for instance any body damage, or unique features such as a tow package, stickers, markings or custom body work.*)

Vehicle information includes the vehicle location at the time of the call, or whether or not the vehicle has left the scene. If the vehicle has left the scene, determine the direction of travel and the time delay involved in the departure of the vehicle.

It is essential that information on suspects and associated vehicles be relayed as quickly and completely as possible to field units. These details should be broadcast in a systematic and orderly fashion.

Depending on the system in use at an agency, the above information may be dispatched from a completed form or by reading a screen.

Call Information Dispatching

Information may be supplied to an agency through any number of methods. It may be received electronically, through phone, radio, pagers, MDT, facsimile, E-Mail or CPIC. It may come into the agency manually through mail, courier or memorandum, or more directly by a caller attending the office.

No matter how the information enters the agency, it will have to be recorded in some manner. Once the appropriate forms, screens or logs are completed, it is assigned or dispatched as any other call would be. The field unit may or may not need to be apprised of the method in which the information was received, depending on the circumstances.

Call information is always dispatched under the criteria of an agency's SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), utilizing appropriate codes and radio language. Introduction to Effective Police Communications will cover this area in depth.

Dispatch Information Procedures

In a manual system, when a call enters an agency it may be recorded on a dispatch form or ticket, in an occurrence report, as well as in an incident log book.

The form is generally filled out for the dispatcher and will contain all the necessary information to assign a field unit or crew to the call, and will indicate any support or specialty sections that may also be required at the scene.

Most agencies record caller information, telephone conversations and radio broadcasts on audio tapes. Communicators need to be aware that their communications are recorded and may become part of a transcript, trial or evidence. Maintaining a professional manner in conversations, inter-office communications and while broadcasting, even if on a scrambled or protected channel, is always a good idea for communicators.