

1. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

The Communications Manual is an operations publication that supports radio operations. York County Department of Emergency Services (DES) personnel and field responders will use this manual to operate all radio systems. The manual contains critical information that supports emergency communications. This manual is the only authorized source for this information. This manual supersedes any other publication. DES management and field supervisors should ensure that all personnel that routinely use the public safety radio systems have access to this publication in their work area.

The proponent of this publication is the Director, York County 911 Communications. Submit changes for improving this manual to the Director. Key each comment to the specific page and paragraph. Provide reasons for each comment to ensure understanding and complete evaluation.

This manual applies to DES personnel, Fire Departments, Police Departments, EMS Departments, EMA Coordinators, HazMat Personnel, and all other users of the radio system.

This manual is for official use only (FOUO).

1.1A The digital trunked radio system is designed to be geographically diverse and robust enough to accommodate the needs of the County's emergency services agencies. This radio system is first and foremost a public safety network that provides for an interoperable communications solution for those public safety agencies in and around the County of York that will allow for direct two-way radio communications to occur among the various public safety entities.

The York County Board of Commissioners has established a Public Safety Policy Board that is comprised of representatives from police, fire, and EMS agencies throughout the county. The communications center is also represented. They work to identify existing communications policies and procedures to ensure they meet the current needs of the various public safety agencies.

1.2 CONTROL OF COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS

Purpose - Standard procedures will be used by all concerned for handling messages by radio and telephone. Use of standard procedures will conserve on-the-air time and will permit accurate, brief and rapid transmission of essential information. Careless procedure and lack of circuit discipline causes delay, confusion and unnecessary transmissions.

1.2A Operational Authority – Authority of the Communications Center operations is limited to the authority delegated to us by the municipalities, federal and state regulations, or legislation.

1.2B Circuit Discipline - The Communications Center Lead Shift Supervisor/Shift Supervisor is responsible for maintaining circuit discipline; for handling radio and telephone messages rapidly; for determining the order of priority in which transmissions will be made; and for directing and controlling the use of all frequencies.

1.2C Operator Requirements and Violations - This radio network is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is thereby required to follow all regulations, guidelines, policies and procedures set forth by the FCC. Users are further advised that all talk groups on this radio network, while not necessarily monitored by the dispatch center are recorded at all times. Further, these licensed frequencies are published by the FCC and thereby accessible to the general public, if they have the proper monitoring equipment necessary to listen to our radio traffic.

The following items in this section list the most important operating rules in the Public Safety Radio Services. They are not intended to cover all the Rules or to quote them verbatim. The rules are subject to constant review and modification. Since the Commission can levy monetary fines and even suspend/revoke the licenses of radio system owners (including public safety systems) who violate its rules, users should always keep these Rules in mind.

1. Radio operators are not required to be licensed by the FCC. Licensees are responsible for maintaining control and for the proper functioning and operation.
2. Communications involving the safety of life and/or property are to be afforded priority by all licensees.
3. Only such calls as are authorized by the Rules in the Public Safety Radio Services may be transmitted. False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals, unnecessary and unidentified communications, obscene, indecent and profane language, and the transmission of unassigned call signals are specifically prohibited. Radios are primarily authorized to transmit communications directly related to public safety and the protection of life and property and to official public safety activities. Enforcement of these regulations is left to the licensee.
4. Operators are required to listen to (monitor) the frequency on which they intend to transmit for a sufficient period of time to insure that their transmission will not cause harmful interference to others who may be using the frequency.
5. Each station must be identified by transmitting the FCC assigned call sign during each transmission or exchange of transmissions or at least once each thirty (30) minutes of the operating period. Licensees are allowed to use the identification method they prefer. They may also comply with identification requirements by using electronic devices that automatically transmit the station identification in Morse Code signals at the required time intervals.
6. **ALL RADIO TRANSMISSIONS MUST BE RESTRICTED TO THE MINIMUM PRACTICAL TRANSMISSION TIME.**
7. Contents of any radio communications shall not be divulged to any person or party other than to whom it is addressed without the expressed permission of York County 9-1-1.

MAXIMUM PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING FCC RULES AND REGULATIONS ARE A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN \$10,000, OR A PRISON TERM NOT TO EXCEED TWO YEARS, OR BOTH.

1.2D A **PRIORITY** message will be given the highest consideration over all other messages. However, the use of the **PRIORITY** category will be restricted to the type of emergency where life or personal injury is at stake or critical situations requiring immediate additional assistance.

1.2E In the event that any unit has priority message for the Communications Center, the unit shall call the Communications Center in the following manner:

EXAMPLE: York from Engine 65-1 - **PRIORITY**

1.2F All personnel should continuously be aware of the need to conserve the radio use and should make a conscious effort to eliminate unnecessary use of radio by using non-radio voice commands at the scene and posting messages whenever possible.

1.3 AUDIO RECORDINGS/RECORD RELEASE

York County 911 has a policy specific to the release of any record(s), written or otherwise, relating to matters pertaining to incident communications. This Release of Information Policy is located in Appendix VII of this Communications Manual. Review and/or duplication of the audio recording is subject to the provisions of this appended Release of Information Policy.

1.4 COMMUNICATIONS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Complaint Procedure provides all emergency service providers a means of voicing complaints and reporting wrong doings. It is the Department's policy that all providers have the right to voice legitimate complaints, and to have their complaint considered and resolved.

1.4.1 Violations by public safety radio users other than YCDES Personnel

1.4.1A If during the course of a complaint investigation, it is found that the complaint involves a public service entity other than a YCDES employee, the following procedure will be followed to address the situation:

A formal Complaint Form will be completed and submitted to the 911 Director.

The Investigation of the complaint will follow the same steps as is outlined in the above listed Policy. If at the completion of the investigation, the allegation does indicate a possible violation of the policies, the investigator will promptly report the results of the investigation to the 911 Director in writing. The report will include all appropriate statements and other supporting documentation.

The 911 Director shall notify the Chairperson of appropriate Public Safety Workgroup of the complaint and provide supporting information. The Chair for the appropriate type of agency involved will initiate the following process to address the complaint/violation:

The Chairperson will arrange a meeting with the highest ranking officer of the involved agency. This meeting will be held to discuss the complaint/violation that has occurred. In addition, the Chair will provide recommendations to the involved agency on how to correct the situation. The involved agency will be given 60 days to correct the violation. The Chair will provide a brief written report of the interaction back to the 911 Director that will include the date and time of the meeting, as well as recommendations made to correct the violation. The 911 Director will notify the Chairperson of the Public Safety Policy Board of the situation for further monitoring.

At the end of 60 days the 911 Director and the Workgroup Chairperson will review the compliance of the involved agency. If compliance has occurred, the Formal Complaint will be closed. If the involved agency has not come into compliance, the Public Safety Policy Board will be notified and a formal letter will be sent to the involved agency, the affect municipal government, and any governing body for that agency i.e. York County Fire Chiefs Association,

Emergency Health Services Federation, York County EMA Office etc. The involved agency will be given a written list of requirements for compliance and will have 30 days to institute the needed changes.

At the end of the 30 day period the 911 Director and the Public Safety Policy Board Chairperson, along with the Workgroup Chairperson, will review the compliance of the involved agency. If compliance has occurred, the Formal Complaint will be closed. If the involved agency has not come into compliance, the Public Safety Policy Board will be notified and a formal letter will be sent to the agency involved, the Municipal Government in which they are stationed and the appropriate governing body for the agency. This letter will notify the municipality of the Formal Complaint and those steps taken to bring the involved agency into compliance. They will also be informed of possible removal of the agency from the York County Radio System. Once notified, the involved agency and their municipality will have 30 days to comply with the recommendations provided. If the agency involved is removed from the York County Radio System, the impacted agency and their municipality will be required to appear before the Public Safety Policy Board for reinstatement on to the radio system.

The violating agency does reserve the right to appeal the formal complaint to the Public Safety Policy Board. If a request is made the Chairperson will be notified and arrangements will be made to for the agency to attend the next scheduled meeting of the Public Safety Policy Board. The involved agency will be given a brief period of time to voice their complaint/concern along with any requests they may have regarding the formal complaint. The Board will then evaluate the requests and provide the agency a response within 10 business days.

1.4.2 Violations by YCDES Personnel

As an emergency service provider you must know that you can enter the system, and that a proper responsive consideration will result. The Department will accept complaints against personnel through written correspondence. Only written complaints on the approved complaint form shall be accepted for consideration, unless extenuating circumstances

exist. Only the Executive Director of Emergency Services, the 911 Director, or the Deputy Directors shall be authorized to receive complaints regarding public safety dispatch personnel, administrative staff, technical staff, or supervisory staff.

1.4.2A Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the above listed personnel shall:

Time Stamp all pages with a stamp that indicates the date of receipt if not received via email.

If not already done so, notify the 911 Director of receipt of the complaint. The 911 Director will assign the proper supervisor or manager to investigate the complaint.

The investigating manager or supervisor will generate a letter or email to the complainant indicating receipt and review of the complaint by the 911 Center.

The complaint will be placed in a pending file, located in the 911 Director's Office.

The investigator will review the contents to determine whether or not the allegation constitutes a possible violation of the York County 911 Policies and Procedures; a violation of the York County Employee Guidelines; or a violation of any state or federal rules and guidelines.

If the allegation does not indicate a violation of the policies, the 911 Director shall generate a letter or email to the complainant thanking them for their concern and advising them that the complaint falls within the bounds of current policies explaining the current policy in force.

If the allegation does indicate a possible violation of the policies, the investigator shall perform the following steps:

The investigator shall promptly inform the person being investigated of the complaint and of the matter

being investigated and request their response to the matter by conducting a ¹Loudermill Hearing.

At the conclusion of the investigation the investigator will promptly report the results of the investigation to the 911 Director, in writing, in the following format:

- Matter Investigated
- Investigating Officer
- Persons Contacted
- Findings
- Conclusion
 - A response will then be generated to the complainant by the 911 Director that complaint has been validated and handled appropriately. It will also include any plans for improvement that have been put into practice.

Appropriate statements and other supporting documentation must be attached. All formal complaints that are founded and disciplinary action taken shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

The 911 Director shall administer discipline in cases of founded complaints ranging from verbal counseling, documented oral counseling, written reprimand, suspension and/or dismissal depending upon the nature of the offense.

¹ The "**Loudermill**" hearing is part of the "due process" requirement that must be provided prior to removing or impacting the employment property right (e.g. imposing severe discipline). The purpose of a "Loudermill hearing" is to provide an employee an opportunity to present his side of the story before the employer makes a decision on discipline.

1.5 York County Public Safety Policy Board

- 1.5A The formation of the Public Safety Policy Board was approved as an ad-hoc committee by the County Commissioners. The task of this committee is to help foster positive change within the Department of Emergency Services and within Public Safety Agencies throughout York County. The end result is that the citizens of York County are provided with the best services available with excellent customer service every day. This committee has no legislative authority over policy.
- 1.5B The Policy Board shall consist of fourteen (11) members and a Chairman of the Board, each of whom shall be appointed for a four year term no later than thirty (30) days following the swearing in of the Board of Commissioners following a general election every four years.
- 1.5C The initial appointments shall consist of fourteen (11) members and one (1) Chairman, of which all will serve until the end of the current Board of Commissioner's Term of office. The York County Board of Commissioners may appoint new members or reappoint existing member to the York County PSPB at the beginning of the new Board of Commissioner's term of office. Appointments must be made no later than thirty (30) days following the new Board of Commissioner's first meeting.
- 1.5E The York County Board of Commissioners or Chairman of the Board once established may appoint ex-officio members to the Policy Board. Ex-Officio members shall have limited privileges. No ex-officio member shall have voting rights.
- 1.5F The York County Board of Commissioners reserves the right and privilege to remove any member at any time of any reason.
- 1.5G The chair will be a non-voting member (unless the committee comes to a tie vote on a recommendation). Recommendations will be communicated to the working groups and the Department of Emergency Services. This committee will not have any binding legislative power over any agency. The committee only serves to advise of what it considers best practice and foster open communications to agencies utilizing DES services. The Department of Emergency Services and York County Government will

make the final decision on policy and procedure for its agencies and employees utilizing current chain of command procedure.

- 1.5H Recommendations for change to this manual will be submitted to the Policy Board's Communications Working Group. When a change is approved a memo will be distributed indicating the change. Users will make "pen and ink" changes to their manual and note the change in the revision log. A copy of the memo will be kept with the manual. The manual will be reprinted periodically to include all changes to that point. At that time, a new revision log will be included with the manual, and all change memos will be removed.

1.6 EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

1.6A GENERAL

Emergency Conditions may be implemented during any extended period of overwhelming call volume, to include but not limited to: large scale incidents, mass casualties, or severe weather. Emergency Conditions may be declared by the 911 Shift Supervisor on duty when deemed necessary. The phases of Emergency Conditions listed below may be implemented in any order and the phase of operations can be changed as the situation warrants. All communication center personnel and field units should understand that during periods of Emergency Conditions, emergency services of York County are excessively taxed and the current needs outweigh the available resources.

1.6B PROCEDURE

Phase I: During periods of Phase I Emergency Conditions the following operating procedures will be followed. In addition the following announcement should be made on all dispatch talk groups:

(5 second warble tone) "York to all units, York is now operating under Phase I of Emergency Conditions, Time."

A mobile cad message and countywide all-call of digital pagers will be sent with the above message along with a brief description of the phase.

1. Radio Traffic will be kept to an absolute minimum.
2. Non-emergency communications will not be taken via phone or radio, i.e. request for times, report numbers, road closings, status changes with Public Service calls.
3. Duty Officer notifications will not be made for fire drills, or other non-emergencies during this phase.
4. York County 911 will NOT make any notifications to utility companies unless directly related to a life safety issue. All field units will be issued a contact list and proper documentation to notify utility companies from their stations or the scene. All contact information will be available and updated on the ycdes.org website. After departments are issued their contact list it will be their responsibility to keep them updated.
5. All FIRE responses will be first due station only, unless a working fire or accident with entrapment has been reported. Duty Officers may request to upgrade any call to a full response at any time. No other officers will be acknowledged unless it is a priority message.
6. All EMS units due on fire calls will not be dispatched unless a need for medical assistance is identified, i.e. vehicle accidents.
7. All CELL PHONE hang up calls will be documented on paper. All calls will then be returned when call volume allows. All possible attempts should be made to filter through hang up calls to get to live callers with emergencies.
8. Med patches will not be made by the Communications Center except for medical command or ALS unstable patients.

Phase II: During periods of Phase II Emergency Conditions, the following operation procedures will be followed in addition to all procedures of Phase I.

York County 911 will activate the countywide “all call” and announce for personnel to report to their respective stations:

(5 second warble tone) “York to all units, York is now operating under Phase II Emergency Conditions, All personnel should report to your stations.”

A mobile cad message and countywide all-call of digital pagers will be sent with the above message along with a brief description of the phase.

1. Once individual stations are staffed, one person should contact the communications center and identify themselves as the duty officer with their rank.
2. Police, Fire, and EMS stations are encouraged to have at least one person in station as a primary contact.
3. All non-emergency calls will be “stacked” for the first due station. Items such as trees down and other low priority calls will be phoned in groups to the duty officer or main contact for each department. Each department may handle the low priority calls when time permits. This will eliminate these calls from the radio and allow for proper dispatch of emergency incidents.
4. York County 911 will consider staffing the Emergency Operations Center as deemed necessary.
5. Primary Dispatch positions should avoid answering phones if at all possible and if staffing permits. Supervisors should grant permission prior to logging out.
6. The Department of Emergency Services Public Information Officer (PIO) will be made aware of

the current situation and continually updated or briefed as the situation warrants.

- 1.6C Any changes, upgrades, downgrades, or cancellation of Emergency Conditions should be updated via radio, digital pagers, and mobile CAD.