

The Dispatch Center

802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of the Dispatch Center. It addresses the immediate information needs of the Department in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

802.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Elk Grove Police Department to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance. The Department utilizes a two-way interoperable radio system to provide continuous communication between the Dispatch Center and department members in the field.

802.3 STAFFING LEVELS AND HOURS

Shift and staffing levels in the Dispatch center are established by management. Each shift shall have eighty (80) hours of regular time for each pay period. During emergency staffing situations, staffing levels may be adjusted to maintain center operations. Management reserves the right to employ alternative work schedules to meet staffing levels in the center.

802.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

802.4.1 COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU MANAGER

The Communications Bureau Manager ensures the efficient and effective operation of the Dispatch Center. This includes long term planning, coordination with state and county funding sources related to 9-1-1, regional collaboration, implementation and selection of technology projects, policy and procedure recommendations, evaluation of staff, and recruitment/retention.

The Communications Bureau Manager, with assistance from Information Technology and Dispatch Supervisors selects, procures, implements and maintains all technical systems used in the day to day operation of dispatch duties. All recordings, analysis, and data shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law. The Communications Bureau Manager shall ensure procedures are established for:

- (a) Recording all telephone and radio communications and playback issues.
- (b) Storage and retention of recordings.
- (c) Security of audio recordings (e.g., passwords, limited access, authorized reviewers, preservation of recordings past normal retention standards).
- (d) Availability of current information for dispatchers (e.g., Watch Commander contact, rosters, member tracking methods, member contact, maps, emergency providers, tactical dispatch plans).

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- (e) Assignment of field members and safety check intervals.
- (f) Handling misdirected, silent and hang-up calls.
- (g) Handling private security alarms, if applicable.
- (h) Radio inoperability issues.
- (i) Emerging issues, such as Next Generation 911, First Net, Radio Service delivery (VoIP, Wireless 911 routing, Text to 911, telephony networks, P25 standards, etc.)

Furthermore, the Communications Bureau Manager is responsible for the following duties:

- (a) Processing Dispatch Activity Requests (DARs) for copies of the Dispatch Center Information and packaging for release.
- (b) Publishing 9-1-1-statistics for quarterly / yearly reporting.
- (c) Supervising, training, mentoring / coaching, and evaluating Dispatch Supervisory staff.
- (d) Participate in regional public safety organizations and attend meetings.
- (e) All other duties as assigned.

The Communications Bureau Manager is directly responsible to the Support Services Division Manager.

802.4.2 DISPATCH SUPERVISORS

The responsibilities of the Dispatch Supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective day to day operation of the Dispatch Center in coordination with other supervisors.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining dispatcher time records.
- (c) Supervising, training, mentoring and evaluating dispatchers.
- (d) Creating audio recordings, querying and compiling analysis of technical systems, which include in part: State 911 call answering reports, audio logger, CAD, CLETS/ NCIC, and radio statistics
- (e) Processing Dispatch Activity requests (DAR's) for copies of the Dispatch Center information for release.
- (f) Ensuring requests are processed for copies of the Dispatch Center information for release.
- (g) Maintaining and recommending procedure changes and updates to the Dispatch Procedures Manual as needed.
 - 1. Ensuring dispatcher compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (h) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided, accepting and evaluating personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (i) Maintaining a current emergency contact list of City personnel.

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- (j) Works closely with Dispatch Manager, Information Technology staff and/or product vendors to ensure proper functioning of all technical systems utilized in the Dispatch Center.
- (k) Works closely with the Dispatch Manager to select and implement updated and new technological systems and/or programs.

Dispatch Supervisors report to the Dispatch Manager.

802.4.3 LEAD DISPATCHERS

The Lead Dispatcher will work collaboratively with the supervisor in providing support and guidance in the workplace when a Dispatch Supervisor is not available

The responsibilities of a Lead Dispatcher include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Provide direction and assistance to dispatch staff
- (b) Communicate with the shift supervisor regarding concerns
- (c) Responsible for making necessary notifications to Watch Commanders and Communications Bureau Manager, as needed
- (d) Ensure minimum staffing levels are maintained
- (e) Coordinate coverage for last-minute vacancies
- (f) Approve short notice time off requests that do not incur overtime
- (g) Handle emergencies as they arise
- (h) Coordinate activities on shift with the watch commanders

The Lead Dispatcher will not be responsible for:

- (a) Investigating complaints
- (b) Writing performance notations or documented counseling
- (c) Any activity related to discipline

Requirements for the Lead Dispatcher position:

- (a) Candidate must currently be off probation
- (b) Candidate must possess a P.O.S.T. Basic Dispatch certificate
- (c) Candidate must show a high level of self-initiative
- (d) Candidate must have an over 3 or above average on their most recent evaluation

Candidates who meet the listed qualifications shall express interest through an IDC submitted to the supervisory team. Acceptance to the Lead Dispatcher Team is at the discretion of the Communications Bureau Manager. Dispatchers accepted to the Lead position will be trained by the supervisor on their shift in the Lead role. Once training is completed, the dispatcher will be added to the list of qualified leads who can act in a supervisory capacity in the absence of a supervisor.

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If the Lead continues to meet the qualifications, they will remain on the lead dispatcher team and they will select their shifts as outlined in the shift bid procedure. Each lead will be assigned to act in a supervisory capacity by the supervisor on their shift.

802.4.4 DISPATCHERS

The responsibilities of the dispatcher include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Receiving and handling all incoming and transmitted communications, including:
 - 1. Emergency 9-1-1 lines.
 - 2. Business telephone lines.
 - 3. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Text Telephone (TTY) equipment.
 - 4. Radio communications with department members in the field and support resources (e.g., fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), allied agency law enforcement units).
 - 5. Other electronic sources of information (e.g., text messages).
- (b) Documenting the field activities of department members and support resources (e.g., fire department, EMS, allied agency law enforcement units).
- (c) Inquiry and entry of information through the Dispatch Center, department and other law enforcement database systems (RMS, CLETS, DMV, NCIC).
- (d) Maintaining the current status of members in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.
- (e) Notifying the Watch Commander or field supervisor of emergency activity, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Vehicle pursuits.
 - 2. Foot pursuits.
 - 3. Assignment of emergency response.

Dispatchers report to a Dispatch Supervisor.

802.5 CALL HANDLING

In alignment with the Department's Mission, Vision and Values dispatchers shall be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

This Department provides members of the public with access to the 9-1-1 system for a single emergency telephone number.

When a call for services is received, the dispatcher will reasonably and quickly attempt to determine whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency, and shall quickly ascertain the call type, location and priority by asking five key questions:

- (a) Where?
- (b) What?

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- (c) When?
- (d) Who?
- (e) Weapon?

If the dispatcher determines that the caller has a hearing and/or speech impairment or disability, he/she shall immediately initiate a connection with the individual via available TDD/TTY equipment or Telephone Relay Service (TRS), as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If the dispatcher determines that the caller is a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual, the dispatcher should quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a language-appropriate authorized interpreter is available in the Dispatch Center, the dispatcher should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter.

802.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered an emergency when there is an immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage, and the timely arrival of public safety assistance is of the utmost importance. A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the dispatcher has obtained all necessary information to ensure the safety of the responding department members and affected individuals.

Emergency calls should be dispatched immediately. The Watch Commander shall be notified of pending emergency calls for service when department members are unavailable for dispatch.

802.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered a non-emergency call when there is no immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage. A person reporting a non-emergency may be placed on hold, if necessary, to allow the dispatcher to handle a higher priority or emergency call.

The reporting person should be advised if there will be a delay in the dispatcher returning to the telephone line or when there will be a delay in the response for service.

802.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

The police radio system is for official use only, to be used by dispatchers to communicate with department members in the field. All transmissions shall be professional and made in a calm, businesslike manner, using proper language and correct procedures. Such transmissions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Employees acknowledging the dispatcher with their radio identification call signs and current location.
- (b) Dispatchers acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Employees keeping the dispatcher advised of their status and location.
- (d) Employee and dispatcher acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

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The Dispatch Supervisor shall be notified of radio procedure violations or other causes for complaint. All complaints and violations will be investigated and reported to the complainant's supervisor and processed through the chain of command.

802.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

Elk Grove Police Department radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

802.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

Radio call signs are assigned to department members based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or member identification number. Dispatchers shall identify themselves on the radio with the appropriate station name or number, and identify the department member by his/her call sign. Members should use their call signs when initiating communication with the dispatcher. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the dispatcher can acknowledge the appropriate department member. Members initiating communication with other law enforcement or support agencies shall use their entire radio call sign, which includes the department name and call sign.

802.7 DOCUMENTATION

It shall be the responsibility of the Dispatcher to document all relevant information on calls for service or self-initiated activity. Dispatchers shall attempt to elicit, document and relay as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the officer and assist in anticipating conditions that may be encountered at the scene. Desirable information would include, at a minimum:

- (a) Date and time of request.
- (b) Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- (c) Type of incident reported.
- (d) Synopsis of incident including description of people and property involved.
- (e) Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- (f) Time lapse and direction of travel, if applicable.
- (g) Location of incident reported.
- (h) Identification and location changes of members assigned as primary and backup.
- (i) Time of dispatch.
- (j) Time of the responding officer's arrival.
- (k) Time of officer's return to service.
- (l) Disposition or status of reported incident.

Dispatchers will monitor the main radio channel and Sacramento Regional Hotline at all times. Auxiliary channels will be monitored when staffing allows, or upon the request of an officer. Officers are to use EGPD3 or a TAC channel for unit to unit traffic relevant to a specific call.

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Officers will utilize the in car computer systems to the full extent the software allows. Officers finding that emergency or safety conditions do not allow for the use of the in car computer systems shall broadcast information over the main radio channel. The dispatcher assigned to the radio channel will update information into the CAD event on behalf of the officer, and will take appropriate action.

802.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that becomes available through the Dispatch Center may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All members of the Dispatch Center shall treat information that becomes known to them as confidential and release that information in accordance with the Protected Information Policy.

Automated data, such as Department of Motor Vehicle records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal police files or medical information, shall only be made available to authorized law enforcement personnel.

Nonwithstanding the generality of the above, this section 802.8 will not be interpreted, applied, or enforced so as to infringe on EGPD employees' right to engage in collective action as protected by the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act ("MMBA," Gov. Code § 3500 et seq.)

802.9 SCHEDULING

802.9.1 BI-ANNUAL SHIFT AND VACATION BIDS

Shift bid and vacation selections will be held twice a year approximately 6 - 8 weeks prior to the start of the new shift bid period. Shifts and vacations are based on seniority.

Shift bids will be administered through the scheduling system. Each dispatcher will be notified via email when it is their time to bid. The dispatcher will log into the scheduling system and make their selection. This will repeat until all dispatchers have made their selection.

Shift trades outside of the bidding period will follow guidelines outlined in Policy 401.5.1.

Once all shifts have been updated in the scheduling system, vacation bids will commence. In seniority order, each dispatcher will log in and make their first vacation selection. The system will notify the dispatcher when it is their time to select. The number of rounds of selections each dispatcher is allotted is determined by the current EGPD MOU.

The following guidance applies to annual vacation bid approvals:

- (a) No more than one (1) employee per shift can be on vacation at a time
- (b) No more than two (2) employees from each side of the week can be off at the same time
- (c) The Communications Bureau Manager has the right to block out certain dates for staffing needs

802.9.2 DISCRETIONARY TIME OFF

Time off requests, other than annual vacation picks, will be referred to as discretionary time off

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- (a) Discretionary time off can be entered any time after the annual vacation selections have been completed
 - 1. To account for any center staffing needs, these requests may not be approved until 30 days prior
 - 2. If multiple requests are made for the same day / time, the requests will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis
- (b) Requests that create overtime will only be granted if the time is filled voluntarily by another dispatcher
- (c) Discretionary time off requests should be processed through the scheduling system

802.9.3 SHIFT TRADES

All shift trades will be entered into the scheduling system for approval by a Dispatch Supervisor.

- (a) An email will be sent to the supervisor email group, advising the following information
 - Dispatchers participating in the trade(s)
 - The dates and times of the trade(s)
 - Confirmation that the trade has been entered into the scheduling system
- (b) The Dispatch Supervisor will approve or deny the trade in the scheduling system

See the current EGPD MOU for additional information regarding shift trades.

802.9.4 FLEXING

- (a) Flexing will be done at the discretion of the Dispatch Supervisor and / or Communications Bureau Manager
- (b) Flexing of an employee's schedule may be done to accommodate meetings, training, or other such activities that require a shift adjustment or relief from shift to attend such activities

802.9.5 OVERTIME

Overtime will be used in the Dispatch Center when necessary to maintain minimum staffing levels. Basic rules and definitions for overtime process

- (a) All overtime hours worked to support the needs of the center will be counted toward total accrued hours
- (b) It shall be the determination of the Dispatch Supervisor when:
 - 1. Overtime is needed to maintain daily staffing levels
 - 2. Additional staffing is needed for declared emergencies, or for
 - 3. Other situations requiring additional staffing

Any changes to this process are at the discretion of the Communications Bureau Manager.

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802.9.6 JURY DUTY

- (a) Employees that receive a jury summons are required to provide a copy to their supervisor upon its receipt
- (b) Employees assigned to jury duty on their days off will not be compensated
- (c) Employees assigned to work night shift will be flexed off at a reasonable time but not less than eight (8) hours prior to the required reporting time for their jury service
- (d) Once an employee is released from jury duty, they shall contact the on-duty supervisor for direction on when to work, making sure the employee has a minimum of eight (8) hours before reporting for duty
- (e) Employees are required to provide their supervisor with a daily receipt of their time on jury duty

802.10 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Dispatchers shall receive training consistent with minimum standards established by POST (Penal Code § 13510).