2.8 Use of Emergency Communications

2.8.1 Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to ensure responder safety.

2.8.2 Policy
It is the policy of the Department to coordinate the delivery of ACS Responder services with requests from citizens and Department personnel utilizing radio, telephone, and digital communications equipment.

2.8.3 Rules of use for Emergency Communication Equipment/Radio

A. Use of City communications equipment is for official business only as follows:
> 1. Plain text will be used when transmitting. The Ten Code may need to be referenced when communicating with Police officers, particularly when reading MDT comments from Police.
>
> 2. All references to time shall be in military (24-hour) time.
>
> 3. The necessary language shall be short and relevant.
>
> 4. When feasible, lengthy messages shall be given by telephone, Mobile Digital Terminal (MDT), or on a non-dispatch channel.
>
> 5. Personnel shall be professional when using voice transmission and when using their MDT. Jokes, wisecracks, profanities, or voice inflections that reflect or indicate irritation, disrespect, or sarcasm shall not be used.
>
> 6. Transmissions should not be acknowledged unless they are understood.
>
> 7. Every ACS Responder in a field assignment must have access to radio communications equipment.
>
> 8. Every ACS Responders must complete MDT and Radio Training from Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR) Alarm Room before the use of communication equipment.
>
> 9. Every ACS responder is personally responsible for their assigned communication equipment, including Motorola radio, City Issued Cell Phone, MDT. If the assigned equipment is broken, stolen, or misplaced, it is the responsibility of that ACS responder to replace the equipment.

B. Department Phone Numbers
> 1. When needed, follow-up contact information will be given to citizens. This information will include the ACS hub station telephone number, hours of operation and days of service. The number 242-COPS will not be given as a contact number for ACS personnel. No restricted Emergency Communication Center (ECC) telephone numbers will be given to citizens.

C. Assignment of Unit Call-Signs
> 1. The AFR Alarm Room Tech Team is responsible for the assignment of all call signs.

a. Every ACS Responder will be given a call-sign. Call-signs are numbers or combination of numbers and letters that identify a particular responder assigned to a sector beat or unit or other individuals, by assignment, which need to be readily identified during radio contact.

2. Personnel assigned a permanent call sign shall be called by, and answer to, their assigned unit call number.

3. Personnel who call out on air "off-duty" will identify themselves to Alarm Room Dispatchers to notify responders is off-duty. The responder must also change status in the CAD to off-duty.

D. Unit Location Response
1. When any ACS unit is called by the Alarm Room Dispatcher, the unit will promptly respond with his/her call-sign and location.

E. Calls Considered Official Orders
1. All calls by the ECC shall be considered as official orders being subject to review only after the call has been responded to and handled. Supervisors may countermand a dispatch for justifiable cause.

2. When dispatched to a call for service, the primary ACS responder will be responsible for ensuring the AFR Alarm Room is contacted before returning into service. Contact will not be necessary on calls that indicate "no contact" or calls where ACS is no longer required/retracted.

F. Authorized Out-of-Service Activities
1. All units with MDTs must log off the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system at the end of their field duty assignment.

2. All units with MDTs must change status from active mode in the CAD system by describing the reason for out-of-service status.

G. Other Jurisdictions
1. Unless life-threatening emergencies exist, units will not be dispatched to the following locations/incidents without the permission of the appropriate on-duty area supervisor.

a. University of New Mexico

b. State Fairgrounds

c. Kirtland Air Force Base (except for certain areas)

d. Veteran's Administration Hospital

e. Locations outside the Albuquerque City limits

2. In those instances, where life threatening emergencies are believed to exist, immediate dispatch will occur with the earliest possible follow-up notifications to the appropriate on-duty area supervisor.

H. Requests by Other Agencies/Cross Dispatches

    1. Requests for support services from other agencies will be handled as follows:

        a. requests will only be honored if approved by the ACS Director and/or Deputy Director of Field Response.

    2. ACS responders will not be cross-dispatched by other jurisdictions/agencies.

        a. ACS Responders who are approached by citizens to investigate crimes that occurred then then the responder must confirm the nature of the incident with details of the situation.

        b. ACS responder must radio into AFR Alarm Room dispatch the details of the incident. If the nature of the call be deemed low-acuity with no need for a law enforcement or medical services response then ACS responder will handle the call at that time. If the ACS is not the appropriate response then the responder must request the assistance from:

            1. AFR should the citizen(s) require immediate medical related services.

            2. Albuquerque Police Department (APD) should the nature of the incident and citizen(s) require the services of a sworn officer.

I. Required Use of MDT

    1. ACS Department personnel assigned to field duty are equipped with MDT and shall use the MDT for all non-emergency communication activities including, but not limited to:

        a. All non-emergency status changes;

        b. Self-initiated out-of-service activities;

        c. Routine car-to-car communications;

        d. When clearing calls with lengthy remarks; and

        e. Community Events. Any time a responder is at a community function, the responder should change the status in the MDT, allowing the responder to still be available for dispatch to high priority calls.

    2. Supervisors and/or Responders shall not avoid calls by negotiating with Radio Dispatchers as to handling and holding calls. Responders will be expected to remain available for dispatch to calls for service until the end of their shift.

    3. Responders will be responsible to login to the CAD using the MDT at the start of their shift and log off at the end of their shift. AFR Alarm Room Dispatchers will not log responders on or off unless the responder's MDT is out of service.

    4. Responders must log themselves out on break and when back in service

    5. Supervisors may override dispatchers as to whom they dispatch on calls but only on a case-by-case basis. Supervisors will make themselves aware of calls holding before changing any dispatch orders.

J. ECC
1. The ECC is a restricted area. Access to the communication center will be provided to authorized personnel only.

a. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted within the ECC without the permission of the Control Supervisor.

b. Master tapes and certain other original information will not be removed except by written order and signed receipt, due to its evidentiary and confidential nature.

2. The AFR Alarm Room Dispatch Center is located at the ECC.

K. Dispatch Talk Groups
1. AFR Alarm Room Dispatch and ECC will assign ACS responders one voice communication channel for dispatch talk group. This channel will be used by on-duty units.

a. The assigned radio channel can be utilized as a talk group for a special event or on-duty coordination with other responders on shift.

b. ACS responders must not remain on the talk group channel for the entirety of their shift. Responders are expected to maintain communication with AFR Dispatch on the Alarm Room Radio channel.

L. Communication with Other Public Safety Agencies
1. ACS Department personnel is not authorized to communicate with other area public safety agencies utilizing the Department's Motorola radio system;

2. ACS radios will be programmed to include only the AFR Alarm Room Dispatch and ACS assigned talk group channel.

M. Phonetic Alphabet
1. The phonetic alphabet shall be used for spelling out unusual names, persons, and locations, or when radio reception is poor. When spelling out a word, use only the phonetic alphabet; example: John Doe -John, Ocean, Henry, Nora, David, Ocean, Edward.

A – Adam	H – Henry	O – Ocean	V - Victor
B – Boy	I – Ida	P - Paul	W - William
C - Charles	J – John	Q - Queen	X - X-ray
D – David	K - King	R - Robert	Y - Young
E – Edward	L – Lincoln	S - Sam	Z - Zebra
F - Frank	M – Mary	T - Tom	
G - George	N - Nora	U – Union	

2. This is not to confused with AFR's dispatch code system.

N. Dispatch Codes

     1. AFR Alarm Room Dispatchers use plain text, not Ten codes. Plain text will be used in the CAD on the MDTs when dispatching ACS to calls for service.

          a. AFR dispatchers utilize a #/letter dispatch code to distinguish between type medical code and level of priority.

               A- Alpha (low acuity call; no lights and sirens)

               B- Bravo (low acuity call)

               C- Charlie (lights and sirens)

               D- Delta (lights and sirens)

               E- Echo (high acuity call; lights and sirens)

     2. APD uses Ten Codes. Dispatchers and Sworn Officers will use Ten Codes in the CAD on the MDTs when providing comments to calls for service.

          a. APD dispatch may request an ACS Responders to support sworn officers on calls for service related to mental and behavioral health services.

          b. ACS Responders will need to be familiar with APD Ten Code to comprehend the comments entered by APD Dispatch and Officers in the CAD.

               Priority levels 1- (high acuity call; lights and sirens)

                       2 (lights and sirens)

                       3 (lights and sirens-optional)

                       4 (low acuity call)

                       5 (low acuity call; no lights and sirens)

[Attach APD Ten Codes]

[Attach AFR A-E Codes]

Policy referenced APD 2-10 Use of Emergency Communications