Title: School Radio Procedures

POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY

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School Radio Policy

Radio Procedures

Purpose

Pottawattamie County in the continued interests of Public Safety has taken steps to utilize the School Districts' transportation resources in the event of emergencies. Mobile and portable radios have been deployed in school buses as well as schools within Pottawattamie County. These radios are part of the Douglas/Pottawattamie Metro wide 800MHz radio system.

The purpose of these radio procedures is to give the person operating the radio information to make a decision upon which method to use to contact the Pottawattamie County Sherriff's Office 911 Center when emergencies incident occur.

Methods of Calls

Several methods may be utilized to contact 911 such as, wire line (Land line), wireless (cellular phone) or by using the radio.

In some cases, phone service may be unavailable for multiple situations. Situations may include damaged lines, poles, boxes, System failures, and fiber lines that get cut or damaged.

When you place a 911 call, there may be a possibility that your call may be delivered to another Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) or what we will call a 911 Center. This "call forwarding" may occur due to call overflow from the 911 Center you are calling and it occurs when their 911 lines are all busy or a system issue occurs with the 911 center that you may be calling.

When using a wireless, or cellular device, this device is considered a mobile device used by the caller. The service and reception cannot be guaranteed. In times of emergency, the cellular network may be inundated by callers; this in turn may busy up all circuits and make the cellular network unavailable to all users, therefore your cellular phone will not work.

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Call Information – Automatic Location and Number Identifiers

A wire line, or land line phone, may provide the Automatic Number Identifier (ANI, the phone number) and the Automatic Location Identifier (ALI the location) information, which displays the telephone number of the instrument from which the 911 call was placed, as well as the name, house number, street name, class of service (kind of device such as payphone, wire line, etc), and police, fire and medical zones from which the 911 call was placed. A wire line, or land line, would most likely be in a fixed location, such as a home or business. This method, may give the caller the ability to have a two way conversation with the 911 Operator, making it easier to ask questions and ascertain information for the responders.

With these types of calls, there are different types of information provided. WRLS, or wireless, no subscriber information is provided. WPH1, or Phase 1 wireless cellular call, no latitude and longitude information provided. WPH2, or Phase 2 wireless cellular call, usually displays the latitude and longitude.

In certain circumstances there may be a time when dialing 911 from a cell phone, that you are routed to a different Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). This may occur when your own 911 centers, 911 lines are all busy or your cellular phone, or if your cell phone signal reaches a tower in the area and that tower is selectively routed to a different PSAP due to the location or geographic area. A cellular phone call provides the caller with mobility, and the ability to have a two way conversation with the 911 Operator, making it easier to ask questions and ascertain information for the responders.

Radio Operations

A radio on the Pottawattamie County 800MHz Radio system provides at least 95% portable coverage on the hip. This coverage may extend into the adjacent counties to provide extended coverage areas.

Using a radio is somewhat different that using a phone. A phone is a two way conversation that uses a method called Trunking, where two people can carry on a conversation basically at the same time. When using a radio, only one person can talk at a time. Once you have depressed the push to talk button located on the left side of the microphone or portable radio and you wait for the permission to talk tone, and then speak, you cannot be interrupted by the Operator or anyone else on the talk group/channel. This holds true for the 911 operator, while the 911 operator is talking, you must wait for them to stop talking and take a second, make sure no one else is talking and you can talk or respond.

Unit Identification

Every unit on the system is given an identification number that is unique to your radio.   Once you push the press to talk button (PPT), the 911 operator will see a unit identifier, such as BUS30M LCSD, this shows the operator that Bus 30 Mobile at Lewis Central is calling on the radio talk group/channel. Your radios do not have location devices installed (GPS) at this time, and a 911 Operator will not have the units location.

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Radio - Advantages

Radio calls/traffic that is received by the 911 Center is considered emergency and has priority over all other calls/traffic. This choice is optimal during something of high priority or emergency/ in progress (occurring right now). By using this method, the time delay is reduced when trying to contact 911.

In the event of an accident or someone that is hurt (medical emergency), it is recommend that you do not move the patient, it is recommended that you take the phone to be near the patient. If this is not possible, having your radio nearby would be most ideal situation to assist the 911 Operator while gathering the patient information and providing pre arrival instructions to you, if you are the caller.

Utilizing your radio may be the best choice when you are witnessing something in progress, and need to keep visual contact with the activity of the incident. You must remember "Safety First" and to not endanger yourself or any other bystander. If it is safe to do so, whenever possible, the reporting party should stay in contact with the 911 Center until responding units arrive.

For the purpose of operations, in progress calls are defined as incidents that are currently occurring, or have just occurred, within the past 10 minutes.

By using your radio, this may be the ideal method of communication when mobile and/or when changing locations to contact the 911 Center. Once again, safety is first and it is recommended that you do not compromise your or anyone else's safety.

Information Gathering

When utilizing the 911 system, the 911 personnel will ask you a series of questions that 911 will use to brief the first responders that are dispatched to help you at your incident. When using a radio to contact the 911 Center, you will use the following procedure:

When contacting the 911 Communications Center, always identify your District, then name or title.

> **Example:** **Avoca Bus #1:** *"911 from Avoca Bus #1."*
>
> **911 Operator:** *"Avoca Bus #1, Go ahead,"*

Once the 911 operator advises you to "Go Ahead", you may press the push to talk button, wait for the permission to talk tone and begin to talk. The location of the incident should always be the first item given or asked first. In this instance, no matter what else happens, the call for service can still be dispatched. If you are calling from an office or another location that is not the location of the incident, or you are calling on behalf of someone else, always give the location of the incident first. The 911 Operator will verify this information and then ask you additional questions relating to the nature of your incident.

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Listed below are some questions that the 911 operator may ask of you to help provide additional information to the responding units.

"Where" may not be as simple as it sounds. "Where" might include:

- Where did this happen?
- Where are you now?
- Where is the suspect?
- Where is the patient?
- Where is this occurring?
- Where can you be reached?

"Where" must be very specific:

- Business name, business address, suite number, location inside the building, location outside a building.
- Apartment name, address, apartment number, building number, location inside the complex.
- House address, location, directions, color, description.
- Street name or cross street, landmarks, which direction and how far?

If Weapons and Where. Every time you have a volatile situation, without exception, find out if there are weapons being used, threatened, or available. Find out where the weapons are:

- Does anyone have any weapons?
- Where are they?
- Did anyone mention weapons or guns?
- Are there weapons or guns in the residence?
- Where in the residence?
- Is the suspect known to carry guns or weapons?
- Did you see the weapon?

After the location of the incident has been determined, the 911 Operator will need to know what is happening, or what happened.

- What is happening?
- What happened?
- What is the problem?
- What do you need?
- What are you requesting be done?
- What was taken?

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"What" questions help determine not only the nature of the incident, but also the priority of the call and who to send:

- What is the number of persons involved?
- What is the extent of injuries?
- What is the potential for injuries?
- What was threatened?

"When" can greatly change the priority and response to a call. If it is determined that a call is in progress or just occurred, it has a different response than if the event is over and there is no chance of immediate apprehension of a suspect and there is no impending danger to the victim or responding units. "When" is essential to have a full understanding of the situation.

Some relevant when questions are:

- Is this happening now?
- How long ago?
- When will it become a problem?
- How long were you away from the office?
- How long has the patient felt ill?
- How long before the bomb will explode?
- When did the suspect leave?
- How long before you can be there?

It is very important that the 911 Operator verify who is notifying the 911 Center. They may also ask how you are related to the incident you are reporting.

Some important questions they may ask:

- Who is calling?
- What is your relationship to this event?
- Who is the suspect?
- What is the suspect's relationship to you? Friend? Stranger?
- Who is fighting? What is their relationship to one another?
- Who else is involved?
- Who is there with you?
- Who told you this?
- Who is this person?
- Who did you talk to?

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The 911 Operator may need clarification to your request or incident.

They may ask:

- Why is he threatening you?
- Why are they fighting?
- Why do you think that?
- Why did she take the vehicle?
- Do you know why she took the pills?
- Why are you worried?

Information Sharing and Dispatching

Only talk group/channel **_A4-911_** will be monitored and recorded by the 911 Communications Center.

Information sharing is the rapid and efficient exchange of information between all Public Safety and non Public Safety users on the system. All agencies involved in an incident will be kept informed of any changes.

Personnel as well as users of the system shall not transmit if the transmission is likely to interfere with other communications.

Messages shall be direct and to the point and any one transmission will not last more than sixty (60) seconds at any one time.

Additional countywide talk groups/channels (A5 through A10 ground channels) shall only be assigned by the 911 Center to the appropriate call types. A Metro Channel will be assigned to any of these incidents if the incident location borders Nebraska or involves out of State agencies. Talk groups/Channels C1 through C4 may be assigned for scheduled events such as parades, concerts, sporting events, etc. Upon request to the 911 Center, if justified, 911 Communications will assign all countywide talkgroups/channels on the Pottawattamie system. Self assigning or imitating any conversation to any countywide talk group/channel is prohibited.

Weather Broadcasts

In the event Pottawattamie County is under severe weather, a 911 Operator will broadcast information given by the National Weather Service over the School 911 (A4) talk group/Channel. This will occur every time there is a warning, regardless the time of day, or time of year. The broadcasts are not limited to, but will include the following:

Severe Thunderstorm Watches and Warnings

Winter Storm Watches and Warnings

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Flash Flood Watches and Warnings

Tornado Watches and Warnings

Internal Radio Procedures – School Districts

Portable radios may be assigned to individuals at the School Administrators discretion. Districts may initiate a sign out protocol to ensure the school system can account for all the Districts radios. In the event of an emergency, 911 may notify a call list of school representatives and that representative must be aware of knowing who has a radio, where it may be, and what it is being used for.

District staff or students will not access, monitor or scan any talk group/channel other than A1 through A4 talk groups, unless you are involved in an incident. This is a responder safety issue and it will ensure staff or students are not hearing sensitive information to include victim or suspect names or locations.

System security is a priority. In the event that a radio is lost or stolen, the School Administrator shall immediately contact the 911 Communications Center at 712-328-5737 and report the incident. The radio will then be inhibited and taken off the radio system until such time as the radio is recovered.

Radio Emergency Button Activation

An orange emergency button is located on all Motorola portables and mobiles responder/units radios in Pottawattamie County. The purpose of an emergency button is to provide a rapid notification to 911 dispatch as well as other subscriber radios that an officer/unit is in need of immediate emergency assistance.

Upon activation of the emergency button, the microphone on the portable/mobile radio will open up and provide hot audio for (10) seconds, allowing the Telecommunications Operator as well as other officers/units to hear radio traffic coming from the portable/mobile in which the emergency button has been activated. The activation will also display the emergency activation and officer/unit identification number and create an audible tone thru the dispatch console. During the (10) seconds of hot audio from the radio that activated the emergency button, this transmission cannot be interrupted by any other radio traffic.

There are two types of activation; Revert and Tactical. When the radio user activates the emergency button on a talk group that is set for Revert, the portable/mobile will automatically Revert to the 911 Schools talk group located on each of the 911 Consoles. In the Schools subscriber radio it is located in position A4 in the School Radio Zone Configuration and fleet map.

When the radio user activates the emergency button on a talk group that is set for Tactical, the portable/mobile will automatically continue to stay on the talk group (open microphone for 20 seconds) they are currently on (A5-A10 and A15 in the schools radio). This emergency activation will alarm on the selected talk group only and only alarm at all the 911 Consoles, if the talk group is one that is monitored

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on the 911 dispatch console. This is also true for the portables/mobiles, if the subscriber is on the specific talk group or scanning the talk group, they will also receive the emergency notification.

Activation Procedure

When any emergency button activation from a subscriber's radio, the following protocol shall be followed:

A. Silence or "Knock Down" that emergency alarm on the Console by the 911 Operator while listening to the "Hot" microphone audio from the radio subscriber.

B. Multi-select the 911 Schools or the Tactical talk group where the emergency activation occurred, as well as the primary talk group and say the following over the radio;

   911 Dispatcher: *"Emergency button activation UNIT__, UNIT__ status?"*

   Radio Subscriber: *"Unit __ No Emergency"*

   911 Dispatcher: *"Clear, UNIT__ advises accidental activation…(give time)"*

C. If the 911 Operator receives no response from the radio subscriber that is not on a scene, or has an unknown situation (i.e. medical emergency or possible disturbance heard while the microphone is open), the 911 Operator will send a deputy/officer to the School District location that the radio is assigned to. The 911 Operator will also contact the School District location so that they may make contact with the person who has the radio that activated the emergency button. The 911 Operator will continue to attempt to make contact.

D. If the 911 Operator receives no response from a unit ON A SCENE in which Incident Command has been established, Multi-select the 911 Schools and the Tactical talk group where the emergency activation occurred as well as the A4-911 talk group and state the following;

   Dispatcher: *"All Units at_____(location),Emergency button activation from UNIT__, as occurred, no contact made, last know location was_____, UNIT_____Status?"*

If the 911 Operator receives no response at all, notify the Incident Commander (IC) of the negative contact and have the IC acknowledge activation. The IC will then send units on scene to investigate.

If there is no evidence of an emergency, the 911 Operator only needs to attempt to make contact once. If there is no contact made, the 911 Operator will make contact with the school system from a list of contacts provided by the school. The school will be responsible for making contact and checking the welfare of the radio user that activated the emergency button. If law or fire/emergency medical services are needed, the school will contact 911 for assistance.

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911 Operators may use discretion. They should pay close attention to background noises, tone of voice and word choice of a radio user as additional evidence to assist with the determination of the status of any emergency button activation. In any situation where the 911 Operator believes an emergency situation exists, an appropriate public safety response will be initiated.

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