

BASIC RADIO TECHNIQUES UNIT 5 – SPECIAL RADIO TRAFFIC

RESPONDER SAFETY TERMS OR CODES

- Agencies may expect the dispatcher to assign response codes to calls, such as Code 1 for routine calls, Code 2 to respond as quickly as possible, but less than emergent and Code 3, respond using full emergency response, lights, sirens. Agencies define these terms differently so be mindful when using these codes when speaking with other departments. Other agencies may use a word identifier for response codes such as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta responses. Alpha would signal an emergency response and Delta would be the lowest priority.
- Most agencies have a designated “**sensitive radio traffic to follow**” code that is used to alert a field unit of important, responder safety information. Some of these may be a 10-code type of notification, while others may use a phrase such as the agency name before the field unit’s number. For an example, the dispatcher would say, “Dispatch Oakville PD Unit 23” to signal dangerous/sensitive radio traffic, when normally they would have said “Dispatch, Unit 23”.
 - **When any dangerous/sensitive radio traffic signal is given, the dispatcher will wait for a the officer’s response before giving the information.** The field unit may be too close to the suspect and not able to get the information without the suspect hearing the radio. Officers need to **know how and when they are being signaled of dangerous radio traffic in order to respond appropriately.**
 - Officers may also signal that they need assistance but are not able to explain the reason on the radio. This may be in the form of a code or phrase. Again, officers should be made aware of what codes or phrases are special to their agencies.
 - **Words such as “help”, “send back-up”, “need assistance”, and “send another unit”** may generate different levels of response in different agencies. The dispatcher may need to clarify what assistance is needed if there is no set procedure. How many additional units are needed? At what level do they need to respond?
- Responder **emergency button** responses – may be a button on the mobile, portable radio, or MDT which when activated, sends an alert or alarm signal to the dispatch center. Agency procedures may differ on acknowledgement and response to these alarms so refer to your department procedures and be prepared to respond appropriately.

CLOSING OR RESTRICTING FREQUENCY

Closing or restricting a frequency is an option that dispatchers, field units, or supervisors may choose on high priority or dangerous calls. An over-the-air announcement to close a frequency is made by the dispatcher. From that point forward, no radio traffic is allowed unless it is either related to the incident or of an emergency nature.

Adapted from the **WSCJTC Telecommunicator-2 Course Manual**

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Again, agency policies may differ, but a guideline to follow when closing or restricting frequencies is that the dispatcher should announce on **all** frequencies that the particular channel is closed or restricted for all but the emergency incident. The dispatcher will also announce where field units not involved in the emergency should direct their traffic. If units not involved in the emergency use the frequency, the dispatcher will advise of the restriction and/or advise the unit to switch to a secondary frequency. Once the emergency abates and the frequency is re-opened, the dispatcher will announce on **all** channels the re-opening of the restricted frequency.

Some agencies use channel marker tones rather than voice announcements to advise of a frequency closure or restriction. This marker is an intermittent “beep” on the channel. A voice transmission overrides the beeping. This beep indicates the channel is ***not clear for non-emergency radio traffic***.

PURSUITS

Pursuits are usually initiated by officers and involve either vehicle or foot pursuits. The dispatcher is required to document the location, where it began, the direction of travel, speed, and other information.

Expect the dispatcher to repeat that an officer is in pursuit, the location and the direction of travel and then close the air. Dispatchers may repeat critical information that other responders need to know, such as occasional updated locations and direction of travel or information such as weapons, items thrown from the vehicle, etc. *Agency policies prevail*. Repeating of information is often based on clarity of transmissions and effectiveness of radio systems.

Surrounding agencies may be notified if applicable.

FELONY STOPS

There may be any number of situations occurring that will require a felony stop procedure from field units. These may include armed robbery, stolen vehicles, eluding, or any felony crime.

During these stops, dispatchers are trained that officers may not be able to give updates or status checks while they initiate the stop and remove people from the vehicle. Upon notification that a felony stop will be made the unit should advise dispatch of the number of persons in the vehicle. The dispatcher should send back up to the unit, which equals at least one more field unit than the number of persons in the vehicle; and restrict or close the frequency. If possible, a second or third unit arriving at the scene should update dispatch.

Upon receiving notification that the scene has been secured, the frequency should be opened.