
	<b>STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE</b>			
	RESPONSE			
	COMMUNICATIONS			
	Effective 17/Jun/02	Revised: 10/Dec/20	S.O.G #: R-407	

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to establish procedures for Fire Department personnel when communicating on the radio. Clear, concise, and effective communication procedures are critical in the delivery of fire and emergency medical services.

## 2.0 Responsibility



- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all Battalion Chiefs, Lieutenants, and Firefighters to understand and follow the procedures established in this Standard Operating Guideline.

## 3.0 General Radio Guidelines

- 3.1 Use a moderate rate of speaking, not too slow and not too fast.
- 3.2 Use a moderate expression of speech, not a monotone and not overemphasized. Avoid *shouting* over the radio and be careful to articulate properly.
- 3.3 Use a vocal quality that is not too strong or too weak. Finish every comment and avoid a voice that trails off at the end. Strive for good voice quality.
- 3.4 Be confident in what you say. Position the microphone appropriately (approximately 1 to 2 inches away from your mouth) to make best use of the system. This includes the apparatus radio microphone, portable radio microphone, and the vehicle intercom system microphone.
- 3.5 Be concise and to the point. Give the information required in a logical and complete manner that best addresses the service requested.
- 3.6 Do not transmit until the airwaves are clear. This includes listening for other departments assigned to our fire frequency – Lake Forest & Lake Bluff
- 3.7 Think about what is going to be said before transmitting.
- 3.8 Remember that any unit working at a fire or emergency medical alarm has priority over any other transmission.
- 3.9 Do not use profane or obscene language on the air.
- 3.10 Under no circumstances are personnel to remove the speaker/microphones from any portable radio.

## 4.0 Order Model

- 4.1 The Highland Park Fire Department has adopted an Order Model to be used for all radio communications. The order model refers to a four-step method of structuring radio messages so that information can be transmitted and received in the most efficient manner. Radio communications will be regulated by the following order model guidelines:
- 4.1.1 Step 1: The sender will alert the receiver and then give his/her unit identification.
- 4.1.2 Step 2: The receiver will give his/her unit identification and indicate they are ready to receive the message.
- 4.1.3 Step 3: The sender will then transmit the message, order, etc.
- 4.1.4 Step 4: The receiver will then give his/her unit identification and acknowledge receipt of the message. A brief restatement of the message is the best acknowledgement.
- 4.1.4.1 Dispatch will acknowledge all communications directed to it with a brief restatement of the message, with particular attention given to repeating on the scene, size-up, and progress reports.
- 4.2 The order model will be used in the following types of radio communications:
- 4.2.1 During dispatch to, response to, and termination of an event.
- 4.2.2 While giving a task-oriented assignment
- 4.2.3 When an acknowledgement is not received following the first transmission of a frequent use communication, as defined in Section 4.3 below.

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4.2.4 Whenever added information is given to or from the scene of an incident.

4.3 Order model Step 2 and 3 can be eliminated during frequent use communications, such as:

4.3.1 When going out of quarters or back in quarters.

4.3.2 When enroute to a given location.

4.3.3 When on the scene of an incident.

4.3.4 Any other frequent use communications.

4.3.5 Example:

Step 1: *"Dispatch from Engine 34"*

Step 2: *"Engine 34 is available in district on training"*

Step 3: *"Engine 34 in district" (dispatch communication)*

## 5.0 Standardized Terminology

5.1 In order to establish common radio language and add consistency that is understood by all personnel, standardized terminology will be utilized in the transmitting of information over the radio. The following standardized terminology shall be used during radio transmissions:

5.1.1 Apparatus that is available on the air on a detail or for a specific reason:

5.1.1.1 Terminology: Available, In-Service

Example: *"Engine 34 is available in District 34 on building inspections"*

*"Engine 32 is in-service in District 32, training"*

5.1.2 Apparatus that is responding to an emergency or non-emergency incident:

5.1.2.1 Terminology: Enroute, Responding

Example: *"Engine 34 end-route to 1150 Half Day Road on a Code 3"*

Example: *"Ambulance 34 responding to 1150 Half Day Road on a Code 3"*

5.1.3 Apparatus that arrives on the scene of an incident:

5.1.3.1 Terminology: On the Scene, On Location

Example: *"Battalion 33 is on the scene, 718 Glenview Avenue"*

Example: *"Squad 33 on location, 1677 Old Deerfield Road"*

5.1.3.2 Companies that arrive on the scene of a Code 3, Code 4, or multiple-patient Code 1 will also give a proper size-up radio report. On Code 3 and Code 4 Alarms, the first arriving Company will also indicate their mode of operation per Standard Operating Guideline O-303, Incident Management System – Command Procedures, Section 6.0, i.e. Nothing Showing Mode, Fast Attack Mode, Command Mode, etc.

Example: *"Squad 33 is on the scene, 990 Deerfield Road, single story residence, nothing showing, Squad 33 will be investigating"*



5.1.4 Apparatus that is returning to quarters or back on detail from an incident:

5.1.4.1 Terminology: Returning to Quarters, Available (notify Dispatch of any pertinent information)

Example: *"Engine 34 is returning to quarters"*

Example: *"Squad 33 is available, remaining on the air"*

Example: *"Alarm was caused by cooking smoke in apartment 302, Command terminated, Battalion 33 returning to quarters"*

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5.1.5 When contacting the communications center at the Police Station:

5.1.5.1 Terminology: Highland Park, Highland Park Dispatch, Dispatch

Example: *"Highland Park Dispatch from Battalion 33"*

Example: *"Dispatch from Engine 34"*

Example: *"Highland Park from Squad 33"*

5.2 When responding to a MABAS Division 3 incident, beware they have established a standard for portable radio designations based on apparatus riding positions. The radio designations are:

5.2.1 Apparatus Officer or front seat rider: X as in "x-ray"

5.2.2 Apparatus Operator: O as in "ocean"

5.2.3 Example: The Officer on Engine 34 would use the radio designation Squad 34 X.

Example: The apparatus operator on Engine 32 would use the radio designation Engine 32 O.

## 6.0 Use of the Fireground Frequency

6.1 The Department has several fireground radio frequencies available to utilize at emergency incidents. The following list documents the frequencies and their intended use:

6.1.1 Red: This is the Department's *main fireground frequency*, and is the main fireground frequency for both MABAS Division III and Division IV. This frequency is located in the last position in all radios.

6.1.2 White: This is a back-up to the main fireground frequency.

6.1.3 Other Frequencies: The Highland Park Fire Department is licensed to operate on the following additional frequencies: Blue, Gold, Black, Gray (fireground channels), IFERN, and IFERN 2.

6.2 In order to utilize the fireground frequency effectively, the following guidelines shall be followed:

6.2.1 Whenever there is a multi-company response (three or more companies), consideration should be given to utilizing the primary fireground frequency.

6.2.2 Upon the arrival of the Battalion Chief, after Command has been established, the change to the RED fireground frequency will take place. This shall be done by the fire companies upon notification by the Battalion Chief via announcement over the primary dispatch channel for all companies to switch to the fireground frequency and acknowledge.



6.2.2.1 If the fireground frequency is busy with other traffic, the White fireground channel or another fireground channel may be utilized, or the Battalion Chief may choose to remain on the primary dispatch channel.

6.2.2.2 The Battalion Chief shall monitor the selected fireground frequency at all times for traffic that may be important to an incident.

6.2.2.3 The Battalion Chief shall also maintain communications with dispatch via the primary apparatus radio. The secondary radio in the Battalion Chief's apparatus is utilized for fireground communications. If the incident has been upgraded to a Box Alarm, the Battalion Chief should maintain communications with both the MABAS Dispatch Center and Highland Park Dispatch.

6.2.3 Companies may switch to and utilize the fireground frequency even if the Battalion Chief is not on the scene (although one company must maintain contact with Dispatch on the primary frequency). This will be implemented by the initial Incident Commander. If a switch of frequencies is made, make sure all companies on scene and responding receive the message and acknowledge.

6.2.4 Avoid using the fireground frequency as a non-emergency communications channel. You may utilize your apparatus cellular telephones for this.

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**7.0 Additional Communications Considerations**

7.1 Command

7.1.1 Once Command has been established, all communications between Dispatch and an incident will be directed through Command.

7.2 Progress Reports

7.2.1 During active incident operations, Command will provide Dispatch with regular progress reports when significant plans are changed or unusual situations are encountered. The first progress report should include what initial actions have been implemented and should include an improved description of on-scene conditions if the arrival report was incomplete.

7.2.1.1 The first report should also include the declaration of a working fire, extrication, haz-mat, etc., when appropriate, and also include an indication of the time companies will be held at the scene. Dispatch will repeat the significant facts from all progress reports for the information of monitoring units.

7.3 Working Fire

7.3.1 The term “working fire” indicates a situation which will require the commitment of all responding companies. This report advises Dispatch the companies will be engaged in tactical activities and will be held at the scene for an extended period of time.

7.3.2 When notified of a working fire, Dispatch will:

7.3.2.1 Activate the “Working Fire” page, which notifies the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and all three Battalion Chiefs. When the Battalion Chiefs are notified, they will assume the following tactical positions:

7.3.2.1.1 Both off-duty Battalion Chiefs will respond to Station 33. The first-arriving off-duty Battalion Chief will remain at Station 33 and become Battalion 31. The second-arriving off-duty Battalion Chief will pick up his personal protective clothing (including SCBA) and will respond to the scene and assume the position of Incident Safety Officer.

7.3.3 Battalion 31 will be the designation utilized when a second Battalion Chief goes in-service. Battalion 31 can go in service for a variety of reasons; including recalls, stand-by, large scale incidents, and any other reason requiring a second (or third) Battalion Chief.

7.3.3.1 The above documented guidelines can be modified due to vacations and other circumstances. If a Battalion Chief is unavailable, the first position to be filled will be that of Incident Safety Officer.

7.3.4 Be prepared to recall off-duty firefighting personnel to staff reserve apparatus.

7.3.5 Be prepared to upgrade the alarm to a Box Alarm, Second Alarm, etc. If alarm levels are skipped, be sure to have companies on the skipped alarm levels dispatched.



7.3.5.1 Example: If a Code 3 gets upgraded to a Box Alarm, Dispatch must also be sure to dispatch companies due on the Code 4 alarm levels.

7.3.6 Be prepared to dispatch further assistance that may include Police, Public Works, utilities, and other agencies.

7.3.7 Be prepared to dispatch any special agencies or equipment when the need is indicated.

7.3.8 Dispatch will monitor radio traffic on all incidents and try to anticipate the needs of Command.

7.4 Elapsed Time Notification

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7.4.1 When a working structure fire occurs, Dispatch will notify Command at 10 minute intervals during the incident for the first hour. After the 1 hour notification, Dispatch will notify Command every fifteen minutes. Dispatch will use the order model and announce:

7.4.1.1 “Command, you are 10 minutes into your incident”

7.4.2 The time frame used is based upon *receipt* of the incident and will cease when the incident has been terminated.

7.5 Returning Companies

7.5.1 Only Command can release companies from an incident. When a company is released from a working incident, they will indicate to Dispatch whether they are in service or out of service. The company will also indicate if they are returning to quarters or going to Station 33 to assist in placing equipment back in service.

7.5.2 Personnel completing the NFIRS report will utilize the response time information from the CAD Incident Report to complete their incident report. Times for *all vehicles* will be entered accurately, including the seconds.

**8.0 Reference**

- 8.1 Highland Park Fire Department
- 8.2 MABAS Radio Guidelines
- 8.3 NFPA 1500, 2013 Edition, Chapter 8, section 8.2.4.1

Approved:  Fire Chief