

the Communication Center

801.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice

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

801.2 POLICY

Best Practice

It is the policy of the City of Galveston Police Department to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance. The Department provides two-way radio capability for continuous communication between the Communication Center and department members in the field.

801.3 THE COMMUNICATION CENTER SECURITY

Best Practice

The communications function is vital and central to all emergency service operations. The safety and security of the Communication Center, its members and its equipment must be a high priority. Special security procedures should be established in a separate operations manual for the Communication Center.

Access to the Communication Center shall be limited to the Communication Center members, the Watch Commander, command staff and department members with a specific business-related purpose.

801.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Best Practice

801.4.1 COMMUNICATIONS SUPERVISOR

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to a Communications Supervisor. The Communications Supervisor is directly responsible to the [Support Services Bureau Commander](#). ~~–or the authorized designee.~~

The responsibilities of the Communications Supervisor include but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Communication Center in coordination with other supervisors.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining telecommunications officer time records.
- (c) Supervising, training and evaluating telecommunications officers.
- (d) Ensuring the radio and telephone recording system is operational.

City of Galveston Police Department

TX LE Policy Manual (linked w/ Global)

the Communication Center

1. Recordings shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law.
- (e) Processing requests for copies of the Communication Center information for release.
- (f) Maintaining the Communication Center database systems.
- (g) Maintaining and updating the Communication Center procedures manual.
 1. Procedures for specific types of crime reports may be necessary. For example, specific questions and instructions may be necessary when talking with a victim of a sexual assault to ensure that his/her health and safety needs are met, as well as steps that he/she may take to preserve evidence.
 2. Ensuring telecommunications officer compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (h) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided and accepting personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (i) Maintaining a current contact list of City personnel to be notified in the event of a utility service emergency.

801.4.2 TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS

Best Practice

Telecommunications Officers report to the Communications Supervisor. The responsibilities of the telecommunications officer 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, digital photographs, video).
- (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 Communication Center, department and other law enforcement database systems (e.g., Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (TLETS), Texas Crime Information Center (TCIC), NCIC).
- (d) Monitoring department video surveillance systems.
- (e) Maintaining the current status of members in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.

the Communication Center

- (f) 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.

801.5 CALL HANDLING

Best Practice

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 telecommunications officer 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 four key questions:

- Where?
- What?
- When?
- Who?

If the telecommunications officer 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 telecommunications officer determines that the caller is a limited English proficiency (LEP) individual, the telecommunications officer 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 Communication Center, the telecommunications officer should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter.

If no authorized interpreter is available or the telecommunications officer is unable to identify the caller's language, the telecommunications officer will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the telecommunications officer, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

Telecommunications Officers should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

801.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS

Best Practice

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.

City of Galveston Police Department

TX LE Policy Manual (linked w/ Global)

the Communication Center

A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the telecommunications officer 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.

801.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

Best Practice

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

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

801.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Best Practice

The police radio system is for official use only, to be used by telecommunications officers 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) Members acknowledging the telecommunications officer with their radio identification call signs and current location.
- (b) Telecommunications Officers acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Members keeping the telecommunications officer advised of their status and location.
- (d) Member and telecommunications officer acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

The Communications 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.

801.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

Federal

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

801.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

Best Practice

Radio call signs are assigned to department members based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or member identification number. Telecommunications Officers

City of Galveston Police Department

TX LE Policy Manual (linked w/ Global)

the Communication Center

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 telecommunications officer. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the telecommunications officer 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 station name or number.

801.7 DOCUMENTATION

Best Practice

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

- Incident control number.
- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- Type of incident reported.
- Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- Location of incident reported.
- Identification of members assigned as primary and backup.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of the responding member's arrival.
- Time of member's return to service.
- Disposition or status of reported incident.

801.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Best Practice

Information that becomes available through the Communication Center may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All members of the Communication 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. Prior to transmitting confidential information via the radio, an admonishment shall be made that confidential information is about to be broadcast.

City of Galveston Police Department

TX LE Policy Manual (linked w/ Global)

the Communication Center

801.9 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

State

All personnel hired as telecommunicators shall be trained as necessary in the operation of the communications equipment and in department operations. All telecommunicators are required to be licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) within one year of their appointment (Tex. Occ. Code § 1701.301). In addition, all telecommunicators are required to complete the Basic Telecommunicator and Crisis Communications courses within one year of assignment, and any other mandatory training required by TCOLE (Tex. Occ. Code § 1701.405; Tex. Occ. Code § 1701.352).

An officer working as a telecommunicator does not need a telecommunicator license (Tex. Occ. Code § 1701.405).