

Bethel Fire Department

Communication Protocols SOG

D-009

PURPOSE

1. To promote efficient and effective Fire Department communications.
2. To provide consistent and uniform procedures for dispatching the fire department units to the various types of emergencies incidents to which it responds.
3. To dispatch any fire or medical emergency within 30 seconds after initial receipt of the call. In accordance with NFPA 1221, 95% of all alarms should be dispatched within 30 seconds and in no case longer than 60 seconds.

POLICY

A. Voice Communications by radio

1. Speak in a slightly above normal tone of voice, slowly and distinctly. The utmost professionalism must be used at all times.
2. The Echo Procedure should be used to acknowledge any traffic from fire department units. As fire department units report in route, acknowledge and repeat the call information.
3. Select the appropriate repeater that works best in the area the radio is located in when talking on the repeater is required.
4. After pressing the PTT button, wait for 1-2 seconds to allow the repeater to key up and/ or the radio identifier to be sent.
5. Letters in addresses should be pronounced phonetically. Apartment addresses must include apartment complex name, address, and apartment number.
6. Clear text communications shall be used at all times on the radio.
7. The radio should not be used for casual conversations or explanations.
8. Sensitive or confidential information may be relayed over the cellular phone.

B. On Dispatch Procedures

1. After obtaining the call information, determine the appropriate response units.
2. All Units will report themselves in route, repeat the location and state the number of persons onboard.
3. Command units will report themselves in route and either state their destination or repeat the call and location.
4. Command can request additional Mutual Aid be dispatched (or placed on Stand By) after notification of going in route and before arrival to facilitate the response time.

C. Incident Command

1. Incident command shall be established on all responses, except single unit calls (Cat. 1) i.e. "C-1 on scene, establishing Church Street. Command."
2. The officer on the first arriving unit will establish Incident Command and report by radio the conditions found on their arrival. Dispatch will repeat the report and subsequent order using the Echo Procedure for confirmation.

3. All communications are to be directed through the Incident Commander (IC) once established.
4. Dispatch will be notified anytime there is a transfer of command on scene.

D. On Scene Procedures

1. Once arriving on the scene of a working fire or other incident where there should be substantial on scene communication, all communications should be switched to Bethel Fire Ground or other tactical channels as assigned by the IC. This would decrease the amount of traffic going to dispatch and allow for clearer communications on scene.
2. Bethel Ground Channels should also be used for special events and training.
3. All on scene radios must remain in the SCAN OFF mode unless directly indicated by the IC
4. Communications between the on-scene IC and Dispatch shall be on Bethel Dispatch Channel.
5. In accordance with the ICS, once established, only the IC shall communicate with Dispatch.
6. At a minimum, all Division Officers, Section Supervisors and Strike Teams (Fire Teams) will have at least 1 radio.
7. At any incident where personnel are operating in an IDLH environment, the Incident Commander will use the 20-minute tactical benchmark. The 20-minute MARC will be prompted by Fire Dispatch. (Detailed in SOG A-013 Fireground Accountability) At this point the Incident Commander may conduct a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) of all of the Companies operating at an incident and not assigned to Staging. The PAR should reconcile with the accountability of the PALS passports.

E. Request for mutual aid

1. Requests for mutual aid shall be at the discretion of the IC. These requests shall be based on incident location and the specific aid needed.
2. Once the mutual aid agency has been notified, Dispatch should report the response with an ETA, if possible, to the IC.

F. Mayday Procedures

1. Any member operating at an emergency incident may initiate a call for "Mayday" if they are in immediate danger. All other radio traffic will cease and the Mayday will be given priority. All other traffic not concerning the Mayday and rescue shall be conducted on another channel as announced by the IC or Communications Officer.
2. Once the Mayday is acknowledged by the IC, Dispatch will activate the Alert Tones and state the unit's number and that unit has called a Mayday.
3. If the IC has not acknowledged the Mayday within 10 seconds, Dispatch is to automatically activate the Alert Tones and advise of the Mayday.
4. During the Mayday, only the endangered firefighter(s), the IC and the RIT are to be on the radio.
5. The IC is to obtain a LUNAR report and react accordingly. (Location, Unit Number, Name, Assignment and Air Supply, Resources Needed)

G. Evacuation Order

1. At times when conditions warrant, the IC or the on-scene Safety Officer may order an immediate evacuation of the structure or area.

2. Once the evacuation has been given, Dispatch will activate the Alert Tones and advise all units of the evacuation order.
3. Dispatch will then stand by for PAR report. (Personnel Accountability Report)
4. Acknowledge the PAR report.
5. The Engineer shall sound 3 repeated 5 second blasts from the airhorn.

H. Mutual Aid

1. When Dispatch pages out for Mutual Aid, the response will be appropriate to the Aid request, meaning if the request is for a Tanker, then a Tanker responds with sufficient personnel to accomplish the objectives of a tanker crew.
2. Additional Aid requests will be dealt with in the same manor while always maintaining sufficient equipment and personnel to cover the needs of the Bethel community.
- 3.

I. Leaving Scene

1. All Portable Radio Units will be returned to the appropriate and correct charger.
2. Incident Command will advise Dispatch that the situation is resolved, command is terminated, and all units are clear of the scene. Example: "Church Street Command to State Dispatch, the fire is out, terminating Church Street Command, all Bethel units now clear of the scene in route back to quarters".

RESPONSIBILITY

- A. It is the responsibility of all Fire Department members to strive to communicate clearly and concisely in all radio traffic.
- B. It is the responsibility of each unit to communicate with the dispatch center that unit's status.
 1. Example: "Bethel Engine 1 to State Dispatch, Bethel Engine 1 in route to 123 Main Street East Bethel, 2 aboard".
 2. Example: "Bethel Engine 1 to State Dispatch, Bethel Engine 1 on scene"
 3. Example: "Bethel Tanker 1 to State Dispatch, all Bethel Units back in Quarters"
 4. Example: "Bethel C-2 on and responding to the station" "Bethel C-1 on and responding to structure fire, 123 Main Street"

Definitions

- A. **Alarm:** Unit or group of units assigned to respond to a particular type of incident.
- B. **Echo Procedure:** Procedure by which the receiver repeats information received over the radio to ensure correctness.
- C. **Incident Commander:** Commanding Officer at the scene of an incident following National Incident Management System (NIMS) guidelines. (IC)
- D. **LUNAR:** MAYDAY status report given by a downed firefighter. Location, Unit assigned to, Name, Assignment and Air Supply Remaining, and Resources needed for rescue.
- E. **MAYDAY:** Term used to indicate an immediate threat to the safety of a firefighter.
- F. **Operational Mode:** Mode used to indicate the type of fire attack being deployed at the reported fire.
- G. **Personnel Accountability Report:** Report used to account for all personnel operating at an emergency incident. (PAR)
- H. **Special Alarm:** A response requested by the IC that does not follow the standard response. (i.e. A technical rescue request or an Aerial device.)
- I. **Rapid Intervention Team:** Team assigned for the rescue of a downed firefighter. (RIT)

FINAL INTENT

It is the intent of this policy to establish correct radio procedures for certain situations. Not all incident types can be accounted for, but should be dealt with as close as possible to an existing procedure as modified by need. The need for clear and concise communications is critical in all responses. Correctly formatted and predictable formats for communicating aids in the assimilation of these incoming and outgoing messages and insures a correct response.

It is the responsibility of all members to read, understand and follow this Standard Operating Guideline.

Fire Chief

Date

Printed Name