

Georgia Department of Public Safety

Policy Manual

SUBJECT COMMUNICATIONS	POLICY NUMBER 14.04
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14.04.1 Purpose

To establish procedures governing communications within the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS), with other law enforcement agencies, and the general public.

14.04.2 Policy

It is the policy of the DPS to provide clear and concise oral and written communications at all times within the Department, with other law enforcement agencies, and the general public.

Dispatchers and other members who have cause to perform duties in Communications Centers shall be familiar with the Communications Division Operation Procedures Manual.

14.04.3 Procedures

- A. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules and Regulations
 1. Base and mobiles are licensed by the FCC and are required to follow their rules and regulations.
 2. The FCC monitors radio transmissions to determine if illegal traffic is being transmitted. Violations of FCC rules and regulations can result in the loss of the Department's license and/or a monetary fine.
- B. 24-Hour Radio Communications
 1. The department shall be equipped with facilities and equipment that enable members to have continuous radio communication with a DPS Communications Center on a 24-hour basis.
 2. The facilities and equipment shall also enable communication with other public safety agencies.
 3. The department is also equipped with portable radio communication equipment that enables members to have access to the communications network from remote locations.
- C. Radio Call Signs

1. Radio call signs shall be used by all mobile or portable units, base stations and repeaters when making radio transmissions. The operator of the base station or repeater shall give its complete FCC assigned call sign upon completion of transmissions on any channel.
2. Sworn members of the rank of Sergeant First Class or below shall utilize their badge number as their radio call sign.
3. Commissioned Officers shall prefix their badge number with zero; e.g. Lt. 53 shall use 053.
4. Dispatchers operating state vehicles shall use their badge numbers, prefixing with the numbers with "R".
5. Other call signs are assigned for use by special persons such as the Governor, Lt. Governor, etc., and are listed in Exhibit #14.04-1.

D. Methods Of Calling

1. When calling a mobile unit from a base station or repeater, the base station or repeater name shall be given followed by the mobile call sign; e.g. Atlanta – 473.
2. When calling a base station or repeater from a mobile unit, the mobile call sign shall be given followed by the base station or repeater name; e.g. 473 – Atlanta.
3. When calling mobile to mobile or car to car, the calling unit shall give their call sign followed by the call sign of the unit called.
4. When calling base to base, the calling base name shall be given, followed by the name of the base being called.

E. General Procedures

1. Transmitting Messages

- a. Members shall be professional when transmitting messages.
- b. When an emergency exists, the member involved shall have first priority on the frequency until the emergency is cleared. All other units and posts shall stop transmitting until normal operations have resumed.

2. Communication with other Agencies

Members are able to use radio devices to communicate with other public safety agencies that have similar capabilities. Members may achieve this by:

- a. Contacting the Troop Communications Center and requesting they make a radio transmission to the agency;
- b. Switching car radios to an available frequency for communication with other agencies' base station, or mobile unit.

3. Death Messages

- a. In the event of the death of a member or a member of their immediate family, the following communications procedures shall be adopted:

- 1) The Public Information Office shall issue a statewide message via email notifying members of the death.
 - 2) If the death occurs outside normal business hours, the member receiving the information in the Post/Unit shall notify the:
 - a) Post/Unit Commander;
 - b) Troop/Region Commander, and
 - c) Public Information Office, who shall notify the command staff via command page.
 - b. Upon receipt of notification of funeral arrangements, the same procedures shall be followed.
 - c. Upon notification of a death of other than an immediate family member, the Post/Unit Commander shall use their discretion to determine whether to contact the Public Information Office to issue a message via email.
 - d. Other messages of interest (e.g. retirements, receptions, birth announcements, hospitalizations) shall be approved by the Post/Unit Commander and forwarded to the Public Information Office for dissemination through the Bulletin or at their discretion via department wide e-mail.
5. Hit and Run Incidents
- a. A member receiving information of a hit and run incident shall immediately transmit all available details to the nearest Troop Communications Center for area broadcast.
 - b. Any additional information, corrections, or omissions shall be transmitted immediately.
6. Recovered Vehicles
- When a stolen or abandoned vehicle is recovered, members shall provide the following information to their Troop Communications Center:
- a. License number and VIN;
 - b. Where the vehicle was recovered;
 - c. Condition of vehicle;
 - d. Apprehension, if any, and where the apprehended persons are held, and
 - e. Local charges against apprehended persons.
7. Radio Use Near Blasting Sites
- Electric blasting caps can be detonated by radio transmissions. Therefore, radios shall not be used within 300 feet of any known blasting site.
8. Emergency Civil Aircraft Landings

Pilots are instructed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to contact the nearest law enforcement agency following an emergency landing. When a member is notified of such an occurrence, they shall report the incident to their Troop Communications Center. The Troop Communications Center shall notify the FAA.

9. Welfare Reports (separated/over due motorists)
 - a. Members shall assist the public in locating persons for emergency reasons when other avenues fail.
 - b. Welfare reports shall be carefully screened before being accepted for broadcast by the Troop Communications Center.
10. Checking In or Out of Service
 - a. Members shall use the "10-7" signal code each time they go out of service. They shall inform the Troop Communications Center of their location.
 - b. Members shall use the "10-8" signal code when they return to service.
11. Vehicle Stops
 - a. It will be the sworn officer's discretion of whether or not to utilize radio transmission or complete their own input on CAD.
 - b. If utilizing the Troop Communications Center when stopping a vehicle, members shall notify the Communications Center of their call sign and shall use the "10-38" signal code.
 - c. There shall be no further radio traffic until the Troop Communications Center acknowledges the message.
 - d. The member shall then respond with the:
 - 1) Location;
 - 2) Make/Model
 - 3) Color
 - 4) Tag number
 - e. For felony vehicle stops, the member shall provide the above, as well as the number of occupants and their description.
12. Driver's License/Wanted Queries
 - a. When requesting a driver's license or wanted person query, members shall notify the Communications Center of their call sign and shall use the "10-27" or "10-29" signal code respectively.
 - b. They shall provide the Troop Communications Center with the following particulars:

- 1) Name (last name followed by first name);
- 2) Date of birth;
- 3) Sex, and
- 4) Driver's license number (if relevant).

13. Gun and Other Queries

- a. When requesting a gun, article, security or boat query, members shall notify the Communications Center of their call sign and shall use the "10-29" signal code.
- b. They shall provide the Troop Communications Center with the following particulars:
 - 1) Brand name, if applicable;
 - 2) Serial or manufacturer number, and
 - 3) Type of firearm, item, security or boat.

14. Vehicle Queries

- a. When requesting a vehicle registration or stolen vehicle query, members shall notify the Troop Communications Center of their call sign and shall use the "10-28" or "10-29" signal code respectively.
- b. They shall provide the Troop Communications Center with the following particulars:
 - 1) Tag number;
 - 2) State of tag;
 - 3) Type of vehicle, and
 - 4) VIN number, if relevant.

15. Wrecker Requests

- a. When requesting a wrecker, members shall notify the Troop Communications Center of their call sign and shall use the "10-51" signal code.
- b. They shall provide the Communications Center with the following particulars:
 - 1) Type of vehicle;
 - 2) Tag number and VIN, if relevant;
 - 3) Location, and
 - 4) Any special towing requests, e.g. flatbed truck.

F. Telephones

1. Answering the Telephone

Proper telephone etiquette is important in maintaining the public image of the Department. In order to maintain a high degree of uniformity and professionalism, the following procedures shall be adopted:

- a. When a telephone rings, it shall be answered promptly; however, radio communications with a sworn member involved in enforcement activities shall take precedence.
- b. The member shall answer the phone by providing the following information:
 - 1) Georgia State Patrol (NOT GSP), Motor Carrier Compliance Division, or Capitol Police (whichever is applicable) then the *Post or Unit Name*;
 - 2) Title of person answering the call, and
 - 3) Last name of the person answering the call. Example: "Georgia State Patrol, Griffin, Dispatcher Jones".
- c. Members shall determine the nature of the call before placing any caller on hold. Should the member place a caller on hold, they shall return to the caller periodically until the completion of the call.
- d. Duration of conversations on publicly listed telephone lines shall be limited, and/or transferred to other lines.

2. Members will not wear/use cell phone ear pieces while on duty, except when operating their vehicles.

3. Emergency Calls

Emergency calls shall be promptly routed to the appropriate agency. The member shall remain on the line with the caller until the transfer has been accomplished successfully.

4. Receiving Collect Calls

Members shall only accept emergency collect calls on department telephones. Members shall report the occurrence to their supervisor.

5. Personal Calls

Calls of a personal nature that do not relate to Department business shall be kept to a minimum.

6. Directory Assistance Calls

Information shall only be sought from Directory Assistance in circumstances where all other avenues to obtain the information have been exhausted.

7. Long Distance Calls

Members are not authorized to make long-distance calls of a personal nature from state telephones and shall not bill such calls to the State.

8. Forwarding and Transferring Calls

- a. *GSP calls shall only be used to report suspected impaired drivers.
- b. Members shall only forward or transfer calls when such actions are necessary to facilitate the operations of the Department.

G. Multiple Member/Supervisory Response

1. Due to the nature of the Georgia Department of Public Safety, sworn members will normally respond to calls individually. Upon arrival, members may request additional assistance. There are certain incidents when it is desirable to assign multiple (two or more) members. These incidents include, but are not limited to:
 - a. High-risk arrests;
 - b. Traffic crashes involving multiple fatalities or major traffic congestion;
 - c. Crimes in progress and scenes of major criminal offenses;
 - d. Disasters;
 - e. Hazardous material incidents;
 - f. Manhunts, and
 - g. Roadblocks.
2. In circumstances where additional members are unavailable, assistance may be requested from adjacent Posts/Regions or other law enforcement agencies having concurrent jurisdiction in the area.
3. Supervisory Response shall be required in the following circumstances:
 - a. Crashes involving a departmental vehicle;
 - b. Incidents involving on-duty employees that result in an injury;
 - c. Nighttime road checks;
 - d. Shootings involving members, and
 - e. Unusual situations that require the presence of a supervisor.

H. Radio Repairs And Installation

1. For repairs or installation refer to DPS Policy #6.02 Departmental Communications Equipment.
2. If members become aware that lights on a radio tower are not functioning, they shall make the appropriate entry in the radio log and contact the Director of Communications.

I. Mobile Communications Vehicle

1. The mobile communications vehicle is intended to serve as a mobile command post capable of achieving the communications requirements of the department at special incidents and events.
2. The vehicle shall not be utilized without the approval of the Director of Communications. If possible, requests shall be forwarded in writing through the chain of command. Verbal approval may be provided in exigent circumstances.
3. The vehicle shall be operated in accordance with DPS Policy #6.03 Vehicle Assignment.
4. The members designated as drivers of the vehicle shall:
 - a. Possess a valid, appropriate class, driver's license;
 - b. Be approved by the Director of Communications.
 - c. Complete orientation in the operation of the vehicle and its equipment, conducted by a designee of the Director of Communications.
5. The vehicle may be used for the following purposes:
 - a. Special details;
 - b. Significant events;
 - c. Public demonstrations and displays;
 - d. Unusual occurrences, and
 - e. Any other circumstance where its use will be of benefit to the department.
6. In addition to the equipment that forms a part of the vehicle, the following equipment shall also be maintained in the vehicle:
 - a. Radios, batteries and chargers;
 - b. Telephones;
 - c. Generator;
 - d. Appropriate complement of maps;
 - e. Fire extinguishers;
 - f. First aid kit;
 - g. Flashlights, and
 - h. Other emergency items;
7. The Mobile Communications Vehicle and all related equipment shall be checked for operational readiness at least monthly.

8. The Director of Communications shall assign a member to be responsible for the care and maintenance of the vehicle and to ensure that it is in a serviceable condition for operational readiness.
9. The vehicle shall be stored at Headquarters and requests for its use shall follow the chain of command to the Director of Communications for approval.