


POLICY 102	COMMUNICATIONS/CALL PRIORITIZATION	
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A. PURPOSE

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is a full-service agency prepared to respond to any type of emergency or call for service received from the community we serve, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Since the Communications Center is most often the first point of contact between the community and Department, the policies in this section govern how calls for service are received, evaluated, prioritized and dispatched.

B. USE OF RADIO

Refer to the Operations manual for the use of Department-issued radios. The Operations Manual can be located in Training.

1. Talk group designations
 - a. Patrol, District 1
 - b. Patrol, District 2
 - c. Patrol, District 3
 - d. Teletype

- e. Various tactical and specialized unit talk groups
- 2. Radio Codes: Use only Broward County Uniform Codes and Signals and the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- 3. Response Codes:
 - a. Code 1: Normal response; obey all traffic rules and regulations.
 - b. Code 2: Expedited response; officers will employ continuous use of emergency lights and intermittent use of siren as needed.
 - c. Code 3: Any transmission preceded by an alert tone where there appears to be a danger of death or serious bodily harm may be run CODE 3. When running CODE 3, emergency lights and siren will be in operation continuously from start to finish.
- 4. Vehicle and Pedestrian Stops
 - a. Vehicles: Give location, license number, license state, license type, color of vehicle, make of vehicle, race/sex, number of occupants and reason for the stop.
 - b. Pedestrians: Give location, reason for the stop, and a description of the subject(s).
- 5. Back-up Calls:

All calls for back-up of another officer will be made routinely and safely. When an officer calls for an emergency back-up it will be run CODE 3. If an officer calls for a back-up and does not specify a code and cannot be re-contacted the response will then be CODE 3.

C. AUTHORITY OF THE POLICE DISPATCHER

- 1. The authority to dispatch called-for services to police officers is delegated to the police radio dispatcher by the Chief of Police.

This authority is not to be questioned over the radio unless the following conditions exist:

 - a. There is a true emergency.
 - b. There are questions regarding the safety of police officers or citizens.
- 2. Procedures for Resolving Complaints Related to Police Dispatchers (under conditions not described in C.1.a. above):
 - a. Line personnel who have complaints related to police dispatchers shall notify their immediate supervisor, either orally or in writing (written complaints can also be forwarded through the chain of command).

- b. The immediate supervisor can, at his/her discretion, take the complaint directly to the Broward Sheriff's Communications Shift Duty Officer of the shift where the incident occurred, the Broward Sheriff's Communications Site Manager, the Fort Lauderdale Police Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau or designee, or forward the complaint upward through their chain of command. All incidents will be recorded on the Communications Incident Request Review form and forwarded to the Fort Lauderdale Police Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau or designee for follow-up. Line supervisors will retain the authority to intercede on any matter requiring their immediate attention.
 - c. At no time should single complaints or questions of procedure, such as "can this be sent to SRO?" or "Isn't there a PSA?" be directed to the dispatcher.
 - (1). Line personnel with questions or complaints of this nature shall direct them to their immediate supervisor as outlined in 2.a. above.
 - (2). Line supervisors will direct such inquiries to Broward Sheriff's Communications Duty Officer or through the chain of command as outlined in 2.b., above.
3. Resolving problems related to improper response by an officer:
- a. Broward Sheriff's Office Communications personnel who have a complaint related to a police officer shall notify their immediate supervisor. The information will be forwarded to the Fort Lauderdale Police Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau or designee for follow up with the officer's supervisor.
 - b. If the complaint is of a critical nature, the Broward Sheriff's Office Communications Duty Officer or Site Manger can take the complaint directly to the Patrol Supervisor of the shift where the incident occurred or to the Fort Lauderdale Police Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau or designee. The incident will be documented and forwarded through the chain of command.

D. ASSIGNMENT OF CALLS

- 1. For the purpose of this order all requests for service will receive a dispatch priority upon entry into the CAD system. Responses are indicated by the use of priority numbers 0 through 9:
 - a. Priorities:
 - 0 - Code 3 back-up for an officer
 - 1 - Immediate threat of bodily harm
 - 2 - Immediate threat of loss of property

- 3 - open
- 4 - open
- 5 - Routine response
- 6 - open
- 7 - Station report calls
- 8 - open
- 9 - No police response

2. The status is defined as follows:

a. Urgent (Priorities 0, 1 and 2)

- (1). Any bona fide threat to life or great danger of serious physical injury or major property damage or loss.
- (2). Any active felony, violent misdemeanor or active incident that may result in either.
- (3). Any felony or violent misdemeanor that recently occurred and the logical probability exists that a suspect is near the scene or in the area and may be apprehended.
- (4). Any serious injury that may result in substantial personal harm including personal injury accidents.
- (5). Any incident involving exigent or unique circumstances such as snipers, threat of explosive devices, etc. that demands an immediate response.
- (6). Any incident on school grounds while class is in session, i.e. disturbances, trespassers, etc.

b. Routine (Priority 5)

- (1). Any active incident that does not represent a significant threat to life or property.
- (2). Any non-active incident that involves a minor violation or offense such as noise complaints or loitering.
- (3). Any incident that involves non-criminal services such as bridge fishing complaints, parking violations, traffic services, inebriates, requests for transportation from the station, etc.

- (4). Any property damage motor vehicle accident that, from information received does not appear to represent a significant hazard to the free flow of traffic.
- (5). Any non-violent misdemeanor that is not in progress which because of its nature cannot be referred for a STATION REPORT.
- (6). Any felony of considerable delay (over one hour) where preservation of the scene or immediate investigation is not an issue.

c. Public Safety Aide (PSA)

- (1). PSA's will not be permitted to respond to calls above a Code 1 response.
- (2). PSA's will not be dispatched or respond to crimes in progress where there is a likelihood of the suspect(s) still being on scene or in the immediate area unless there is a sworn officer present.
- (3). If a PSA is dispatched to a call for service and it is found that the call no longer meets the threshold of what a PSA is allowed to handle (ie. missing person call appears to be a kidnapping, etc.), the PSA will immediately notify a supervisor who will make a decision as to the appropriate sworn officer response.
- (4). PSA's (when available) will be assigned first on all traffic related calls (i.e. accident, hit and run and traffic control). If the dispatcher is unsure if the PSA can handle certain calls, the field supervisor will be consulted for direction. PSA's are qualified, but not limited to, handling the following examples of calls for service;
 - (a). Disabled vehicles
 - (b). Prohibited parking complaints
 - (c). Missing persons
 - (d). Burglary vehicles
 - (e). Burglary businesses
 - (f). Threatening telephone calls
 - (g). Stolen vehicle
 - (h). Recovery of an unoccupied stolen vehicle
 - (i). Stolen tag
 - (j). Supplemental reports

- (k). Larcenies
- (l). Fraud/forgery
- d. Station Report (Priority 7)

All routine response calls which are able to be handled by an employee over the telephone. No in-progress call is ever to be handled as "STATION REPORT".

- e. No Police Response (Priority 9)

- (1). All service calls received by the Police Department upon which no direct police response is necessary, for example: fires, sick persons, or miscellaneous assists. These calls are received by the Police Department but are referred to other agencies.

- (a). The Dispatcher will advise the affected district of the nature of the call and the fact that Fire/Rescue is responding to an address, in the event the District Supervisor desires to provide assistance.

- (2). Missing juvenile runaway reports received from a state authorized facility (Juvenile Detention Center, halfway house, emergency shelter, etc.), per policy 213.0, section C.2.

- (3). Delayed Misdemeanor Larcenies (under \$1,000). The call-taker will direct the victim to the Police Department's website (flpd.org) to download a Theft/Lost Property Report to be mailed-in. In the event that the victim does not have Internet access, they will be directed to the Police Department between 0700-1700 hours to obtain a Theft/Lost Property Report with instructions that they can fill out and submit immediately to the front desk attendant, or mail-in at a later time.

- (a). If the victim requests a police officer, they will be advised this is not the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department and no officer will be dispatched. If they wish to speak with an officer/public safety aide (PSA) immediately, they can come into the station and meet with the station report officer (SRO) if one is available.

- (b). The call taker will note in the remarks area that the victim requested an officer to respond.

E. PROCEDURES FOR CALL TAKERS

- 1. Screen the call and obtain as much information as possible relative to the incident.

2. Promptly and carefully evaluate the call to determine if the priority status should be changed from the CAD assigned priority.
3. Politely inform complainant(s) who request service that an officer will respond when one becomes available. When arrival time becomes an issue, check with the Broward Sheriff's Communications Duty Officer who will verify the delay with the road supervisor before giving information to complainant(s).
4. Complete the incident screen including the spaces provided for all pertinent information relative to the incident.
5. If the incident is in progress, try to keep the caller on the line until the police have arrived and established control of the scene.

F. PROCEDURES FOR DISPATCH

The dispatcher will dispatch units according to the criteria set forth below.

1. URGENT CALLS

Shall be assigned in the following order.

- a. Zone car whose patrol sector encompasses the location of the incident.
- b. Any other unit whose district area encompasses the location of the incident.
- c. Any unit whose close proximity to the incident would significantly enhance the response time.
- d. A District Supervisor whose supervisory area encompasses the location of the incident may be used for life endangering incidents.
- e. If the call cannot be dispatched immediately, the Dispatcher will:
 - (1). Notify the District Supervisor to review the computer or MDC, because no unit is available to respond. If the supervisor is not near a computer they may be advised over the air of the call(s) holding. In instances where the primary talk group is limited to emergency traffic, the supervisor will be taken to a different talk group and advised.
 - (2). If "(1)" above is acknowledged by the District Supervisor and the calls are to be held pending the availability of zone or district units, the Dispatcher will note the call sign of the Patrol supervisor contacted and the reason the call is to be held on the dispatch screen.
 - (3). The district supervisor will ascertain if units from another district are available. If the other districts cannot provide assistance and

district units are not readily available, the District Supervisor will notify the Dispatcher to record the reason for delayed-response.

- (4). After a maximum time limit of fifteen (15) minutes has expired, the dispatcher will notify the Patrol Supervisor that the call is still holding and ascertain:
 - (a). Who will respond?
 - (b). Will the call be delayed further pending availability of units?
 - 1). If "b" above is authorized, the Patrol Supervisor contacted will be recorded on the dispatch screen.
 - 2). If the call holds an additional fifteen (15) minutes, the Patrol Supervisor will be notified by the Dispatcher.
 - 3). If the call has been held for a total of forty-five (45) minutes, the Patrol Supervisor, or his/her designee, will attempt to contact the complainant and explain the delay.

2. PRIORITY DISPATCH (URGENT CALLS)

The Dispatcher will activate the appropriate alert tone and this will signify that the call being dispatched may require a "Code 3" response.

- a. The Dispatcher will notify the District Supervisor of the nature of the call and the supervisor will designate the response code.
- b. Dispatchers are authorized to dispatch units "Code-3" when officer(s) request assistance (10-94).

3. ROUTINE CALLS

- a. Zone units whose patrol sector encompasses the location of the incident.
- b. Any other unit whose District area encompasses the location of the incident.
- c. Notify the District Supervisor immediately either by radio or mobile data terminal that no unit is available to respond. If the call cannot be dispatched immediately, the dispatcher will:
 - (1). If "c" above is acknowledged by the District Supervisor and the calls are to be held pending the availability of units, the Dispatcher will note the call sign of the Patrol Supervisor contacted and the reason the call is to be held.

- (2). After a maximum time limit of fifteen (15) minutes has expired, the dispatcher will notify the Patrol Supervisor that the call is still holding and ascertain:
 - (a). Who will respond?
 - (b). Will the call be delayed further pending availability of units?
 - 1). If "b" above is authorized, the Patrol Supervisor contacted will be recorded on the dispatch screen.
 - 2). If the call holds an additional fifteen (15) minutes, the Patrol Supervisor will be notified by the Dispatcher.
 - 3). If the call has been held for a total of forty-five (45) minutes, the Patrol Supervisor, or his/her designee, will attempt to contact the complainant and explain the delay.

4. NO POLICE RESPONSE

- a. The Dispatcher will inform the District Units that Fire/Rescue is enroute to a location and advise the nature of the call.
- b. If a police unit is in the immediate vicinity and is in service, the officer should check by to ascertain if assistance is required.

5. STATION REPORT

Calls handled under "STATION REPORT" (priority 7) are not dispatched because the call for service is a "Walk-in" or "By Phone Only" report.

6. DELAYED MISDEMEANOR LARCENIES (under \$300)

The call-taker will direct the victim to the Police Department's website (flpd.org) to download a Theft/Lost Property Report to be mailed-in. In the event that the victim does not have Internet access, they will be directed to the Police Department between 0700-1700 hours to obtain a Theft/Lost Property Report with instructions that they can fill out and submit immediately to the front desk attendant, or mail-in at a later time.

7. VERIFICATION OF PATROL PERSONNEL STATUS

Guidelines shall be in place for verifying patrol personnel status after an established period of time has elapsed without contact, to include when patrol personnel are in-between calls for service or other activity.

- a. When Communications receives no response from personnel, Communications shall initiate contact/locating procedures.
- b. When patrol personnel are assigned calls for service or initiate contact with the public, Communications will conduct intermittent time and location officer safety checks.
- c. When non-supervisory patrol personnel are available for service (10-8) for a period of ninety (90) minutes, Communications will conduct a status check via FLPD radio.

G. PROCEDURES FOR POLICE SUPERVISORS

Police Supervisors are expected to be aware of activity within their district and/or area of responsibility. Dispatchers will advise when calls are holding and no officers are available to handle.

District Supervisors shall when requested:

- 1. Assist the Dispatcher in assigning units to respond to delayed calls.
- 2. In appropriate cases, personally respond to the incidents.
 - a. Whenever the Fort Lauderdale Police Department is confronted with a situation or event requiring enhanced control and coordination of resources and personnel, a supervisor will respond and assume on-scene command until the situation is resolved or he/she is relieved by a person of higher rank.
 - b. Circumstances requiring on-scene command by a patrol supervisor or person of higher rank include, but are not limited to:
 - (1). Critical incidents such as hostage/barricaded subjects; large disturbances; plane or train crashes; fatal accidents; environmental and natural disasters.
 - (2). High-risk incidents such as the use of deadly force and pursuits.
 - (3). Any incident or situation which has the potential to affect the sensitivities of the various constituents and groups comprising the community. These incidents include, but are not limited to:
 - (a). Robbery
 - (b). Sexual Battery
 - (c). Aggravated Assault and Battery
 - (d). Other crimes against persons
 - (4). Incidents which attract unusual media attention.

- (5). The injury of a department employee which requires immediate hospital care.

H. PROCEDURES FOR POLICE OFFICERS

All officers engaged in patrol operations shall have constant access to radio communications. Officers are issued portable radios for two-way communication between patrol vehicles, the Communication Center, and specialty units.

1. Officers performing patrol duties are required to contact the Communications Division in the following circumstances:
 - a. At the beginning of shift;
 - b. To acknowledge a call from a dispatcher with call sign and location;
 - c. Upon arrival at a call;
 - d. When changing or updating a location while on a call;
 - e. When a call is completed;
 - f. When making an investigative or traffic stop; and
 - g. When going out of service.
2. Members in the field shall contact the Communications Division via radio when procuring external services to include:
 - a. Fire equipment;
 - b. Environmental and human services;
 - c. Fire Rescue/Ambulances;
 - d. Aircraft;
 - e. Wreckers;
 - f. Taxis; and
 - g. Other services which are not components of the agency.

I. COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH HAZARD FILE INFORMATION FORM

1. INTRODUCTION

Computer Aided Dispatch includes a HAZARD FILE that notifies Dispatch that special conditions exist which may be a hazard to public safety personnel. Entry into this file may also be informational in nature, i.e. entry codes, known hearing

impaired individuals, etc. These files are entered based on address, not names. The exact address must be provided.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. OFFICER - An officer identifying an immediate hazard should advise dispatch over the radio of the hazard. This on-air notification does not relieve the requirement to complete a form and forward it to the officer's immediate supervisor. If the hazard poses an immediate threat to responding officers, a copy of the Hazard File Form will be placed on the Patrol Briefing Board and read at subsequent briefings as an officer safety alert. The entry into the CAD system may take several days based upon the availability of data entry personnel.

The hazard form is to be used by officers wanting to add a hazard information notification to any particular location. This information must be kept as brief as possible. If the officer has knowledge of when the hazard will be eliminated, the officer shall indicate that information on the form. Case numbers should be included, if applicable, for reference purposes. The forms will be available at Police Supply and in the Patrol Write-up Room.

An officer, responding to a hazard location, who finds that the hazard no longer exists, should cancel the hazard notification using the same form.

- b. SERGEANT - The sergeant shall review the submitted form to determine the information to be entered is pertinent and complete. The sergeant will sign and date the bottom of the form and forward it to the Communications Center for entry into the CAD database.
- c. DISPATCHER - The dispatcher shall be required to notify responding officers of any hazard information which displays in the Hazard field on their screen. Dispatchers must be sure to review all of the hazard information, as some addresses have more than one entry.
- d. CAD Administrator - The CAD Administrator (or designee) shall be responsible for ensuring that the information contained on the form is entered precisely and immediately upon receipt. If, during the CAD Administrator's (or designee's) off-duty hours, the information is determined to warrant immediate entry into the system by a supervisor, the appropriate administrator shall be contacted via telephone so the entry may be made without delay. The date of entry and authorizing officer's name will be included. If a purge date is applicable, that will also be entered into the file.
- e. PURGE RESPONSIBILITY - The CAD Administrator will ensure that the file is purged as needed.