

<p style="text-align: center;">Madison County Fire Communications Procedure 18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Communications Guidelines</p>	<p>Date: June 13, 2006 Amended: January 9, 2007</p>
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10.0 1 PURPOSE

A. To provide a standardized format for the operation of Fire Communications in Madison County, Alabama.

10.02 POLICY

A. All personnel shall abide by the procedures contained herein when communicating over the departmental radio system in the field

10.03 OBJECTIVE

- A. To specifically cover the following areas:
1. General procedural guidelines
 2. Dispatch of apparatus
 3. Routine and emergency communications with mobile radio units
 4. Command communications

10.04 FCC INFORMATION

- A. Licensing and Ownership
1. Madison County Volunteer Fire Association is the licensee for all radio frequencies.
 2. Individual Fire Department own portable and mobile radios assigned to individuals within the given Fire Department.
 - a. Channel 1 shall normally be used a primary dispatch frequency for all units and Incident Commander means of communicating with dispatch.
 - b. Tactical Channel to be referred to as Capshaw and Ledges shall be used as the secondary or operating frequency. It may be used for the controlling of a working incident, relieving congestion on primary channel, or as directed by a dispatcher.

10.05 PROCEDURES

A. **Incident Dispatch**) shall be on Channel 1 and will be as follows:
Pager tones will be activated two times and the following verbiage used:

“ County Fire to _____ (name of fire department) medical (or nature of fire call) at 123 Any town the location will then be repeated by dispatch a second time. **Cross Streets will be given at initial dispatch.** If a departmental member does not accept the alarm after 45 seconds from the end of transmission the dispatcher will repage that department (double tone). After 45 seconds from last page, dispatch will page the designated backup department (double tone) alerting them of the alarm repeating the same above format.

“ County Fire to _____ (name of fire department) medical call (or nature of fire call) backing up (lead department name) at 123 Any town Rd” **cross streets will be given at initial dispatch.**

If in 45 seconds following the paging of the 1st and 2nd due departments no acknowledgement is received: Dispatch shall continue to page the closest next due departments following the above verbiage until a response is generated. If the alarm is for a medical emergency the dispatcher shall check the location of the responding ambulance to determine if a continued backup response is necessary.

B. 10-2 Acknowledgement of the Alarm

One person assigned to the department receiving the alarm shall acknowledge the alarm on Main Frequency. The person Acknowledging the alarm should advise County Fire of their 4 digit unit number for documentation. No other units should Acknowledging the alarm on Main but should follow internal departmental policy. Units may however acknowledge the alarm to other departmental members on main who are unable to transmit on talk around due to a wide span of area. Traffic should be brief and to a moderate level.

C. 10-8 Enroute

a. POV

If responding POV (Persons on Vehicle) the 1st person should go 10-8 on Main and all other POV units should **not** go 10-8 on main radio channel but should follow internal departmental policy.

b. Apparatus

All apparatus responding to an emergency alarm should go enroute on Main. Verbiage should be as follows Engine 221 is 10-8 ...10-4 Engine 221 you are 10-8 to 123 Anytown Rd cross streets are _____ and _____. Dispatch should only repeat the address and cross street with the 1st apparatus going 10-8 the address and cross streets with only be repeated upon request of a unit or personnel responding. Units that are going 10-8 from their residence whether POV or an apparatus should not go 1-8 to the station for an apparatus. They may do so on Talk around to fellow department members. Closest hydrant location should be given at that time.

D. 10-97 Arrival on Scene

1st responder or apparatus on scene should give an initial size up to County Fire such as E121 is 10-97 we have a working structure fire or smoke and flames showing...2102 will be IC. County Fire should respond back to 2102 as 10-4, 2102 have all units switch to Capshaw Tower upon going 10-97, for operations. The

incident commander should monitor both Main and Capshaw. County Fire will monitor Capshaw and Main. All scene information should be channeled through the IC only.

E. 10-98 Completed assignment –

Each apparatus should advise County Fire on Main that they are Leaving the Scene, if they depart the scene separately. However, if they depart the scene several apparatus at a time or as an entire department they should do so by allowing one person to put all units 10-98.

F. 10-10 Back at Station—

Each apparatus should advise County Fire on Main that they are 10-10 if they arrive back at the station separately. However, if several apparatus arrive back at the station or as an entire department they should do so by allowing one person to put all units 10-10.

10.06 Reporting on the scene

- A. Incident Command System should be used on all scenes regardless of the scene size.
- B. An on scene report shall be given by the first unit arriving whether POV or Apparatus. The reporting unit should assume IC until Higher-ranking officer arrives and assumes IC. He should advise County Fire of his/her unit number and that they are IC in conjunction with the on scene report.
- C. Command Progression or Change: If a change in Incident Command occurs it should be as follows: 2102 to County Fire...2101 10-97 assuming IC.
- D. Once all units arrive on scene the incident commander is the only unit that will communicate with dispatch.
- E. All communications with dispatch shall be on Main or Tactical Channels thru the IC.
- F. Initial coordination of air transport will be handled on Main however, Once helicopter is in the area a tactical or HEAR channel will be designated for landing of the helicopter.
- G. As soon as possible, and continually throughout the incident IC shall Notify and update dispatch on the situation. Specifically these updates should include:
 - 1) Working Structure Fire
 - 2) Forcible entry made
 - 3) Confirmed Entrapment
 - 4) Extrication of patient
 - 5) Whether structure involved is Multistory, Commercial or residential
 - 6) Air transport landed/ lifted off
 - 7) Meter Pulled and location

- 8) Primary survey began/completed
- 9) Secondary survey began/completed
- 10) Request for Utilities Notification
- 11) Request for Investigator Notification

10.07 Tactical Channels Ledges and Capshaw

- A The switch to Tactical Channels shall be under the following conditions:
- (1) Any working incident.
 - (2) When directed by dispatch
 - (3) When requested by the Incident Commander
 - (4) Any multi company event or a long term incident such as the following:
 - a. Natural Disasters
 - b. Weather incidents in a generalized location
 - c. Terrorist Events
 - d. Bomb –(Located or Detonated)
 - e. Working Structure Fires (Commercial or Residential)
 - f. MVA/E with extended extrication times
 - g. Air Transport Scenes
 - h. Hazmat Scenes
 - i. Confirmed Alert 3
 - j. Large multi department Grass and Brush Fires
- B. The switch to Tactical Channels will be assigned from Dispatch according to the location of the department and incident Involved once units arrive on scene.
- C. All traffic should be channeled through the Incident Commander if a unit attempts to notify dispatch of a situation or request a service they will be directed to contact the Incident Commander. Dispatch will at that time attempt to contact the incident commander and notify them of the request made by that unit.
- D. All alarms will be dispatched on the Main Channel. If the responding department is already assigned to a tactical frequency the alarm will be paged as normal on main and the Incident Commander will be advised of the call via the assigned tactical channel. No tones will be alerted over the tactical channel.
- E. Dispatch will monitor both Main, as well as the Tactical channels.
- F. In the event of air transport, the helicopter pilot will coordinate with the landing zone incident command on Main. Once the air transport unit is in the area of the scene the LZ commander will designate which tactical channel or as a last resort the HEAR network will be used to coordinate the landing operation.

- G. At the termination of an incident all units will go 10-98 and 10-10 on Main. However, if several units depart scene at once they should simply advise County Fire that “All units are 10-98 10-10 whichever the case may be.

10-08 Basic Rules for Voice Operations & Mobile Communications

- A. Make certain the channel is clear and organize your thoughts before transmitting.
- B. Keep all transmissions brief and to the point.
- C. Speak distinctly and pronounce words carefully
- D. Depress the microphone switch fully and pause a second before starting to talk. Talk at conversational level. **DO NOT SHOUT.**
- E. Remain calm during all radio and telephone conversations.
- F. Use official titles, authorized units, and complete designations, i.e.
- G. Engine 121, Brush 631, 1201 and so on. Use of first names is not permitted on Main or the Tactical Channels
- H. Approved 10 signals should be used at all times (see section 10.10)
- I. Mobile and hand held radio units will use complete identification designations which identify with the apparatus to which assigned or will use the individual’s call sign.

- 1. Personal Unit Numbers- should consist of 4 numbers the first two should signify the department the last two numbers should signify their ranking within the department: Example below.

01 Chief

02-19 Officer (Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, or Captain, Lt.)

20-59 Firefighter/Drivers

60- up EMT’S

- 2. Apparatus Numbers

All apparatus numbers shall consist of 3 unit numbers. The first Number generally signifies the station the apparatus is located at. The last two numbers signifies the department number. Example: Engine 131,1 signifies the station location – Station 1. 31 signifies The department number –New Hope.

J. Dispatch will only accept orders form the Incident Commander. When orders or instructions are give by personnel other than the IC, dispatch will inform that person of the IC and direct that traffic To the IC.

10-09 Violation of Communications Guidelines

- A. The following is the proper procedure for reporting an individual or fire department believed to have violated communications guideline.

- i. Senior dispatcher on duty will generate a non-compliance report specifically outlining the event or incident with date time and what is the alleged violation.
- ii. Report will be forwarded to Communications Supervisor who will record said radio traffic, copy non-compliance report and summarize their findings.
- iii. Communications Supervisors report will be forwarded to Chief of the alleged Fire Department with a notice allowing 5 business days to answer in writing to allegations and corrective measures being take Communication Supervisors report will be carbon copied to Association President and Madison County Fire Marshal.
- iv. Once written answer is received by Communications Supervisor from the Fire Chief correspondence will be forwarded to Association President and Madison County Fire Marshal.
- v. If all parties involved find that allegations are unfounded or that violation has been justly handled by said Fire Department involved no further actions will be taken.
- vi. If allegations are found to be in violation and Association is not pleased with actions of said Fire Department the Association may bring situation to Fire Marshal for corrective action to be taken against individual or Fire Department involved.
- vii. Non compliance reports will be kept for an indefinite period of time at Communications.

10.10 Authorized Radio 10-Codes and Terminology

A. 10-Codes

The following are approved 10-Codes and Terminology to be used by Madison County Volunteer Fire Departments on both emergency and non-emergency scenes.

- 10-1 Unable to Copy
- 10-2 Acknowledge
- 10-4 Copy
- 10-6 Busy with Assignment
- 10-8 Enroute
- 10-9 Repeat message
- 10-10 Back at station
- 10-12/10-60 Unable to relay information due to confidentiality or situation
- 10-19 Return to Station
- 10-20 Location
- 10-23 Standby
- 10-31 Officers life in danger
- 10-56 Person with symptoms of alcohol or drug impairment
- 10-97 On Scene

10-98 Completed Assignment
10-99 All is okay
** 10-77 Now listed as Priority 0 – no CPR in progress

Priority 0 No CPR in Progress replaces 10-77

B. Code Responses

Code --- Lights and Sirens
No Code ---No Lights and Sirens

C. Patient Priorities

Priority 0 Full Arrest, requiring life support and immediate Transport. Units should advise if CPR in progress
Priority 1 Life threatening, requires immediate transport.
Priority 2 Serious conditions, requires stabilization and Transport as soon as possible
Priority 3 Non-life threatening. Requires assistance and Transport when possible.

10.11 Addition of Personnel to Fire Communications Roster

- A. Fire Chief or Communications Officer must complete Fire Department Unit Number Form on new personnel and fax form to Communications Supervisor immediately upon communications equipment being assigned. Chief must sign form.
- B. Fire Department personnel will only be added to Alpha paging system and recognized in CAD with approval from Chief by Unit Number Form completion. No verbal request will be fulfilled.

10.12 Alerting of Fire Department Pagers and Alpha

1. Pagers- Fire Department Issued Pagers (Minitor)

- A. Pagers will only be activated by request of authorized personnel as submitted by the Fire Chief of that department. These lists will be kept on file at dispatch.
- B. The alerting fire department pagers are intended for emergency dispatch of alarms only. They are not to be used for notification purposes of regularly scheduled meetings and training sessions.
- C. Pagers will be activated for Weather Warnings. An attempt will be made to notify departments that are being directly affected 1st and then the remaining departments.
- D. In the event that an emergency arises that would drastically

impair the functionality of the department (ie Fire Truck must be taken in or out of service immediately) pagers shall be activated in accordance with Item 10.12.C.

- E. All Fire Department paging is checked each Monday at 16:00 hrs unless Dispatch is inundated with alarms.
 - 1. One member from each fire department shall acknowledge the pager activation if received by stating their individual assigned unit number.
 - 2. Dispatch shall log acknowledgment accordingly.
 - 3. Upon completion of pager checks dispatch shall state that --All departments are 10-2 with except of those Fire Department who did not acknowledge pager activation.
 - 4. Log will be stored in accordance with governing body regulations.

2. Alpha Pagers

- A. Alpha pagers will be entered into the CAD system upon proper paper work being submitted by Fire Chief (see 10.11.B)
- B. Alpha pagers are not to be considered main means of emergency alarm notification. Dispatch is not responsible for alarms not received or incidental activation.
- C. Dispatch will not be used as a notification service for standard announcements for fire department business.

10.13 Support Services

- A. General support services provide to Madison County Fire Department. List compiled is not all conclusive.
 - 1. Air Transport. Provided by Med flight, Erlanger or Air Evac air helicopters. Med flight is air transport 1st notified by Med Comm (HEMSI), if not available next closest air transport helicopter is notified for standby or scrambled. Air transport may be put on standby from dispatch but is generally scrambled by field unit's enroute or on the scene.
 - 2. Alabama Forestry. Upon on the request of the Fire Department Incident Commander Forrest shall respond to woodland fires for assistance in suppressing the fire and enforcement of laws violated relative to outside burning. Incident Commander should state to dispatch what is required from Forestry.
 - 3. Alabama State Troopers. Will respond for investigation of accidents with and without injuries on public property outside of city limits. AST protocol is not respond to single vehicle accidents with negative property damage unless requested per

owner or fire department. Accidents with injuries shall not be moved until Troopers arrive. Accidents without injuries may be marked and moved prior to Trooper arrival. Call takers or Dispatch will notify AST of location of accident and pertinent information and obtain ETA. Dispatch will not call Troopers back unless something major has changed prior to their arrival. Field units should not continually ask for ETA from State unless original ETA has lapsed or scene conditions have changed.

4. American Red Cross shall be notified to respond to all working structure fires (smoke and or flames showing) residential or commercial. Dispatch will not ask fire departments whether they need Red Cross but may ask number of displaced or number of fire fighters on scene.
5. Arson Task Force. Established to investigate fires involving high monetary losses and large loss of life due to suspicious causes. Upon the discretion of the Madison County Deputy Fire Marshal assigned to the in question fire he or she may deem it necessary to activate the Arson Task Force
6. HEMSI. Responding Ambulance Service for sick and injured persons in Madison County. In general the ambulance always responds Code with the exception of No Code indicated responses. Response of ambulance may be changed once EMT has assessed patient and determined patient priority. If patient is stable and priority 3 ambulances may be cut back to No Code. However if patient is priority 2 or 1 ambulance will not cut back to No Code.
7. Huntsville Fire. Mutual aid response. Fire Department must be on the scene before requesting mutual aid from Huntsville Fire.
8. Huntsville Hazmat. Hazard Material Response Team. Responds to contain hazardous spills (chemical, propane leakage, fuel leakage in large amounts or unidentified spills and leaks. Fire Departments are expected to have the ability to contain minor spills such as fuel run off from gas stations. Dispatch notifies Hazmat unit through Huntsville Fire Dispatch.
9. Huntsville Utilities. Responds to down electrical lines and poles throughout Madison County. Dispatch generally notifies utilities once scene has been assessed by fire department unless situation is obvious from initial 911 call.
10. Locksmiths. Notified for children locked in cars, houses and apartments. Dispatch has a list of participating Locksmiths and attempt to notify the closest with shortest response time.
11. Madison County Fire Marshal Office. Upon the request of the Fire Department the Fire Marshal or Deputy Fire Marshal shall respond for investigation and inspection of structure and vehicle fires.
12. Madison County Rescue Squad. Respond as secondary or back

up extrication for entrapped victims in Madison County. Also provides search and rescue on land and water. Should not be cancelled until all victims have been extricated.

13. Madison County Sheriff Department. Law enforcement for Madison County also provides traffic control as necessary.
14. Wreckers. Dispatch is not allowed to contact wrecker services unless it is involving a Fire Department apparatus. Dispatch restrains from contacting wreckers upon the request of accident victims. Alabama State Troopers generally wish to contact wreckers following their arrival this keeps vehicles from being towed from the accident scene or moved unnecessarily. Wreckers will be only be contacted by the request of an investigator from the FMO for fire related incidents.

10.14

Communications Tours and Training

- A. Tours for Fire Departments as well as the general public is highly encouraged. New Field personnel should be encouraged to visit the Communications Center for better understanding of dispatch. Tours should be set up 1 week in advance and should last no longer than 2 hours.
- B. Fire Chief or designee should contact Communications Supervisor with specifics of tour dates, attendees and any special arrangements that will be needed.
- C. Communications classes are offered on an independent basis as well as department wide. Class should be arranged a month in advance. Chief or training officers should make request to Communications Supervisor with selected dates, times and location. The Communications center has facilities for training on premises