

Guideline Name: Radio Discipline Guidance Revision 01.00		Department: Orange County Emergency Services
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Radio discipline is the process of using handheld, mobile and base station radios in a proper manner that will limit the amount of radio traffic, omit redundant radio traffic, and reduce radio transmission time.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guidance document is to have all OCES personnel understand and enforce good radio discipline. It provides a common radio use protocol to be used by all OCES employees for communication between field units (regardless of the agency), with supervisors, and with 9-1-1 Communications.

INTENT

The intent of this guidance document is for all radio transmissions to be **clear, accurate, and brief**. Being brief will free the TalkGroup to enable other responding units to communicate with each other, and with 9-1-1 Communications. Note that being brief does not mean talking fast. Talking fast creates radio traffic that is difficult to understand, often having to be repeated. It also can excite or panic other responders and Telecommunicators. Be calm, be specific & accurate, be brief, and be done.

GUIDANCE

- A. Only use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) resource status indicators: Available, Assigned, or Out-of-Service.
- B. When a Medic or EMT is in the passenger seat, the driver of the vehicle should not be using the radio or any other controls such as the emergency lights, sirens or horns. Full attention should be given to defensive driving and the passenger should perform these functions.
- C. Radio discipline must be used to think through what is to be said before keying the microphone. Time is wasted and confusion is created when people talk over the radio without knowing what they want to say. Use and reinforce the ABC's of radio broadcasting:
 1. Accuracy – Provide correct and realistic information
 2. Brevity – Transmit only pertinent information
 3. Clarity – The message must be clear and understandable to the receiver

- D. Chiefs, supervisors and EMS units should be the only radios making transmissions when acknowledging calls and responding to incidents.
1. All other users should stay off the radio until they are on-scene and working on the assigned TalkGroup or TAC channel.
- E. Radio transmissions should be clear and concise. It should provide just enough information to make sense to the person receiving the transmission. Useless traffic should be kept off of the radio.
1. **Transmit only when needed.** Radio transmissions that do not provide or request critical information just create useless chatter. This creates additional noise for the end users to filter through and can quickly become a safety issue when communications or other units cannot be heard because there is too much non-critical radio traffic.
- F. Radio transmissions should be professional and made with composure. Verbal tones and expressions should not be used.
- i. Speak in a clear, normal voice across the face of the microphone. Do not yell, become excited, or become agitated over the radio.
 1. Calmness will breed calmness and excitement/panic will breed excitement/panic. Keeping your composure will help instill calmness and confidence in your partner and others responding to the incident.
 2. Use plain text for all transmissions. Do not use 10 codes unless operationally specific information must be transmitted that way (i.e., Rape, Help, Bomb, etc.). Examples of 10-codes that staff should be familiar with include:

10-18	Urgent
10-33	Help Me (emergency)
10-36	Secure the Radio
10-45	Bomb threat/Suspicious Package
10-66	Medical Examiner
10-82	Rape/Sexual Assault
10-96	Domestic Violence
- G. If a transmission attempt is made over the radio and the unit/agency does not respond to your request immediately, wait 15 seconds before trying to raise them over the radio again. They may be pre-occupied with operations, busy on another TalkGroup, dealing with another incident, or in the middle of a 9-1-1 call.

PROCESS

“Blind” transmissions occur when someone calls another unit/officer on the radio without any previous contact. The receiving unit will probably not be expecting your transmission. When conducting blind transmissions, the unit making the request should use the “Hey you this is me,” method of communication. Using the radio designator of the unit you wish to speak with first, before giving your unit designator alerts them that radio traffic will be coming their way. Example, if EMS-1 wants EMS-10 to change to the Admin Talk Group, the conversation would be:

EMS-1	“EMS-10 from EMS-1”
EMS-10	“EMS-10”
EMS-1	“Switch to EMS Admin and ...”
EMS-10	“Copy”

- A. **RESPONSE.** When dispatched to an emergency call or other event, it is no longer a blind transmission. The “Hey you this is me” method is not necessary because Communications is expecting your radio transmission. Dispatch conversations would be:

Communications	<dispatches Medic 1 to a call and assigns an Ops TalkGroup>
Medic 1	“Medic 1 responding to (address) from (location)”
	NOTE: the location may be “quarters” if responding from a station, or address, or intersection. Keep it short.
Communications	“Medic 1 responding to (address) at (time)”

- B. **CLOSEST UNIT.** If 9-1-1 dispatches an EMS unit and you are the closer unit, you must advise 9-1-1 within 30 seconds that you will take the call, or **do not take the call at all.** There should be **NO** conversation on the radio about who is closer. Example, if Medic 5 is dispatched, but Medic 1 is closer:

Medic 1	“Communications from Medic 1”
Communications	“Medic 1”
Medic 1	“Medic 1 responding to (location) for Medic 5”
Communications	“Medic 1 responding to (location) at (time)”
Medic 5	“Medic 5 available”
Communications	“Medic 5 available at (time)”

- C. **ARRIVAL.** When arriving at the scene, always specify the address to enable communications to validate your location.

Medic 1 "Medic 1 on-scene at (address)"

Communications "Medic 1 on-scene at (time)"

- D. **TRANSPORT.** When departing the scene for the hospital, always specify the hospital you are transporting to in order for communications to validate that location.

Medic 1 "Medic 1 enroute to (hospital), (routine or hot)"

Communications "Medic 1 enroute to (hospital) at (time)"

- E. **CLEARING THE CALL.** When clearing from the scene or clearing from the hospital, there may have been a significant time laps since the last radio transmission, which could lead to a blind transmission. When clearing, revert back to the "hey you this is me" communication method.

In addition, the words "clear and available" have been used when clearing a call. Consider that if a unit is "available" it should be obvious that it is "clear". *Omit the word "clear"*. Also, if the unit is Out-of-Service for any reason, briefly state the reason when clearing (decon, restocking, equipment, end of shift, etc.). Don't give a long narrative...keep it simple and short.

Medic 1 "Communications from Medic 1"

Communications "Medic 1"

Medic 1 "Medic 1 available" or "Medic 1 Out-of-Service (reason)"

Communications "Medic 1 available or Out-of-Service at (time)"

- F. **START OF SHIFT/END OF SHIFT.** When beginning and ending a shift of duty, keep radio traffic short and simple and stick with the NIMS compliant resource status indicators.

Start of Shift

Medic 5 "Communications from Medic 5"

Communications "Medic 5"

Medic 5 "Medic 5 available in District 5"

Communications "Medic 5 available at (time)"

End of Shift

Medic 5 "Communications from Medic 5"

Communications "Medic 5"

Medic 5 "Medic 5 Out-of-Service...end of shift"

Communications "Medic 5 Out-of-Service at (time)"

G. **MAINTENANCE/TRAINING/OTHER.** When the truck is not available for assignment due to maintenance, staffing, or training, it is Out-of-Service. The reason is not important to announce over the radio as these conversations should have already taken place with the supervisor.

Medic 1 “Communications from Medic 1”

Communications “Medic 1”

Medic 1 “Medic 1 Out-of-Service for maintenance (or training)”

Communications “Medic 1 Out-of-Service at (time)”