

Santa Barbara City Fire Department - Standard Operating Procedures Emergency Operations		Code: E-II-6
Basic Communications Procedures		
Chpt: II Alarms, Responses and Comm.	Revised: 3/5/12	Pages: 4

I. PURPOSE

A. To establish a standard procedure for radio communications during normal and emergency procedures.

II. BASIC RADIO PROCEDURES

A. Proper radio procedure employs words and phrases that are short, specific, prioritized, and recognizable to responding units, dispatch, cooperating and support agencies

B. Precise messages, ones that are thought out before speaking, communicate the desired message with clarity, brevity, and without undue waste of air time.

C. Contain excitement and emotion, consciously controlling the voice and rate of speaking.

D. Unimportant messages and insignificant information should be avoided on all calls.

E. Critical messages must be allowed to proceed unimpeded, and radio conversations should not be interrupted prior to conclusion except in cases of Emergency Traffic.

F. Speakers should PAUSE between consecutive messages to allow dispatch, BC's, or company commanders to repeat the message if necessary.

G. Transmitting emergency and non-emergency radio traffic is completed by listening, prioritizing, thinking, experience, and maintaining an awareness of the overall situation, and how the speaker fits into it.

H. All radio communications are expressed in Clear Text.

1. This can generally be taken to mean the use of plain language

2. Ten Code is avoided, although some exceptions will appear in the section below.

III. NORMAL TRAFFIC

A. Normal radio traffic communications will be regulated by the following guidelines:

1. Sender - Call receiver by radio designation, and then give your own designation. For example, "Santa Barbara, Engine 1". In this example, "Engine 1" is calling "Santa Barbara".

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2. Receiver - Give the indication they are ready to receive.
 - a) Santa Barbara will say “Go ahead Engine 1”, or “Go ahead for Santa Barbara”, or “Engine 1”.
 - b) In all three examples, “Santa Barbara” is telling “Engine 1” it is ready to receive its radio traffic.
3. Sender - Transmit message, order, request, etc.
4. Receiver - Acknowledge receipt of the radio message. Example: “Santa Barbara” will answer in one of two ways:
 - a) “Santa Barbara”
 - b) Or by a repeat of the gist of the message.
5. Sender will give radio designation to acknowledge receipt of message, for example, “Engine 1”.
6. It is important when addressing the Dispatch, to precede any radio traffic, and especially routine radio traffic, with the radio designation “Santa Barbara”.
 - a) This alerts the Police-Fire Communications Specialist that Fire Department radio traffic is to follow.
7. When transmitting a message:
 - a) Press transmit button
 - b) WAIT A SECOND OR TWO!
 - c) Proceed with radio traffic
 - d) This will prevent you from “Cutting yourself off”
8. A brief repeat of non-emergency radio messages by dispatch is necessary to insure that the message was accurately received, and to allow monitoring units to remain aware of status changes.

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9. Radio rules

a) Innovations, deviations, offensive, rude, or otherwise inappropriate radio language will be avoided at all times. Use of such radio language may subject the user to disciplinary measures.

IV. RADIO TRAFFIC DURING EMERGENCIES

A. Dispatch will acknowledge all emergency radio communications **directed to them** by a brief re-statement of the message. With particular attention given to:

- On-scene reports
- Size-up reports
- Tactical assignments
- Progress reports
- Primary Search
- Emergency Traffic
- Under Control
- Additional assistance
- Requests for additional information
- All Clear

B. Any emergency radio traffic expected to be repeated by dispatch must be spoken in a clear, concise, and repeatable manner.

1. Give the receiver of the message time to process and reply to your message.

C. Information pertinent to the CAD history of the incident Command wishes to be entered on the record should be directed to the dispatch for inclusion.

D. Repeating emergency ground messages by dispatch is not mandatory and must be based on

1. If Command's instructions are being readily acknowledged by on-scene and responding companies.
2. If emergency units are experiencing difficulty communicating, dispatch will relay messages and transmit acknowledgments.

V. CODE EXPRESSIONS IN USE

A. A few code expressions have been deemed acceptable for use.

B. Code expressions may be used for:

1. Safety of crew members, to avoid antagonism at a scene.
2. So as not to unduly upset family members present.
3. Convenience, their brevity conveys a specific message in need of immediate response.

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4. Codes in use:

- Code 2
- Code 3
- Code 20
- Code 33
- Code 40
- 10-4
- 11-44
- 11-99 F
- 51-50
- Responding Without Red Lights and Siren
- Responding With Red Lights and Siren
- Newsworthy Event, Notify Public Information Officer, Media
- Curtail non essential radio traffic
- Drunk, Inebriate
- Affirmative
- Dead Body
- Firefighter Needs Assistance
- Mental Problems

For information on command communications (see [E-I-1](#) Command Procedures).