
	<b>LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> <b>Ardmore, Pennsylvania</b>	
	<b>Policy 3.20.1</b>	
Subject:		Distribution:
<b>Communications Center</b>		<b>All Personnel</b>
Date of Issue:	Expiration Date:	Rescinds:
<b>06-01-2014</b>	<b>Until Amended or Rescinded</b>	<b>Directive: 06-20</b>
References:		
<b>CALEA: 81.2.2 - 81.2.5, 81.2.8, 81.2.12, 81.2.14, 81.3.1, 81.3.2; PLEAC: 3.3.1 – 3.3.3, 3.3.4</b>		
By Authority of:		
		<b>Superintendent of Police</b>

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the effective operation of the Police Department's Communications Center.

## **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Lower Merion Township Police Department to utilize the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety for 24-hour two-way communications. The Montgomery County Department of Public Safety, located in Eagleville, Montgomery County PA, provides dispatching services to the Lower Merion Township Police Department utilizing Lower Merion Township's 450 MHz M/A Comm EDAC's truncated radio system. Lower Merion Township Police Department also maintains a communication center staffed 24-hours per day. The Lower Merion Township Police Department's communication center receives incoming phone calls over the 610-649-1000 administrative phone lines and maintains the ability to transfer the incoming call directly to the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety for emergency dispatch. Lower Merion Township Police Department's communication center also has four computer aided dispatch (CAD) terminals and can enter certain requests for police directly into the CAD for dispatch by the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Emergency Dispatch (MCED). MCED is a CALEA approved Public Safety Communications Center.

## **CONTINUOUS TWO-WAY CAPABILITY**

All on-duty officers and all vehicles utilized for emergency response will be equipped with two-way radios capable of providing continuous 24-hour communications between Lower Merion Township and MCED. MCED is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week. **(CALEA 81.2.2) (PLEAC 3.3.1)**

## **PROCEDURE**

### **A. RECORDING INFORMATION**

1. At the time a request for police service is received by MCED, the following information will be documented in the CAD system:
  - a. Event number; **(CALEA 81.2.3 a)**
  - b. Date and time of the request; **(CALEA 81.2.3 b)**
  - c. Complainant name and address, if possible; **(CALEA 81.2.3 c)**
  - d. Incident type; **(CALEA 81.2.3 d)**
  - e. Incident location; **(CALEA 81.2.3 e)**
  - f. Assigned primary and back-up officers; **(CALEA 81.2.3 f)**
  - g. Time of dispatch; **(CALEA 81.2.3 g)**
  - h. Time of officer arrival; **(CALEA 81.2.3 h)**
  - i. Time of officer return to service; **(CALEA 81.2.3 i)**
  - j. Disposition or status of the incident (final disposition is maintained by Lower Merion Township Police Department). **(CALEA 81.2.3 j)**
2. A Lower Merion Township Police Department incident number is automatically assigned by the CAD system to all events entered for the Lower Merion Township Police Department.

### **B. COMMUNICATIONS**

1. All radio transmissions shall be kept professional, and as concise and complete as possible. Members of the police department shall not disrupt the radio system by making unauthorized or unnecessary transmissions.
2. All official communications shall be transmitted only on authorized radio channels. The primary channel for the Lower Merion Township Police Department is "Patrol 1".
3. Plain speech is the preferred method when transmitting on the radio.

4. The radio designation of all Lower Merion Township Police Department units begins with the numerical designation of “34,” followed by a second number which designates the unit’s beat / assignment. When transmitting on the radio, units shall first identify themselves with their radio designation (i.e. “34-16.”)  
**(CALEA 81.2.4 c)**
5. The radio designation of MCED is “County.”
6. Transmitting officers shall announce their radio designation and the radio designation of the unit they are calling.
7. When acknowledging receipt of a transmission, units shall use their radio designation.
8. Officers will advise MCED via radio as follows: **(CALEA 81.2.4 a)**
  - a. Upon becoming available for service or being unavailable for service;  
**(CALEA 81.2.4 b)**
  - b. When acknowledging a call;
  - c. Upon arrival at the scene of an incident;
  - d. To report incidents or conditions;
  - e. When making vehicle, pedestrian, or suspect stops;
  - f. When assisting motorists;
  - g. Of their status if on a call for extended periods of time; and
  - h. As needed, for the safe and efficient operation of the shift and the department.
9. Whenever a unit is dispatched on a call, the location, nature, and any other pertinent information regarding the call will be transmitted to the responding officer, who shall acknowledge receipt of the call and advise whether they are enroute.
  - a. The method of response to the call will be the decision of the responding officer in accordance with all Lower Merion departmental policies, procedures, and state laws.
  - b. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring call assignments, ensuring that the method of response is appropriate, and making modifications as necessary. This includes the number of officers responding to the call.

**10. Clear Channel for Emergency Traffic**

- a. Telecommunicators and officers may clear a channel of all unrelated traffic during a critical incident or while trying to ascertain the status or well-being of a non-responsive unit.
- b. The channel will remain in emergency status until such time as the situation is under control, a determination has been made that the safety of those involved is no longer in question, and/or when advised to lift the emergency status by the responding officer or a supervisor.
- c. During emergency radio status, officers shall refrain from unnecessary transmissions. MCED may assign another channel for radio traffic unrelated to the incident.

**11. When it becomes necessary for an officer to communicate with another agency by radio, the following procedure shall be used: (CALEA 81.2.4 d)**

- a. If the other agency utilizes a different frequency, officers shall request MCED to patch Lower Merion Township to the other agency's frequency. Once granted permission, the officer may switch to that frequency.
- b. All communications on the other frequency shall be in accordance with this policy.

**12. A single unit will generally be dispatched to handle routine calls. Some calls may require additional units to facilitate the handling of the call, or to ensure the safety of personnel on the scene. The number of units responding to a call shall be at the discretion of a Lower Merion Township Police Department supervisor in accordance with all policies and procedures. Calls requiring two or more units would include the following: (CALEA 81.2.4 e, g)**

- a. Assault on an officer, an officer's call for assistance, or an officer's activated emergency alarm;
- b. Any Crime-in-progress call;
- c. Violent crimes;
- d. Calls involving locations and/or persons where the use of weapons and/or violence might exist;
- e. Domestic disturbance situations;
- f. Calls where there exists a need to search the area for suspects, evidence, missing persons, etc.;

- g. Use of force incidents;
- h. Alarms;
- i. Calls involving unsecured premises;
- j. Calls involving intoxicated, disorderly, or mentally ill persons;
- k. Any call where in the judgment of the officer, supervisor, or telecommunicator, there exists a need to send two or more units.

13. When multiple units are dispatched, those additional units are expected to clear the scene and return to service as soon as it had been determined that their presence is no longer needed.

14. It is the responsibility of the shift supervisor to continuously monitor calls to determine whether the presence of the shift supervisor is or may be needed. The shift supervisor shall be notified by officers in the following circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to respond to the following incidents: **(CALEA 81.2.4 f)**

- a. Use of force incidents resulting in injury;
- b. Accidents involving Police Department vehicles;
- c. Calls involving serious injury or death;
- d. Complaints concerning questionable conduct by a member of the Police Department;
- e. Vehicle pursuits;
- f. Discharge of a firearm;
- g. On-duty injury of an employee; and/or
- h. Hostage or barricaded suspect situations.
- i. Any scene requiring supervisory oversight.

**C. ACCESS TO RESOURCES (CALEA 81.2.2, 81.2.5)**

1. Shift supervisors shall ensure that they are immediately available, at all times, to MCED. **(CALEA 81.2.5 a)**
2. At the beginning of each shift, the shift supervisor shall ensure that the MCED supervisors are notified, via email, of the names of the officers on duty and their

assignments prior to the start of their respective tour-of-duty. The officers on duty and their assignments shall also be updated throughout the day as needed. **(CALEA 81.2.5 b)**

3. Residential phone numbers of all agency personnel are available to MCED by contacting the shift supervisor or the Lower Merion Township Communication Center. **(CALEA 81.2.5 c)**
4. A map detailing the service area of the Lower Merion Township Police Department is posted at the dispatch consoles at MCED. Computerized versions are also available to MCED personnel at their consoles via the CAD. **(CALEA 81.2.5 d)**
5. Officer status is visually available to each telecommunicator at MCED in the CAD system, including those units who are out of service. A change in the status at one telecommunicator position will change the status at the other locations at the same time. **(CALEA 81.2.5 e)**
6. All requests for emergency or non-emergency Fire or EMS response shall be made through MCED by radio or telephone. The officer shall provide the necessary information to ensure a proper dispatch and response by emergency services personnel and equipment.
7. The MCED CAD and phone systems maintain a list for procuring the services of tow trucks, taxis, and social service agencies. The Lower Merion Township Police Department's Communication Center also maintains listings for services such as utility companies, taxis, and social service agencies. Officers may request these services as needed. **(CALEA 81.2.5 f)**
8. The Lower Merion Township Police Department's Emergency Response Team is available for call out through the Lower Merion Police Department's Communication Center for tactical incidents and must be requested by the shift supervisor or Unit Commander.
9. MCED maintains tactical and non-tactical dispatching plans. **(CALEA 81.2.5G)**

#### **D. RECORDING AND PLAYBACK**

1. MCED records transmissions on all radio channels and all phone lines. Their recordings are maintained on hard drives within MCEDs' secure communications center. MCEDs' audio recording retention period is one year. Lower Merion Township Police Department also records all police radio transmissions on the Lower Merion Township 450 MHz M/A Comm EDAC's radio system and all phone lines within the Communication Center. The Lower Merion Police Department's logging recordings maintained on the AudioLog recorder's hard drive and backed-up on DVD. The AudioLog recorder resides within the secure communication center's equipment room and the DVD's are stored in a secured

cabinet within the Auxiliary Services Unit. Lower Merion Police Department's retention period is forty-five days. **(CALEA 81.2.8 a, b) (PLEAC 3.3.3 a, b)**

2. If the recording of an incident is needed for an investigation or review, officers may request a copy of the recording by completing a MCED "Record Release" form (attachment "B"). The form shall then be submitted to the Division Commander for approval. **(CALEA 81.2.8 b, c) (PLEAC 3.3.3 c)**
3. Each console position within Lower Merion Township's Communication Center has continuous recording of all radio transmission and telephone calls, with the capability of immediate playback of both. Lower Merion Township's Communication Center personnel are permitted to instantly replay information of an emergency nature. **(CALEA 81.2.8 c) (PLEAC 3.3.3 c)**

#### **E. MISDIRECTED EMERGENCY CALLS**

1. MCED maintains a policy for the prompt handling and appropriate routing of misdirected emergency calls. Any calls received in Lower Merion Township Police Department's Communication Center can be transferred to outside agencies, including surrounding Public Safety Answer Points (911 Centers) via the communication center's phone system. **(CALEA 81.2.12)**

#### **F. FIRST AID OVER PHONE**

1. The Lower Merion Police Department Communication Center is not emergency medical dispatched certified. If a medical emergency call is received by the Lower Merion Police Department's Communication Center, the caller is transferred immediately to MCED. MCED provides emergency medical dispatch instructions. All Montco DPS Telecommunicators are trained in emergency medical dispatch by the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch based in Salt Lake City, Utah. Their telecommunications staff utilizes the card sets provided by the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch (NAEMD). All MCED staff follows the guidelines set forth by the NAEMD. **(CALEA 81.2.14) (PLEAC 3.3.2)**

#### **G. MONTCO DPS AND LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

1. In order to ensure the physical protection and security of the communications function, and related equipment and personnel, MCED is located within a secure facility with controlled access. The parking lot of the center is gated and surrounded by a chain link fence. All vehicles and individuals entering the facility are checked by armed security personnel. Cameras are mounted around the exterior of the building. Access to MCED Communication Center is restricted to employees only. Approved visitors must register and be escorted by authorized personnel to both facilities **(CALEA 81.3.1 a)**

2. In order to ensure physical protection and security of the Lower Merion Township Police Department's Communication Center, and all related equipment and personnel, the Lower Merion Communication Center is located within a secure facility with limited controlled key card access. Cameras are mounted around the exterior of Lower Merion Township's Public Safety Building and at all entrances. **(CALEA 81.3.1 a)**
3. Lower Merion Township's radio equipment room, remote tower sites, including all phone lines, antennas, and power sources, are located within secured facilities. The sites are also protected by uninterruptable power sources (UPS's) and monitored by the 450 MHz M/A Comm EDAC's radio system's communications system director (CSD) computer. **(CALEA 81.3.1 b, d)**
4. MCED provides a mobile communications vehicle that duplicates the capabilities of their Communications Center in case of a catastrophic failure or as needed as a command post. **(CALEA 81.3.1C)**
5. MCED has 3 alternate back up power sources. Two of the primary sources are a 300 KW diesel generator supported by an identical 300 KW diesel generator should the one fail. Each of these generators is capable of supplying back up power from its own self-contained 600 Gal. fuel tank for 48 hrs. The third alternate back up power source is a 200 KW diesel generator capable of supplying back up power to ancillary equipment from its own self-contained 336 Gal fuel tank for 38 hrs. There is a 10,000 Gal. in ground tank available to re-fuel each generator as needed. Each generator is tested bi-monthly and tested under full load on a quarterly basis. If the generators would fail, MCED has UPS back up power that will run the necessary infrastructure to keep emergency communications on the air for 6 Hours. **(CALEA 81.3.2) (PLEAC 3.3.4)**
6. The Lower Merion Township Communication Center, located within the Township's Public Safety Building, uses public electricity as its primary source of power. In the event the primary power source fails, the Public Safety Building has a diesel-powered generator providing an alternate source of electricity. The generator enables radio communications to be maintained, uninterrupted, during a power emergency. Additionally, all electrical equipment within the Lower Merion Township Communication Center is protected with a MGE UPS Systems 75 kVA Galaxy 4000 uninterruptable power source (UPS) that will continue to supply power for all equipment for approximately 1 hour. **(CALEA 81.3.2) (PLEAC 3.3.4)**