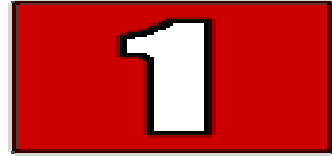
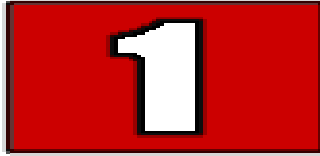


# Warren County Sheriff's Office

1400 State Route 9  
Lake George, New York 12845  
(518) 743-2500

## Emergency 911 Communication Center



## Communication Procedures & Guidelines

for

## Emergency Services Providers

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## **Purpose and Content**

These guidelines shall provide a plan and directive for uniform procedures in radio communications for all law enforcement, fire and EMS agencies accessing the Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication Systems. It should be understood that all frequencies are licensed by the FCC to the Sheriff of Warren County and he retains ultimate authority over their use. As it becomes necessary, sections will be added to cover other areas, including the operation of local base stations, monitor/pager receivers, mobile radios and portable radios and ANI signalling requirements.

Providing specific guidelines for radio communications within our organizations will allow for clear and concise communication between Communication Center staff and all emergency services personnel.

Mobile and portable radio equipment is likely the most valuable technological advancement in the fire service since the invention of the pump, but it can be rendered useless if not properly used. In addition to the basic functions of alerting and dispatching alarms, the radio is used to provide a working knowledge of all field conditions, making interaction between the Communication Center and field personnel operating over a wide area possible. Fireground communications, operating on designated radio frequencies separate from alert and dispatch frequencies, is a major innovation for the efficient overall command and operation of an emergency situation. We have come full circle from the days of the fire trumpet, which to this day is the symbol of fire officer command and rank.

We no longer use "10" Codes but rather plain language to exchange messages. The proper use of the radio is one of the more important adjustments necessary for the modern fire service. It is imperative for field personnel to remain calm and poised in the face of disaster in order to promote an atmosphere of control and stability.

This manual has been prepared to instruct and guide field personnel in the professional and appropriate use of the Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication System. It is through the cooperation of the Warren County Sheriff, the Warren County Fire Coordinator, the Warren County EMS Coordinator and the Communication Center staff that this guide was made possible.

## **The Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication Center**

The primary Communication Center is located within the Warren County Public Safety Building at 1400 State Route 9 in Queensbury, NY. There are a minimum of three Communication Officers on duty from 07:00 to 23:00 and a minimum of two Communication Officers on duty from 23:00 to 07:00 every day. The Communication Center includes six console positions for those times when additional staffing is needed.

A secondary Communication Center is located at a separate location. The backup Communication Center mirrors the primary center and includes four more console positions.

The Communication Center is the primary Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) for all hard line and wireless 911 calls in Warren County and the Town of Minerva. Communication Officers are responsible for the dispatching of 25 fire departments, 14 emergency squads (including Minerva Fire/EMS which is in Essex County) and 1 police department, covering 11 towns, 1 village and 1 city. They also dispatch for the Lake George Park Commission during the boating season, monitor State Police units operating within the county and fire and EMS units outside the county during mutual aid calls. Warren County has an off-season population of about 63,300 people over 869 square miles. That number can more than double during the summer months and during special events, such as the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival, Americade and the Adirondack Nationals Car Show.

In 2009, the Communication Center handled 40,071 calls for service or roughly 110 calls per day. This number represents any incident that a police, fire or EMS response was requested. It does not take into consideration duplicate reports for the same incident or calls answered on the "administrative" lines that are directed to another division or agency.

Currently, there are 18 full-time Communication Officers including one Communication Supervisor and two Senior Communication Officers. All Officers are required to successfully pass a civil service exam and must successfully pass a 16-week on-the-job training course. Once this is done, he/she will go on to become certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), CPR/AED, NYSPIN and e-JusticeNY operations. Meal breaks are taken within the Communications Center. Stress levels are often high and "quiet" time is minimal.

All activities of the Communication Center are time sensitive. The time setting on **all** equipment is synchronized using Spectracom's GPS satellite based NetClock system. To avoid any confusion, all times are logged using 24-hour military time.

01:00 = 1:00 am	13:00 = 1:00 pm
02:00 = 2:00 am	14:00 = 2:00 pm
03:00 = 3:00 am	15:00 = 3:00 pm
04:00 = 4:00 am	16:00 = 4:00 pm
05:00 = 5:00 am	17:00 = 5:00 pm
06:00 = 6:00 am	18:00 = 6:00 pm
07:00 = 7:00 am	19:00 = 7:00 pm
08:00 = 8:00 am	20:00 = 8:00 pm
09:00 = 9:00 am	21:00 = 9:00 pm
10:00 = 10:00 am	22:00 = 10:00 pm
11:00 = 11:00 am	23:00 = 11:00 pm
12:00 = 12:00 pm	00:00 = 12:00 am

The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system in use today was designed by New World Systems (NWS) in Troy, Michigan. Warren County has been an NWS customer since 1992. In September 2004, the software was updated to their new Microsoft Platform (MSP) product. Not only did this allow the Sheriff's personnel to continue to use a software package that they are very familiar with, it also afforded them the benefit of a "Windows" based, far more user friendly interface than its AS-400 based predecessor. Once a 911 call for service (CFS) is received, pertinent information is imported to the CAD system. Once this is done, and the address is verified against the GEO or street file, a map appears with an icon pointing to the scene of the call. To that the operator can drag-and-drop any available unit, which will then become an active unit on the call. The exact address is displayed, including cross streets, and if set up to do so will suggest the shortest route of travel for field units.

## FCC Requirements and Radio Regulations

Efficient communication is essential in today's world. Of all the resources available, two-way radios are recognized as the most efficient system for keeping all units informed as to the exact conditions that exist on the scene of an incident. Preliminary reports and status updates make it possible for officers to deploy their equipment most efficiently. It's value in the management of resources and operations has been well established. Keep in mind:

- All radio communications must comply with the rules and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.
- All conversations shall be as brief as possible and all unnecessary repetition avoided.
- All radio conversations shall be business-like without personal greetings or pleasantries.
- All transmissions shall be courteous, but expressions of courtesy such as "thanks" and "please" shall be avoided in the interest of brevity. Indecent, obscene or profane language is strictly prohibited.
- Members shall use titles when identifying themselves, or addressing others. Avoid abbreviations such as "Cap". Never call a person by their first name no matter how well they are known. Formal procedures are recommended by the FCC for all radio communications.
- If an error has been made, simply say "correction" and re-word the message.
- All messages should be acknowledged as quickly as possible. Avoid the use of "OK" except as a qualifying answer as in a properly received test. Otherwise, acknowledge messages with the phrase "Message Received" or simply "Received".

## Appropriate Radio Procedures

- It is important when using any radio that you use proper radio procedures. By doing so, chances are good the person you are calling is prepared to hear or “copy” your message and they will receive and understand it completely.
- Be sure to select the proper channel.
- Be sure the volume is turned up.
- Be sure the channel is clear of other radio traffic.
- Always use your complete identifier (“Ambulance 721” not just “721”)
- Do not attempt to contact Fire or EMS Control during a dispatch.
- Press and hold the Push-to-Talk (PTT) button on the microphone for approximately one second before speaking to allow the ANI data packet (squawk tone) to be sent.
- Speak in a normal voice. Shouting or loud talking causes distorted sounds that are difficult to understand. Every effort should be made to keep your voice calm, regardless of the situation. If a person is out of breath, they should pause momentarily and regain their composure prior to transmitting.
- Speak clearly in a natural conversational rhythm.
- Speak at a steady slow to medium pace, do not rush.
- Hold the microphone at a 45 degree angle about 2-3 inches from your mouth and speak across it.
- Try to avoid background noises. Sirens, air horns and other loud noises can seriously impair reception of messages.
- All messages should be clear, concise and to the point.
- Release the PTT button after your message has been transmitted.
- At no time is obscene or vulgar language appropriate.
- Remember, a message has no value if it is not clearly understood.
- Listen for a Communication Officer to acknowledge your message. If, after a short time the Communication Officer has not acknowledged, call and ask if he/she copied your last transmission.

## Phonetic Numbering

To avoid confusion or misunderstanding, numbers should always be transmitted digit by digit. This applies to all numbers, including street numbers. For example:

Address	Transmitted as:
1340 State Route 9	One, Three, Four, Zero State Route 9
15 First Street	One, Five First Street

## The Phonetic Alphabet

A - Adam	N - Nancy
B - Boy	O - Ocean
C - Charlie	P - Paul
D - David	Q - Queen
E - Edward	R - Robert
F - Frank	S - Sam
G - George	T - Tom
H - Henry	U - Union
I - Ida	V - Victor
J - John	W - William
K - King	X - X-ray
L - Lincoln	Y - Young
M - Mary	Z - Zebra

Words that are not understood after repetition should be spelled out and the word spoken before and after spelling. For example:

"Chelsea -- I spell C H E L S E A -- Chelsea".

If the spelling still cannot be understood, then the phonetic alphabet should be used to clarify spoken letters. For example:

"Chelsea -- **C**harles – **H**enry – **E**dward – **L**incoln – **S**am – **E**dward – **A**dam".

## Radio Terminology

Common words and phrases used in radio communications and their meanings.

- ACKNOWLEDGE - Let me know if the message was received and understood.
- AFFIRMATIVE - Yes or true. Opposite of negative.
- ALL STATIONS - Attention all stations - Stand by for message.
- CORRECTION - Use if any error has been made.
- EMERGENCY - Any incident that threatens life and/or property.
- EXPOSURES - The surrounding property on all sides of a fire building or fire area. Exposures are defined in clockwise order beginning with "Side 1" which is the street side.
- FALSE ALARMS
  - MALICIOUS FALSE ALARM (MFA) - An alarm deliberately sounded to cause inconvenience, disturbance, and excitement.
  - EQUIPMENT - Malfunction of alarm system equipment.
  - ACCIDENTAL - Accidental activation of a fire alarm system.
  - GOOD INTENT - Mistaken activation of the fire alarm system by a citizen with good intentions.
- ICS - INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM - A component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept in the United States. It is a management protocol originally designed for emergency management agencies and later federalized. ICS is based upon a flexible, scalable response organization providing a common framework within which people can work together effectively. These people may be drawn from multiple agencies that do not routinely work together, and ICS is designed to give standard response and operation procedures to reduce the problems and potential for miscommunication on such incidents. ICS has been summarized as a "first-on-scene" structure, where the first responder of a scene has charge of the scene until the incident has been declared resolved, a superior-ranking responder arrives on scene and seizes command, or the Incident Commander appoints another individual Incident Commander. ICS provides for a unified single point of contact for any size incident. At no time is there more than one Incident Commander at the same incident. (Fire Command & EMS Command)
- IN SERVICE - Unit ready and available for another alarm.
- MESSAGE RECEIVED - I have received and understood the message.



- NEGATIVE - No or not true. Opposite of affirmative.
- OCCUPANCY - The purpose for which a building is being used such as a residential dwelling, grocery store, textile factory, storage loft, hotel, rooming house, office building, etc.
- OCCUPANTS – Person or persons within a building.
- OCCUPIED - People in building at the time of the fire.
- UNOCCUPIED – No people in the building at the time of the fire.
- OUT OF SERVICE - Not available to respond due to routine or mechanical conditions, or operating on an alarm or drill.
- PROCEED – Go ahead with your message
- PRIORITY 1 - Emergency response mode using warning lights and siren.
- PRIORITY 2 - Non-emergency response mode. No warning lights or siren.
- PRIORITY 3 – Response for a stand-by only. There is no emergency.
- REPEAT - Repeat your last message.
- UNIT - The term used to designate any police, fire or EMS vehicle or person.
- “EMERGENCY TRAFFIC” - Message to follow will be of a life-threatening nature.
- “MAYDAY” – Message transmitted ONLY when you or your crew are threatened with "grave and imminent danger." This distress call consists of the word “Mayday” repeated three times.
- VACANT - Unused or abandoned building.

## Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication System

The Warren County Sheriff's Office communication system consists of 30 frequencies on VHF High (148-174 MHz), VHF Low (30-50 MHz), and UHF (406-512 MHz) band. All frequencies are licensed by the FCC to the Sheriff of Warren County and he retains ultimate authority over their use. They are a combination of simplex and half-duplex frequencies. A simplex frequency is one that you transmit and receive on the same frequency. A half-duplex frequency is when you transmit on one frequency and receive on another through a "repeater" system. The Sheriff's main frequency (Headquarters), Local Government (DPW), Fire Control, EMS Control and the Emergency Services Talk-Around channel are on repeaters. This means that all signals from a mobile, portable or base station are transmitted on a specific frequency to a mountain top receiver and at the same time the signal is re-broadcasted (or repeated) at a higher power on another specific frequency to the other units. This is how a unit in Hague can talk directly to a unit in Queensbury.

Warren County has four transmitter/receiver sites. The first is at the top of Prospect Mountain in Lake George, NY. The second is at the top of Gore Mountain in Johnsbury, NY. The third is located in the basement of the Warren County Municipal Center in Queensbury, NY. The fourth is located at the Hague Fire Station on State Route 8 in Hague, NY. All inbound and outbound radio and telephone traffic is recorded and archived for a period of 90 days.

Certain channels at these four sites are connected to a "voting" system. This technology automatically takes the strongest signal from the four sites and hands it off to the Communication Officer without their interaction. By doing so, the Communication Center will only hear the strongest signal. Transmissions on these channels are simultaneously broadcasted – known as "simul-casting" which means all four transmitters are activated at the same time.

The **Fire Alert frequency** (WNVU-964) is used for paging all Warren County Fire Departments, Emergency Squads, Fire and EMS Coordinators and some Sheriff's Office personnel. It is also used by the Communications Center to activate the siren or air horn warning system at each fire station. Transmissions on this frequency other than those from the Warren County Communication Center or a Warren County Fire/EMS base station for a local announcement are strictly prohibited.

The **Fire Control repeater** (WQCK-301) is used by all Warren County fire apparatus to advise Fire Control of their status. Non-essential radio traffic on this frequency is strictly prohibited.

The **Inter-County Fire Control** frequency (KCK-671) is used as a means of communication between Fire Control Centers throughout New York State.

The **Civil Defense** frequency (KYQ-352) is a state-wide frequency used by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and the Office of Emergency Services for coordinating resources during large scale disasters or weather related emergencies.

The **EMS Control repeater** (WNVU-964) is used by all Warren County EMS apparatus (primarily ambulances) to advise EMS Control of their status. Non-essential traffic on this frequency is strictly prohibited.

The **Emergency Services Talk-Around repeater** (KCZ-460) is available for use by all authorized Warren County emergency services personnel.

The Fire Control and EMS Control repeaters are not inter-changeable. One should not be considered a back-up for the other. In the event of a channel failure, you may be directed by the Communications staff to switch to an alternate frequency. However, unless you are told to do so, **Fire Control** is for **Fire radio traffic** and **EMS Control** is for **EMS radio traffic**. There are no exceptions to this policy.

The Communication Center has a Motorola CDM-1250 portable base station and a Zetron series 2500 encoder set up to act as a local backup radio with paging capabilities. It is tied in to the consoles as well as the recording system and includes many of the local fire/EMS channels.

The **Sheriff's Primary** law enforcement frequency (KNED-338) is commonly referred to as the "Headquarters" frequency and is used to poll for the location of patrols, dispatch patrols to calls for service and for the patrol units to advise Headquarters of their status. This too is a "repeated" frequency allowing patrol units to talk to each other even though they are at opposite ends of the county.

The **Sheriff's Secondary** frequency (KSL-462) is commonly referred to as the "Dispatch" frequency. It is used by Warren County patrol units, marine patrol units and Lake George Park Commission marine units for Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) information. Wants and warrant checks on a person, driver's license checks, and vehicle and boat registration checks are a few examples. This is a simplex frequency that is incorporated into the "voting receiver".

The **Sheriff's Car to Car** frequency (KD-43629) is, as the name implies, used when two patrol units need to communicate with each other. This channel allows them to do so without tying up the main or dispatch frequency.

In addition to these three police frequencies, Communication Officers also have the **Intra-State** frequency (WNAK-422), sometimes referred to as the "MRD" or Mobile Radio District to contact other police agencies throughout New York State.

The **Local Government repeater** (KCZ-460) is used primarily by the Warren County Department of Public Works (DPW). Any highway department in Warren County may use the frequency although most use their own private frequency.

The **Transport** frequency (KNED-338) is used strictly by the Correctional Division inmate transport vehicles.

## What to expect from the Communication Center

The Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication Center and its staff:

- Assists in pinpointing call locations
- Assists in the relay of emergency messages between emergency services personnel although direct communications is recommended
- Maintains accurate and detailed records of all pertinent information relating to each call for service
- Are certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) which allows them to assign a priority to every EMS call based on a standardized set of questions
- Provides pre-arrival emergency medical instructions to callers
- Provides post-dispatch instructions to responding emergency personnel
- Coordinates emergency notifications to wrecker services, utilities such as National Grid, Time Warner Cable and Verizon as well as Animal Control, Department of Public Works, County Coroners, Department of Social Services, NY State Department of Transportation, Upstate Poison Control and Chem-Trec.
- At 19:00 hours Monday through Friday, on the first full week of each month they perform a scheduled siren and unit test of each fire agency in the county.
- At 18:00 hours each evening, they provide nightly announcements for training and other **public safety related** topics, as long as:
  - They meet the criteria established and agreed upon by the Warren County Sheriff and the Warren County Fire Coordinator.
  - They do not violate Regulation 90.405 of the Federal Communications Commission.
  - They do not interfere with emergency operations.
- Training announcements may be approved by one of the following:
  - Sheriff, Undersheriff, or Communications Supervisor
  - Fire Coordinator or EMS Coordinator
  - Fire Chief or Executive Officer
  - EMS Captain or Executive Officer

- Training announcements may be made on any 2 nights. In addition, an announcement for training may be made the night immediately prior to the training date.
- Announcements for regular monthly events **will not** be made.
- Announcements for recreational or social events such as parades **will not** be made.
- Announcements are limited to no more than 30 words, excluding the required language in the Communication Operations manual. Announcements of a greater length **require** the Sheriff's or Undersheriff's approval.
- Announcements, other than for training, will be run a **maximum** of two times on dates to be selected by the authority.
- Announcement requests must be received at least 30 minutes prior to the time of the announcement.
- **Temporary Automatic Mutual Aid** requests are those which expire within 24 hours. They may include but are not limited to units taken out of service for minor repairs, banquets, etc. These requests must be submitted to the Undersheriff or Communication Supervisor for approval. If approved, a Special Dispatch Order will be issued.
- An announcement canceling a training course due to unforeseen circumstances may be made the night prior to **or** the night of the training course.
- With the exception of the Sheriff, the authority name and title are NOT transmitted with announcements.
- There are **NO** exceptions to the above rules. Any request for announcements to be made outside the procedure outlined herein must be made to and approved by the Sheriff.
- The Communication Center **is not** a personal answering service, and will not accept personal calls or take messages.

## Drill Notifications

1. Any agency wishing to host a Mutual-Aid or single agency drill that will include the services of the Warren County Communications Center must **at least three (3) business days prior to the drill:**
  - A. Obtain the approval of the Fire Coordinator for fire related operations and activities, or
  - B. Obtain the approval of the EMS Coordinator for EMS related operations and activities.
2. Following approval, the Fire and/or EMS Coordinator, must notify at least one of the following:
  - A. The Communication Supervisor
  - B. The Undersheriff, in the absence of the Communication Supervisor
3. Notification must also be made to any other County Coordinator if their county is participating in the exercise.
4. The agency hosting the drill must provide the Communications Supervisor, or in his absence the Undersheriff:
  - A. The Date and Time of the exercise.
  - B. Location of the exercise.
  - C. Duration of the exercise.
  - D. List of agencies participating.
  - E. List of frequencies to be used.
  - F. What may be expected of the Communications Center Staff.
5. This procedure applies to all In-County and Out-of-County agencies requesting Warren County resources.
6. If prior to the start of the drill, the Communication Center has **not been notified**, permission to use county radio frequencies may be **denied** by the Communications Center staff, and notification made to the Communication Supervisor.
7. If an actual incident occurs within Warren County at any time during the exercise, and it is determined by the Communications staff, Fire Coordinator or EMS Coordinator that the activities at the drill are interfering with emergency operations, participation by the Communications Center will be terminated.

## Basic Dispatching Procedures for Fire Related Calls for Service

- A **Fire Service Field Unit** is defined as a Chief's vehicle, Air Boat, Fire Boat, Engine, Engine/Tanker, Engine/Rescue, Rescue Truck, Tanker, Brush Truck, Utility vehicle or Aerial Truck.

The following procedure will be followed by Communication Officers when dispatching a fire related emergency call for service. On the Fire Alert channel:

1. Activate the pulsed Alert Tone for several seconds
  2. "Stand-by (Agency Name) Fire"
  3. Activate Two-Tone sequence for pager activation
  4. "Warren County Fire Control to (Agency Name) Fire, respond to (Address and Cross Streets) for a (description of the incident)."
  5. Repeat steps 3 and 4
  6. Fire Control will end the dispatch with the time
  7. Fire Control will then activate the station siren
  8. The Communication Officer will continue steps 3, 4 and 7 every three minutes until the necessary resources respond.
- Fire Service Field Units shall use the term "Fire Control" to contact the Communication Center.
  - Communication Officers will "echo" and simulcast all incoming pertinent transmissions made by field units.
  - Fire Service Field Units should always wait for the operator to finish both dispatch sequences before trying to contact Fire Control.
  - Fire Service Field Units should know what unit they are in and what unit they are attempting to contact **prior** to transmitting.
  - If multiple units are responding to the same call at the same time, the first unit should be the only one to contact Fire Control to advise which units are responding.
  - Fire Service Field Units should contact each other directly using the Warren County Fireground frequency or their organization's own frequency to obtain additional information, receive orders from the Incident Commander and all other **on scene** communications. For inter-agency communication where units are not within range of each other, the Emergency Services Talk-Around repeater should be used.
  - It is not necessary for apparatus to acknowledge an alarm and say you are "awaiting manpower". Either you are responding to the alarm or you are not.

- Generally speaking, Fire Service Field Units only need to contact Fire Control to let them know they are:
  - Enroute to the scene
  - Arriving on the scene - Only the first arriving Chief or piece of apparatus needs to check out on the scene. The first arriving unit should provide a brief status report.
  - In need of additional resources such as mutual aid, National Grid etc.
  - In Service - The last unit to return to service should put all units back in service.
  
- For example, use the Fire Control frequency to advise the Communication Center that you are responding in the following manner:
  1. “(Your complete unit number) to Fire Control.”
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. “(Your complete unit number) is enroute.”
  4. Fire Control will simultaneously re-broadcast (known as simulcasting) your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
  
- If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call, provide Fire Control with a brief “on scene” status report in the following manner:
  1. “(Your complete unit number) to Fire Control.”
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. “(Your complete unit number) is arriving, nothing showing – Investigating.” Other on scene reports might be “smoke showing”, “working fire” or “fully involved.”
  4. Fire Control will simulcast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
  
- If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call and have no radio communication, give Fire Control a brief “on scene” status report by phone by dialing 911.
  
- It is **not** necessary for more than one Chief to check enroute.
  
- It is **not** necessary for each unit to check out on the scene.
  
- It is **not** necessary for fire units to check in “Returning”. If the unit is in district and available for the next call, the unit is considered “In Service”.
  
- It is **not** necessary for any unit to check in “Mobile Service”.



- If no **unit** has responded within six (6) minutes of the time of call, the call will be dispatched to the nearest mutual aid agency and the Fire Coordinator notified. If no **apparatus** has responded within six (6) minutes of the time of call, Fire Control may attempt to contact an Officer for instructions prior to dispatching mutual aid.
- If another agency has been dispatched under mutual aid and the home agency obtains sufficient personnel to handle the call, the home agency has the option to cancel any/all mutual aid units.
- All on scene operations should be conducted in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS).
- On Sunday evenings at 18:00, the Communication Center will conduct a weekly test of the Fire Chief's and EMS Captain's page. They will also announce the list of units out of service throughout the County as well as the agencies on automatic mutual aid.
- Misuse, abuse or any other improper or unauthorized activities on the Warren County Sheriff's Office Communication System cannot and will not be tolerated.

## Basic Dispatching Procedures for EMS Related Calls for Service

- An **EMS Field Unit** is defined as a Captain's vehicle, Ambulance or Medic Unit.

The following procedure will be followed by Communication Officers when dispatching EMS related emergency call for service. On the Fire Alert channel:

1. Activate the pulsed Alert Tone for several seconds
  2. "Stand-by (Agency Name) Emergency"
  3. Two-Tone sequence for pager activation
  4. "Warren County Fire Control to (Agency Name) Emergency, respond (EMD Priority) to (Address and Cross Streets) for a (description of the incident)."
  5. Repeat steps 3 and 4
  6. Fire Control will end the announcement with the time.
  7. The Communication Officer will continue steps 3 and 4 every three minutes until the necessary resources respond.
- If, according to EMD protocols an "Echo" determinant is recommended:
    - Communications will page the fire department or fire department 1<sup>st</sup> responders once with no siren activation
    - Communications will activate the long tone designated for "Echo" responses
    - Any available EMS provider may respond to assist if they are close by.
  - EMS Field Units shall use the term "EMS Control" to contact the Communication Center.
  - Communication Officers will "echo" and simulcast all incoming pertinent transmissions made by field units.
  - When an ambulance checks "Enroute" to a call, Communications will presume that they have all the resources they need. Requests for ALS or additional personnel should be made at that time.
  - EMS Field Units should always wait for the operator to finish both dispatch sequences before trying to contact EMS Control.
  - EMS Field Units should know what unit they are in and what unit they are attempting to contact **prior** to transmitting.
  - If multiple units are responding to the same call at the same time, the first unit should be the only one to contact EMS Control to advise which units are responding.

- EMS Field Units should contact each other directly on the statewide inter-agency EMS frequency (155.715) or their organization's own frequency to obtain additional information, receive orders from the Incident Commander and all other **on scene** communications. For inter-agency communications where units are not within range of each other, the Emergency Services Talk-Around repeater should be used.
- It is **not** necessary for any EMS Field Unit to advise EMS Control that you will be "enroute momentarily". Either you are responding to the call or you are not.
- It is **not** necessary for any unit other than the ambulance to check enroute to the scene
- It is **not** necessary for any unit to check enroute to the squad building
- The only time an ALS Tech **should** check enroute to the scene is when he/she is responding to an ALS request.
- Generally speaking, EMS Field Units (primarily ambulances) only need to contact EMS Control to let them know they are:
  - Enroute to the scene
  - Arriving on the scene – Only the ambulance, the first arriving Officer or first arriving ALS tech needs to check out on the scene. This is only to establish the initiation of patient care.
  - In need of additional resources such as mutual aid, ALS, Life-Net etc.
  - Enroute to (facility name) Hospital
  - Out at (facility name) Hospital
  - Returning to station or to the scene
  - In Service
- For example, use the EMS Control frequency to advise the Communication Center that you are responding in the following manner:
  1. "(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control."
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. "(Your complete unit number) is responding."
  4. EMS Control will simulcast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.

- When you arrive on the scene, advise EMS Control in the following manner:
  1. “(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control.”
  2. Wait for an acknowledgement
  3. “(Your complete unit number) is arriving.”
  4. EMS Control will simul-cast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
  
- If you are the first unit to arrive on the scene of the call and the situation justifies it, provide EMS Control with a brief “on scene” report in the following manner:
  5. “(Your complete unit number) to EMS Control.”
  6. Wait for an acknowledgement
  7. “(Your complete unit number) is arriving, two vehicles, head-on, vehicles are still in the roadway, 3 patients, no extrication needed.” Other on scene reports might be “Unable to locate – request further information” or “smoke showing from the vehicle.”
  8. EMS Control will simul-cast your message on the Fire Alert, Fire Control and EMS Control frequencies.
  
- If no ambulance has acknowledged the call within **six (6) minutes** of the original time of call, the call will be dispatched to the nearest mutual aid agency along with Empire Ambulance Service.
  
- If another agency has been dispatched under mutual aid and the home agency obtains sufficient personnel to handle the call, the home agency has the option to cancel any/all mutual aid units. However, the State Department of Health mandates the closest fully staffed ambulance continue to the scene.
  
- All on scene operations should be conducted in accordance with the Incident Command System (ICS).
  
- On Sunday evenings at 18:00, the Communication Center will conduct a weekly test of the Fire Chief’s and EMS Captain’s page. They will also announce the list of units out of service throughout the County as well as the agencies on automatic mutual aid.
  
- Misuse, abuse or any other improper or unauthorized activities on the Warren County Communications System cannot and will not be tolerated.
  
- The Communication Center has an established Automatic Mutual Aid (AMA) EMS policy.
  - As the county Emergency Communication Center we have an obligation to ensure patient care is the principle standard upon which ambulance assignments are made. As stated within NYS Department of Health Policy Statement 95-04, the intent of EMS responses is to have "the

closest available EMS unit respond to a patient's medical need." Patient care must take priority over any other concern. And, closest available must be interpreted to mean fully manned and ready to immediately respond to the call.

- Any EMS agency that notifies our office they are available and closest to a call, shall be immediately acknowledged as enroute.
- The primary agency is the emergency squad with immediate jurisdiction over the geographical location in which the request for services has been made. Any other service available to handle the call in the primary jurisdiction is referred to as a secondary agency.
- Each primary agency has at least one secondary backup response agency for their jurisdiction. In addition, Empire Ambulance Service holds an operating certificate valid for all municipalities in Warren County and, with the exception of the City of Glens Falls, is a secondary agency for all of those municipalities.
- There are three means by which mutual aid can be activated:
  - Discretionary Activation - The primary agency may request the activation at any time.
  - Automatic Activation Based on Alerting Time - The primary agency has not responded to the call for service within the first 6 minutes of alerting and has not cancelled mutual aid activation.
  - Mandatory Immediate Activation - The primary agency has failed to respond to a previous call for service. Note this does not apply if an EMS agency has their primary crew out on a call and are unable to respond to a second call in their jurisdiction.
- A designated member or officer of the primary agency involved may deactivate mutual aid upon request to the Emergency Communication Center.
- If no agency is assigned to the call **after 6 minutes**, and no person from the home agency has cancelled mutual aid, the Communication Center will activate secondary agencies as outlined on the map in the Communication Center. Note for this first activation of secondary agencies will include an alert to Empire Ambulance Service. The Communication Center will continue to alert both the primary agency and the secondary agencies until the call is handled. Note for these additional pages that Empire Ambulance Service is no longer included.
- If no agency is assigned to the call **after 12 minutes** of the first request, and no person from the home squad has cancelled the mutual aid, The

Communication Center will activate tones for any EMS agency that may be available to handle the call as outlined on the map in the Communication Center, and advise the Shift Commander.

- If a secondary agency acknowledges and is assigned the call, and is not physically in the jurisdiction of the township of the primary agency, the primary agency and any other secondary agencies shall continue to be alerted every 3 minutes until such time as the assigned secondary agency has notified the Communication Center that they are in the township of the call, or the call is re-assigned to a closer available agency. Upon such notification, all further alerting for the call shall be terminated.

## Making Requests for Additional Equipment or Personnel

- All requests for additional resources should come from the Incident Commander or person in charge at the scene.
- The Incident Commander should make the request using a mobile radio, **not a portable**.
- In accordance with NYS law, a patrol unit is sent to **ALL** motor vehicle accidents. It is not necessary to specifically request one.
- If a police officer has not been assigned to the call and one is needed, one may be requested. Be prepared to describe the problem or justify the request.
- In the event of an obvious death, whenever possible, it is suggested you contact the Communication Center by phone to explain the circumstances. Exceptions would be a death as a result of a motor vehicle accident.
- Be aware that what started out as a fire or EMS call could easily become a crime scene, such as a suicide or an assault.
- In the event of a fire or EMS call at the scene of a potential crime scene or hazardous situation, you may be asked to stand-by “near” the scene until it is secured by law enforcement personnel. Not doing so may place your personnel in danger as well as that of the responding officers.

## 911 Discrepancies

Dispatching of fire and medical agencies will be determined by the Communications personnel based on a combination of E911 ANI/ALI screen information and the current Warren County fire & EMS district maps in the CAD system.

In the event of a discrepancy, it is the duty of the agency initially dispatched to request another agency to be dispatched. Additional resources **will not** be dispatched based on a request from any member of an agency that has not been dispatched.

Polling for calls on I-87 will be dictated by the township or village in which the call for service is.

All Communications Officers have the discretion and authority at any time during the steps listed under procedures above; to do what they think is necessary to obtain the necessary resources in a reasonable amount of time.

Communication officers shall make appropriate entries in the CAD system concerning the receipt of emergency calls regardless of whether or not the office retains the call following the polling procedures outlined above.

The Undersheriff and Communications Supervisor shall serve as the office liaisons assigned to work with the fire and EMS agencies in the implementation and maintenance of the provisions of this section.



## Portable Radios

Portable radios, though convenient, are best used for on scene communications. With a maximum output power of 5 watts, they are not well suited for communications with base stations. Mobile radios range from 25 to 110 watts. If you attempt to contact the Communication Center on a portable and you are unreadable, do not keep trying, switch to a mobile radio or change your location.

## ALS Intercepts

If you make a request for an ALS Tech or an ALS intercept from another squad, you should thereafter switch to the statewide inter-agency EMS frequency (155.715) or the Emergency Services Talk-Around repeater for all further communication between your unit and the ALS Tech.

## Unknown Personal Injury Motor Vehicle Accidents

When the Communications Center receives a report of a Traffic/Transportation Accident and injuries cannot be confirmed or denied, it is considered a PI Unknown Accident.

Following EMD protocol Card # 29 states "Unknown status (3<sup>rd</sup> party)" calls dictate a Priority 1 BLS response of EMS and the Sheriff's policy dictates that we send fire with EMS to traffic accidents.

The procedure for alerting fire/EMS for a PI Unknown accident will be:

- a. Activate fire/EMS tones, give the message including "No confirmed injuries"
- b. Activate fire/EMS tones, give the message including "No confirmed injuries"
- c. Activate the fire station siren.
- d. Re-alerting every three minutes **is not** done unless someone on the scene (Law Enforcement/Fire/EMS) confirms the need for a fire/EMS response.

## Emergency Services Talk-Around Repeater Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed to promote effective use of the Emergency Services Talk-Around repeater.

- The Emergency Services Talk-Around channel was designed as a repeater frequency. This allows a unit in Queensbury to talk directly to a unit in Hague if necessary. The frequency is available for use by all authorized Warren County emergency services personnel.
- Users of the frequency **must** transmit their assigned ANI code.
- Make only necessary transmissions. You are sharing a frequency with a large number of users from various Public Safety Agencies. You may not know when other emergency communications are in progress and your unnecessary transmission may delay another unit from reporting or responding to an incident.
- Use assigned identifiers, not personal names, when calling another unit. The license issued for this frequency does not authorize personal conversations.
- Know your unit number and that of the unit you are calling before you transmit.
- Know exactly what you are going to say before you press the Push-To-Talk (PTT) button.
- The frequency **IS NOT** to be used as an alternate method of contacting Fire Control or EMS Control unless those frequencies are not operational.
- Make all transmissions brief and to the point. Long transmissions are usually unnecessary and will prevent other units from using the frequency while you are speaking. If possible, use a telephone to relay non-essential messages. If you must transmit a large amount information, make several shorter transmissions. Also be aware that your radio, depending on its programming may automatically stop transmitting (time out) during an excessively long message.
- While being professional, it is not necessary to use words such as "please" or "thank you". This only wastes valuable air time. You can indicate courtesy and appreciation by the tone of your voice. Short acknowledgments such as "received" or "message received" are adequate.
- All transmissions should be impersonal and professional. Additionally, the frequency is monitored and recorded at all times. It is a violation of FCC Rules and Regulations or make "catcalls" or play music and/or sound effects over the radio.

## Contacts

If you have any questions or would like to make arrangements for a presentation or tour of the Communications Center, please contact your Fire or EMS Coordinator or one of the following:

Robert E. Swan, Undersheriff <a href="mailto:Robert.Swan@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us">Robert.Swan@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us</a>	743 2500 (Option 9) 8AM-4PM
Larry Jeffords, Communication Supervisor <a href="mailto:Larry.Jeffords@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us">Larry.Jeffords@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us</a>	743-2500 (Option 7) 7AM-3PM
W. Marc Zahn, Senior Communication Officer <a href="mailto:Marc.Zahn@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us">Marc.Zahn@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us</a>	743-2500 (Option 1) 7AM-3PM
Brian Engle, Senior Communication Officer <a href="mailto:Brian.Engle@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us">Brian.Engle@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us</a>	743-2500 (Option 1) 3PM-11PM
Brian A. LaFlure, Fire Coordinator <a href="mailto:Brian.LaFlure@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us">Brian.LaFlure@sheriff.co.warren.ny.us</a>	743-2500 (Option 8) 8AM – 4PM
Gary Scidmore, EMS Coordinator <a href="mailto:scids@hotmail.com">scids@hotmail.com</a>	

# Warren County Sheriff's Office

1400 State Route 9  
Lake George, New York 12845  
(518) 743-2500

**Nathan H. York**  
Warren County Sheriff



**Brian A. LaFlure**  
Warren County Fire Coordinator



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## TRAINING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the information provided in Warren County Sheriff's Office Communications Procedures & Guidelines Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Cc: File  
Warren County Fire Coordinator  
Warren County EMS Coordinator

Revised 6/3/2010