

*Lebanon*

**Daniel Kauffman, Director**  
**Phone: 717-272-7621**  
**Fax Number: 274-1486**



*County*

**400 South Eighth Street**  
**Room 12, Municipal Building**  
**Lebanon, PA 17042**

TO: Lebanon County Fire Chiefs

FROM: Daniel Kauffman *djk*  
Director

DATE: April 19, 2006

SUBJ: New County Fire/EMS Radio, Paging and Dispatch Protocol

Effective June 1, 2006 Lebanon County will begin utilizing a new trunked radio system for POLICE/FIRE/&EMS. The following will address dispatch and radio protocols for Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Units within the County.

Frequency identifiers will no longer be used as multiple frequencies will be available and there will be no way the user can control that. Instead the County 911 Dispatch Center will be addressed as (County Fire / County Police /County Med) there will be no call letters associated with any radio transmission.

1. Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls will be dispatched via alpha numeric page. This page will include the box number, companies, equipment, replacements dispatched, nature of the call and will include an assigned fire ground talk group. EMS will remain on EMS 1 or the main dispatch channel while responding unless otherwise advised by the Communications Center. These fire ground talk groups will be named Fire Grounds 3 through Fire Grounds 12. Fire Grounds #3 through and including #7 have a higher queuing priority and should be assigned for major incidents first. Fire Grounds #8 through #12 have a lower queuing priority and should be used for less critical incidents.
2. As of the effective date of this policy Lebanon County Communications will no longer rely on a "10" code for communications. Any radio communications should be in plain English. Official Unit number descriptors shall still be utilized to address one unit to another.

3. All Units will sign on the air on the primary dispatch talk group (Fire 1) or (Fire 2) only in the case of a disaster in which Fire 1 is not available. Dispatch will log the appropriate time as responding. Only the Fire Chief, Deputy, Duty Officer and or Assistant with the primary company are to sign on the air. Other officers (2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chiefs, Captains, Lieutenants, Engineers), etc are not to sign on the air. It is not necessary, ties up the primary dispatch group and puts additional logging burdens on dispatch.
4. 911 Dispatchers will acknowledge the unit and verbally re-advise the unit of the appropriate Fire Ground Group to switch to, nature and location of the call. The assigned Fire Ground Group is to be used only for Fire Ground Communications. Do not utilize the assigned Fire Ground in an attempt to contact the Communications Center. The Communications Center will not be monitoring the fire grounds assignment.
5. Upon arrival at the scene the first unit or officers will contact the Communications Center and advise of his/her arrival. At the time of arrival the IC will name the command relative to the incident such as (1<sup>st</sup> St. Command / Main St. Command). After the IC has named the command location, all units and Communications Center personnel involved in that incident will use the same descriptor. It will be the responsibility of the Command (in most cases the primary Fire Chief) to name the command site.
6. Once command is established and assessment is done, command may request a re-page for manpower. On a re-page it will not be necessary to include all equipment, but rather the purpose is to advise volunteers that it is an actual incident and manpower is requested.
7. Should the Communications Center have a need to contact the Incident Commander at the fire scene, the Communications Center will change to the appropriate Fire Grounds Group and address the incident commander with the message. If the message is extensive and will tie up the Fire Grounds for any significant period of time, dispatch will request the Incident Command to change to another assigned talk group. If the message is not urgent, Incident Command **may** request the message to put out on the pager in lieu of voice communication. This will only be done at the request of Incident Command.
8. The Communications Center will log the following fire call information only unless there is a special need or request by the IC:

Dispatch Time  
Responding Time  
Incident Command Arrival Time  
Incident Name  
Under Control or Extrication Complete Time

Unit or Company Available Time  
Back In Quarters Time

9. The Communications Center will log the following EMS transmissions:

Dispatch Time  
Responding Time  
EMS Unit Arrival Time  
En Route to Hospital Time  
Arrival at Hospital Time  
Unit Available Time  
Back in Quarters Time

10. No responder will switch to, change or utilize any other Talk Group without requesting and being granted permission from the Communications Center to do so. The only exception will be in utilizing one of the ten Simplex channels outside the trunked system. These may be utilized with the permission of the Incident Commander, Chief or Officer in charge of the incident or training. It is highly recommended that the Communications Center be advised of the use of these frequencies in case they have the need contact someone. It should be noted that when utilizing the simplex frequencies you are outside of the trunked system and you cannot be contacted on the main radio. It should also be noted that when utilizing these frequencies the emergency button on any radio does not function. The Communications Center will not routinely monitor these frequencies.
11. When a call is cancelled the Communications Center will patch the main dispatch (Fire 1) and the Fire Ground Group together and announce the cancellation. Units that are responding must acknowledge Communications Center but may utilize either the main dispatch or fire grounds to do so. The Communications Center will monitor primary dispatch and assigned fire grounds for acknowledgements. The cancellation will also be sent out over the paging system for the benefit of any responder still En Route to the call, but off radio contact. This page will include the box number for the cancelled call.
12. In the case of emergency button activation, no one with the exception of the Incident Commander or the Communications Center will be authorized to transmit on the talk group that the activation took place, unless it is necessary to share information that might be life saving in nature. The Communications Center must clear the emergency before communications resume.

13. All radio users are advised that every transmission within the trunked radio is logged and recorded. This information includes the radio personality that made the transmission, what talk group they were on, when they turned to that talk group, date, time and length of transmission as well as the voice transmission itself. Users and especially command personnel should be advised that radios utilizing the Lebanon County Trunked Radio System in any unauthorized manner that utilizes system resources, causes queuing or other improper radio procedure may cause that radio to be disabled from using the system until such misuse is resolved. No radio shall be disabled without the direct permission of the Director, Deputy Director, or in an emergency the Emergency Management Agency "Duty Officer".
14. Status reports will be announced by voice twice a day. The first announcement will be at 0800 hrs and the second at 1800 hrs. When a piece of apparatus is put out of service an alphanumeric page will be sent to that entire company advising members of the status of that apparatus. After this initial page only voice announcements will be made.
15. Individual Pages: No individual, personal, or line officer pages will be made over the Lebanon County paging system for personal or private gain. The paging system will be utilized only for emergency notification or other official purposes where conventional communication is not possible.

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**400 South Eighth Street**  
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TO: Lebanon County Law Enforcement

FROM: Daniel Kauffman, Director *djk*

DATE: April 19, 2006

SUBJ: Radio Protocol

Effective June 1, 2006 Lebanon County will be switching to a new trunked radio system. With this change we will be implementing some changes in radio protocol. Please note the following changes:

**Elimination of Ten Codes (use of plain talk):**

Effective this date, Lebanon County will no longer depend on the familiar "Ten" Codes but rather switch to a "Plain English" format. Officers are requested to avoid using the old ten codes as much as possible. The elimination of ten codes, which are not consistent throughout the Commonwealth or United States will simplify communications, enhance interoperability and make us NIMS compliant.

**Call Identifiers:**

Effective immediately with the switch to trunked radio we will also abandon the call letter identifiers used in the past. Since a user will not know what frequency the system is actually on, a new system is necessary. Users calling the Communications Center will address them as County Police. The Communications Center will respond to the caller utilizing the following format "County to 25-6" or such. Each department will choose a numeric identifier from their current range of car numbers. Each officer in the department will be assigned an officer number by the department for identification purposes. Officers will use those numbers in communication with County.

**Signing Off and On Duty:**

Officers coming on duty or going off duty will be required to contact County Police Dispatch advising them of their status. Officers should utilize the following format "18-1 (for Cornwall) or 24-1 (for South Lebanon) County Police, Officer Smith in service" or

“out of service”. A list of current officer number designations will be included with this protocol. Officers are expected to use these officer number designations for routine communications.

Officers coming on duty are expected to contact County Police on talk group “CO PD1”. Officers should remain on “CO PD1” unless directed by dispatch to switch. Officers wishing to switch to another talk group must advise County Police of such a switch prior to moving. With the diverse talk group structure, dispatch will not be able to keep track of officers unilaterally switching to other talk groups. Officers wishing to communicate directly with Fire, Ambulance or Public Works must meet them on Common 1, 2 or 3 as these are common analog talk groups.

#### **Traffic Stops:**

The County Dispatch currently has a five minute check on officers engaged in a traffic stop. This procedure will be continued. If an officers does not respond to the check, the nearest available backup unit will be dispatched.

#### **Use of Tactical or Common Talk Groups:**

The trunked radio system includes several Tactical and Common talk groups. These groups are to be used for involved, large or specialized incidents. Incidents that may involve significant intrusion on the primary dispatch talk group will be assigned by dispatch to a Tactical group. When switched to a Tactical group, dispatch will monitor that talk group’s traffic. Officers involved in a special operation that may disrupt the primary dispatch talk group may request assignment to a Tactical group. Officers will utilize their last names when communicating on Tactical Talk Groups.

#### **Emergency Button Activation:**

Radios on the Lebanon County System are equipped with “Emergency Buttons”. When activated these emergency buttons will provide un-keyed open microphone times allowing an officer hands free talk. It is imperative that officers focus on getting location information out to the communications center during this open microphone time. During an emergency button activation, officers not directly involved in the backup or assist will be instructed to switch to CO PD 2 for normal dispatch procedures. Officers concerned about the emergency may scan CO PD 1 but must remain on CO PD 2. When the emergency is cleared all units will be switched back to CO PD 1.

#### **Police Bulletins:**

Police Bulletins will continue to be broadcast by County Radio. Effective this date, there will be no requirement to acknowledge such bulletins. Bulletins will be pushed out to Mobile Data Terminals, FAX as well a verbal broadcast.

**Time Checks:**

Effective this date time checks will be discontinued as a general policy. Any Police Chief wishing to continue the time checks with his department may request such time checks by submitting such request in writing to County Emergency Management Agency. Upon such requests time checks will be conducted randomly by County Radio only for departments making such requests. No more than three time checks per shift will be conducted in a random fashion chosen by the communications center.

**Recording and Identifiers:**

All radio communications will be recorded in the control center. Users should be advised that each individual radio has a specific identifier imbedded within it. Even without voice transmission that radio is identified on the system. Users of the system are expected to be professional at all times.