

*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  
Director

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

Effective 05/04/09 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. The fire dispatcher will assign the fire ground to the responding units. 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.

The dispatch center will list and advise responding units to command at the five minute mark and ask command if units need to be replaced. Dispatch will call command via radio twice to ask about replacing units. If there is no reply from command, dispatch will automatically replace with next due units.

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 based on NIMS compliancy.

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>rd</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. If command needs to talk to the communications center they will return to the main fire dispatch channel.
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 via CAD 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

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

- 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. The communications center will perform a roll call of Units that are responding who 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 will move all personnel to another fire ground with the exception of the person(s) with the emergency command and / or the incident commander and RIT. 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 Officerö.
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 or put in 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.
16. At the request of command the communications will automatically dispatch the next due Engine, Truck, Rescue, ALS, and BLS for any declared ÷Maydayö.

\*\* Any department not having EDACS capability will notify the communications center when the first piece of equipment and / or line officer signs on and will be allowed to use the old system and be assigned an old system fire ground to operate on. Any mutual aid companies assisting on the call will be advised of the primary company not having new system capabilities and will operate off the old system if they are able or assigned a fire ground via the communications center per the protocol.

## EMS

EMS will follow the same radio protocol as Fire where applicable. The following specific communication functions will apply to EMS radio protocol.

1. All initial EMS dispatch / responding radio traffic will be conducted on EDACS EMS 1. EMS units in the field will communicate directly with the hospitals on their specific talk groups such as GSH (Good Samaritan Hospital). After three attempts of an EMS unit attempting to contact the hospital with negative results, an EMS unit may switch back to EMS 1 and request that the communications center attempt to notify the hospital of the pending communication.
2. Any EMS unit responding as part of a fire box will be given the fire ground assigned to that incident along with any pertinent information for that call. When a call is cancelled, the communications will patch Fire 1 and EMS 1 together to relay the information.
3. When 2<sup>nd</sup> due EMS is dispatched and or responding to a call and 1<sup>st</sup> due EMS signs on for the same call, the decision will be made by 1<sup>st</sup> due EMS as to who will be handling the incident.
4. Life Lion (aero medical) does not currently have EDACS capability. When a landing zone needs to be set up for an incident, the dispatch center will assign a fire ground on the old system for aero medical to communicate with ground units.

\* Policies subject to change as needed.