

TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 2: STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Part 1: Response Guidelines

Subject: Communications

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Effective Date: 05-01-96

Section: 2-1-19

Reviewed/Revised Date: 07-29-11

- 19.01 Goal. To provide guidelines for radio communications.
- 19.02 Dispatch Designation. The term Base will be used when referring to the dispatch center operated by Township Fire Department.
- 19.03 Eau Claire Communications Center. The term Comm Center will be used when referring to the dispatch center operated by Eau Claire County.
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- 19.04 Unit Identification. Units will use plain language identification when conducting radio communications.
- A) Plain language identification will include:
 - 1. Unit Type.
 - 2. Unit Number.

 - B) Unit Type. The following have been adopted as plain language terms for fire/EMS vehicles or staff.
 - 1. Fire Department Unit Types.
 - a) Engine.
 - b) Tender.
 - c) Brush.
 - d) Squad.
 - e) Chief (FD staff person: Chief, Battalion Chief, etc.).
 - f) Township (Line officer).
- 19.05 Responsibility.
- A) The provisions of this guideline have a direct bearing on the safety of department members and the efficiency of department operations.
 - B) Each member is responsible for operating within these guidelines.
 - C) The officer-in-charge of an incident is responsible for enforcing this policy.

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- D) Any deviation from this guidelines must be made with due regard for the safety of department personnel and operational efficiency.

19.06 Alert Messages.

- A) Alert messages directed to fire units will follow a standard format. These messages will include the following information.

1. Identification of Township.
2. Location of Incident.
3. Type of Incident.

Example: "Attention Town of Union. Report of smoke in the hallways at 1234 Townhall Road."

- B) BASE will transmit alert messages over Township Fire Department's main frequency.

19.07 Response Message. Each unit assigned to an incident will begin its responses by broadcasting a response message. This message will include the following:

- A) Identification of Unit.
- B) Indication of en route Status.

Example: "Engine 21, responding."

19.08 On Location Reports.

- A) First Unit to Arrive on Scene.

1. The first arriving unit shall report "ON SCENE" along with a size-up of the situation found.
2. The time at which all units report "ON SCENE" will be acknowledged and recorded by BASE.

3. The "ON SCENE" report will include the following:
 - a) Identification of Unit.
 - b) Indication of "ON SCENE" status.
 - c) Description of Scene.
 - d) Description of Conditions.
 - e) Action Taken.

Example: "Engine 21 on scene with a medium sized, two-story structure with smoke showing. Side 2 Second Floor. Engine 21 will be Command."

B) 2nd, 3rd, etc Units to Arrive on Scene.

1. Units which arrive after the first-due unit will broadcast an "ON SCENE" report which includes the following:
 - a) Unit Identification.
 - b) On Scene.
 - c) Ask for an assignment.

Example: "Tender 26, On Scene awaiting assignment."

19.09 Command.

- A) When COMMAND has been established, all routine communications between the incident scene and the Base will be directed through COMMAND.
- B) The radio designation "COMMAND" will be used with a brief description of the incident location. This designation will not change through the duration of the incident.

Example: "Townline Road Command."

19.10 Command Messages.

- A) BASE will acknowledge and record messages as directed from COMMAND.

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B) Command messages may include the following:

1. ALL CLEAR³.
2. UNDER CONTROL⁴.
3. LOSS STOPPED⁵.
4. PROGRESS REPORTS⁶.

19.11 Returning Units.

- A) Only COMMAND can release units from an incident.
- B) COMMAND will indicate the units to "HOLD" at the scene (or continue response) and release the remainder of the assignment.
- C) BASE will retransmit this report from COMMAND and the balance of the assignment will return to available status.

19.12 Normal Operations. "Normal operations" refers to the normal mode of operation for BASE. Under these conditions, non-emergency communications of an official nature are permitted on all frequencies. Incident related communications will always take priority over other traffic.

³"ALL CLEAR" is a message which indicates that activities required to protect occupants, and to remove those who are threatened, have been accomplished. The actions taken to reach this point are described as the Primary Search.

⁴"UNDER CONTROL" --The fire has been controlled; the incident has been stabilized.

⁵"LOSS STOPPED" -- The activities required to stop or reduce additional loss to property have been accomplished.

⁶"PROGRESS REPORTS" -- During active firefighting/rescue operations, Command may provide progress reports when significant tactical plans are changed or unusual situations are encountered. The first progress report should be given after initial action has been implemented and should include the correct address and an improved description of the building and fire (emergency) conditions if the arrival report was incomplete. The first report should include the declaration of a working fire when appropriate and give an indication of the time units will be held at the scene. BASE will repeat the significant facts from progress reports for the information of monitoring units.

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19.13 Emergency Traffic. The term "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" will be used by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive the highest communications priority from BASE, COMMAND and all other units. Units may initiate EMERGENCY TRAFFIC by contacting BASE.

Example: "Engine 21 with emergency traffic." The unit will transmit their message, BASE will repeat message one time.

If Command does not acknowledge, unit will then establish contact with BASE to transmit the emergency message.

19.14 Radio Code.

A) Plain language will be used during radio communications.

B) Commonly used plain language terms.

1. "Copy".
2. "En route".
3. "On Scene".
4. "All Clear".
5. "Under Control."
6. "Loss Stopped".
7. "Returning to Quarters".
8. "Available".

19.15 Radio Procedure.

A) Short-Specific. Before transmitting know what you are going to say; don't make it up as you go along. Choose precise terms to communicate the desired message as clearly and briefly as possible without wasting air time.

B) Task Oriented. Orders received by firefighters should indicate a specific task which is assigned to them. It should be of a magnitude reasonably performed by those assigned the task alone or in concert with other crews.

C) Indicate Objective. In addition to being task and crew oriented, assignments should indicate an objective to the action. The crew should know exactly where to go, to whom to report, what the task is, and the objective of the task. Orders should tell what to do -- not how to do it.

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- D) Clear Tone -- Self Control -- Effective Rate. Speak clearly at a practiced rate.....not too fast or too slow. Control your emotions and excitement deliberately. If you do not consciously control your voice, it will become garbled under stress.
- E) Well Timed/Spaced.
1. Prioritize your messages. Do not use up valuable air time with unimportant messages and insignificant details. Let critical messages go first. Maintain an awareness of the overall situation and how you fit into it.
 2. Do not interrupt conversations unless you have EMERGENCY TRAFFIC. Listen before transmitting and wait until a message transaction has been completed.
 3. Pause between consecutive messages. This will make it clear when one has been completed and another message started. It will give other units a chance to get on the air with important messages.