# 92-006 Use of Dispatch, Tactical, and Mobile Digital Communication System

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

**FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE**

Field Operations Support Services

**USE OF THE DISPATCH, TACTICAL, AND MOBILE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

## PURPOSE

This order establishes policy and procedure for the use of the Dispatch, Tactical, and Mobile Digital Communication system.

## DISPATCH AND MOBILE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Each Sheriff's station has been assigned a specific dispatch channel for the transmission and reception of calls for service.

Voice dispatch channels are used for direct communications with Sheriff's Communications Center (SCC) dispatchers and shall also be used to request assistance, fire equipment, paramedics, ambulances, and other emergency services. Mobile Digital Computer (MDC) equipped field units shall use the MDC to request additional information on calls, tow trucks, Road Department, electric company, and other non-emergency services. Non-MDC equipped field units may use voice dispatch channels to request non-emergency services.

Should communications be required with the station desk for non-tactical purposes, MDC equipped field units shall use the MDC. Non-MDC equipped field units may request such traffic over the local tactical (L-Tac) channel or via the voice dispatch channel, if necessary.

Station dispatchers are prohibited from using the station transmitter on the voice dispatch channel except:

- As authorized by the SCC watch commander for testing; or
- During a system failure. To prevent interference and the possible disruption of emergency traffic, voice dispatch channels shall be used only in the "repeat" mode. The only exception is during a system failure.

## TACTICAL RADIO CHANNELS

Tactical channels are to be used for communications during the coordination of responses to calls and for tactical and special operations that require the use of voice radio.

Local tactical (L-TAC) channels are the primary tactical coordination channel for field operations units and are

assigned solely to the field operations regions. L-TAC channels are not normally restricted and may be used at any time by field operations units.

All other tactical channels, including area tactical (A-TAC) channels, countywide tactical (C-TAC-1) channel, star tactical (S-TAC) channel, and mutual aid channels, are restricted and shall not be used without the approval of the SCC watch commander or supervising dispatcher. These channels are restricted to ensure Department personnel (from all divisions) have immediate access to a dedicated channel for priority needs such as searches, containments, high risk calls, and tactical/mutual aid operations. The use of these channels shall be in the "repeat" mode unless directed otherwise by the SCC watch commander or when circumstances prevent the "repeat" function from being used.

When it is necessary to communicate with units from other Sheriff's stations or personnel from Detective Division, Custody Division, Court Services Division, or other units, an appropriate tactical channel will be assigned by the SCC watch commander or supervising dispatcher.

Use of the station transmitter on tactical radio channels shall be limited as described below.

## RESPONSE COORDINATION/TACTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Field units shall coordinate responses to high risk calls, containments, and special operations. Response coordination shall occur as follows:

After handling and assisting units have acknowledged the call, the handling unit may request the Duplex Patch for initial coordination. "Initial coordination" is defined as the giving of the deputies' estimated time of arrival and may, depending on the nature of the call, include tactical communications prior to the arrival of units at the scene. After this point, all tactical coordination shall take place on tactical radio channels. It is extremely important units limit the use and duration of the Duplex Patch since, under most circumstances, multiple dispatch channels are assigned to an SCC dispatcher. The result is that multiple dispatch channels and Sheriff's stations are "on hold" for all communications during the coordination, containment, etc., pending release of "the patch." The Duplex Patch shall also be used for vehicle pursuits, foot pursuits, Code 9, crime broadcasts, and activated upon request by field personnel.

Unless another operation is already using the L-TAC channel, it shall be used for tactical coordination purposes. If the L-TAC channel is already in use or if multi-station coverage is necessary, an A-TAC or C-TAC-1 channel may be used with the approval of the SCC watch commander or supervising dispatcher.

SCC dispatchers have the capability to monitor and transmit on all tactical channels. However, they will not normally monitor tactical channel traffic except under the most unusual of circumstances or if requested by a field unit and approved by the SCC watch commander. SCC dispatchers will, for the purpose of continuity, remain assigned to the dispatch channel of a station whose units are using a tactical channel for coordination. In this manner, should an involved field unit return to the dispatch channel and request additional assistance or resources, the SCC dispatcher will be familiar with the situation. Radio traffic on the dispatch channel will not, however, be restricted.

## STATION DESK RESPONSIBILITY

Station desk personnel have the capability to immediately transmit additional tactical information to involved

units on an assigned tactical channel and on the MDC system. In emergency situations, the station dispatcher may request the SCC dispatcher to override all traffic on a tactical channel and broadcast important information.

Station desk personnel are in a position to best assess the number of units required for an initial dispatch and response to a reported incident. Handling field units shall not routinely solicit additional field units beyond those assigned by the desk to respond to incidents.

Only when the handling field unit has clear information that more than the number of units originally assigned are needed, or a unit is on-scene and the situation warrants, shall additional assisting units be requested either on the dispatch or assigned tactical channel. Field supervisors may increase or decrease the number of units responding to an incident as they deem necessary and appropriate.

## WATCH COMMANDERS

Should the situation warrant, station watch commanders may request a deviation from any of the above policies. All such changes must have the approval of the SCC watch commander. The watch commander shall conduct periodic audits of his/her shifts' MDC messages and bring any discrepancies to the attention of the unit commander.

## DESK AND FIELD OPERATIONS LIEUTENANT

Station commanders shall designate a lieutenant who shall have as a collateral duty the responsibility to oversee that station's desk and field radio/MDC operations. This lieutenant will review station procedures and performance to ensure compliance with this and other applicable orders, rules, and regulations related to the Department's communications system.

## SPECIAL UNITS DISPATCH CHANNEL

The Special Units Dispatch (SUD) channel is for use by assigned units not normally dispatched through the SCC. This includes Special Enforcement Bureau, Emergency Services Detail, Aero Bureau, and Emergency Operations Bureau. Station personnel shall not use the SUD channel, either in the "repeat" or the "direct" mode, unless directed to do so by the SCC watch commander.

## COMPLIANCE

The Department's communications system is to be used only for official business. Personal messages, non-work related transmissions, personal opinions on current events, or messages that contain derogatory, discriminatory, racist, sexist, or profane language or intent, are not permitted. All MDC and voice radio transmissions are recorded and are subject to review by this Department, the courts, the media, outside regulatory, and enforcement agencies.

The Department's radio channels are a finite, limited, and shared resource. It is imperative that proper discipline and control of their use be exercised. Therefore, station commanders are expected to ensure compliance with this directive.

The SCC unit commander has the sole responsibility to assign radio channels and is required to report improper or unauthorized use to the concerned station watch commander when violations occur.

Communications and Fleet Management Bureau – Mobile Digital Training staff have responsibility to audit each station for compliance with this directive. A report to the respective region headquarters through the Command Inspection Program shall be prepared annually.