

## Unit Order #7 - Telephone Procedures

### Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

#### CRESCENTA VALLEY STATION

#### UNIT ORDER # 7

#### TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the Crescenta Valley Station that personnel shall handle all telephone contacts in an efficient and professional manner. To ensure compliance with this policy, this Unit Order has been implemented. For many citizens, their only contact with law enforcement will be over the telephone. Establishing and maintaining good public relations and fostering a professional image is the responsibility of all department personnel. The manner in which a caller is handled will have a direct effect on how the individual perceives us and how we do our job.

#### Incoming Calls

All incoming calls shall be answered promptly and professionally. Personnel shall be courteous in their demeanor at all times. Personnel shall properly identify themselves and the Unit being called. Ideally, the following three phrases will be used when answering the phone:

1. Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station;
2. Your Rank and Name; (LET Personnel shall refer to themselves as "Officer")
3. "How may I help you?"

It is well understood that under certain given circumstances, personnel may not be in the position to parrot each word of the greeting in the exact order and terminology. The above referenced greeting is to be considered a guideline for phone-answering demeanor. The most important factor to remember is that personnel interacting with the public over the phone shall always be professional and courteous. There is absolutely no excuse for being rude or abrupt when dealing with the public.

#### Emergency Calls

Emergency calls shall take priority over all other calls. Although most emergency calls are now routed via the 911 system, some emergency calls for service are still received via our regular business line. Routine calls shall be placed on hold until each new incoming call is answered to determine whether or not if any are of an

emergent nature. Emergency calls received over the regular business lines **SHALL NOT** be transferred.

If another agency has jurisdiction over the area where the emergency is taking place, personnel shall obtain all necessary information and advise the caller that the appropriate agency will be notified.

Emergency calls received via the 911 system may be transferred to the appropriate agency by depressing the appropriate transfer button on the Transfer Console, or by manually transferring the call in the manner described in the "Public Safety Answering Point" user guide.

When an emergency call is received via the 911 system which involves a traffic accident, personnel will notify not only the fire department, but the California Highway Patrol as well.

Both the Fire Department and CHP shall be advised as to whether or not we are dispatching a unit to the scene. Any question regarding agency jurisdiction over an emergency call shall be resolved by dispatching a field unit to the scene.

### **Transferring Phone Calls**

Professionalism and efficiency are the driving forces that reflect greatly on our service to the community. The manner in which we conduct ourselves on the telephone has a lasting impression on our organization and, therefore, each of us must consider the following prescribed procedures for all calls to the station. Certainly the volume of activity on the desk will dictate if this procedure can be done with each incoming call, every effort to follow the procedures below shall be weighed against high call volume and/or urgent radio traffic.

When a caller asks to speak to the Watch Commander or Watch Sergeant, you shall remain on the line during the transfer to ascertain if the line is picked up. Desk personnel should then announce the transfer before releasing the call. If the line is not picked up, desk personnel should advise the caller, then if requested, place the call on hold while the Watch Commander or Watch Sergeant is paged. If the caller desires, the call may be forwarded to the voice mail system at any time during this process.

### **Outgoing Calls**

County phones shall be used for County business only. Absent an emergent situation and/or authorization from a supervisor holding the permanent rank of Sergeant or above, personal calls shall not be made on county phone equipment. Personnel making outgoing business calls shall use the SETS or other tie lines whenever possible. Personnel shall plan all calls before placing them in order to avoid unnecessary phone expenses. Once the individual or unit has been contacted, personnel shall properly identify themselves and state the reason for the call.

**NOTE:** The station telephone bills are routinely audited. Any noted abuse of the County phone system may result in a requirement to reimburse the County for the expense incurred, as well subject the caller to disciplinary action.

### **Toll and/or Long Distance Calls**

Normally, personnel holding the rank of Captain or above are authorized to make any toll or long distance call they determine to be necessary. Personnel holding the rank of Lieutenant are authorized to make calls

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anywhere within the state of California. Deputy and Sergeant personnel are authorized to make calls within the contiguous counties of Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Kern. Other Department members are authorized to make toll calls only to other Sheriff's facilities and other government agencies within Los Angeles County.

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Crescenta Valley Station

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Date Approved

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