01-008 Deaf or Hard of Hearing Text Telephone Communications

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING TEXT TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose

The purpose of this Field Operations Directive is to provide direction and training to station telephone operators and desk personnel receiving incoming text telephone calls from deaf or hard of hearing individuals and placing text telephone calls to deaf or hard of hearing individuals. This directive will also provide direction to personnel responsible for providing court mandated telephone calls for deaf or hard of hearing individuals in custody.

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that the Department take necessary measures to receive both routine and emergency telephone calls from the deaf or hard of hearing, and to provide access to a text telephone device to deaf or hard of hearing individuals in custody.

Policy and Procedures

Answering Incoming Emergency and Routine Text Telephone Calls and Placing Text Telephone Calls:

All personnel assigned to station telephone operator and desk duties shall be cognizant of the unique tones emitted by text telephone devices. The tones are similar to those emitted by a fax machine.

When station telephone operators receive a text telephone call they shall immediately transfer the call to the station desk.

The “Vesta” telephone systems in place in all station desk areas are programmed to recognize incoming text telephone calls. When such a call is received the computer will automatically display a text screen that will allow the individual receiving the call to communicate with the caller either using pre-programed text messages or typed messages.

On occasion, there may be a few seconds delay before the computer displays the text telephone screen.

Station desk personnel receiving a text telephone call, either via 9-1-1 or the station business line, must be aware of this possible delay and not disconnect the caller.

Outgoing calls to a text telephone may also be placed from a “Vesta” telephone system. To place a telephone call to a text telephone device, dial the requested number and when the call connects, listen for the distinctive text telephone tones. Within a few seconds the “Vesta” telephone system text screen should activate. Should you hear the tones and the screen not automatically activate, the screen can be manually activated by utilizing

the following steps:

• Click “Vesta” tool bar

• Click “‘TTY” button

• Click “TTY Disabled” button (this will activate the “TTY” screen).

Training

All Deputy and Law Enforcement Technician personnel regularly assigned to desk operations duties shall be trained in the answering, handling, and placing of text telephone calls utilizing the “Vesta” telephone systems.

This training shall be conducted at a station level and include the answering and handling of a 9-1-1 test call, the transferring of a 9-1-1 test call to the fire department, CHP, etc., and the answering and handling of a business line test call.

Concerted efforts shall be made to provide this training to all personnel temporarily assigned to desk duties.

All station operator personnel shall be trained to recognize the tones of an incoming text telephone call. This training shall include receiving a test call placed from the station text telephone device and transferring it to the desk.

All test calls can be placed from the station text telephone device. This training shall be recurrent to ensure personnel maintain their proficiency.

Providing Text Telephone Device Calls to deaf or hard of hearing Prisoners:

Those stations operating jails shall have their station text telephone device located in the jail available for use by the deaf or hard of hearing prisoners.

The device may be used in the “acoustic mode” with any phone. The device can only be directly wired to an analog telephone line, such as a fax line. It cannot be wired into a digital telephone system without a special adaptor.

Training

All station personnel permanently or routinely assigned to jail duties shall be trained in the use of the text telephone device. This training shall be conducted at a station level and be recurrent to ensure personnel maintain their proficiency.

California Relay Service and Other Uses of the Text Telephone Device:

The California Relay Service (CRS) enables a person using a text telephone device to communicate by phone with a person who does not use a text telephone device. The service also works in reverse, allowing a non-text telephone user to call a person utilizing such a device.

To reach a toll-free California Relay System operator, dial 711.

More detailed information on the services provided by the California Relay System is available on-line at https://caconnect.org/.

Should the need arise for station personnel to communicate telephonically with a hearing impaired individual, or during the course of business should a deaf or hard of hearing individual, other than a prisoner, need assistance in placing a telephone call, the station text telephone device, the desk “Vesta” telephone system or the California Relay System may be used.

INSPECTIONS

Station telephone operator and desk personnel proficiency in handling incoming text telephone calls will be inspected by personnel from Communications and Fleet Management Bureau as part of the yearly desk operations command inspection process.

Availability of a text telephone device in station jails and personnel proficiency will be inspected by personnel from Field Operations Support Services as part of the yearly jail operations command inspection process.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

Questions regarding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act can be referred to the Department ADA Unit at (323) 526-5671.

Questions regarding the use of the text telephone device and the “Vesta” telephone systems can be referred to the Department Telecommunications Coordinator, or Sheriff’s Information Bureau at (213) 229-1850.

Questions regarding this directive can be referred to Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411.

AFFECTED DIRECTIVES/PUBLICATIONS

None

CITES/REFERENCES

Americans with Disabilities Act