

## 4.2 Communications



### City of Oak Point Department of Public Safety Fire Department

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These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish specific terminology and process for radio communications. It is understood that the clear understanding of all radio messages is imperative for safe and efficient incident operations.

### 2.0 SCOPE

This SOP/SOG pertains to all personnel in this organization.

### 3.0 POLICY/GUIDELINES & INFORMATION

#### Policy

In order to ensure consistent and understandable communications, it is imperative that all members utilize the same terminology. In order to ensure this consistency, the following terminology and procedures are established:

- No “10 codes” or other code type messages may be utilized for any message. All transmissions are to be plain English.
- Unnecessary and superfluous words such as “show me” or “is going to be...” (*as in “Rescue 631 is going to be out at ....” or “show me out at ...”*), should not to be used.

## Communications

- “Available”-Indicates that a unit is available for a call.
- “Unavailable” – Indicates a unit cannot take a call.
- “Clear” –Indicates (to differentiate from “Available”) the unit is clear from an incident but not necessarily available for another response. If “clear” is used, “available or “unavailable” will have to be used in conjunction.
- “Emergency Traffic” – Utilized to clear communications channels prior to giving an emergency radio transmission.
- “En-route” or “Responding” (with “address” given) – Indicates that a unit is responding to an incident. Or when a medic unit is leaving the incident scene, transporting to the hospital.
- “Hold” – If an on scene IC tells the dispatcher to hold a unit or units, the held units are staying committed to the scene. *“Hold E631,” the dispatcher and units know that all other units are available.*
- “May Day” – Utilized as a distress call by a lost or trapped firefighter.
- “On” or “On Scene (with address)” Used when arriving at the location to which dispatched.
- “Received” - When the message is “information” only, units may acknowledge with “received”

## Status Reports

- “All Clear”- Declares completion of the primary search or secondary search.
- “No All Clear” – Declared when no primary search will be performed due to conditions.
- “Offense to Defense” - Reports the change of strategic operations from an interior (offensive) attack to an exterior (defensive) attack.
- “Under Control” - Signals the forward progress of the fire has been stopped and the incident has been stabilized.
- “Loss Stopped” - Reports the completion of loss prevention activities.
- “PAR” (Personnel Accountability Report) - Used to announce that a roll call of units will be performed.
- “Terminate Command” – The “formal command” has been terminated. At this point the IC should state “Terminate command” and give the unit number to be in charge of the scene.

## Procedures

### Checking en-route to an incident

- During single station responses, each company checking en route to an incident will give their unit number, address to which they are responding. (*Example: "Rescue 631 to Oak Point Elementary, Medical Emergency"*).
- A company given a response while out of the station should acknowledge their response and also indicate the location from which they are responding.
- Companies that are closer than the dispatched unit should notify the dispatched company of their location and availability to respond with the initially dispatched officer having the authority to allow or disallow the request.

### Arriving at location

- First unit arriving at the incident location must state their unit number, scene address, scene size-up, and assignment. All subsequently arriving units shall give their unit number and state "on scene".

### Multiple Alarm Communications

- Multiple alarms or request for additional resources may be requested by any member on the department who is serving in the capacity of Incident Commander at the time.
- When placing a multiple alarm on an incident a staging location and radio channel should be considered and related to Denton County Fire Dispatch. If implemented, companies will be dispatched to that staging location rather than the incident address. The Incident Commander should designate a staging officer.

### Mutual Aid (When responding to another city)

- Check en-route with your primary dispatch for type of call, address and radio channel.
- Then go directly to the assigned channel of the requesting city and notify them that you are en-route, obtain additional information and assignments.
- Remain on the assigned channel until otherwise directed or cleared.
- When released from the incident, report your status to your operations channel.

### Mutual Aid (When requesting aid from another city)

- When the IC disregards a responding unit, contact them directly via the assigned radio channel rather than asking dispatcher.
- Requesting mutual aid (IC procedure): When a mutual aid company is needed, request that the next appropriate unit be dispatched. Do not ask for a specific city unless it is a needed unit. The dispatcher should use CAD to get the recommended unit(s)

### Communications Order Model

- Sender will give receiver unit ID then their unit ID (*Engine 631 from Engine 521*).
- Receiver will give their ID to indicate they are ready to receive (do not simply say “go ahead”).
- Sender will state message, order, etc. (*Engine 631 lay a line to the fire*).
- Receiver will give ID and acknowledge receipt of message. A brief restatement should be given. (*Example: Engine 631 laying a line to the fire*).
- Sender will only respond if a correction is needed because of wrong response of sender or wrong information initially related.

### Emergency Traffic Procedures

- “Emergency Traffic” will be utilized by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive the highest priority from dispatch, command, and ALL operating units.
- “May-Day” will be used by lost or trapped firefighters.

### Evacuation Procedure

- An emergency evacuation order will be initiated by an "Emergency Traffic" radio announcement followed by three five second blasts from an air horn.
- A PAR will be conducted immediately following a completed evacuation to confirm the safe exit of all companies.