

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL POLICY MANUAL

	SUBJECT COMMUNICATIONS	POLICY NUMBER 14.01
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14.01.01 PURPOSE

To promulgate regulations and procedures governing radio communications within the Division of Florida Highway Patrol, with other law enforcement outside the agency, and the general motoring public. Effective and efficient law enforcement communications enhance officer safety, present meaningful communications within the Patrol, with other agencies, and the motoring public.

14.01.02 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to provide effective oral and written communications at all times to all necessary agency personnel and other law enforcement agencies in a clear and concise manner. The Division has 24-hour two-way radio capability providing continuous communications between the Regional Communications Centers, patrol officers on duty and other law enforcement agencies.

14.01.03 DEFINITIONS

- A. **CALL TAKER** – Non-sworn communications personnel assigned to primarily receive and enter calls for service information into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.
- B. **COMMUNICATIONS COMMANDER** – Sworn law enforcement Major assigned the responsibility of providing overall leadership and command oversight for all Regional Communication Centers.
- C. **COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING OFFICER (CTO)** – Non-sworn communications personnel assigned to a Regional Communications Center responsible for training new and current communications personnel.
- D. **DUTY OFFICER SUPERVISOR (DOS)** – Non-sworn communications supervisor assigned to a Regional Communications Center.
- E. **REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (RCC)** – There are seven (7) Regional Communications Centers statewide. RCCs are responsible for dispatching all state law enforcement officers whose agency is participating in the joint dispatch.
- F. **REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER MANAGER** – Non-sworn

communications management personnel responsible for the operations of their respectively assigned Regional Communications Center.

G. **REGIONAL DUTY OFFICER (RDO)** – Non-sworn communications personnel assigned to a Regional Communications Center.

H. **TROOP WATCH SUPERVISOR (TWS)** – A supervisor assigned the role and responsibilities of providing command oversight for the troop.

14.01.04 OBJECTIVES

A. To formulate and disseminate written policy and procedures relating to accurate and effective radio communications.

B. To specify procedures concerning documentation, as required, of all communications.

14.01.05 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (RCC) MANAGERS

1. The RCC Manager is responsible for the effective operation of the communications center.

2. If the RCC Manager position is vacant for an extended period of time beyond 30 days (i.e., long-term injury/illness, termination, etc.), the Communications Commander shall ensure the duties and responsibilities are formally delegated to another employee.

3. The RCC Manager shall establish a schedule to ensure Duty Officer Supervisor (DOS) coverage on a twenty-four hour basis in the communications center.

4. The RCC Manager shall ensure all DOSs are properly trained.

5. The RCC Manager is responsible for the timely advertisement, interview, and hiring of all personnel assigned to the RCC.

6. The RCC Manager is responsible for all operations at the RCC, including technical communications

B. REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER DUTY OFFICER SUPERVISORS

RCC Duty Officer Supervisors (DOSs) are responsible for:

1. The direct supervision of CTOs, RDOs and Call Takers.

2. Establishing communications personnel schedules to ensure coverage on a 24-hour basis in the RCC.

3. The effective operation of the RCC under his/her command.

4. Ensuring that RCC operations are conducted in compliance with all Department and Division policies and procedures, FCIC/NCIC rules and FCC rules.

5. Ensuring on-going communications with the TWS during any critical incident, to include the closing and re-opening of major roadways. All pertinent interactions shall be documented in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) notes section.
6. The out-going DOS or Acting DOS shall brief the in-coming DOS/Acting DOS prior to ending their shift. The briefing shall provide an opportunity to discuss all **relevant** issues and information that may affect the in-coming DOS/Acting DOS and subsequent shift personnel.
7. The RCC Shift Log shall highlight critical issues pertaining to the operations of the RCC (i.e., CAD failures, radio outages, significant road closures, weather or other alerts received during the shift, etc.). Prior to ending their shift, the DOS or Acting DOS shall enter the briefing report in the FHP Notification and Reporting System (FHPNRS) online at <http://safetynet/FHP/Pages/ReportNotify.aspx>.
8. Ensuring that the geographic location (GEO), personnel, and other files on each RCC's CAD system contain current information and are updated in a timely manner.

14.01.06 PROCEDURES

A. FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION RULES AND REGULATIONS- USE OF RADIO

1. All radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules and Regulations. The Patrol is authorized to transmit communications relative to public safety, the protection of life and property and communications essential to law enforcement activities. False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals; superfluous, unidentified communications, obscene, indecent and profane language are prohibited.
2. Communications personnel shall promptly answer all calls on the State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS), Mutual Aid and Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) in a professional law enforcement and business like manner using proper communications procedures.

B. STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT JOINT DISPATCH

All supervisors assigned to the RCC, shall be familiar with the various Memoranda of Understanding and/or Joint Dispatch Protocols for each state law enforcement agency served by the Regional Communications Center. All related documents shall be kept readily available and where all RCC supervisors may reference the material immediately.

C. IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. There are seven Regional Communications Centers located in Tallahassee (TRCC), Jacksonville (JRCC), Orlando (ORCC), Tampa (TBRCC), Ft. Myers (FMRCC), Miami (MRCC), and Lake Worth (LWRCC). Each Regional Communications Center shall be identified by

the name of the city where they are located.

2. Members and employees will be identified by their assigned identification number during radio communications.

D. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES

1. Whenever a patrol vehicle is being operated by a member and is equipped with a patrol radio, the member shall ensure that the radio is operational and shall monitor the designated talk groups.
2. Unless specifically exempted by the Director, members shall notify the RCC (via voice or CAD) when they begin and end their tour of duty, and anytime the member is out of service, including location, other than routine traffic operations. Communications personnel shall log all information into the CAD. Members engaged in field assignments must ensure they maintain availability for communications with the RCC through mobile radios, portable radios, cellular telephones or other methods that ensure immediate voice contact. Members engaged in planned patrol duties should not exit their vehicle without carrying a portable radio on their person.
3. Employees shall listen to ensure the talkgroup is clear before transmitting, and should wait approximately 15 to 30 seconds between each attempt to contact a mobile unit or the Regional Communications Center unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
4. At the start of a transmission or a series of transmissions, personnel using SLERS shall properly identify themselves, then the Regional Communications Center, person or agency being called, i.e.: trooper identification number 309 calling Tallahassee would say, "309 Tallahassee". All units shall respond with their location when called by a communications center except when stating the location would jeopardize the safety of the employee or the success of the assignment being conducted. Other agencies will use their Joint Task Force (JTF) approved agency designator before their radio identification number for proper identification of unit.
5. Radio communications shall be brief and to the point. Unnecessary, superfluous comments added as an expression of courtesy, such as please, thank you or you're welcome, etc., should not be used. Personal communications are prohibited.
6. Units shall advise the RCC (via voice or CAD) of changes in their in-service status as soon as practical. Dispatch consoles and mobile units shall be alert to radio traffic within their area of responsibility. All employees shall monitor radio traffic on all assigned talk groups and when necessary or directed to do so, will hold radio traffic to a minimum. Communications personnel shall record in the CAD all changes in status of members when out of service and assigned to an incident or crash.
7. Members who believe they are stopping a suspicious person or suspicious vehicle shall notify the RCC of the following:

- a. Location and direction of travel (if appropriate)
 - b. Complete description of vehicle and/or person
 - c. License number, including the state, on vehicle, if available
 - d. Reason for the stop
 - e. The member shall immediately notify the RCC when completed with the stop.
 - f. If no contact has been made with the member within three (3) minutes from the initial contact reporting the stop, the communications personnel shall attempt to contact the member originating the stop. The member's welfare shall be checked every five (5) minutes until the traffic stop is cleared except at the request of the member to extend the contact to every fifteen (15) minutes, depending upon the circumstances of the stop. Due to the length of time it takes for commercial motor vehicle safety inspections, CVE members may request to extend the contact to every twenty (20) minutes. Safety of the member shall always be the primary factor when the decision to perform the welfare check is deemed necessary.
 - g. If in the event two attempts to contact the member have failed, the communications personnel shall dispatch the nearest patrol unit to the location of the stop and notify the on-duty/on-call sworn supervisor.
 - h. If no patrol unit is available, the communications personnel shall contact the nearest local law enforcement agency and notify the on-duty/on-call sworn supervisor or TWS.
 - i. All information concerning traffic stops and all welfare checks shall be appropriately documented in the CAD system.
- E. MULTIPLE MEMBER/SUPERVISORY RESPONSE - There are certain incidents when it shall be necessary to assign multiple members, including supervisory personnel.
- 1. When available, two (2) or more members should be assigned to:
 - a. Arrests of felons, violent misdemeanants, or contacts involving combative subjects
 - b. Serious injury or fatal crashes
 - c. Crimes in progress and scenes of major criminal offenses
 - d. Natural and manmade disasters
 - e. Hazardous material incidents
 - f. Manhunts and roadblocks

2. If two or more members are not available, necessary assistance should be requested from other law enforcement agencies having concurrent jurisdiction in the area, if feasible.
 3. Sworn on-duty/on-call shift supervisors, including the TWS, shall be notified of all critical incidents as outlined in FHP Policy 17.29 Troop Watch Supervisors, and in addition to, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Crashes involving:
 - (1) Fatality / Preliminary fatality
 - (2) A school bus occupied with children
 - (3) A Division owned or operated vehicle
 - b. Aircraft down
 - c. Significant road closure, as defined in FHP Policy 17.29
 - d. Incident involving an employee that results in injury or death of the employee or another person
 - e. Motor vehicle and foot pursuit
 - f. Felony drug arrest; cash or property seizure
 - g. Manhunt
 - h. Shooting that involves a member or discharge of a firearm not during training or qualification
 - i. Arrest of an employee on any charge
 - j. Other unusual situations that require the presence of a sworn supervisor
- F. MUTUAL AID FREQUENCIES - Mutual Aid frequencies shall be used in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the FCC and the Region 9 Plan. Mutual Aid frequencies are primarily for extraordinary communications between disparate agencies. Transmissions on these frequencies shall be brief, using plain English. No dispatch signals or ten-codes shall be used. Mutual Aid frequencies are not law enforcement specific and not secure channels. Mutual Aid frequencies are available to many public safety agencies including fire departments and other first responder personnel.
- G. RADIO DISPATCHES- **Be On the Look Out** (BOLO)
1. Dispatches shall be used to inform units, other agencies or Regional Communications Centers of items, events or hazards that require prompt notification. Items that should be **kept confidential** should be dispatched by telephone, computer or other more secure method of communication.
 2. Communications personnel shall consider the timeliness and importance

of the items before reading a dispatch. Items of importance shall be repeated to mobile units who were out of service, unavailable or who started their tour of duty after the original dispatch was read. "Attempt to contact" dispatches will be broadcast if there is an indication that the party is in or about to enter the affected district. Items where timeliness and importance are not a factor shall be read during low volume transmission periods.

Be On the Look Out (BOLO's) should also be sent to MDC units for future reference by field units.

3. Communications personnel, when transmitting dispatches, shall consider the availability of other agencies that could be affected.
4. Only pertinent information shall be broadcast, and all dispatches shall be read using the proper format and stated as briefly as possible.
5. Questions concerning the need for dispatching certain messages shall be referred to the DOS or Sworn on-duty/on-call shift supervisors, including the TWS.

H. EMERGENCY POWER SOURCES

1. Each RCC shall be equipped with an emergency generator set to start immediately in the event of commercial power failure. These generators shall produce sufficient power to keep the RCC equipment operating so there will be no interruption of service.
2. Any indoor generator shall be checked for proper operation during each hour of use. Generators shall be manually or automatically self-tested at least monthly to ensure proper operation. Additionally, each generator should be tested under full load capacity at least once each year.

Automatically generated self-testing diagnostic reports suffice as evidence of monthly testing and may be retained in electronic format. Manual tests shall be documented on a log sheet or inspection checklist (e.g., conducted by a service company). This log sheet may be developed by each RCC and maintained for reference purposes at each location. At a minimum, the following information shall be recorded on this log:

- a. Date
 - b. Time
 - c. Oil Level
 - d. Fuel Level
 - e. Results (i.e., running okay, would not start, leaking oil, etc.)
3. The ultimate responsibility for the proper documentation of the operation inspections of the auxiliary power generator shall be that of the RCC Manager.

I. RCC AUXILIARY RADIO EQUIPMENT

1. Each communications center shall have auxiliary radio equipment capable of transmitting and receiving to be utilized in the event of primary radio equipment failure.
2. All portable radio units assigned to the Regional Communications Center shall be maintained in working order. Dispatch portables assigned to the RCC shall not be removed from the communication centers for any reason other than maintenance or service. Dispatch portables are specifically programmed for dispatch use and shall not be used by field personnel.

J. RADIO REPAIRS AND MODIFICATIONS

1. All modifications and repairs to radio and other communications equipment shall only be performed by authorized personnel.
2. Communications personnel shall be knowledgeable of the operating functions and locations of all communications equipment including radio consoles and the auxiliary power sources.

K. REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER SECURITY

1. The security of each Regional Communications Center, communications personnel and its assigned equipment shall be the responsibility of the RCC Manager. Adequate security must be provided at all facilities for property and personnel.
 - a. Entrance doors to the RCC shall be kept closed at all times when not in use. All non-public entrances shall be locked. All outside lights, if manually controlled, shall be turned on during hours of darkness. All drapes, curtains and shades shall be closed during these periods.
 - b. When equipped, an RCC facility with a closed circuit TV camera and/or intercom at the public entrance, shall be utilized. This will enable the communications personnel to have contact with visitors without permitting access to the facility.
 - c. Communications and computer equipment, as well as files and messages, shall be located in a secure area not accessible to unauthorized personnel.
 - d. Any security problem at any facility shall be brought to the attention of the respective RCC Manager through the appropriate chain of command.
 - e. Areas containing computers, servers, telecommunications equipment, radio equipment, uninterrupted power supplies and emergency generators shall be restricted to authorized personnel. When necessary, non-Division personnel may be permitted access to restricted areas containing communications equipment,

provided they have approved Joint Task Force (JTF) Security Clearance or they are accompanied by a Division employee and they have a need to be in that area.

2. Communications equipment (i.e.: radio transmitter sheds, antennas, etc.) outside communication centers will be appropriately secured from public access when no Division personnel are on the premises. Securing will normally be done by the use of adequate fencing, locks and/or alarm systems. Additional security measures shall be taken, if needed.
 3. Division employees shall be attentive to communications equipment and sites. All apparent unauthorized entry, access or tampering shall be investigated and appropriate action taken to safeguard Division equipment.
 4. ACCESS CONTROL - Only communications personnel and members with official business, which requires access to the RCC, or a person(s) authorized by the Communications Commander, RCC Manager, or DOS are permitted in the communications center. Those who have regular access will be maintained on a current list or issued access credentials. General public walk-in traffic is not permitted to the secure areas, since security of communications personnel and equipment is of the utmost importance. Signs bearing the words "Restricted Area - Authorized Personnel Only" (or substantially similar language) shall be conspicuously posted at all entrances to the secure area of the RCC.
 5. Employees shall not loiter in the RCC or engage in conversation or activities that disrupt the communications function.
- L. 911 PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATION (PST) TRAINING
1. The Florida Highway Patrol 911 PST Training Curriculum was submitted and approved by the Department of Health. Only FHP personnel that are 911 PST certified by the Department of Health may provide this training.
 2. Communications personnel in training must:
 - a. Work under the direct supervision of a certified 911 PST;
 - b. Complete an approved training program and receive 911 PST certification: and
 - c. The 911 PST certification must be achieved within 12 months of assignment.
 3. New communications personnel should start their 911 PST training within the first week of hire.