Monroe Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines
Communications Policy

Purpose: To provide guidelines for radio communications and ensure proper documentation of department activities.

Level of Performance: This policy will be used whenever possible in order to standardize radio communications. This policy may only be modified when absolutely necessary by the incident commander.

Dispatch designation
The term "Green County Fire" will be used when referring to the dispatch center operated by the Green County Sheriff's Department.

Local department base stations
Base stations operated by local fire departments in Green County will be designated by stating the community name followed by "Fire Base". Example: "Monroe Fire Base".

Unit identification
Units will identify in the following manner:

- When communicating with other Monroe units the assigned vehicle numbers will be used. Example: "Engine 6 to Engine 7".

- When communicating with the dispatch center or other fire departments the community name shall be used in front of the vehicle numbers. Example "Monroe Engine 6 to Green County Fire"

Alert messages
Alert messages directed to fire units will follow a standard format. These messages will include the following information:

- Identification of alerted department

- Type of incident

- Location of incident

- Above information repeated

The dispatch center will transmit alert messages over the Green County Paging Frequency 163.250.

Acknowledgment of alert
The department member who is "on-call" should acknowledge the alert message by radio.

- The acknowledgment message should include the following:

- o Identification of department
- o Restatement of incident type
- o Restatement of incident location

The time at which the alert message was acknowledged will be recorded at the dispatch center.

Response messages

The first unit assigned to an incident will begin its response by broadcasting a response message to the dispatch center. This message will include the following:

Identification of unit.

Indication of status

Restatement of incident location

Example: "Monroe Engine 1 is responding to (location)"

On location reports

The first unit to arrive on scene should report arrival (on location) to the dispatch center.

The time at which the first assigned unit reports on-scene will be acknowledged and recorded by the dispatch center.

The officer on the first unit will broadcast a description of conditions upon arrival.

Department or Incident Command terminology shall be proper and include the following:
Condition Red – Confirmed working fire
10-33 Suspected emergency situation
10-40 Non-emergency response

Following units to arrive on scene

Units which arrive on scene after the first-in unit shall report that they are on scene and their location to "Fire Command" stating unit # and number of personnel on-board.

Units arriving after the first-in unit should not report that they are on scene to the dispatch center. The dispatch center only needs to know when the first unit arrives.

Command

When Command has been established, all routine communications between the incident scene and the Dispatch Center will be directed through Command.

The radio designation "Fire Command" will be used with a brief description of the command location. This location will normally not change during the duration of an incident. A radio message will be broadcast if location must change.

Command Messages

The dispatch center will acknowledge and record messages as directed from Command

Command messages may include the following:

- Under control
- Fire is out
- Progress reports
- Request for outside resources and mutual aid

Returning Units

Only Command can release units from an incident.

Command will indicate the units to "Hold" at the scene *(or continue the response)* and release the remainder of the assignment.

Normal Operations

Normal operations refers to the normal mode of operations of the dispatch center. Under these conditions, non-emergency communications of an official nature are permitted on all frequencies. Incident related communications will always take priority over other traffic.

During periods of extremely heavy traffic, it becomes impossible for the dispatch center to carryon all normal functions. It is necessary in such circumstances to restrict non-essential communications.

The dispatcher on duty will make the determination when it becomes necessary to restrict radio communications.

The announcement "Hold radio traffic to emergency traffic only" will be made over all radio channels.

While the dispatch center is in heavy traffic mode:
- All non-incident related radio traffic will be restricted and units will transmit only essential information.
- Units will avoid calling dispatch center unless necessary.

At the end of the heavy traffic situation, the dispatch center will announce "Resume normal radio traffic"

The term "Emergency traffic" will be used by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive a higher priority from the dispatch center, Command and all other units.

Any firefighter finding themselves in a perilous situation that they can not remove themselves

from without assistance should use the term "MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY"

THE RADIO FREQUENCY ABSOLUTELY BELONGS TO ANY UNIT GIVING "MAYDAY" CALL

Radio Procedure

The use of plain text radio protocol is encouraged. Using terms such as responding, on-scene, returning to quarters etc. is preferred to using 10 codes.

Before transmitting, know what you are going to say; don't make it up as you go along. Choose precise terms to communicate the desired message as clearly and briefly as possible without wasting air time.

Orders received by companies should indicate a specific task which is assigned to the company. It should be of a magnitude reasonably performed by a single company alone or in concert with other companies.

In addition to being task and company oriented, assignments should indicate an objective to the action. The company should know exactly where to go, to whom to report, what the task is, and the objective of the task. Orders should tell what to do -- not how to do it.

Speak clearly at a practiced rate, not to fast - not to slow. Control your emotions and excitement. If you do not consciously control your voice, it will become garbled under stress.

Prioritize your messages. Do not use valuable air with unimportant messages and insignificant details. Critical messages go first. Maintain an awareness of overall situation and how you fit into it.

Do not interrupt conversations unless you have "Emergency Traffic". Listen before transmitting and wait until a message transaction has been completed.
Pause between consecutive messages. This will make it clear when one has been completed and another message started. It will give other units a chance to get on the air with important messages.

All Monroe Fire Departments units shall operate on Fireground frequency. Command will advise all units for the need to switch to a different frequency due to MABAS activation or other conditions.

Command will monitor the alert frequency at all times.

Implementation: This policy has been approved by the Officers of the Monroe Fire Department and the Monroe Common Council. This policy, and all adopted procedures, provide a guideline for operations within the Monroe Fire Department. Adoption of these guidelines in no way restricts the incident commander, department administration or the Monroe Common Council from modifying operations or implementing exceptions to policy in the interest of safety, efficiency and harmony within the organization. It shall remain in effect until withdrawn or modified by the department.

Effective Date: December 2, 2014