



# RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE

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<i>C.A.L.E.A.</i>	<i>Reference</i> <b>(see "INDEX AS:")</b>

## **INDEX AS**

Clear Text  
 Communications Procedure  
 Radio Use  
 Ten Signals  
 Use of Radios

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this order is to establish a uniform manner of transmitting radio communications for all personnel of the Iowa City Police Department.

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. Mobile Operating Procedures
- II. General Operating Procedures
- III. Dispatching Assignments-Broadcasts
- IV. Dispatcher Responsibilities
- V. Stationmaster Dispatching Responsibilities
- VI. City-Wide Message Broadcasts

## I. MOBILE OPERATING PROCEDURES

### A. Monitoring the Frequencies

1. The volume control should never be set so low that you cannot hear messages being dispatched.

### B. Microphone Techniques

1. When speaking into the microphone: Hold it one to two inches from the mouth at a 45 degree angle; talk in a normal to slightly louder than normal voice.
2. Shouting will not help increase the volume at the receiving end, but will only distort the signal.
3. Whispering or talking in a low voice will also cause receiving problems.

### C. Frequency Conduct

1. Our conduct and manners on the radio are the standards by which many people judge the attitude, quality, and efficiency of the Department.
2. Personnel should be careful to remain in control of their temper and remain calm during the most trying situations. A voice with a temper usually receives the same in return.
3. Try not to transfer excitement as this makes conditions worse. Excitement in your voice will only create confusion in others.
4. When asked to repeat, do not become angry. What you have said has not been understood. Calmly speak slower and repeat the information.

## II. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

### A. Conserving Air Time

1. In order to conserve airtime and keep the information open for emergencies, it is necessary to put as much information into as few words as possible.

### B. Stating Your Traffic

1. Stating the nature of your traffic helps the Dispatcher determine the priority of incoming calls. If a special form is needed, the Dispatcher can have it ready when you are given the "GO AHEAD," i.e. "JCOMM from Iowa City 80 Time and Number," or "JCOMM from Iowa City 80, 10-28."

### C. Transmitting Lengthy Messages

1. When you have occasion to transmit a lengthy message, it may be beneficial to write it down ahead of time and read it as written. Double phrase each group of words. Speak slowly enough for the Dispatcher to copy it. If asked to repeat a part, say it as originally given. Do not change the wording. Consideration should also be given to the use of cell phones or data terminals.

### D. Calling the Base Station

1. Always use the agency identifier and full number: "Iowa City 80" or "Iowa City 81."
2. Use the following format:
  - a] "JCOMM from Iowa City 80"
    - (1) Calling the base first and then identifying your agency/unit number.
3. The Dispatcher will advise "Go ahead Iowa City 80" when they are ready to copy your traffic.

E. Calling Other Mobile Units

1. When calling another mobile unit, first use the officer agency and ID# of the unit you are calling followed by "from" and then your agency and officer ID#. Advise if on a channel other than channel Law One.
  - a] "Iowa City 81 from Iowa City 80."

F. Phonetic Alphabet

1. The Phonetic Alphabet should be used for spelling out unusual names of persons and locations. The names used after each letter have been found to be the most understandable over the air. They should always be given as:
  - a] "A – Adam," or "B – Boy," not as "A as in Adam" or "B as for Boy," etc.

A Adam	J John	S Sam
B Boy	K King	T Tom
C Charles	L Lincoln	U Union
D David	M Mary	V Victor
E Edward	N Nora	W William
F Frank	O Ocean	X X-ray
G George	P Paul	Y Young
H Henry	Q Queen	Z Zebra
I Ida	R Robert	

G. Pronouncing Numbers

1. Numbers are an important part of your message reading. Their confusion and miscopying can lead to much trouble, both for the Dispatcher and the others to whom your messages are addressed. Officers should clearly enunciate any spoken numbers.

H. Standard Vehicle Descriptions

1. Remember the word "CYMBALS" when describing motor vehicles. Start at the top and move down according to the following:
  - a] Standard Description of Cars
    - (1) Give top to bottom
      - C. COLOR
      - Y. YEAR
      - M. MAKE
      - B. BODY TYPE AND MODEL (2-door, 4-door, hatchback, etc.)

- A. AND
- L. LICENSE
- S. SERIAL

I. Standard Description of Persons

1. Tell the most obvious thing first and least obvious last. When broadcasting person descriptions you are making an attempt to paint an image. Use the following as a guide:
  - a] Standard Description of Person
    - (1) Don't give a DOB. Pick specific age.
    - (2) Pick a specific number for height.
    - (3) Pick a specific number for weight.

J. Ten Signals and Clear Text

1. Ten Signals should not be used. "Clear Text" more accurately conveys the message and is more universally understood by emergency responders regardless of their background/agency.
2. The following is a list of TEN SIGNALS acceptable for use by ICPD personnel in certain situations if necessary to maintain officer safety or tactical advantage:
  - 10-29 Check records for wanted
  - 10-32 Man with a gun
  - 10-96 Mental subject
  - 10-99 Records indicate wanted or stolen
  - 10-200 Drug related
  - Code 4 No further assistance needed

K. Requesting 10-27's, 10-28's, and 10-29's

1. When officers are able to safely run their own queries, officers should do so. When running queries through Dispatch, always try to give the information in the same sequence each time. This will help you remember what information is necessary and at the same time will help the Dispatcher to anticipate what you will say next. This will speed up responses and save air time by avoiding repeats.
  - a] Request for Driver's License (10-27)
    - (1) By Name: Give the name (Last, First, Middle Initial) first, followed by the sex, race, and DOB (Date of Birth – year, month, day) which should be given in the same order that Dispatch enters the information in the computer inquiry, i.e., 1955-08-26.
    - (2) By Number: Advise the Dispatcher that you are requesting a "10-27 by Number or File Number." When reading the Driver's License number, break the number into groups of three.
  - b] Vehicle Licenses and/or Vehicle Identification Number (10-28)
    - (1) Vehicle License: Request information by stating "10-28," after the Dispatcher has given the go-ahead, then give the license plate number. It is only necessary to give the License year if it is other than the current year,

and it is only necessary to give the State if it is other than Iowa.

- (2) Vehicle Identification Number: Request information by stating "10-28 VIN." When reading the numbers, break where practical into groups of three digits.
- c] Stolen/Wanted (10-29) Information: When requesting a Stolen/Wanted check (10-29), specify in the call-up if the request is for other than a license check (i.e. if for name say "10-29 Name," if for article say "10-29 Article").
- d] Read only one 10-27, 10-28, 10-29 at a time. Wait for the Dispatcher to give the "go-ahead" before giving any additional information.

#### L. Reading Names and Numbers

1. The name should be spoken clearly, then spell the last name and the middle initial phonetically. If the first name might be interpreted wrong, spell it phonetically also. The time required for spelling ensures accuracy and reduces repeat requests.
2. When reading numbers, where practical, break into groups of three digits. When reading Driver's license or Social Security numbers, break where the hyphens appear. Pause slightly between each section of the DOB (month, day, and year).
3. Vehicle license numbers should be read without breaks unless they exceed four digits. If there are letters, pause between the letters and numbers. VIN's should be broken into the appropriate three digit groups.

### III. **DISPATCHING ASSIGNMENTS/BROADCASTS**

- A. Transmissions shall be broadcast slowly enough to allow copying, but not prolonged so as to occupy the air unnecessarily.
  1. Radio transmissions shall be answered promptly. When the base or mobile unit is not prepared to accept traffic, the calling unit shall be requested to "stand by." Excuses for not answering such as "out on a traffic stop," or "busy" shall not be stated on the radio.
  2. Expressions such as "roger, will do, out, come in, go, clear, etc." shall not be used.
  3. Base Dispatchers and mobile unit operators alike, when not acknowledged on the first call, shall place their calls for that unit at intervals and not continuously.
  4. If an assignment requires copying, the Stationmaster shall say "prepare to copy," where the duration of the message is more than ordinary length of dispatch information. If normal copying cannot be accomplished, the mobile or base operator shall advise "stand by" until he can copy.
  5. When a field unit is called by the dispatcher, the field unit will give their agency/number and location.
- B. The following procedure for assigning incidents to mobile units is designed to insure the Field Officer ample opportunity to record all the necessary

information and to eliminate the time-consuming process of repeating the incident.

1. Think before opening the transmitter. Form your thoughts so as to make your broadcast as BRIEF AND TO THE POINT AS POSSIBLE.
2. When contacting a mobile unit, the Stationmaster (identified by the radio identifier, "200") will call the proper unit and wait for a response.
  - a] By first calling the unit and waiting for a response. This shall alert the Field Unit to prepare to copy. Example: Iowa City 80 from 200.
  - b] It shall be the responsibility of the Field Officer to record all information to carry out his assignment.
  - c] In case the Field Officer is not fully clear on all or any part of the transmission, he shall request clarification at the time the information is given out and not wait until he has arrived at the scene of the incident.
3. To further insure the Field Officer the opportunity to record all the pertinent information, the Stationmaster shall always, first give information, that is 10-50, burglar alarm, juvenile complaint, and second the location, repeating the address and then any particulars that are related to the assignment.

C. When a Field Officer is calling the Communications Center, use the following format:

1. Call-up JCOMM followed by your full agency/ID
  - a] i.e. "JCOMM from Iowa City 80."

#### **IV. DISPATCHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. Dispatchers of the Joint Emergency Communications Center (JCOMM) are responsible for the area law enforcement radio communications and dispatching including the ICPD. As such, they are governed by their policies and practices as established and approved by their organization and governing board.

#### **V. STATIONMASTER DISPATCHING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Stationmaster will grant any reasonable request from a mobile unit. BUT WILL NOT:
  1. Make decisions for the Field Units. These should be made through the Field Supervisor or the Watch Commander.
  2. Field Officers should not rely on JCOMM Dispatchers to act as a secretary to make routine telephone calls; however, this may be an appropriate request to the Stationmaster. The Field Officer has all the information; therefore, the officer is likely in a better position to make the call.
  3. Field Officers should not rely on JCOMM Dispatchers to obtain information or make notifications which are not of an urgent nature; however, this may be an appropriate request to the Stationmaster.

**VI. CITY-WIDE MESSAGE BROADCASTS**

- A. The following procedures should be used when broadcasting City-wide messages of information that the Field Officer should be made aware of:
1. The Stationmaster will alert the Field Officer by stating, "All City units prepare to (copy nature of broadcast).
  2. Pause thirty (30) seconds to allow the Field Officers to prepare to copy the broadcast information.
  3. Repeat "All City units prepare to (copy nature of broadcast) and broadcast the message.
  4. After the transmission of the message, units should indicate the message has been received. In the event an officer did not receive any or all of the message, he should contact the Stationmaster by phone or mobile data terminal.

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Samuel Hargadine, Chief of Police

**WARNING**

This directive is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. The department policy should not be construed as a creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions.