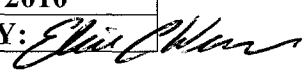


RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY FIRE and RESCUE ASSOCIATION	NUMBER: 1001
STANDARD OPERATIONAL GUIDELINE	PAGE 1 of 5
SUBJECT: Communications Guidelines	EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/19/2010
WRITTEN BY: J.B. Carter, Jr.	ISSUED BY: 

PURPOSE: Common and plain English language is imperative with regard to radio communications. The guidelines below meet the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standard and recommendations from the state NIMS team. In some cases, the guidelines enhance and exceed the recommendations presented by the NIMS team.

BACKGROUND:

DEFINITIONS: *Included as part of the guideline.*

GUIDELINE:

1. General Communications
 - A. Be clear and concise. Speak in a clear, strong voice relaying all necessary information as quickly as possible.
 - B. Think before speaking, thereby eliminating errors and reducing the possibility of having to repeat a message.
 - C. Never acknowledge a transmission until it is fully understood.
 - D. Keep radio traffic to a minimum at all times.

2. Basic Considerations
 - A. Ensure you are on the correct talk group.
 - B. Listen before transmitting to ensure the talk group is clear and available.
 - C. Avoid lengthy descriptions and unnecessary repetition.
 - D. Prior to speaking, depress the Push-To-Talk (PTT) button and wait for the "talk permit" tone.
 - E. Hold the radio microphone close to the mouth and speak directly into it not across it.
 - F. When ever possible, avoid transmitting when horns and sirens are operating.
 - G. Remain calm; avoid uncivil, angry, abusive, derogatory, or sarcastic language/tones.
 - H. Identify one's self and transmit a message in a single transmission.
Example:
Ambulance 1: Rappahannock from Ambulance 1 ready and returning.
Rappahannock: "Ambulance 1 ready and returning *time stamp*."
 - I. Avoid the routine use of "radio checks" and do not request strength and readability reports from dispatch. In the rare instance that these tests are conducted, a concise statement of the results must be issued. For example,

”loud and clear,” weak but readable,” or “unreadable” are the acceptable test result descriptions.

- J. Never transmit via radio that an injured or deceased victim is fire/rescue personnel.
- K. Transmit information using the call reference technique enabling dispatch personnel to be prepared to perform a requested task or acknowledge radio traffic:

Examples:

“Rappahannock from Engine 2 responding.”

“Rappahannock from Tanker 1, address check?”

- L. Always use complete radio designation; never use only numerals.

3. Codes and Signals

- A. All radio traffic shall use plain English.
- B. The following are standard exceptions granted by NIMS and the Commonwealth of Virginia Interoperability Office:
 - i. SIGNAL 1: MAYDAY! A situation in which either the responder or dispatcher has identified an immediate threat and must convey this to a partner, other responders or dispatch without alerting the subject; may be used with or in place of Emergency Call Button. Signal 1 or MAYDAY! May be used interchangeably.
 - ii. SIGNAL 2: ASSISTANCE: A situation in which a responder needs assistance: however, there is no immediate threat to life.
 - iii. SIGNAL 3: TAKING A SUBJECT INTO CUSTODY: Responder is taking subject into custody. A communications officer may also use this code to direct a responder to take a subject into custody and/or to expect resistance.
 - iv. SIGNAL 4: CONFIDENTIAL/CRITICAL INFORMATION TO BE RELAYED: This code indicates a situation where a responder or communications officer has identified an immediate threat and must convey this information without alerting a subject or individual.

4. Busy Signal

- A. Used to indicate that the Communications Officer is unable to respond to over-the-air communications at the current time.
- B. Radio traffic may continue on the talk group but do not expect communications with the Communications Officer unless a “Priority Traffic” request is transmitted. (See “Priority Traffic” definition below.)

5. Communications Terminology

Acknowledge	"Let me know that you have received and understood the message."
Address Check	Responding apparatus requesting that the address be repeated.
Advise	"Give this message to..."
Affirmative	"YES"
Be Advised	Reflects the desire to make another party aware of specific information
Begin tour	Personnel or apparatus are on duty and ready.
Confirm(ing)	"Verify the accuracy of the entire message that was just transmitted and correct it if necessary."
Correct	"What has just been transmitted is accurate"
Correction	"An error was made in the previous radio transmission. The correct version is..."
Direct	"Okay" or "Understood"
End of Tour	Personnel or apparatus are off duty.
En Route "Priority 2"	Apparatus or personnel are on the way to an event, stand-by, or hospital; used also to indicate a <u>non-emergent</u> response to an incident.
Hold Traffic	All on-air personnel cease radio transmissions and traffic.
In-Service	Apparatus is mechanically sound, equipment is functional, and able to respond: not synonymous with "Ready"
In-Quarters	Apparatus has safely arrived at a station; if multiple pieces of apparatus arrive in-quarters at once, on piece should transmit "All station 4 apparatus in -quarters."
Mayday	Emergency distress signal that indicates that one or more personnel require emergency assistance
Negative	"No"
Not-Ready	Apparatus is not ready to respond to an incident; <u>not</u> synonymous with "Out-of-service"
Okay	"Your message is received, and understood, and will be complied with"
On Location	Apparatus or personnel have arrived at the scene of an incident, stand-by, or event
Out-of-Service	Apparatus is mechanically disabled or equipment is not functional, and unable to respond to incidents; <u>not</u> synonymous with "not ready"
Priority Traffic	An <i>imminent</i> danger to life, limb, or property exists; <i>not</i> used simply due to heavy radio traffic or to relay routine radio traffic to Dispatch.
Ready	Apparatus is ready to respond to an incident; <u>not</u> synonymous with "In-Service"
Repeat	"Repeat your message. I did not understand it the first time"
Responding "Priority 1"	Given apparatus is responding (<u>emergently</u>) to an event or incident
Response Check	Verbal inquiry initiated by dispatch to check if apparatus is responding to an incident
Returning	Apparatus or personnel are leaving the scene of an incident; usually used with terms "ready" or "not-ready"
Stand By	"Listen but do not transmit until directed to do so"
Status Check	An inquiry of the status of apparatus or personnel
Test Count	Used for the purposes of testing a specific radio or the radio system infrastructure; a five (5) count will be conducted twice:

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Understood	“Your message is received, understood, and will be complied with”
Placed In Service	The unit is no longer needed on the call.

6. Radio Designators

Driver	Vehicle Operator
Vehicle ID	Officer will keep the unit ID as their designator
Officers Bucket	Jump Seat – Right
Drivers Bucket	Jump Seat – Left

Example:

Rescue Engine 9s Driver: Driver

Rescue Engine 9s Officer Bucket: Officer bucket firefighter

Rescue Engine 9: Officer

Ambulance	A Basic Life Support (BLS) transport unit staffed with an EMT-B
Attack	4 wheel drive Engine capable of structure fire attack
Brush	4 wheel drive vehicle used for wildland, grass or brush firefighting
Command Vehicle	Vehicle designed for a Chief Officer to command and control small-to-medium scale incidents
Company	A crew of three(3) or more trained and released personnel
Duty “X”	A duty officer performing command and coordination responsibilities for a specific area, district, or system wide
Engine	Vehicle designed and used for fire attack; carries hose and a minimum of 500+ gallons of water, and a fire pump; usually carries 3-6 personnel
Haz-Mat	Vehicle designed to mitigate hazardous materials incidents
Medic	An Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport unit staffed with an EMT-I, or EMT-P
Rescue Engine or Rescue	A vehicle carrying tools and equipment primarily utilized for vehicle extrication or other types of specialized rescue
Tanker	Vehicle used to transport/Shuttle large amounts of water to the scene of a fire-usually key in a rural water supply
Trauma	An Advanced Life Support (ALS) transport unit staffed with an EMT-E or EMT-ST
Truck/Ladder/Tower	Vehicle used for equipment and ladders; equipment may include generators, salvage, overhaul and ventilation tools.
Utility	A multi-purpose station vehicle for carrying personnel.

7. Phonetic Alphabet

- A. To increase the clarity of radio transmission, use the Phonetic Alphabet.
- B. By using words in conjunction with letters, clarity is enhanced and improved
- C. When using the Phonetic Alphabet, identify the letter with the corresponding word. (A-Alpha, B-Bravo, C-Charlie, etc.)
- D. Used to describe the sides of a building. Side A will now be Side Alpha.
- E. Used to describe a location in a building Quadrant D is now Quadrant Delta
- F. Used to describe radio channels 14 B will now be 14 Bravo.

A	Alpha	Al fah		N	November	noVEM ber
B	Bravo	BRAH voh		O	Oscar	OSS car
C	Charlie	CHAR lee		P	Papa	pah PAH
D	Delta	DELL tah		Q	Quebec	keh BECK
E	Echo	ECK oh		R	Romeo	ROW me oh
F	Foxtrot	FOKS trot		S	Sierra	SEE air rah
G	Golf	GOLF		T	Tango	TANG go
H	Hotel	HOH tell		U	Uniform	YOU nee form
I	India	IN dee ah		V	Victor	VIK tah
J	Juliet	JEW lee ett		W	Whiskey	WISS key
K	Kilo	KEY low		X	X-ray	ECKS ray
L	Lima	LEE mah		Y	Yankee	YANG key
M	Mike	MIKE		Z	Zulu	ZOO loo