

Halifax Fire Department

December 28, 2007

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**Communications****21.01 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines for communication practices for operations, which includes common terminology, the order model and required communications.

21.02 TERMINOLOGY**RADIO CODE**

"Plain language" radio messages should be used in preference to numerical codes to facilitate understanding.

The terminology shall form the basis for standard communications. Additional terminology related to standard designation for resources or management assignments and tactical operations will be specified in the related Standard Operating Guidelines.

- a. Assuming Command:** 1st Officer/Senior Member on scene is taking charge of the incident.
- b. Passing Command:** 1st Officer/Senior Member is **Not** taking charge of the incident, the next arriving Officer/Senior Member will.
- c. Brief Initial Report:** Initial report of conditions found and given by the first arriving unit and the formal establishment or passing of Command.
- d. Affirmative:** Yes that is correct.
- e. Negative:** No that is not correct. When giving information or a tactical order, if the feedback provided is not correct, the sender must provide correction.
- f. Repeat:** Repeat your last transmission.

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- g. Standby:** Unable to accept any radio traffic at this time.
- h. Acknowledge:** Unit(s) being called, acknowledge you've received the message.
- i. Committed:** Unit(s) unavailable for other response.
- j. Report of Conditions:** Report of conditions at your current location.
- k. Staging:** A location which has been assigned by the IC for apparatus to standby for assignment(s).
- Level I** – Close to the incident for immediate deployment.
- Level II** – Away from the incident, out of line of sight.
- l. Progress Report:** A report on your progress of the task given.
- m. Emergency Traffic:** A request for **Absolute Priority** radio traffic. Emergency radio traffic is used to report an imminently hazardous condition, an order of evacuation, request for emergency assistance or MAY DAY.
- n. Unit Designation:** For radio communications, the following designations will be recognized as standard;

Dispatch	Halifax Fire Alarm
Fire Chief	Halifax 50
Fire Deputy	Halifax 51
Fire Captain	Halifax 56, 57, 58, 59
Engine 1 (Pumper)	Halifax Engine 1
Engine 2 (Pumper)	Halifax Engine 2
Ladder Truck (Aerial)	Halifax Ladder 1
Ambulance 1	Halifax A1 or Ambulance 1
Ambulance 2	Halifax A2 or Ambulance 2
Forestry	Halifax 54 & 55
Rescue Boat	Halifax Boat 1
Hovercraft	Halifax Boat 2
Service Vehicle	Halifax 52
Individual FF, EMT, EMTP	Halifax Portable # 2 thru #40

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21.03 PROCEDURE**ORDER MODEL**

Radio communications will be regulated by the following order model guidelines.

1. Sender will give unit ID and call the receiver by their Designation.

Ex: Halifax Ambulance 1 to Fire Alarm....

2. Receiver will give their ID to indicate they are ready to receive.

Ex: Halifax Fire Alarm on.....

3. Sender will then extend message, order, etc.

EX: Ambulance 1 is transporting one ALS to the Brockton.

4. Receiver will acknowledge receipt of the message with a time stamp.
A brief restatement is the best acknowledgment.

EX: Received, Ambulance 1 enroute to the Brockton ALS, 1349.

5. Dispatch will acknowledge all communications directed to it by a brief restatement of the message, with particular attention given to repeating on the scene, size-up and progress reports, requests for additional resource(s) and all incident status changes and milestones.

Short-specific

Before transmitting, know what you are going to say. Choose precise terms to communicate the desired message as **clearly and briefly** as possible without wasting airtime.

Task Oriented/Company Oriented

Command's orders to operating Companies should indicate a specific task assigned to the Company. They should be of a magnitude reasonably performed by a single Company alone or in concert with other Companies.

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Indicate Objective

In addition to being task and Company oriented, assignments should indicate an objective to the action. The Company should know exactly where to go, what is the task and what is the objective of the task. **Orders should tell what to do - not how to do it (unless Command wants something specific).**

Clear Tone/Self-Control/Effective Rate

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

Well Timed/Spaced

Prioritize your messages. Do not use up valuable air time with unimportant messages and insignificant details. Let critical messages go first. Maintain an awareness of the overall situation and your role in 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 message has been completed and another started. It will give other units a chance to get on the air with important messages.

"MAY-DAY" RADIO MESSAGE

The radio message "May-Day" will be used by fire fighters to report their status as being lost, trapped, or injured and needing rescue. Any member may use "May-Day" to report a lost fire fighter. Any report of "May-Day" will receive priority radio traffic followed by the radio alert tone. The term "May-Day" will be reserved ONLY to report a lost, trapped, or injured fire fighter(s). The term "emergency traffic" will be used to report all other emergencies.

EMERGENCY TRAFFIC

The term "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" will be utilized by any unit encountering an immediately perilous situation and will receive priority radio traffic from Dispatch, Command and all operating units followed by the radio alert tone. Units may initiate emergency communications by depressing the emergency button on their radio, or by verbally contacting Command.

Ex: *"Interior to Command with Emergency Traffic"...Command to all units, Hold all radio traffic...Command to Interior go ahead with the Emergency TrafficInterior; "The roof is beginning to fail" **THE AIR ABSOLUTELY BELONGS TO ANY UNIT GIVING "EMERGENCY TRAFFIC" or "MAY DAY".***