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PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY

In effect:

Authorized by:

PS-6 Emergency Response Radio Communications

I. Purpose

To establish procedures to guide radio communications on the fireground or other emergency incidents.

II. Policy

- A. All emergency incident radio communications will adhere to this policy.
- B. Upon initial dispatching of units, COUNTY Dispatch (COUNTY) will assign the primary incident radio channel (SBFD DISP) as the channel for incident communications.
- C. Radio communication shall utilize "plain English" only.
- D. All units arriving on a first alarm shall report out on the scene immediately upon arrival at the dispatched address regardless of whether an emergency is apparent on arrival or not.
- E. The Incident Commander shall establish the most reliable means of maintaining emergency communications possible with personnel on the scene.

III. Procedure

- A. SBFD DISP is the primary radio communications channel for Sam Bass Fire Department (SBFD). All units will keep radios set to this channel unless directed otherwise by either COUNTY dispatch or by the Incident Commander.
- B. SBFD TALK is the secondary radio communications channel for Sam Bass Fire Department. It is available should the need arise for an alternate radio channel.



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- C. Other radio channels will be assigned by COUNTY dispatch whenever SBFDF units are responding to automatic or mutual aid calls. All department members should remain familiar with each of the radio channels used by area departments to which SBFDF might respond.
- D. Radio communication shall utilize "plain English" only.
 - 1. Unit designations shall be SAM BASS plus the type of unit and the unit number assigned to it. For example, Engine One shall refer to itself as SAM BASS ENGINE ONE in all radio communications. Truck Two shall refer to itself as SAM BASS TRUCK TWO in all radio communications. The same unit designation protocol applies to all the emergency response units in the department. It is increasingly critical to follow this protocol because of the automatic and mutual aid calls with other area departments.
 - 2. Williamson County Dispatch shall be referred to as "COUNTY".
 - 3. When units are in-service on radio, status report shall be given whenever the unit status changes.
 - 4. When a unit is responding to a dispatched emergency, a proper "plain English" report shall be given. (example: SAM BASS ENGINE 1 - RESPONDING)
 - 5. When a unit arrives at the dispatched address, they shall report the unit out on the scene immediately whether the emergency situation is readily apparent or not. Any delay in this report affects the response time data negatively. This status report requires that very basic additional information about what is observed be included along with information on what actions need to take place next. (Example: SAM BASS ENGINE ONE IS OUT – NOTHING SHOWING. WE WILL BE INVESTIGATING)
 - 6. Once an incident has been taken care of and the unit is available again for emergency call, a status report shall be given about that availability along with any other information that would further define that availability. (example: SAM BASS ENGINE IS CLEAR IN DISTRICT – RETURNING TO THE STATION)



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7. Once the unit is back at the station, a status report shall be given stating so. (example: SAM BASS ENGINE ONE IS BACK IN THE STATION)
 8. Anytime a unit must go out of service for any reason, a status report shall be given along with the reason. (example: SAM BASS ENGINE ONE IS OUT OF SERVICE LOADING HOSE)
 9. Portable radios shall be referred to by the position of the person operating the radio. (example: SAM BASS ENGINE ONE CAPTAIN to SAM BASS ENGINE ONE DRIVER)
- E. Radios utilized on an incident shall normally be placed in the non-scan repeater mode so that the highest degree of probability exists for COUNTY dispatch to monitor emergency incident communications, and the possibility of emergency traffic going unheard because of lack of hitting receiver sites is minimized. If Incident Command decides to switch to non-repeater (direct) mode because of building construction or some other circumstance, Incident Command shall notify COUNTY dispatch and have COUNTY dispatch announce the switch over all channels. If resources permit, the Incident Commander may then assign a Communications Officer whose sole purpose is to monitor the primary incident channel at the Command Post.
- F. In the event of a widespread radio failure, all radios shall be switched to the direct mode. A more widespread radio failure may not be apparent, as COUNTY dispatch will not be able to transmit or communicate with Incident Command or fireground units. Only due diligence and monitoring may detect a more widespread radio failure. All fireground radios shall be switched immediately to the direct mode. Incident Command shall initiate an immediate PAR and an immediate review of strategy shall be undertaken. Withdrawal and/or defensive operations shall normally follow a total radio system failure. Withdrawal should be communicated by a continuous blast of apparatus air horn (multiple apparatus if possible). The air horn blasts should last 30-45 seconds, be repeated after one minute, and continue until Incident Command is confident all personnel have been withdrawn.
- G. Incident Command shall have a cellular phone turned on and available for use at the Command Post when it is established. The cellular phone shall serve as an alternate means of communication between



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COUNTY dispatch and the Incident Command in the even of radio failures.