

**NEW HAVEN  
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE**

**GENERAL ORDERS**



**GENERAL ORDER 9.02**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: July 11, 2023**

**RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**

**9.02.01 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the radio procedures to be used by employees.

**9.02.02 POLICY**

It is the policy of the New Haven Department of Police Service (NHPD) that all radio communications should be conducted in a professional and effective manner, be direct, and concise, and in accordance with Department procedures, relevant Connecticut General Statutes, and regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission.

**9.02.03 GENERAL**

The function of the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) is to satisfy the immediate information needs of the Department in the course of routine activities as well as in emergencies. The system conveys information from the public to police officers, through communications personnel. The speed and accuracy with which the information flows are measures of the agency's ability to respond to the needs of the community.

**TELEPHONE COURTESY**

Telephones will be answered as quickly as possible. Personnel will project a professional image in all telephone conversations. Calls will be answered: "New Haven Public Safety (Operator Number)."

**RADIO OPERATIONS**

- The importance of effective radio communications to efficient police operations cannot be overstated. To ensure radio communications are conducted in a manner consistent with the operational goals of the NHPD, the following general rules concerning radio operation will be followed:
  - All radio transmissions should be brief, concise and strictly related to the pursuit of police activities.
  - Officers shall comply with the instructions of dispatchers unless those instructions are rescinded by a supervisor or pose a safety concern.
  - Courtesy is required between all users of the police radio.
  - Supervisors are to monitor radio communications to ensure rules and regulations are followed and take appropriate action when they are not.
  - Officers and dispatchers should speak in a clear, calm tone when transmitting.
  
- **OFFICER SAFETY**
  - Plainclothes Officers responding to crimes in progress or emergency situations shall advise the dispatcher of their response. The dispatcher shall advise all responding NHPD units of the presence of plainclothes officers on the scene.
  - Whenever an Officer exits their department vehicle, they shall turn their portable radio on. Officers assigned to a bicycle patrol or walking patrol shall have their portable radio on at all times. The radio volume should be loud enough for the Officer to hear radio communications.
  - In the event of radio failure, upon discovery employees shall immediately contact the dispatcher and their immediate supervisor via telephone.
  
- **UNIT IDENTIFICATION**
  - All officers are issued portable radios for their use.
  - Each officer will be issued a unique call sign, as follows:

- Officers assigned to mobile or foot beats will respond to the beat number of their assignment.
  - Patrol Officers on extra-duty assignments will use their shield numbers preceded by the letter "P" as their call sign while on the extra-duty assignment (e.g., P-100).
  - Detectives on extra-duty assignments will use their "I" numbers as their call sign.
  - Post numbers will be issued for certain extra-duty assignments. When post numbers are assigned, Officers will use post numbers as their call sign.
  - Supervisory personnel will use their assigned "L" or "S" numbers.
  - Investigative Services personnel will be assigned "I" numbers.
- **SHIFT START PROCEDURE/RADIO CHECKS**
    - At the beginning of each tour of duty, the shift supervisor shall provide the dispatcher with a list of any changes to the daily detail.
    - Officers shall call the dispatcher on their portable radio for a check of their equipment and to put themselves in service.
    - Officers assigned to extra-duty assignments will be required to contact the dispatcher immediately upon beginning their assignment, by radio, giving their call sign, location and the duration of their assignment. (e.g., Officer: P-100, Dispatcher: P-100, Officer: Extra duty, Gateway Community College, until 2200 hours. Dispatcher: Roger (TIME)).
- **RADIO SIGNALS**
    - During normal operations, all personnel will use NHPD-specific radio codes to facilitate communication. The phonetic alphabet must be used to transmit letters (e.g., A – Alpha, B – Bravo).
    - Plain language is required for multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline events, such as major disasters.

#### **9.02.04 PROCEDURES**

To standardize the format of radio procedures and provide for uniformity and professionalism in radio communications, the following guidelines will be followed with

respect to radio transmissions.

- Dispatchers shall call individual units by announcing their call sign. (e.g., Dispatcher- 100).
- Individual units shall answer the dispatcher by announcing their call sign. (e.g., Officer- 100).
- Individual units shall call the dispatcher by announcing their call sign. (e.g., Officer- 100).
- No transmissions will be initiated without the use of a call sign.
- Except in cases of emergency, units shall call the dispatcher by announcing their call sign and await acknowledgement prior to transmitting any message.
- In an emergency, units shall transmit "99". After the dispatcher has acknowledged the transmission, the Officer shall provide their call sign and other relevant information.
- All other units shall remain off the air until the emergency message is transmitted to and acknowledged by the dispatcher.
- Radio transmissions between units may be conducted without the involvement of the dispatcher.
- All NHPD units should normally function on their main dispatch channels (Channel 2 or Channel 3).
- Any unit leaving these channels shall notify the dispatcher and give the frequency he/she will be operating on.
- The dispatcher shall be advised by the unit when the unit returns to operation on Channel 2 or Channel 3.
- All units shall continuously monitor their radios and shall not interrupt transmissions already in progress except in emergency circumstances as outlined above.
- Long conversations, requests for information, discussions, etc. will be conducted by telephone, whenever possible, or by switching to another radio frequency (e.g., Channel 1 or Scan). If an Officer needs to use their cell phone to call PSAP, they shall contact the Supervisor's line and not contact the dispatcher directly.
- The use of first names, nicknames or other forms of identification not consistent

with the unit identifiers described above is prohibited.

- Officers assigned to mobile patrol shall use vehicle radios in lieu of portable radios when in vehicles.
- Units going out of service for any reason shall notify the dispatcher, giving their location and reason and shall promptly notify the dispatcher upon returning to service.

## **BROADCASTS**

In events involving missing persons or the commission of crimes where descriptive information could aid in locating the missing person or apprehension of suspects, officers shall obtain descriptive information and disseminate that information immediately over the radio.

- Broadcasts shall be confined to descriptive information that is quickly obtainable and would make a wanted/missing person or vehicle readily identifiable including, but not limited to,
  - Race
  - Sex
  - Approximate age
  - Approximate build (e.g., small, average, heavy)
  - Approximate height (e.g., short, average, tall)
  - Any unique characteristics (e.g., beard, deformity, tattoos)
  - Type and color of clothing
  - Method and direction of escape
  - Whether or not armed
  - Make, model and color of vehicle
  - Number of doors on vehicle
  - Vehicle tag number or partial tag number, if available
- If the missing/wanted person is not located, the Officer shall send a message through the Mobile Communications Terminal (MCT) to PSAP with the information to be included in the COLLECT broadcast and then call the PSAP Supervisor. For a missing person complaint, the broadcast needs to be placed into COLLECT within two hours.

## **TRANSMISSIONS PERTAINING TO SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

- Names, addresses, and contact information of victims or witnesses of serious crimes shall not be transmitted over the police radio, if possible. Officers shall use other means to communicate sensitive information including mobile data terminals and Department cellular telephones. Serious crimes are defined as those crimes that cause or threaten serious bodily injury to a person, or that cause a person's death including murder or manslaughter, rape, robbery, and

aggravated assault.

- Intimate details of a sexual assault shall not be transmitted over the radio.

## **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Patrol supervisors are responsible to:

- Monitor the number of Officers responding to a particular scene and call off or re-direct resources, as necessary.
- Ensure that patrol officers are available for service within a reasonable time after arriving at the scene.
- Monitor the radio to address issues of Officer or public safety.

## **PATROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Every Officer is issued a portable radio and will have the radio with them whenever they are on duty including private job assignments.
- All sworn officers are required to carry a portable radio with them while away from their vehicle, unless unusual circumstances exist, or with the approval of a supervisor.
- When going on duty, sworn personnel will be responsible for ensuring that their assigned car and portable radios are functioning properly.
- While many responsibilities are shouldered by the dispatcher, patrol units also have important responsibilities to ensure an effective and efficient communications process. Patrol Officers shall:
  - Keep the dispatcher advised of their activities and status.
  - Monitor their radios and promptly answer the dispatcher or other units when called.
  - Acknowledge calls given to them by the dispatcher.
  - Advise the dispatcher upon arriving at the scene.
  - Upon completion of the investigative phase of a complaint, advise the dispatcher that they are in service.
  - Update dispatcher as to all changes of location (e.g., location for report writing)

- Upon completion of the report, advise the dispatcher that he/she is returning to patrol.

**This supersedes General Order 9.02 – issued on November 16, 2016**

*History: General Orders 74-9, 74-10 and 82-5.*

**This General Order was approved by the civilian Board of Police Commissioners on July 11, 2023.**

 7/11/23

**Chief of Police  
(Signature and Date)**

 7/11/23

**Chair, Board of Police Commissioners  
(Signature and Date)**