


SOG# 501-12	Standard Operating Guideline			
	<h1 style="text-align: center;">Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.</h1>		Approved By	
			Steven W. Parrish, Fire Chief	
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Communications</div>		Effective Date	Revised Date
		November 5, 1991	May 20, 2018	

**Purpose:**

This document will establish guidelines for portable, mobile, and fixed communications regarding emergency and non-emergency incidents. The following covers radio use, repair failures, and daily testing procedures. This policy directs the emergency communications and supporting elements employed by Cumberland County Fire Station 5, Cumberland Road Fire Department Inc.

**II. Definitions:**

- AVL-** Automatic Vehicle Locator
- FFD -** Fayetteville Fire /Emergency Management Department
- FCC -** City of Fayetteville Communications Center (Call sign “City”)
- CCEMS-** Cumberland County Emergency Medical Service
- CCFD-** Cumberland County Fire Department
- CCSO-** Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office
- EOC-** Cumberland County Communications Center (Call sign “Cumberland”)
- FPD-** Fayetteville Police Department
- NCSHP-** North Carolina State Highway Patrol
- PWC-** Public Works Commission
- CAD-** Computer Aided Dispatch
- MCT-** Mobile Computer Terminal
- EMD-** Emergency Medical Dispatch
- EFD-** Emergency Fire Dispatch
- Pro QA Priority Dispatch EFD and EMD Software**
- Talk Group Radio Channel**
- VIPER-** Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders

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**Procedure:**

**Dispatch:**

- The Cumberland County Communications Center or Fayetteville Communications Center will dispatch Fire, Rescue, Hazardous Materials, and Medical Emergencies on the Fire Dispatch Talk group (CFD Dispatch or FFD Dispatch).
- Cumberland Road units will monitor Cumberland County and City of Fayetteville dispatch Talk group at all times.
  1. Upon receipt of dispatch the primary unit will acknowledge by switching their radio to the Fire Ground Talk group (CFD GROUND or FFD GRND), depress the en-route button on the apparatus MCT, verbally check en-route by unit number, and repeat the address to which they are responding.
  2. In a multi-unit response all units responding other than the initial unit will check en-route by only depressing the en-route button on the apparatus MCT. Communication shall be by radio in the event that the MCT is down or not present in the apparatus. If the response is a multi-unit response, Communications will advise the tactical (TAC) channel assignment for the incident. After all units have checked en-route Communications will repeat the Talk group assignment for all responding units. The Company Officer's portable should immediately be set to the TAC channel identified, while the mobile remains selected to the Fire Ground Talk group (CFD GRND or FFD GRND). The TAC channel assigned may be utilized by responding companies for unit-to-unit traffic.
  3. Upon arrival on the scene the first arriving unit will report their arrival on scene by depressing the on-scene button on the apparatus MCT, verbally announcing their arrival on channel (CFD-GRND or FFD GRND), and relaying all pertinent information consistent with the ICS system. After providing the arrival information the unit will then move to the TAC channel assigned. Upon arrival of a multi-unit response all units other than the first arriving unit assuming incident command will check on scene by MCT, and inform the Incident Commander of the unit's arrival on the assigned TAC channel. While on the scene of an emergency the Incident Commander will communicate with the Communications Center on CFD GRND or FFD GRND. This channel has been designated as an information channel and will be continuously monitored by the Communications Center. All benchmark notifications and requests for assistance will be communicated on this channel.
  4. At the completion of an incident the primary unit will terminate command, and check in-service by radio and MCT. Secondary units will check in service by MCT only. The appropriate incident disposition code can be entered and radios switched back to the dispatch channel (CFD DISP or FFD DISP).

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## **Section 2. Radio Talk Group Designations**

- FFD Dispatch (FFD DISP) Primary FFD dispatch channel
- FFD Ground (FFD GRND) Secondary FFD channel to confirm receipt of call and provide arrival info
- TAC Channels (CFD TAC 1-CFD TAC 12) (FFD TAC1 – FFD TAC7) tactical channels for incident operations
- CCFD Dispatch (CFD DIS) Primary CCFD dispatch channel
- CCFD Ground (CFD GRN) Secondary CCFD channel to confirm receipt of call and provide arrival information.
- State VIPER System Dispatch Channel (5 FFDV DIS) FFD radio failure dispatch channel
- State VIPER System Ground Channel (5 FFDV GR) FFD radio failure ground channel

## **Section 3. Storm Plan Implementation**

### **(FOR CITY PURPOSES)**

- During periods of violent weather it is not uncommon for call-loading to quickly exceed the availability of fire units to respond to reported emergencies.
- The primary cause for the increased number of alarms can typically be directly attributed to monitoring systems, which due to a fluctuation in electrical power begin reporting alarm conditions.
- To reduce the demand for service, the Storm Plan will be initiated thus modifying our normal dispatch and response procedures in accordance with the following:
  1. The Storm Plan may be activated by any Chief Officer during a weather event or in the case of CAD being down. The Storm Plan activation shall be formally announced by the Communications Center over the radio on the dispatch channel (FFD DISP). The response to fire alarms will be limited to a single engine/truck company unless there is additional information that would indicate an actual fire. In certain situations, all responses may be limited to a single unit as determined by any Chief Officer.
  2. Units will check available immediately upon assignment completion. Fire units will retrieve incident data directly from the apparatus MCT's. Unit radio traffic shall be limited strictly to situation status updates and requests for additional resources, i.e. PWC, FPD, etc. At the time of dispatch, a TAC channel will be assigned by Communications. Units will ensure that their portable radio is immediately placed on the TAC channel to facilitate direct contact between responding units or with the Incident Commander, if necessary. As call-loading returns to that which is routinely anticipated, a Chief Officer will contact the Communications Center and request to resume normal dispatch procedures. A formal announcement will be made via dispatch channel (FFD DISP) that Communications is resuming normal dispatch and response procedures.


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#### **Section 4. Tactical Talk Group Procedures**

- Internally, Communications will assign a single TAC channel to each incident.
- The Incident Commander, as needed, may request additional TAC channels.
- If necessary, the dispatcher will reassign units to another TAC channel in order to provide the Incident Commander with two (2) TAC channels that are adjacent to one another on the channel position switch.
- The following outlines the procedures when communicating with other agencies such as CCEMS, CCFD, and FFD.
  1. Communications Procedures When Responding with CCEMS, Cumberland Road units responding to assist Cumberland County EMS units on medical emergencies will operate on the channel A3A CFD GRND. Should additional units be requested for an incident, the dispatcher will assign a TAC channel.
  2. Communications Procedures When needing NCSHP, CCSO, or FPD. The unit shall advise the nature of the request if possible and type of response (Routine or Emergency) for the (NCSHP, CCSO, or FPD).
  3. Communications Procedures When Responding with FFD Units responding to assist Fayetteville Fire will operate on the City channels assigned by the dispatcher. The City Communication Center will advise the responding units of the TAC channel assignment. Cumberland Road unit responding, per contractual or automatic aid agreement, shall work within the established incident command system and will therefore operate as any FFD unit on the assigned channel. FFD units responding to assist Cumberland County will operate on the County's channel. The County TAC channel assignment will be conveyed to FFD units at the time of dispatch. When operating on a County channel, City units are not monitored by City Communications. FFD units responding to assist the County will check en-route and on scene on City Fire Channel C3C FFD GRND and County Fire Channel A3A CFD GRN before moving to the County TAC channel.

#### **Section 5. Radio Inventories**

- The following outlines the number of radios each unit shall have which shall be accounted for during daily driver check and weekly inventories.
- In an effort to maintain accountability, any radio missing or needing repair should be reported immediately to the Shift Captain in charge so attempts can be made to locate it or replace it as needed.
  1. Engine companies 511,531,532 will be assigned five portables and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800
  2. Rescue 561 is assigned four portable units and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800.
  3. Squad 571 is assigned two portable units and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800.
  4. Brush 541 is assigned two portable units and two mobile units. One VHF, one 7/800.
  5. Chief Officers are assigned one portable and one mobile. All other officers are assigned one portable unit.

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## **Section 6. Radio Repair Procedures**

- Employees of the fire department shall not tamper or alter the radio in any way, including replacing the antenna with other marketed products designed specifically for use with the unit(s).
- Only employees trained, and approved by the Fire Chief, will make repairs and or adjustment to any communications device assigned to the Fire Department.
- A defective portable radio shall be written up on Aladtec and passed up the chain of command to get repaired or replaced.
- The replacement radio becomes part of the permanent inventory of the unit to which it is assigned.

## **Section 7. “Emergency Button” Situations and Radio Operation**


- This function is to be used in the case of a “Mayday”.
- Each radio is assigned a numeric identifier that appears on the radio console with each transmission.
- In the event an “emergency button” is activated, the identifier at a minimum will identify the unit to which the radio is assigned.
- Radios will not be moved between units, as this procedure will reduce the accuracy in determining which unit has declared an “emergency” either accidentally or intentionally.

### **1. Situations Warranting Activation**

- A fall through a floor or roof of a structure
- A building collapse
- Firefighter lost with no line or direction out
- Firefighter trapped by debris or entangled/stuck in an unknown object
- An activation low air alarm and/or an activated PASS device from an unaccounted firefighter/fire officer inside an IDLH atmosphere
- A volatile situation where immediate police assistance is needed

### **2. “Emergency Button” Activations**

- Upon activation of the emergency button, a signal is sent to the communications center identifying the unit in which the signal originated.
- This signal is sent only if the emergency button is activated on channels identified as FFD DISP, FFD GRND, or any of the CFD channels. (Cumberland County EOC monitors DISP, GRND, and TAC channels for all county related emergencies.).

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- Having encountered an emergency condition the user depresses the orange button, located on the top of the radio, to dispatch the emergency signal.
- At the time of activation the user’s radio is automatically routed to the 911 HELP channel.
- The dispatcher, upon receiving the emergency signal, will attempt to contact the radio from which the signal originated via the same channel.
- The dispatcher, having received the emergency signal, will attempt to verify the existence of an actual emergency condition.
- The dispatcher will then respond to the signal by announcing the unit number and inquiring as to the existence of an actual emergency.

### 3. Accidental “Emergency Button” Activations

- If the emergency button is accidentally activated, the user should state their unit and the phrase accidental activation. Example: “Engine 1, negative accidental activation”.
- If the attempt by the dispatcher to make contact is not acknowledged and the unit is on a call, the dispatcher will contact a Chief Officer by radio and dispatch a FPD or CCSO unit to the unit’s location via AVL status.
- To reset the “emergency button” the operator should depress the orange button on top of the radio for approximately 2 seconds until a medium pitched tone sounds, followed by releasing the button, or by turning the radio off for 5 seconds and then turning the radio back on. This process resets the radio to a state of normalcy.

## **Section 8. Radio Failure Procedures (Fail Soft and Complete System Failure)**

- When the 800 MHz system enters into the “Fail-Soft” mode a total of two (2) Talk groups are available to the Fire Department. Radio traffic on C2C FFD DISP and C3C FFD GRND will remain as normal; i.e., units will be dispatched on FFD DISP, and will then communicate with the dispatcher on FFD GRND while en-route and on-scene (for city related calls). The portable radio display screen will flash the word “fail-soft” intermittently and the radio will “beep” every twenty (20) seconds. The “emergency button” is not operational.
- Complete System Failure (NPS) in the event the total capability of the system is lost, the contingency plan involves the use of predestinated channels. Communications staff will notify Cumberland Road Fire Department by land line of the situation and enable rip and run within CAD. CRFD units will switch over to the State Viper System. Dispatch channel (5 FFDV DISP) will be utilized for dispatch and ground channel (5 FFDV GRD) for unit responses. Viper TAC channels will be assigned by Cumberland County EOC. City Communications will operate on the mobile and portable Viper radio assigned to the center.

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## **Section 9. Communications Testing Procedures**

- The purpose of this procedure is to establish a schedule and define the procedures for the testing of telephone circuits and radio equipment for the Cumberland Road Fire Department. For purposes of operational efficiency, all telephone and radio dispatch circuits shall be tested daily. During radio testing, do not break traffic unless it is for a true emergency situation.

### **1. Dispatch and Ground Channel(s) Test**

- The City Communications Center will conduct a radio/phone check daily at 0730 hrs. The test will include all FFD stations and contract stations. Any issues relating to modulation or stations not answering the test should be keyed in the notes section of the open test call. The City Communications Center will contact the on-duty Chief Officer for any emergency issues involving radios, fire phones, or audible notification systems so they can facilitate repair. This should also be added in the notes section of the call indicating who was contacted and what issues were noted.
- The County Communications Center will conduct a radio check daily at 0830 hrs. The test will include all Cumberland County Fire Departments. This test is conducted on the VHF (Fire Channel 1) CFD DISP and CFD GROUND.

### **2. VIPER Channel(s) Test**

- The CITY Communications Center will conduct a test of the backup radio system (VIPER) every Monday morning at 0730 hrs. The test will include all FFD stations and contract stations. The test will begin with testing of VIPER dispatch and ground channels followed by testing of normal operating channels. Any issues relating to modulation or stations not answering the test should be keyed in the notes section of the open test call. The Communications Center will contact the on-duty Chief Officer for any emergency issues involving radios, fire phones, or audible notification systems so they can facilitate repair. This should be also be added in the notes section of the call indicating who was contacted and what issues were noted.

### **3. Phone Test**

- The CITY Communication Center Each will conduct a phone line test follow the radio test.



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**4. Test Interruption**

- If radio/phone testing is interrupted by an emergency dispatch, the test will be suspended until clearance to proceed with test is received by units in the field. Once the test resumes, the units assigned to the incident(s) will not be included in the test. The test may be delayed longer, if in the opinion of the incident commander, it will cause interference to those units working the incident.

**Responsibilities:**

It shall be the responsibility of each member of the department and supervisors to ensure that the provisions of this standard are followed.