

# Lincoln County Fire and Rescue Association

## Standard Operating Guideline (SOG)

Effective Date: May 1, 2012

Adopted Date: May 1, 2012

**Number:** 113

**Title:** Fire Dispatch Guidelines

**Purpose:** To provide an overview of communications guidelines for fire and rescue departments.

### 1. Radio Etiquette

- All Radio users shall comply with all pertinent FCC regulations contained in Title 47 Part 90 for private Land Mobile Radio service.
- Only one chief officer shall check enroute to the scene.
- No privately owned radios are authorized to be used on any Lincoln County radio channel without written permission by Lincoln County Fire Marshal and Communications Director.
- Any updates from field operations to additional responding units can be done on the dispatch channel of the agency it affects. (Example: patient care reports )
- Fire / Rescue departments will clear incidents from their respective dispatch channel. If multiple units remain on scene, one unit will clear the remaining units at conclusion of the incident.
- All Fire/Rescue agencies shall use plain speech/plain text while operating on any Lincoln County Radio Channels.
- CIIS (Criminal Information and Identification section) policy prohibits the release of any vehicle or person information to anyone other than law enforcement. Example, tags and drivers license information.
- All units will address communications as FIRE CENTER on fire channels and CMED on EMS channels.
- All units/ apparatus should call communications as; (Engine 30 to Fire Center)
- In an effort to minimize radio traffic, all departments need to limit the request for ETAS of agencies response times to incidents (SHP, Utility Companies)

### 2. Re-Tone: All Fire Departments will be re-toned 4 minutes after initial dispatch.

- Re-tones will be for all fire, rescue, and echo level medical incidents to all Fire Departments, i.e. fire related calls, vehicle accidents, and rescue related calls.
- Fire departments will not be re-toned for medical calls.

All rescue squads will be re-toned for rescue and echo level medical incidents, i.e. vehicle accidents and rescue related calls.

### 3 Tactical Channels

- Communications will prompt responding departments to the appropriate Tactical Channel
- Fire Ground channels can be utilized for training.  
A telecommunicator will determine which channels are available for training usage at the time requested.

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### 4. Fire Dispatch Cadence

- On initial dispatches give only basic response information.
- Identify dispatch as coming from Fire Center
- Address the Station(s) to respond.
- Give Nature Code of call.
- Give Address of call.
- Give cross streets
- Repeat information.
- After one unit has checked enroute or a re-tone has occurred give additional information as to specific location, hazards, scene safety issues or other information.
- Some of the fire departments in the county have substations for better coverage response. If the substation is included in the initial dispatch, address it as such.
  - i.e. "Fire Center, attention Station 1 Base 3, respond...."

### 5. Mutual Aid Responses Out of County

- Fire/ Rescue departments will check enroute, on scene and clear with Lincoln County Communications on all out of county responses on their primary dispatch channel.
- All other radio communications will be handled on the channel assigned by the requesting county.
- Units shall limit radio traffic on the Lincoln County dispatch channels when operating outside the county.

Note - Efforts should be made within each individual department to have available any frequencies, talk groups, or special equipment needed to communicate with any outside agencies that they normally operate with. In such cases where there are large scale, multi-jurisdictional incidents and communications may be inhibited due to lack of interoperability Lincoln Communications should be contacted by the responding departments highest ranking officer on scene or en-route to the incident to request possible assistance.

### 6. Fire / Rescue Announcements And WENS INFO

#### A. County Wide Announcements

- a. *A Fire or Rescue department officer, the Fire Marshal, or an officer of the Fire/Rescue Association can request a county wide announcement. These announcements should be for informational purposes such as:*
  - i. *Association meetings*
  - ii. *Trainings involving more than one department*
  - iii. *Special events*

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Fire/Rescue departments have been given access to the WENS (wireless Emergency Notification Alert System) system for the ability to alpha pages their members. This system should be utilized in house for department's functions and paging of specific members.

Lincoln Communications will announce events that will impacts specific or multiple department /squads such as:

- Utility Emergencies
- Road closures
- Severe weather

**B. Funeral Announcements** – The information shall be provided via fax or email to communications staff with the pertinent obituary information as soon as possible, so that the announcement can be made at least once per day over two day period prior to the service.

- Must be an active or retired Fire/Rescue member or an immediate family member. An immediate family member is defined as:
- Father
- Mother
- Step mother
- Step father
- Brother
- Sister
- Step Brother
- Step Sister
- Grandfather
- Grandmother
- Communications will broadcast a funeral announcement once we receive the information.

**C. Last Call** - Last call- Communications will make every effort to conduct a last call for service members, however due to high call volume and radio traffic the procedure could be delayed.

The last call procedure will be conducted as follows:

- FIRE CENTER TO DEPARTMENT NAME , NO CALL
- SET OFF PAGER TONE
- ALERT TONE (A3)
- FIRE CENTER CALLING “DEPARTMENT NAME MEMBER BADGE NUMBER” (EXAMPLE CROUSE MEMBER 899)
- PAUSE 3 SECONDS
- FIRE CENTER CALLING “DEPARTMENT NAME MEMBER BADGE NUMBER “ (EXAMPLE CROUSE MEMBER 899)
- PAUSE 3 SECONDS
- LAST CALL, FIRE CENTER CALLING “DEPARTMENT NAME MEMBER BADGE NUMBER” (EXAMPLE CROUSE MEMBER 899) MEMBER NAME
- PAUSE 3 SECONDS
- NO CONTACT WITH CROUSE MEMBER 899 JOHN DOE August 31, 2011 @ xx: xx HRS.
- FIRE CENTER CLEAR @ xx:xx, WPKN711

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### **7. Agency Notifications**

1. Building Inspector- When a Fire Dept on scene request a Building Inspector to respond, a name and contact number should be provided by Incident Command. This will alleviate non essential callouts by establishing communication between the IC and the Inspector.
2. Red Cross-When Incident Command requests Red Cross to a scene the incident commander shall provide communications with a contact number. This will allow communications between the Red Cross and IC to be established so all needed information can be relayed.
3. NCDOT- Command should relay exactly what resources are needed and where they should report

### **8. Mobile Communications Unit:**

**This unit is utilized for emergency communications back up and will respond to all multi agency incidents. All county agencies and departments may utilize this unit for on scene support or training evolutions.**

- a. If requested by any agency, or Incident Command.
  - All requests shall go through Lincoln county E911 communications center
  - Scheduled events should be coordinated through the Communications Operations Manager.
  - The requesting agency should provide the following information, contact person and type of incident if not predetermined
- b. Auto dispatched
  - All search and rescue incidents
  - All multi agency incidents

### **9. Radio Numbering System for Fire/ Rescue Departments**

#### **a. Numbering Formula for Personnel:**

- Chief Number + 20 - Chief
- Officer Number + 21 - +30 = officers
- Members numbering +30-+99 = Members
- Apparatus – This is determined by individual departments. The apparatus number cannot be duplicated (if representing the same type apparatus) nor can it be currently used throughout the county
- Example Station 1

Engine 10  
Rescue 10  
Car 10

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### b. Lincolnton Fire Dept:

- Car 1: Chief
- Car 3: Captain (On Duty )
- Car 4: Fire Marshal
- Car 5-8 (Off Duty Captain's)
- Car 9 (Volunteer Captain)

### **10. Radio System failure**

In the event of a catastrophic failure of all or part of the communications system that renders the fire or EMS channels inoperable the on duty shift supervisor or senior telecommunicator shall notify the predetermined officer list for each fire and rescue agency via the WENS system. It shall be the responsibility of the officers of those agencies to ensure that their stations are adequately staffed to handle calls for service. The communications center will establish contact with these agencies via telephone, cell phone, WENS, VIPER, or any means necessary to facilitate notification of calls for service.

Once the radio system is repaired, tested, and operable the communications center will activate an ALL CALL tone in addition to the rescue departments' tones to advise that normal communication via the radio system can resume.

### **11. EFD Nature codes**

The Lincoln county communications (E-9-1-1) Center follows the Fire Priority Dispatch system (FPDS). A unified system for fire dispatching , which includes a Case Entry Protocol, Chief Complaint Protocol, Prioritized determinant Code, Post Dispatch Instructions, Pre-Arrival Instructions, and a Case Exit protocol. This system is maintained by NAED.

### **12. Cancellations or slowing of responding units:**

- Communications staff will accept no liability when relaying cancellations or slowing of units from emergency service agencies.
- Communications must assume that a competent individual has made the determination to slow or cancel another agency's response.
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### **13. Landing Zone Set Up – incidents where a landing zone has been requested by EMS operations.**

- a. Only EMS Personnel or the EMS supervisor can request a response for Air transport at any incident.
- b. Fire/Rescue agencies may request availability of Air Transport or have them put on standby. The request will be relayed to the responding EMS units.
- c. The primary fire department will be dispatched for the area, if they are currently on the scene, a mutual aid department will be sent to handle the landing zone.
- d. Communications staff will provide preliminary coordinates to the Air Transport Agency based on the geographic area of the incident. The LZ command should update the coordinates with communications once established.

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- e. It shall be the responsibility of the fire agency to determine a safe landing zone and remain in control of the LZ for the duration of the incident.
- f. All landing zone communications shall be handled on EMS Channel 2 (155.160)
- g. Although not always feasible, predetermined landing zones can save time and confusion during an emergency call. Fire Departments should make every effort to predetermine suitable day and night landing zones in their respective districts and share this information not only with Communications (for the input of these into CAD) but with their mutual aid departments to allow for familiarity with these areas when called in to assist.

### **Lincoln County Communications Weather Guideline**

It shall be the policy of the Lincoln County Communications Center in efforts to promote the safety of all emergency services workers to announce certain severe weather incidents in a manner to make all field units aware. Severe weather announcements will include but may not be limited to; severe thunderstorm warnings, tornado warnings, and flash flood warnings.

Warnings and alerts that are relayed to field units shall come from the National Weather Service via the weather alert radio, DCI traffic, NC FIRST email service, or other means available to the NWS. When such an alert or warning is received the Shift Supervisors shall make the determination of when is an appropriate time to relay the information to all field units via radio communications but should be done as soon as possible to allow for the most effective warning time.

#### **Procedure for alerting field units:**

- An appropriate time when radio traffic is at a minimum is to be chosen
- The ETC shall simulcast on all dispatch channels.
- If the warning affects the entire county then an all call page for FIRE shall be set off along with WLRS and LRS tones prior to making the announcement.
- If the warning only affects a portion of the county then the ETC shall only set off the appropriate all call (east, central, or west) and the appropriate rescue tone.
- A 3 second burst of A1 alert tone shall be given out prior to the warning.
- The warning shall be given out in the most precise manner possible but giving all appropriate information. The warning shall be repeated once and then the channels cleared.

In an effort to keep the FIRE channel clear as possible it shall be the policy of all fire departments to use the 800 MHz VIPER system to relay weather information (10-13) to each other, to emergency management, and to the Communications Center. The Communications Center shall monitor the 800 MHz consulate located at Console 2 as radio and phone traffic will allow. The VIPER system shall not be used to dispatch calls for service.

NC DOT, all fire departments, EMS, Rescue have access to OpsCAD at their respective bases. It shall be the policy of NC DOT and fire departments to monitor OpsCAD during high volume storm events for non priority calls such as but not limited to; trees down in a roadway. These agencies shall keep up with their own times and report to the communications center, after the weather event, that these calls have been completed. At that time the communications center shall issue report numbers and clear the calls.

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### **Dispatch of Priority Calls for FIRE**

- The CAD system shall be programmed with priority numbers of 5-P (P being highest priority) and shall "stack" calls in the appropriate order in the Open Calls window. ETC's shall use this priority order when dispatching to ensure that sufficient resources are available for life threatening events. Examples of such events are as follows:
  - Persons trapped in a collapsed structure
  - Active Fires (Structural and non-structural)
  - EMS calls

### **Dispatch of Calls for all other Agencies**

- All other agency's calls for service shall be dispatched as normal as to ensure prompt service for the citizens of Lincoln County
- If necessary the Shift Supervisor shall make an announcement to all field units to hold all non-emergency and non-call for service related traffic. This shall include but is not limited to; running tags, warrant checks, EMS moves, etc.
- Once the event has moved out of our area the Shift Supervisor make an announcement that normal traffic can resume.

It is important to remember that just because severe weather is moving through the county the "normal" 9-1-1 calls do not stop. Every effort must be made to continue to answer the 9-1-1 lines as quickly as possible. The supervisor on duty has the obligation to ensure that adequate staffing is available for the increase in call volume.

### **Notification of Communications Administrative Staff**

- It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor on duty to notify the Operations Manager when it is determined that severe weather will impact Lincoln County in such a way as to alter the daily operations of the Communications Center (i.e. High volume, possible loss of power, etc.)
- It shall be the responsibility of the Operations Manager to determine if the Director and/or Coordinator should be notified.
- If the event is severe enough to warrant the notification of the Director, Emergency Management shall also be notified.