

Field Radio System Use

I. PURPOSE

This directive establishes Federal Protective Service (FPS) field radio system use policy and prescribes guidelines for uniform operating procedures.

II. SCOPE

- A. This directive applies to all FPS radio system users.
- B. FPS Directive 15.5.1.1 rev. 1, "Field Radio System Use," issued January 11, 2013 and any other FPS field radio use standard operating procedures and memoranda are superseded.

III. AUTHORITIES/REFERENCES

- A. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Sensitive Systems Policy Directive 4300A, Attachment Q3: "Sensitive Wireless Tactical Systems," Version 13.1, July 27, 2017.
- B. FPS Directive 15.11.6.1 rev. 1, "*Field Training and Evaluation Program*," September 27, 2017.
- C. FPS Directive 15.6.2.3, "*Detention and Arrest*," February 9, 2012.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Call Signs.** A combination of letters or numbers which identifies a specific individual.
- B. **Custodial Transport Situation.** When an FPS Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) transports a prisoner after an arrest or detention. Issuing a U.S. District Court Violation Notice and releasing the subject without transportation is not considered a custodial transport.
- C. **Duty Roster.** A list showing the work status and assignments of officers. The list is normally updated as needed.
- D. **Emergency Traffic.** A message transmitted by an officer who has a situation involving an immediate danger to life or safety.
- E. **MegaCenters.** Technologically advanced alarm monitoring dispatch control centers which support FPS mission achievement for Federal facilities nationwide.
- F. **Mobile Radio.** A two-way radio mounted in a vehicle that transmits at a power above 5 watts. When unsure of a radio's power, all radios mounted in vehicles will be considered mobile radios, including portable radios mounted to the vehicle using a converter.
- G. **Officer Needs Assistance.** An emergency request indicating an officer is in distress and requires immediate assistance. This term describes an emergency situation where there is a direct and immediate threat to the Officer. It is not to be used for situations that require more routine assistance, such as requesting a supervisor, back-up when not in immediate distress or additional

officers needed for motor vehicle accidents or demonstrations.

- H. **Operational Personnel.** Regional Supervisors, Inspectors, Officers, Special Agents, and Protective Security Officers (PSOs).
- I. **Portable Radio.** A hand-held radio that transmits at a power of 5 watts or less.
- J. **Position Designators.** Letters or phonetics used in a call sign to define a specific position.
- K. **Regional Supervisors.** Regional Directors (RDs), Deputy Regional Directors (DRDs), District Commanders (DCs), and Area Commanders (ACs).
- L. **Restricted Air.** A radio condition during which routine transmissions are not permitted, except by those directly involved with a particular incident or others with emergency traffic.
- M. **Sensitive Information.** Information intended for the officer, which if overheard by an unauthorized person could jeopardize officer safety or the integrity of law enforcement investigations.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **Assistant Director for Operations** ensures compliance with DHS directives pertaining to protection of sensitive information.
- B. **Deputy Director for Training and Professional Development (DD TPD)** ensures procedures outlined in this directive are included in the new LEOs basic training programs.
- C. **MegaCenter Managers and Staff:**
 - 1. Maintain the current master list of call signs;
 - 2. Track the status and location of all LEOs; and
 - 3. Support law enforcement operations through efficient and effective radio system operations.
- D. **Law Enforcement Operations Branch** assigns call signs for HQ personnel.
- E. **Regional Directors (RDs) and Headquarter (HQ) Division Directors:**
 - 1. Ensure that field radio protocols are followed within the Region and HQ; and
 - 2. Assign call signs to radio users (RDs Only).
- F. **Supervisors** ensure:
 - 1. The proper use of radio equipment by operational personnel under their supervision; and
 - 2. That all radio users have the necessary radio equipment to perform their job.
- G. **Operational Personnel and HQ Radio Users:**
 - 1. Test their radio and all associated equipment daily to ensure full functioning capability;
 - 2. Report damage or malfunction to the responsible supervisor as soon as possible; and
 - 3. Be accountable for assigned radio equipment.
- H. The **Contracting Officer's Representative (CORs):**
 - 1. When applicable, provide a list of government provided property and equipment (to include

radios and applicable quantities) with the purchase request package to the FPS Acquisition Division;

2. Ensures all government provided radios are properly accounted for in the Property Management System and upon completion of the contract, oversee the return or disposal of all government provided radios;
3. Administer government provided radios in accordance with the applicable clauses and provisions within the contract; and
4. Ensure PSO post orders include proper radio procedures when applicable.

VI. POLICY AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. Radios shall be carried and monitored by all operational personnel when on duty and assigned to the field unless there is an operational requirement that precludes carrying a radio.
- B. FPS operates a dispatcher-controlled radio network. All communications shall be to and from the assigned MegaCenter until the dispatcher grants permission for field units to communicate directly with each other. The dispatcher is not authorized to deny unit-to-unit communication but may direct the timing and/or channel assignment for such unit-to-unit communication to ensure radio network accountability. Nothing in this section shall be construed as to limit a LEO's use of the radio in emergency situations related to life safety.
- C. Use of the radio shall be restricted to official, relevant, mission-related messages with all messages being as brief and concise as possible.
- D. Information involving deployment of personnel and status of incidents may occasionally have to be transmitted by means other than the radio. These situations should be managed to ensure personnel in the field maintain situational awareness. When they do occur, information will be re-broadcast over the air by the MegaCenter, or the originating or receiving party, as soon as possible.
- E. All transmissions shall be communicated in plain language. Using standard or common terminology is essential to ensure efficient and clear communications. FPS requires the use of common terminology, including standard names for facilities and communication without the use of codes or jargon.
- F. PSOs' use of FPS radios shall be authorized if included as a contract requirement and necessary for the efficient operation of FPS. Radio usage procedures consistent with this directive shall be included in post orders.
- G. **Basic Radio Requirements**

1. Call Signs

- a. Call signs for regional personnel shall be assigned by the RDs or their designees and forwarded to the responsible MegaCenter as follows:

1)

2)

(b)(7)(E)

3) For GS-13s and above,

(b)(7)(E)

4) For GS-12s and below,

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

Example:

If the call sign for a Police Officer/Inspector in Region 11 is

(b)(7)(E)

5) For Criminal Investigators GS-13s and above

(b)(7)(E)

6) For PSOs, call signs are assigned by the RD or designee. The

b. Call signs for HQ personnel are assigned by the Law Enforcement Operations Branch and forwarded to the responsible MegaCenter as follows:

1)

2)

(b)(7)(E)

3) The FPS Executive Leadership Team members are assigned

(b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

4) GS-15s and GS-14s are assigned

(b)(7)(E)

5) GS-13s and below are assigned

(b)(7)(E)

2. **Testing (Transmission Check) Portable and Mobile Radio**

- a. Turn radio on and set volume level (See Attachments B and C for Mobile and Portable Quick Reference Guides containing radio control schematic diagrams).
- b. Turn Channel Selector knob to the desired channel.
- c. Press Push to Talk (PTT) and speak clearly with mouth about 1 to 2 inches away the from microphone.

- d. Units initiate a radio test by calling out their call sign and awaiting a response from the MegaCenter. It is not necessary to add "to the MegaCenter" when announcing your call sign.

Example:

Unit: (b)(7)(E)

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) go ahead."

Unit: (b)(7)(E) radio check."

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) read you loud and clear."

- e. Release PTT to listen.

3. **Radio Conduct and Use**

- a. Personnel shall speak distinctly, concisely, and accurately when transmitting information. When a lengthy message is transmitted, the word "break," shall be transmitted and the microphone unkeyed at natural breaks in the message so any unit with an emergency message may transmit.
- b. The recipient of a message shall acknowledge receipt of the message with "copy" or "received."
- f. Unit location shall be given when receiving an assignment and acknowledging the message. During FPS MegaCenter radio checks, units shall transmit their status and location. Status shall be classified as (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

Example:

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) respond to 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, for a disorderly subject in the lobby."

Field Unit: (b)(7)(E) copy from H and North Capitol Streets."

4. **Terms and Practices**

- a. PROHIBITED terms and practices:
- 1) "Copy?" or "How copy?" following a transmission.
 - 2) 10 codes (b)(7)(E) meaning "okay" or "received."
 - 3) "Mega" as a term for the MegaCenter.
 - 4) "Control" as a term for the MegaCenter.
 - 5) Citizens band radio terms and jargon.
 - 6) Curse and slang words.
 - 7) Humor or facetiousness remarks.
 - 8) Discourtesy, sarcasm, or venting of animosities even in voice inflections or modulation.

- b. PREFERRED terms and practices:
- 1) "SMC" = Suitland MegaCenter.
 - 2) "PMC" = Philadelphia MegaCenter.
 - 3) "BMC" = Battle Creek MegaCenter.
 - 4) "DMC" = Denver MegaCenter.
 - 5) "License check" = check of motor vehicle operator's license information.
 - 6) "Registration check" = check for motor vehicle registration information.
 - 7) "Wanted check" = check for wants, warrants, and/or stolen information on a person or property.
 - 8) "Officer needs assistance" = priority request to assist an officer in distress.
 - 9) Use the Police Phonetic Alphabet (see Attachment D).

5. **Radio Transmissions**

- a. (b)(7)(E) for all radio communications, when available.
- b. Since FPS operates a dispatcher-controlled network, all transmissions are directed to the receiving MegaCenter. Units initiate a radio transmission by calling out their call sign and awaiting a response from the MegaCenter. It is not necessary to add "to the MegaCenter" when announcing your call sign.

Example:

Unit: (b)(7)(E)

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) go ahead."

- c. The MegaCenter initiates a transmission by calling out the unit call sign to which they are transmitting.

Example:

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E)

Unit: (b)(7)(E) or "This is (b)(7)(E) go-ahead."

- d. To communicate directly with another unit, units request permission from the MegaCenter.

Example:

Unit: (b)(7)(E) permission to go direct with (b)(7)(E)

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) go direct with (b)(7)(E)

- e. Direct transmissions shall be kept brief or placed on an alternate channel by the dispatcher, when available.
- f. All transmissions shall reference either an address or a building name, not the

building number.

- g. Personnel will use the portable or mobile radio in all areas that have communication with the MegaCenter. Only in those situations and areas where there is poor or no reception that impedes the use of the portable or mobile radio, personnel should call the MegaCenter by phone.
- h. If a LEO becomes unavailable for calls, they must notify the MegaCenter of their status both when going out of service, and when becoming available again.
- i. When a MegaCenter needs to provide sensitive information to a LEO, the MegaCenter will ask the LEO, "Is your radio secure?" The sensitive information will be transmitted only when the LEO replies affirmatively. This method will be utilized for transmission of any sensitive information about a subject with whom the officer is in contact.
- j. If the MegaCenter has not communicated with an on-duty LEO for an unexpected period, the MegaCenter may initiate a status check. Although the exact interval of time that triggers a status check will depend on the totality of circumstances, this interval generally should not exceed 10-15 minutes.
- k. LEOs shall periodically advise the MegaCenter of their location and each time a location is changed, so that the dispatcher will have a recent last known location if the duress button is pressed.
- l. The MegaCenter will perform roll calls (status checks), as needed.
- m. LEOs requesting National Crime Information Center (NCIC) checks must ask for the specific checks they are requesting (e.g., wanted or criminal history).

(b)(7)(E)

6. Duty Rosters

- a. For areas that routinely have 10 or more on-duty operational LEOs, ACs (or their designees) shall e-mail the duty roster (see Attachment E) for all LEOs to the servicing MegaCenter mailbox no later than 60 minutes prior to the start of the shift. The information shall include the officers' ON/OFF Duty status and assignment. Investigations Branch staff may include their information with the uniformed LEOs or separately.
- b. ACs may develop predefined patrol areas. Predefined patrol areas must be coordinated prior to use with the responsible MegaCenter, which includes providing a detailed description of the physical boundaries of the patrol area and a list of buildings located within that boundary.

7. Status and Location Tracking

- a. MegaCenters track the status and location of all LEOs to ensure the most effective utilization of resources, response to incidents and enhancement of officer safety.
- b. LEOs notify their servicing MegaCenter by radio or phone (only if poor reception impedes with the use of the radio) whenever a change in status or location occurs throughout their tour of duty.

- c. LEOs who are provided with Home-to-Work (HtW) transportation shall check "on the air" or "off the air" by radio or phone (only if poor reception impedes with the use of the radio) with their location when beginning and ending any travel that does not fall within their official tour of duty.

B. Situational Practices

1. Restricted Air

Any unit performing a command function may request to restrict radio communications when required by a particular incident. Once "restricted air" is announced by the dispatcher, only LEOs involved in the designated incident may use the system to communicate. LEOs not involved in the incident shall restrict radio communications to emergency traffic only. Once "restricted air" is lifted by the commanding officer on scene, the MegaCenter announces that all units may resume normal radio operations.

2. Emergency Traffic

- a. An officer may declare "emergency traffic" when faced with a life safety threat.
- b. The MegaCenter shall advise all units to stand by while the emergency traffic is communicated.

Example:

Officer: (b)(7)(E) emergency traffic."

MegaCenter: (b)(7)(E) go ahead with your emergency traffic."

3. Emergency Duress Button Activation or Officer Needs Assistance

- a. Emergency Duress Button activations are received by the MegaCenters. The MegaCenter will take measures to check the status of the officer, and if needed restrict the air, and attempt to locate the officer.
- b. An "officer needs assistance" call indicates an officer in distress. An officer who needs immediate assistance shall broadcast "officer needs assistance" and give his/her location.
- c. "Restricted Air" will be implemented by the MegaCenter.
- d. All available units in the area respond immediately with emergency equipment activated and transmit their unit number and location to the MegaCenter.
- e. If no FPS units are nearby, the MegaCenter will notify the local police department and maintain restricted air until the incident is resolved.
- f. If an officer inadvertently presses the emergency duress button on their portable radio, they will immediately notify the MegaCenter that they are not in duress.

4. Communicating with Dispatch before Acting for Officer Safety

- a. Whenever possible, personnel will notify the dispatcher of situations prior to acting. If a vehicle stop is conducted, provide the following information before leaving the patrol vehicle: location of the stop, vehicle registration information, vehicle

description, number of vehicle occupants, and reason for the stop.

- b. Prior to questioning suspicious persons, provide the location and a brief physical description of the subject.
- c. During a custodial transport situation, the LEO will advise dispatch when the subject is in custody and the type of initial offense, as soon as conditions permit a safe transmission. Starting and ending mileage, as well as location(s), should be reported to the MegaCenter.
- d. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a radio transmission prior to taking police action if doing so is not feasible or deemed unnecessary by the officer.

5. Explosive Devices

- a. In the event of a suspected explosive device, the MegaCenter shall broadcast a general message advising personnel in the field of the incident.
- b. After the transmission is completed, the incident commander/senior officer outside of the suspected device area acknowledges that the announcement was received.

c.

(b)(7)(E)

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Position Signifiers
- B. Mobile Radio Quick Reference Card
- C. Portable Radio Quick Reference Guide
- D. Police Phonetic Alphabet
- E. Uniform Operations Duty Assignment

VIII. QUESTIONS

Address any questions or concerns regarding this directive to the Directives Manager, at FPSpolicy@fps.dhs.gov.



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Date