



POLICY & PROCEDURE

ELKHART LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES**

NUMBER: 9.01

SCOPE: All Department Personnel

ISSUED: 06/01/2015

DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedure Manual

EFFECTIVE: 07/15/2015

REFERENCE:

RESCINDS

AMENDS

WILEAG 4TH EDITION

STANDARDS: N/A

INDEX AS: Communications Procedures
Radio Traffic Conduct & Etiquette
Telephone Conduct & Etiquette

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Policy & Procedure is to provide guidance to Elkhart Lake Police Department employees for radio traffic and telephone conduct.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

I. POLICY

II. PROCEDURE

I. POLICY

A. It is the policy of the Elkhart Lake Police Department that all employees conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner when communicating with each other, other agencies or businesses, and the general public when using the radio system or telephone system.

II. PROCEDURE (WILEAG CORE 28-9.1.10)

A. The communications process is for the Elkhart Lake Police Department is contracted through the Sheboygan County Dispatch Center (SCDC).

The SCDC provides 24-hour service including; toll-free access for emergency calls, continuous dispatch services to-and-from field officers as well as all personnel on duty, CAD services, resource availability, immediate playback capability, criminal justice information systems, inter-jurisdictional communications, misdirected emergency calls, private security alarms, and first aid instruction.

B. Radio Traffic Conduct. Radio traffic shall:

1. Be Brief on conversation.
2. Engage in radio conversation that pertains only to official business.
3. Maintain radio system discipline.
4. Commentary:

Radio traffic shall be responsible, efficient and courteous. Department members engaged in radio traffic should exercise extreme courtesy and extend maximum consideration, understanding and cooperation to both the public and the members of the Department.

They must recognize that in many cases they will be the first and, in some instances, the only police contact by many citizens and that good or bad impressions thus gained will influence the attitude of the citizens toward the police.

B. General Radio Traffic Procedures. The following procedures are applicable to radio users:

1. All radios will be on and only "muted" when the operator is communicating.
2. The user should always keep calm. If the user is more excited than the caller, he/she will not be of much help.
3. The user shall not tell people that their calls are being recorded.
4. The user should give the squad units accurate and complete information when sending them on a call.

C. Radio Etiquette.

1. All officers of this Department shall become acquainted with correct radio operation and procedures.
2. All officers, when using the radio, shall speak in a loud and clear voice so the operator and other units can understand the officer the first time without repeating the message again.

All radio conversations shall be limited to law enforcement business only. At no time shall an officer use insulting language or conduct business via the radio. Further, officers shall not make derogatory remarks about complaints, citizens or fellow employees.

3. Officers should realize that their radios are constantly being monitored by citizens of the community and shall be guided accordingly in their conversations. Recorded tapes, if available, will be monitored periodically to see if officers use proper procedures.
4. Officers shall not use the police radio except for official police communications. At no time shall an officer use discourteous, obscene or disrespectful language during the transmission of a radio message.
5. Officers shall keep their radios turned on and tuned to the Sheboygan Sheriff Main channel unless instructed otherwise or if on a special assignment. Before an officer leaves his/her vehicle, he/she shall give his/her location where he/she can be reached, which shall be acknowledged by the 911 Center (this may be substituted using the laptop).
6. Whenever an assignment is completed, officers shall use the proper code word.

D. Radio Communications for Entry and Exiting Squads.

1. Officers will report to the 911 Center every time that they enter and leave their squad car. Officers will be in radio contact with the 911 Center at all times while on duty. Officers will check out of the squad car utilizing radio and/or laptop communications when they enter the office and check back into the squad car when they leave the office. Officers on special assignment may be exempt from this Section upon approval of their supervisor.

E. Telephone Procedures.

1. The telephone system within the Department is to be used primarily for business calls.
2. Local calls of a personal nature are not forbidden, however they should be limited in numbers and duration.
4. Answering of Telephone Calls.
 - a) All incoming calls to the Department should be answered in the following manner:
 - (1) "Elkhart Lake Police Department".
 - (2) Following then with all sworn personnel giving their title and name; all non-sworn personnel need only give their first name.

- b) Be polite and use “Sir” and Ma’am”.
 - c) If the caller is to be transferred, ask for their name “May I please ask who is calling”. Then announce the call to the person it is directed to and then transfer it.
 - d) If the person requested is not available for calls, advise the caller and ask if there is a message to be left.
5. Long Distance Calls.
- a) All persons making long distance calls are to use the designated exchange (line).
 - b) All long distance calls are verified monthly using the telephone bill.
 - c) Long distance telephone calls of a personal nature are permitted. All calls of this nature should be recorded on the daily log and the Village shall be reimbursed for the call by the employee as soon as the monthly statement arrives. It is preferred that all personal calls are made on break with the employee personal phone.
6. Recorded Lines.
- a) All non-administrative telephones may be recorded on tape in the Police Department office.
7. Communications and the Open Records Law.
- a) The Wisconsin Open Records Law essentially states that any record generated by government must be preserved and be available for public inspection upon appropriate request. All communications from Department laptops, telephones, as well as radio voice communications fall within the category of “records” for the purposes of this law. These “records” are available for public inspection upon request. Said records will only be made available and/or released by the Department’s records custodian.

Michael Meeusen
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

Initial 06/01/2015