



Effective Date: July 07, 2010
Revision Date:

Bastrop County Emergency Services District No.1 Standard Operating Procedures

Title: Radio Communications

Originator – Fire Chief (Signature/Date): _____

PURPOSE

Establish a procedure for all personnel to follow when utilizing Department communications equipment.

SCOPE

This procedure shall be followed by all Bastrop County ESD No.1 (BCESD1) personnel. Authority to deviate from this procedure rests with the Fire Chief. This procedure should be used as a guide for all radio communications. Please keep in mind that all radio traffic can be monitored and recorded in many places. All your communications should reflect the professional image of Bastrop County ESD No. 1.

GENERAL

All personnel are responsible for knowing Bastrop County ESD No. 1 protocols and shall be familiar with proper radio use.

POLICY

- A. Bastrop County Sherriff's Office (BCSO) is the agency responsible for call taking for fire departmental requests for service. If walk-ins or witnessing of an incident occur by ESD personnel, BCSO should be notified immediately.
- B. All emergency requests will be received via VHF frequency. Primary notification will be from the Fire Net South tower, secondary/backup notification will be simulcast from the Fire Net North Tower. VHF pagers will be utilized by all BCESD1 personnel to receive notification for requests for service from BCSO. (All paging will be simulcast on VHF along with 800 MHz Fire Com 1.)
- C. BCSO will designate a Fire Com channel to use for the duration of the incident. It will be one of the 800 digital Fire Com channels on bank 2 programmed in the 800 radios. The primary channels for response purposes only will be FireCom1, 2, or 3 as per BCSO.
- D. Upon receipt of request for service from BCSO, fire department personnel responding to the station will identify with their assigned personnel identification number along with enroute to their assigned station on the designated Fire Com channel for that incident. The following is an example of expected communications by all personnel after the notification of a service request.

“4041 enroute to Cedar Creek”.

DO NOT expect anyone to acknowledge your response. If and when the Fire Chief or his/her designee determines that additional resources or a change in your response is needed they will direct you accordingly.

- E. Upon arrival at the station no additional communications needs to take place until you have an apparatus staffed with minimum personnel. Minimum Personnel are defined as:
- Engine response: Three are preferred, **Two required**
 - Tender response: Two are preferred, **One required**
 - Brush truck Response: **Two required**
 - Rescue truck response: **Two required**

****This is known as minimum staffing of all apparatus, and will be adhered to! The minimum staffing of apparatus is for your safety, the overall safety of operations, and to ensure effectiveness of operations.****

Once the responding apparatus meets the required staffing the next communication will be the apparatus assigned unit designation, is enroute to the location or address, the nature of the call that was reported by BCSO, and the number of personnel on the apparatus. The following is an example of expected communications by a responding apparatus.

“Engine 107 will be enroute to 114 Cedar Creek Drive for a Structure Fire, with three personnel”.

The Fire Chief or his/her designee will have sole discretion of making changes to apparatus response, cancellation of responding apparatus, and any deviation from this policy.

- F. Upon arrival on location of the incident the first arriving officer will advise that the apparatus is on location by giving the apparatus identification number, the status, address of the incident, pertinent information and further directions for additional response, establishment of the incident command system for multiple apparatus response, what operational mode fire crews will be in, and the designated incident communication channel, collectively known as a size up.

The following is an example of expected communications by apparatus or personnel arriving on location of the incident.

“Engine 107 will be on location at 114 Cedar Creek Drive, we have a two vehicle accident stand by for further information.” OR “Engine 107 will be on location at 114 Cedar Creek Drive, we have a two vehicle accident all occupants are out of the vehicle, fluids are leaking I need the second in or due unit to assist with traffic control, Engine 107 will be establishing Cedar Creek Command, crews are in investigation mode, communications will be on Channel 15”.

The initial arriving incident commander will establish the operational communications channel upon arrival. Additional units responding will stay on the designated Fire Com channel until notification of arrival on scene is made. Once units are on location personnel and apparatus will then change their radio channels to the fire ground channel that the IC designated.

I. **Radio Channel Designation for Operations**

- A. Structure Fires – All structure fires or incidents that require personnel to enter into any enclosed structure or building when there is potentially a situation that could be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) the fire ground channel on bank 2 titled 8TAC95D, which is in the #15

slot on the channel selector dial (switch) will always be the 1st fire ground channel assigned out to **interior operations!** In the event that two channels are needed for fire ground communications then the channels will be assigned out in a counter clock wise manner with the 2nd assigned or next one being 8TAC96D, which is in the #14 slot on the channel selector dial (switch), and 3rd being 8TAC97D, which is in the #13 slot on the channel selector dial (switch).

- B. Exterior incidents (vehicle accidents, wild fires, vehicle fires, rescues that have no structure involved, and anything else not mentioned) – These type of incidents will utilize the repeated channels in bank 2 on the 800 radios titled ESD1A, ESD1B, or ESD1C. Depending on size, nature, and functional assignment the priorities and geographic designations of the channels will be as follows:

ESD1A – Bluebonnet VFD’s District

ESD1B – 5Points VFD’s District

ESD1C – 3N1 VFD’s District

At any time in accordance to the IC multiple channels are deemed necessary for use at larger scale incidents or incidents that may have different functional assignments; this will solely be at the discretion of the IC or his/her designee.

All firefighters will be familiar with the radio system and the location of all channels that could possibly be designated as a primary communications channel on incidents. ***Your life could depend on it!***

- G. All communications should be initiated or replied by the ranking officer or team leader. This is intended to allow for pertinent information from the commander to the officer in charge of the assignment. When communicating from person to person NIMS compliant communications will be adhered to ***“You this is me”***. The following is an example of expected communications between personnel. ***“4101 from 4001”***.

- H. If the incident commander determines additional apparatus or responding personnel are not needed, they should advise all units to cancel their response to the location or selected units to cancel and certain units to continue. The following is an example of expected communications by the incident commander or first arriving apparatus when cancelling others.

“4001 to all responding units, you can cancel your response to 114 Cedar Creek Drive”

Repeat the same traffic one additional time to ensure the message is heard! There is no reason for any unit to reply or acknowledge this traffic.

- I. In the event of a disoriented firefighter or a firefighter in distress a ***“MAYDAY”*** should be initiated, a standardized pattern of events shall occur so rescuers are able to anticipate their actions.

The lost/trapped firefighter(s) should:

1. ***Call for help*** – Call for help immediately on the designated **incident communications channel**. Do not delay notification of distress. Notifications should occur as soon as you THINK you may be in trouble by utilizing the radio message ***“MAYDAY”***! Every effort should be made to make contact to the IC on the **incident communications channel**!

2. *Emergency Button Usage* – In the event that no communications has been made with the IC and/or RIT the Orange Emergency button shall be utilized as a last resort. The firefighter or crew leader shall switch the channel selector dial (switch) 1 turn clockwise or all the way clockwise or to the right and push the orange emergency button and then transmit the **“MAYDAY”** message. After the channel selector dial is on channel #16 or titled as Common or is all the way clockwise and the orange button is pushed the microphone will be opened for 10 seconds. The push to talk button must be depressed to communicate after the 10 seconds is expired, and every time after that in order to communicate. ***The emergency button (orange button) serves no purpose when the radio is on direct non-repeated channels!***

The **“Mayday”** radio message is to be used ONLY to report a lost or trapped firefighter. All other emergencies shall use the term **“emergency traffic”** and will be reported on the designated incident communications channel. **Any report of a “Mayday” will receive priority radio traffic followed by emergency traffic notification.** Command and or dispatch will then inform all responding units that a firefighter rescue is underway. Anytime the “Mayday” message is used, **the primary focus of all operations at the scene will shift to locating and rescuing the lost/trapped firefighter.** The IC SHALL request additional personnel/mutual aid immediately upon learning of a lost/trapped firefighter.

Training in conducting a **“Mayday”** will be conducted annually to ensure all ESD personnel are proficient in this process.