

Radio Operations

346.1 POLICY

Effective, efficient and safe delivery of police services will not occur without proper radio traffic control. Proper radio discipline is a mandatory obligation of all employees who are authorized to make radio transmissions. The Urbana Police Department believes that conformance to standard radio traffic policies and rules on a daily basis and during periods of non-emergencies will enhance the police response during periods of emergencies by the formation of good radio habits.

346.2 PURPOSE

This policy will outline basic radio discipline and operations expected of every employee authorized to use radios.

346.3 DEFINITIONS

ISPERN - Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network

FCC - Federal Communications Commission

MDC - Mobile Data Computer

IREACH - Illinois Regional Emergency Access Channel

346.4 AUTHORITY

Employees must be authorized to use Department radios for communications. Those authorized include:

- All Sworn Personnel
- All Police Services Representatives
- Animal Control Officer

Others may be given authority under specific circumstances. Under normal, routine circumstances, interns may be allowed to use the radio. This is under the immediate and direct control of their assigned officer. Nothing in this section prohibits anyone from using a Department radio to report an emergency where an officer is unable to; for example, when an officer is injured.

346.5 FCC

Those using radios shall conform to all of the laws and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.

Specific conduct such as obscenities, profiting, unauthorized dissemination, etc. is strictly prohibited.

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346.6 METRO

Officers assigned to METRO shall conform to these rules when operating radios on regular frequencies. However, when they are operating radios on tactical frequencies, they shall conform to METRO radio usage policies.

346.7 DUTY TO MONITOR

All personnel who are issued radios and subject to dispatch while on duty, shall maintain radio communications with METCAD.

Patrol Officers, when on-duty, shall notify METCAD of their location and activity. They shall re-advise METCAD when either of these changes substantially.

346.8 PORTABLE RADIOS

Each Officer is assigned a portable radio and those subject to dispatched calls shall carry it when on duty. It is the officer's responsibility to ensure that the battery is fully charged and the radio is in good working order.

346.9 RADIO CALL SIGNS

All employees when using radios shall first give the call sign of the unit or station they are calling and then identify themselves with their own call sign. The transmission should take the form of, "Unit x from Unit y." Those using radios should use the assigned call sign and not names during radio transmissions.

346.10 REPORT ON DUTY

All radio units shall report to METCAD when they are on and off duty. When coming on duty the Patrol Officer will give their beat number, squad car number and if more than the officer in solo patrol, the number of persons in the squad. When assignment is made, they shall advise arrival and clearance of the assignment. All traffic stops and employee initiated activities shall require them to notify METCAD of his/her status change.

346.11 BREVITY

All radio transmissions shall be kept brief and concise, containing only necessary information. When the information to be transmitted is lengthy, the employee should consider another method of communications such as the telephone or MDC. If that is not practical or possible, then the employee should "break" the transmission into shorter, less than 7 or 8 seconds, transmissions and conclude each one with the word, "break." This will indicate to everyone else on the frequency that more information is to follow.

Employees violating this brevity section will be subject to discipline. Lengthy and unnecessary radio transmissions can prevent others who have emergencies from transmitting and create an officer and citizen safety problem.

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346.12 CONDUCT

Officers and employees using the radio system shall conduct themselves professionally. Dispatchers, others on the radio or citizens will not be disparaged in any way. Officers will not argue, be sarcastic or tell jokes on the radio. This system is for necessary police business communications only. Employees who have conflicts with telecommunicators, desk personnel or other employees on the radio shall consult with their supervisors in person and not confront anyone over the air.

Directions and call dispatches given to an employee over the radio by the Front Desk or METCAD shall be considered an order as they have staff authority. If an officer disagrees, then he/she must seek relief from a supervisor.

A calm, professional, clear and audible tone of voice must be used. Mumbling, talking too fast, loud or too softly will be avoided. Proper pronunciation of words will also be required. Those using the radio shall be courteous to others on the network.

The information broadcast on the radio must be accurate to the best of the employee's ability.

Those using Department radios are reminded that the public uses scanners to monitor radio frequencies. Radio broadcasts are not private conversations but public ones both legally and in effect. Employees should conduct themselves with professional demeanor. Also, all radio transmissions are recorded and may be played back both immediately and in the future.

Supervisors have the affirmative and mandatory responsibility to set the example and to enforce these rules.

346.13 RADIO SILENCE

Incidents will occur which require radio silence. Those using the radio shall obey the order to be silent unless they are engaged in their own emergency.

346.14 MDCS

The same rules, policies and procedures outlined in these Directives about radios also apply to MDC's. Professional conduct is required. MDC traffic is recorded and can be reviewed at any time by UPD Supervisory Personnel or by outside sources under FOIA or subpoena.

346.15 CHANNELS

The Urbana Police Department operates on an 800 MHz system and has several channels available for use. Each portable and mobile radio has these channels programmed into them. METCAD has the authority to make channel assignments.

The non-repeated channels are not heard at METCAD, they are not recorded and they only have a limited broadcast range of a few blocks. Those other channels, are repeated, recorded and heard county-wide.

Some Urbana patrol and plain cars also have VHF high band radios with two frequencies in them.

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Channel 1 - ISPERN

Channel 2 - IREACH

ISPERN is used only in emergencies when radio broadcasts to other police agencies not in the METCAD system is required. Such agencies include the State Police, Secretary of State Police, Conservation Police, etc.

IREACH is an alternate channel for ambulances, highway trucks and other public and semi-public fleet units to reach the police in an emergency.

Officers, when in cars so equipped, shall monitor both of these channels.

346.16 PRIORITY

Calls for service will be dispatched in order of priority, highest to lowest. The telecommunicator shall not hold emergency calls for beat cars but rather dispatch them to available units. When calls are held, a Shift Supervisor shall be notified. Shift Supervisors may also re-order and/or reassign radio calls. Shift Supervisors may issue orders via the radio and are authorized and responsible to manage the radio traffic over the assigned primary Urbana frequency. Additionally, Shift Supervisors shall endeavor to maintain awareness of pending calls and shall communicate with METCAD to resolve delays in the dispatch of calls.

346.17 METRO/COMMAND POST

Whenever a command post has been established, communication between the Command Post and METCAD is essential to avoid mixed signals, miscommunication and other problems. When a Command Post is established, one employee shall be given the responsibility as telecommunicator and take over radio traffic involved in the incident.