

INSERT AGENCY
Communications Center
Standard Operating Procedures

SUBJECT: Text to 9-1-1

DATE: August 19, 2014

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Purpose

It shall be the policy of the ***INSERT AGENCY*** Communications Center to follow the procedures set forth in this directive for the processing of calls received via text Messaging.

Policy

In lieu of voice communications, callers may opt to contact 9-1-1 via text messaging

Calls received via text messaging will come into the Center on the 9-1-1 telephone console.

Pre-set messages are available. The dispatcher may choose to use them as appropriate. The dispatcher may also choose to manually type to the caller. The use of pre-set messages is recommended, but optional.

The dispatcher shall begin the text conversation by sending a message to determine if the caller is able to engage in a voice to voice call, rather than a text conversation.

Dispatchers should avoid the use of “texting” lingo, shortcuts and/or acronyms. Some of these are not universally understood and/or have multiple meanings. All correspondence from the dispatcher should be in plain language. The caller should be encouraged not to use the “texting” lingo, shortcuts and/or acronyms to help eliminate any confusion on the part of both parties. However, callers are not required to oblige. In the event it becomes difficult to understand a caller’s need

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due to the use of these shortcuts, the dispatcher will ask the caller to explain the shortcut.

How to process text calls:

Text messages are expected to be processed using the same standards for processing emergency and non-emergency voice calls for service. The “standard ABC” questioning of dispatch (Where, What, When, Who, Why) will still be applicable.

As emphasized in basic call-taking, the most important piece of information to obtain is the location of the emergency followed by the type of emergency. This procedure will be followed on text to 9-1-1 calls. The text message screen will show the latitude and longitude of the cell tower site (Phase 1), not the location of the caller. The call-taker can rebid the location for a new cell tower site if the caller indicates they are traveling.

It is important to confirm that the caller can be reached at the same number the text is originating from.

All other pertinent information will be asked for by the call-taker to help ensure bystander and responder safety. All pertinent information will be added to the call for service in CAD and relayed to the responding unit(s) as appropriate. The call-taker will note that the call was received by text when creating the call in CAD. When the call is dispatched over the radio, the responders will be advised that the call is being received by text message.

The dispatcher will verify the location of the emergency with the caller before the end of the call by advising the caller that the requested assistance is being sent to the address the caller gave.

- Example – “Officers are being sent to 123 Main Street”

Handling calls for incidents in other jurisdictions (without text capabilities):

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If a text message is received and it is determined that the emergency is occurring in another jurisdiction, all pertinent information will be gathered and relayed by phone to the appropriate PSAP for dispatch if that agency does not have text capability. The session should be kept open until contact is made with the appropriate jurisdiction in case they need additional information.

A call will be created in CAD for documentation purposes. Close the CAD call with the appropriate disposition code for transfers to another agency.

At no point should the caller be advised that they have reached the wrong agency and need to dial a different number to reach the correct agency.

Transferring calls to another PSAP:

Currently, the telephone system has the capability of making only one transfer to another PSAP which has the same texting solution. This makes it very important that the dispatcher transfers the text messenger to the correct PSAP on this single transfer, so the caller and the other agency are not negatively impacted. The transfer codes for all of the PSAPs in Butte County have been built into the drop down box as pre-set messages. Once a transfer is sent, the call essentially becomes a three way call between the 9-1-1 text messenger, the PSAP answering the original 9-1-1 text message, and the agency receiving the transfer. The text messages already displayed, as well as the caller, will be transferred to the agency listed.

Upon answering, the text 9-1-1 transfer the receiving dispatcher will see a message that reads “Dialog transferred to” Currently there is no indicator of which agency made the transfer, so the dispatcher should include a text message to the agency receiving the text identifying the agency making the transfer.

The dispatcher making the transfer should continue to monitor the text conversation to ensure the correct jurisdiction/agency has been reached and that there is no information pertinent to the dispatcher’s own agency. For example, in the city of Chico, there are several areas where Butte County Sheriff’s office or CSU Chico PD jurisdictions are in close proximity to each other. The dispatcher

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could monitor the conversation for suspect(s) descriptions, officer safety information, etc.

Private Chat Feature:

The system has a private chat feature. This allows the two dispatchers to exchange texts during the three-way conversation initiated by a text transfer that the text to 9-1-1 messenger will not see. For example, the transferring dispatcher may want to advise the dispatcher receiving the transfer of previous contacts with the text to 9-1-1 messenger. It is important that dispatchers be aware that while the text to 9-1-1 messenger will not see the private message, the message itself is recorded and is subject to subpoena just like a 9-1-1 telephone call.

When to end a text messaging session:

A text session does not end until the call-taker selects the “Release” button. This allows the call-taker to remain in texting contact with the caller. Once the call is released, the call-taker will not be able to send a text message to the phone. The only way to establish contact at that point is to make a voice call to the phone number or use the dispatch cell phone. Under no circumstances should the call-taker text the caller from their personal cell phone.

Re-establishing contact after a session is closed:

Dispatchers are authorized to make a voice call to the caller if needed. This will need to be done if additional information is needed from the caller or if responders are having difficulty locating them.

A caller should not be called back in cases where their safety, or the safety of another, is in question. If an officer is requesting that a callback be made in this situation, the dispatcher will advise the officer of the safety concern. If the officer still requests a callback at that point, the callback request will be honored.

Utilizing the Language Line:

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If it is determined that Language Line services are needed, a voice call will be placed to the caller and then transferred to the Language Line.

Technical problems with texting program:

Create a trouble ticket with Verizon's NG 9-1-1 service center. The ticket number and information will be logged in a CAD 911 Trouble call.

Notify the Butte County 9-1-1 Coordinator and the Communications Manager or Support Captain.