



# POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Bureau of Communications and Property Control

### Communications Control Section

Date: <b>February 9, 2015</b>	Effective Date: <b>February 16, 2015</b>
Subject: <b>Call Taking Procedures</b>	
Classification: <b>Call Taking</b>	Page 1 of 6
Related: Rescinds CCS P&P 2013-04	
Authority:	No. <b>2015-04</b>

*Substantive changes to 2013-04 are in **bold italics***

**PURPOSE:** To establish basic guidelines related to the answering and handling of incoming calls to CCS.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Communications Control Section to receive and handle calls for service promptly, efficiently and expeditiously, with the utmost concern for the safety and well-being of citizens and police.

#### PROCEDURES:

I. **Answer promptly.** Personnel shall answer all police telephones promptly.

II. **Identify yourself.**

A. Personnel shall answer 621-1234 telephone line by stating:  
"Cleveland Police, rank, last name. How may we help you?"

B. 9-1-1 lines shall be answered by stating:

**"9-1-1, what is your emergency? Police? Fire? Or Ambulance?"**

If the call is for police, identify yourself as "Cleveland Police, rank, last name, how may we help you?"

1. When transferring calls to Fire or EMS state: "Stay on the line while I transfer your call to (Fire/EMS.)"
2. Disconnect from the call once it is transferred, and you hear the caller conversing with Fire/EMS unless it is necessary to continue with the caller when Fire/EMS is through. In these instances advise the caller of your intent while the transfer is going through.
3. The Cleveland Division of Police, Communications Control Section shall be the public safety answering point (PSAP) for the city of Cleveland and

# CCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

the city of Linndale. 9-1-1 callers requesting police service in Linndale shall be transferred to Linndale Police via the pre-programmed "Linndale" button on the calltaker's Positron equipment. Linndale residents requesting EMS or the Fire Department shall be transferred to Cleveland EMS/Fire via the Positron equipment.

- C. The Division's Manual of Rules and Regulations requires all employees to furnish their name, rank and badge number to any person that requests it (Rule 4.13).

### **III. Display Courtesy and Professionalism**

- A. **Use appropriate tone and manner of speech.** Avoid using industry jargon and abbreviations when speaking to the general public.
- B. **Show interest in the caller.** Use "sir", "ma'am", "Mr.", "Ms.", while talking with the citizen. Terms of endearment are not acceptable. Avoid vocal inflections or sounds such as heavy sighs that convey boredom, indifference or frustration.
- C. **Control the call.** Take charge of the conversation by guiding the caller through the information gathering process. Get the responses you need in the shortest possible time.
- D. **Explain holds, pauses and delays.** Provide the caller with reasons for holds and other delays. If you are busy entering a caller's information into the CAD system – let them know.
- E. **Remain calm and polite,** never losing your temper. Do not attempt to solve or mediate the caller's problem.
- F. **Provide and Explain Referrals** when caller's requests can be better handled by agencies outside of the realm of public safety. Keep in mind that other options and services can be suggested but **never give legal or unsolicited advice.** Do not offer specific business names (i.e. tow companies such as K & M).
- G. **Never argue with the caller** and avoid being a part of the problem. Keeping your emotions in check will help to minimize any negative escalation of the caller's issues.
- H. **Be sensitive** to the needs and concerns of the caller. Show empathy and caring for the victims and complainants you have contact with.

# CCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## IV. Gathering Basic Response Information.

- A. Where is the incident occurring or where are the police needed? Location of the incident: up, down, inside, outside, description of premise? What is the full, correct address or intersection? If the caller is unsure of their location can they provide you with a landmark or a business name seen on a sign nearby?
- B. The CAD 'ANI/ALI' button shall be pressed each time a 9-1-1 call is received. Verify ALL 9-1-1 information with the caller. Do not assume that the Positron information is correct. The ANI/ALI information shall be left on the event form. Changes shall be made as needed to coincide with information gathered from the caller. For example: removing the cell provider's name and replacing it with the name of the actual caller.
- C. Ask for callback information (name, phone number) on all calls received on 621-1234 line. Enter info obtained into the incident.
- D. When advised of an incident by Cleveland Fire/EMS, obtain the contact information for the original caller. Attempt to make contact with this caller to obtain additional information and add the info to the incident.
- E. Caller identity is voluntary and a request for anonymity will not preclude police response.
  - 1. **Calltakers shall** clearly indicate a caller's request to remain anonymous in the 'Remarks' section of the CAD event.
  - 2. **Dispatchers shall** communicate a callers wish to remain anonymous to responding officers. Officer inquiries related to the identity of a caller shall be referred to a CCS supervisor.
- F. When unable to obtain a caller's name, note the sex of the caller in the 'Remarks' section of the event. (Examples include, but are not limited to, phone disconnections or complainant pulled from phone)

## V. Determine Immediate or Additional Response Needs

- A. Make notifications to responding agencies as soon as practicable.
  - 1. For serious injury, there shall be minimum delay prior to connecting the caller to or notifying EMS. Obtain the basic

# CCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

information needed to send police such as location, suspect whereabouts, and a general description.

2. When transferring the caller to EMS, calltaker may remain on the line and resume questioning after EMS is completed with the caller. Advise caller of your intent while the call is transferring.
- B. Is anyone injured? How many? Is an ambulance needed?
- C. Is the Fire Division needed
- D. Is there a hazardous condition such as a freeway accident or obstruction? Live wires? Vicious animal?

## VI. Logically order the info in the CAD "Remarks" section.

- A. What occurred or is occurring?
- B. When did it occur?
- C. Who is involved?
  1. Is the suspect(s) on scene or gone? (obtain specific location; if gone, obtain direction of travel)
  2. Clothing description and physical characteristics: sex, race, age, height, weight, glasses, facial hair, scars, marks, tattoos?
    - a. Descriptions are not restricted to suspects. Obtain descriptions of other parties involved when applicable.
    - b. List clothing logically: top to bottom, outside to in.
  3. Vehicle involved? Use CYMBALS: color, year, make, body style, additional info, license, state
  4. Weapon info (type, description, location) ***For example, if a gun is involved determine if it is a handgun, revolver, automatic, shotgun, rifle or other type such as a pellet or BB gun. What color is the gun? Where is the gun at? Concealed? Out in the open?***

## VII. Initiate the Incident. Incidents shall be transmitted to the appropriate dispatch channel in an expeditious manner. With critical incidents, obtain the basic information and immediately send the information to the dispatcher. Inform the caller that you must ask a few more questions, advising them that this will not delay the information being sent to a dispatcher or the responding zone car. Continue to gather pertinent information on the critical call and update the incident as needed.

# CCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- A. Use your CAD incident type matrix and definitions to assist with coding (assigning type and priority) of incidents. Consult with a CCS supervisor if unsure of what incident type and/or priority to make an incident.
- B. Use the CAD 'Nature' field to provide a brief explanation of why police are needed. This field is not to be used instead of or as a substitute for the first sentence of the incident's "remarks".
- C. Do not base incident coding on a caller's tone of voice or level of excitement. Base coding on the information you receive from the caller.
- D. ***Ensure all information provided by the caller that can prove useful to responders is included in the incident narrative. This can include approximate ages of those involved and other information the caller may not be completely certain of.***

## VIII. Terminating the Call

- A. Do not terminate a call without specifically advising the caller what action you are taking with the call. For example, "I will be creating an assignment for your call and forwarding it to a dispatcher."
- B. Remain on the line with the caller until the police arrive if the caller is an important source of information to responding units or if it is reasonable to believe that doing so will enhance the caller's sense of safety and security.
- C. Use proper closing statement. "The police will respond as soon as a unit is available" or, "A police expediter will be calling you back for a report," or other appropriate statement. Avoid the term "someone", as in "someone will be out to your house...".
- D. It is inappropriate to terminate a call because any demeaning and/or derogatory statements made by a caller offend you. Calls such as this are to be handled by a call taker in a professional manner. If necessary, confer with a CCS supervisor prior to terminating the call.

## IX. Canceling (Disregarding) Calls for Service

- A. With minor exceptions, existing calls for service may only be cancelled by the original caller. An example of an exception could be an alarm company operator canceling an alarm that was originally called in by a different operator.

# CCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Note that domestic situations involving violence or the threat of violence may **not** be cancelled. Refer to CCS policy 2012-04.
2. If unsure of when it is appropriate to cancel a call, consult a supervisor.

**X. Supervisor Duties**

- A. *CCS supervisors shall actively monitor calltaker activity. This includes periodic review of newly created high priority incidents and monitoring of live call activity to ensure adherence to existing CCS policies and division protocols.***