COMMON LANGUAGE PROTOCOLS

Directive: 12 – 102

Date of Issue: July 2013   Amends/Cancels: G.O. 12-08, 09-24

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I.   PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to provide guidelines for radio communications using Common Language Protocols (plain language).

II.   BACKGROUND

In February 2006, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Integration Center sent out a bulletin requiring that plain English be used for multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline events, such as major disasters and exercises. Beginning in the fiscal year that started October 1, 2006, federal preparedness grant funding was contingent on the use of common terminology in incidents requiring assistance from responders from other agencies, jurisdictions and functional disciplines.

III.   POLICY

The Department of General Services Maryland Capitol Police (DGS-MCP) has abolished the use of the 10 code system and utilizes the Common Language Protocol. This protocol is a step toward ensuring that during a multi-jurisdictional incident or anytime different agencies must communicate through the radio system; everyone involved understands what is being communicated.

A.   Four Signals will be used to provide for officer safety and disseminating sensitive information. The signals and their definitions are listed below:

1. **Signal 1 – Mayday/Emergency.**
   This will be used in the place of Signal 13 (Officer Emergency). The issuer should include location with the transmission and any other pertinent information concerning the emergency.

2. **Signal 2 – Backup Needed.**
   This will indicate that the issuer needs assistance, there is no immediate life threat but the issuer does not want the subject to know backup has been requested. It will still be acceptable to simply request backup instead of using the signal.

3. **Signal 3 – When used by the unit, it indicates taking subject into custody and resistance is anticipated.**
When issued by a dispatcher this indicates that the unit should take the subject into custody and anticipate resistance. This will alert other law enforcement patrol units to the fact that you may need assistance but are not directly requesting it at the current time.

4. **Signal 4 – Confidential/critical information to be relayed.**
This will be used to indicate that a possible hit has been received. It can be used by the dispatcher to alert the unit that information needs to be relayed to them that should not be heard by the subject. The unit should respond with current location and indicate whether or not the dispatcher can go ahead with the information. If the terrorist codes – the dispatcher will still use those codes prior to transmitting the information:

   (a) **NCIC Code 1 – APPROACH WITH CAUTION.**
   Subject should be arrested immediately. Contact the Terrorist Screening Center immediately.

   (b) **NCIC Code 2 – APPROACH WITH CAUTION.**
   Subject may be associated with terrorism or terrorist or terrorist activities. Subject may be detained for a reasonable amount of time and interviewed. Contract the Terrorist Screening Center immediately.

   (c) **NCIC Code 3 – APPROACH WITH CAUTION. DO NOT ALERT THIS INDIVIDUAL TO THIS NOTICE.**
   Do not arrest unless there is evidence of violations of federal, state or local statues. The Terrorist Screening Center can be contacted for additional guidance.

B. Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) personnel should be contacted for assistance when any of the aforementioned NCIC codes are used to detain individuals.

C. Authorized Caution Codes will be utilized for broadcasting officer safety information and may be utilized during police/violator contacts. This information is contained in the "HOT FILES" and CRIMINAL HISTORY FILES.

   A – Armed
   B – Dangerous
   C – Mental
   D – Armed/Mental
   E – Suicidal
   F – Armed Suicidal
   G – Resists Arrest
   H – Armed/Resists
   I – Dangerous/Resists
   J – Mental/Resists
   K – Suicidal/Resists
   L – Approach with Caution
   M – Assaults Police Officers
   N – Drug User/Seller

1. The information given to support the use of a caution code should have some verifiable foundation from which it is offered. Materials contained in data base files such as CJIS or other supporting information (e.g. investigative reports or arrest records) may be used as justification for a caution code descriptor.

2. The code, "N", by itself, does not constitute probable cause or a reasonable articulable suspicion that the person is involved in criminal conduct.

3. These caution codes are the only codes authorized to disseminate officer safety information.

4. Police Communications Operators (PCOs) will only say, "Caution Codes Not on File" when there is no history or no propensity for violence in criminal history.

D. The following **Standard Phonetic Alphabet** will be utilized when conducting radio communications:

A – alpha (AL fah)	N – november (no VEM ber)
B – bravo (BRAH voh)	O – oscar (OSS car)
C – charlie (CHAR lee)	P – papa (pah PAH)
D – delta (DELL tah)	Q – quebec (keh BECK)
E – echo (ECK oh)	R – romeo (ROW me oh)
F – foxtrot (FOKS trot)	S – sierra (SEE air rah)
G – golf (GOLF)	T – tango (TANG go)
H – hotel (HOH tell)	U – uniform (You nee form)
I – india (IN dee ah)	V – victor (VIK tah)
J – juliet (JEW lee ett)	W – whiskey (WISS key)
K – kilo (KEY low)	X – x-ray (ECKS ray)
L – lima (LEE mah)	Y – yankee (YANG key)
M – mike (MIKE)	Z – zulu (ZOO loo)

E. The use of 10-4 to acknowledge a transmission will continue. This 10 code has been deemed universal and should not cause any problems during inter/intra-agency communications.

F. All other radio communications will be conducted using plain English. In order to maintain brevity and professionalism on the radio, DGS-MCP will be using the definitions already established on the current 10-code list. For example, under the new system, instead of using 10-46 the user would state, "Disabled Vehicle."

G. Professional tones and communications will be utilized at all times. The use of jargon and/or slang terms to include abbreviations will not be used.

IV. TWO WAY RADIO ETIQUETTE

Two-way radios, in general terms, are radios that transmit and receive. By definition two-way radios are portable radios that communicate with each other on the same frequency but, unlike cell phones, or landlines communication can not take place between two radios simultaneously. In a two-way radio arrangement, the user of each radio takes turns talking (transmitting) and listening (receiving); in technical terms this is called half-duplex operation.

A two-way radio network, no matter how many or how few radios it has in use, needs guidelines to enable efficient operation, this is generally referred to as radio protocol. Every user on the network needs to be aware of and use this protocol. Radio protocol will differ slightly but a general set of rules will include short transmissions with clear and concise messages.

V.   PROCEDURES

1. All radios assigned to DGS-MCP will be switched to the appropriate channel for your assignment.

#	Name
1	Annap Detach
2	Annap Talk
3	Annap Maint
4	Balto Detach
5	Balto Talk
6	Balto Maint
7	NLEEC
8	MSP Vcall
9	MSP Vtac1
10	MSP Vtac2
11	MSP Vtac3
12	MSP Vtac4
13	MSP HiBand
14	Weather

2. Common Language Protocols will be strictly adhered to.

3. The military phonetic alphabet will be used. (III – D)

4. Please keep in mind you will be sharing a channel with others and should keep radio transmission to a minimum.

5. You will be expected to act as professional as possible and yield the airwaves to anyone who is involved in an emergency situation.

6. Every hour on the hour the Detachment call letters will be announced (Annapolis WNKX 318/Baltimore WNRD 718). From 1700hrs to 0700hrs Monday through Friday and all day on weekends and holidays each employee will respond to the call by telling the Police Communications Operator (PCO) his/her exact location. Under no circumstance will a member of MCP answer the radio for another employee.

7. Everyone is expected to monitor their radio and respond to calls when contacted by Communications.

PROTOCOL

1. The following radio protocol should be used when making a radio transmission. (This is just an example; your need to use the radio may differ.)

   ➢ **B-1** (you should use your radio identifier) to (Annapolis/Baltimore) Detachment

   ➢ The PCO will respond by saying:

   ➢ **Go ahead B-1**

   ➢ You may then send your message. Under no circumstance should you send a message _**without first**_ being recognized by the PCO

   ➢ Radio Check

   ➢ The PCO will then respond with the appropriate response to your Radio Check (ok, static, etc.)

   All members will notify the PCO when going to lunch and again when they return from lunch.

2. Keep your transmissions short and to the point. If you have a long message to transmit, break it up into short messages and verify that the receiving party "copies" (understands) the message.

   Speak clearly and in a _**normal**_ tone of voice with your mouth two or three inches away from your radio's microphone.

   Never use obscenities – DGS-MCP uses the public airwaves, airwaves that are controlled by the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's); the FCC forbids obscenity and may, at any time, be monitoring your conversation.

   When operating the radio, hold down the push-to-talk button for one second before beginning to speak. On some radios you will hear a "beep" after you push and hold the push-to-talk button that indicates that it is time to talk.