

Subject: New Radio Procedures

At the April 1st meeting of the Broome County Fire Chief's Assn, the proposed radio procedural changes from last year were approved. One of the changes adopts the NIMS system of lettering the sides of a building rather than numbers. These should be stated phonetically ie- "alpha side" as "b" and "d" sound alike on the radio.

Attached are a copy of the procedures with the **changes marked in red**. Please review these with your staff as soon as possible.

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Broome County Fire Radio System

Policies and Procedures

Compiled 1988
Revised & Updated 2008

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Broome County Fire Chief's Association

Fire Radio System Policies and Procedures

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Broome County Fire Chief's Association

Fire Radio System Policies and Procedures

I. Frequencies - The following is a compiled list of radio policies and procedures that have been placed into effect for the Broome County Fire Service. This system utilizes the following channels and frequencies;

Channel 1	33.90	Dispatch Frequency
Channel 2	33.94	Incident <u>Fire Ground Channel</u>
Channel 3	33.98	Incident <u>Fire Ground Channel</u>
Channel 4	33.82	Fire Police/ <u>Training Channel</u>
Channel 5	33.86	F.A.S.T. <u>Water Rescue</u>
Binghamton Fire	460.575	
Johnson City Fire	460.625	
Endicott Fire	154.370	
Vestal Fire	154.310	

These policies and procedures were suggested by the County Fire Coordinator's Office.

II. Policies – These policies were developed by the Broome County Fire Chief's Association Communications Committee and the Fire Coordinator, and adopted by the Broome County Fire Chief's Association. These policies will continue to be added to or amended as the radio system **progresses**.

Any questions concerning these policies may be directed to the:

Broome County Fire Coordinator's Office

OR

Board of Directors of the **Broome** County Fire Chief's Association

We want to stress the need for education and training in regards to the radio procedures and policies. To this end, we recommend a series of regional Round-Table discussions for all officers to explain the need for Communications Policies and Procedures.

Broome County Fire Chief's Association

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Section 1. Communications Authority and Definitions

- 1.1 Definition of a daytime alarm: Any alarm between 06:00–18:00 hours.
- 1.2 The Communications Center will assign **fire ground** radio channels for every alarm.
 - 1.2.1 The Incident Commander may request an alternate operating frequency.
 - 1.2.2 Indiscriminate switching to a secondary frequency for incident operation is **prohibited**.
 - 1.2.3 If operating on an alternate frequency, the Incident Commander will contact Broome Communications on Channel 1.
 - 1.2.4 Broome Communications will contact the Incident Commander on the assigned **fire ground** channel.
 - 1.2.5 **Once a fire ground channel has been assigned, it shall be utilized for FIRE GROUND COMMUNICATIONS ONLY. This includes all fire ground communications, but may not include assignments for incoming units unless requested by the Incident Commander.**
- 1.3 When calling Communications, the designator is either Broome or Broome Communications. I.e. Broome from Chief 99
- 1.4 The Communications Center will acknowledge responses of Chief Officers and apparatus, but **is not required** to acknowledge **the** response of other officers. If acknowledgement from County is not received, it is unnecessary to continue to repeat transmissions unless the message is of an emergency nature.
Communications will not respond to stations acknowledging calls.
- 1.5 **Dispatchers** have the authority to maintain radio discipline on the County Fire Radio system and will report to the Fire Coordinator who in turn will report to the County Chief's Association those departments who do not comply **with established policies.**

The problem reporting system will be as follows;

- 1st Complaint – Letter to the Chief from the Chief's Association
- 2nd Complaint – Letter to the Department's Governing Board from the Fire Coordinator

- 1.6 **Dispatchers** have the authority to automatically dispatch an ambulance to a reported house/building fire if it appears that there may be **entrapment**.
- 1.7 Departments should meet regularly with their normal mutual aid departments to **discuss** run-card assignments and cover-up assignments.
- 1.8 Requesting a wrecker at an incident scene **for vehicle removal** should be done by law enforcement personnel if they are present **or responding**.
- 1.9 In the event a police officer investigating a motor-vehicle accident requests EMS for a minor injury well into the incident (**greater than 10 minutes**), an EMS response may be dispatched without a fire response at the discretion of the dispatcher and the police officer on the scene.
- 1.10 A Standardized Maximum Call Receipt Time Interval Procedure for calls is in effect;
 1. After 5 minutes have elapsed from the initial **tone-out** of a department, **communications** will re-activate the home department if there has been no apparatus **response** from the station or there is no officer responding. **It is no longer necessary for stations to acknowledge calls via radio.**
 2. After 7 minutes have elapsed from the initial **tone-out**, **communications** will re-activate the home department if there is no apparatus **response** from the station or there is no officer responding, and place the nearest mutual aid department on standby in their own quarters.
 3. If after 10 minutes have elapsed from the initial **tone-out** and there is no apparatus actually responding, **communications shall** send the nearest mutual aid department to **respond** to the call.
 4. During tone-outs, home departments will receive pager and siren tones, mutual aid departments **will only receive pager tones. In addition, communications will try to activate siren tones for those departments with base station encoding systems.**

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Section 2. Radio Procedures

2.1 The Broome County Fire Chief's Association recommends that as radios are replaced, they be replaced with minimum four channel capable radios that are P.L. equipped, **and mandates that they be equipped with a time out timer.**

2.2 Standard unit status terminology will be used as follows;

"Responding"	Unit is en route to the scene
"On the scene"	Unit has arrived on the scene.
"In Service"	Unit is available for a call *
"Complete"	Last assignment is completed *
"Returning"	Unit is returning to quarters *
"Out of Service"	Unit is unavailable for a call

* Note – See section 2.6

2.3 When calling the Communications Center **with simple transmissions**, give the unit number and message all at once; instead of breaking-up **the message**. This saves air time.

I.e. Broome, Engine 99 responding

Instead of:

Broome, Engine 99
Broome on Engine 99
Engine 99 responding

2.4 **The only time an apparatus needs to sign on the air is for incident related messages such as responding or arriving on the scene. All other non-emergency information shall be done via telephone, such as;**

2.4.1 **Going in/out of service for any reason**

2.4.2 **Attending a parade or other special function**

2.4.3 **Going out for training/inspections**

2.5 Each unit **shall** utilize the apparatus type along with the department number and apparatus number (**when necessary**). This is very important **for** the **dispatcher using** the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD).

Tanker 99, Engine 99, Rescue 99

2.6 **Each unit shall also provide its manpower status inclusive of the number of green-tags when responding to an alarm.**

“Broome, Quint 99 responding with 5, 3 green”

2.7 Once a department officer advises that they are “On the Scene”, **it is not necessary for other officers from that department to radio that they are on the scene.** After an alarm, the incident Commander or designee should place units back in service and returning. Individual units **shall not call unless they are the only unit returning. Unless otherwise advised, the Communications Center will consider units available for another call as soon as they are called returning.**

2.8 Only 1 Chief Officer should sign on the air for mutual aid calls. All Officers should physically check-in at the Command Post upon arrival at the incident scene.

2.9 It is not necessary for units to radio when they are in quarters. It is recommended that this done by phone when calling for times **and an incident number.**

2.10 It is requested that alarm times be obtained from Communications by telephone rather than radio. **In extreme circumstances this may be done when other means are not possible.**

2.11 In the event that a department is placed on standby, the telephone should be utilized to notify communications of your standby status. Radio traffic by standby departments should be kept to a minimum so that the **fire radio system can be kept free of non-essential communications.**

2.12 Communications shall be contacted to obtain **radio** clearance **prior to any department making** non-emergency tone-outs from their base stations for announcements. Incidents elsewhere in the county may be in progress on the **radio system.**

2.13 **Departments shall call Communications by phone when requesting to use a frequency for training. Where possible, channel 4 should be utilized for training.**

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Section 3. Command Operations

- 3.1 At 2nd Alarm or greater incidents, departments are urged to establish a staging area. Units arriving should report to staging and verbally check-in with the Staging Officer unless given specific assignments **prior to arriving or pre-established policies.**
- 3.2 Incident Commanders should utilize mobiles, Command Vehicles, or high-powered radio systems **when communicating from the incident scene to communications and other in-coming units.**
- 3.3 All incident resources MUST be requested through the Incident Command Post and not through individual agencies. If this occurs, **communications** will request that **any further requests** come through one point **of contact.**
- 3.4 **Anytime a department is utilizing divisions or groups, the sides of a fire building shall be identified as A, B, C, and D. For clarification purposes, these sides may be identified phonetically as Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta.**
- 3.5 Cover-up resources, **if not already pre-determined**; should be handled through the **communications center.** Dispatchers will have the authority to place units or agencies on standby in their own quarters.
- 3.6 Coordinator Staff shall be assigned to the Communications Center to handle mutual aid requests and cover-ups for all major incidents and fires that result in the response of three (3) or more departments,
- 3.7 Departments should have pre-arranged response procedures for their apparatus. These response procedures should be automatically followed unless changed by the Incident Commander.
- 3.8 Unnecessary messages for directions, staffing, etc. Should not be needed for mutual aid.

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Fire Unit Identifiers

- 4.1 Department Chiefs will utilize the department number only. Only Assistant Chiefs will utilize department numbers followed by a phonetic letter identifier:

Chief 99

Chief 99 Adam (1st Assistant Chief)

Chief 99 Baker (2nd Assistant Chief)

Chief 99 Charlie (3rd Assistant Chief)

- 4.2 All other officers will utilize their rank:

3.2.1 Captain 99

3.2.2 Lieutenant 99

3.2.3 Fire Police Captain 99

3.2.4 Etc.

- 4.3 At the request of the Broome County Fire Chief's Association, the BCFA Communications Committee has developed the following apparatus **definitions**. These will be used for radio identifiers in conjunction with the Broome County Communications Center.