

## **DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 09-12**

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE  
REPLACES: General Order 06-15/06-15A  
SOP 401.14.00

DATE: May 29, 2009

---

### **TELEPHONE PROCEDURES**

#### **I. PURPOSE.**

The basic function of a telephonic communications system is to facilitate the receipt and dissemination of information to department employees, outside agencies, and members of the general public. As such, the following guidelines shall govern the basic telephone procedures to be utilized by department personnel during routine operations.

#### **II. DEFINITIONS.**

Communication - The act or means of transmitting and receiving information.

Telephone - An instrument designed to electrically reproduce sound, especially speech, over distance. Such instruments may be designed to operate as part of a hard wired or wireless system.

#### **III. GENERAL.**

Incoming telephone calls shall be answered promptly and handled in a courteous and professional manner. When answering outside calls on the telephone, the call-taker will routinely respond with their title and name.

##### **A. Phone System**

To facilitate the expeditious flow and/or exchange of information, the department is served by a variety of dedicated phone lines with specific phone numbers being assigned to individual employees.

### 1). Comm Lines

Internal communications will generally be conducted by a three-digit Comm Line system which shall link various department offices and selected employees into an integrated phone network. An updated listing of current comm line phone numbers will generally be posted at each phone position.

### B. Service Inquiries/Referrals

ECDC personnel will handle the bulk of calls from the general public requesting police services. For the remainder, administrative personnel will serve as the department's first, and often only, contact between the Police Department and general public. As such, they will be responsible to solicit sufficient detail from each caller to determine the appropriate response or if a referral to another agency is the preferred service alternative.

### C. Voice-mail

Should a phone call be received for another department employee known to be on duty, the employee handling the initial call will forward the call to the appropriate office or phone. If no contact is made, the caller will automatically be transferred into the employee's voice-mail box.

Department employees should check their voice-mail for incoming messages a minimum of at least once a day.

### D. Telephone Recording

The Police Department continuously records telephone conversations on certain designated telephones, while a select number of others have a manual switch to activate the recording system as desired. The internal recording system will automatically record approximately 700 hours of phone conversations on DVDs. These recordings may be immediately played back as necessary.

Used DVDs will be retained in archival storage by the commander of the Administrative Division for a period of one (1) year. Should a review of the DVDs be necessary, the review will be restricted to the Administrative Division commander, the Chief of Police, a bureau or division commander, or internal affairs investigator.

In addition to the preceding, ECDC records all telephone and radio traffic related to the department.

#### E. Paging System

In the event a department employee is being sought in regard to a phone call or other reason, and the employee is believed to be within police headquarters, the phone intercom system will be initiated via #645, and the employee paged. The paging system may be activated from any landline phone within the headquarters structure.

#### F. Emergency Message Distribution

Routine messages which are received for department employees shall generally be transferred to the employee's voice-mail box, at which time they may be retrieved by the intended recipient at a convenient time. However, should a message be received involving a family emergency, ECDC personnel shall contact the employee's supervisor, who will then be responsible to relay the message in person.

### IV. T.D.D. SYSTEM.

A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (T.D.D.) will be located in the East Central Dispatch Center and will be operated in accordance to specifications by personnel assigned to dispatching duties.

### V. LANGUAGE LINE SERVICE.

St. Louis County has established a client account with a Language Line Service which, in addition to meeting their own needs in this area, covers all municipalities located within the county at no charge.

The Language Line Service will provide department personnel with access to interpreters who speak more than 140 languages. In addition, the system provides twenty-four hour access to a communications center staffed with trained interpreters and linguists.

When a department employee must communicate with a non-English speaking person, all that is required is for the employee to dial a single telephone number to reach an interpreter. All necessary translations are then accomplished via phone to preclude a delay in securing information or an associated statement.

#### A. Contacting the Service

When a member of the department encounters a non-English speaking person, the below-listed steps should be followed:

- 1). The employee will attempt to identify the language of the person they are dealing with.
- 2). The employee should then call the Language Line communication

facility at 1-800-523-1786 for “911” and emergency situations, or 1-800-643-2255 for routine requests for service.

- 3). The Language Line service operator who answers the phone will automatically request the identity of the language requiring interpretation. The officer will then provide the name of the language being spoken (if known). If the identity of the language is unknown, the officer shall additionally advise the operator that assistance is required to identify the language in question.
- 4). The operator will then ask for the client ID number and personal ID number of the police employee. To satisfy this requirement, department employees will utilize 132001 as the client number, and 019 plus their DSN as a personal ID number.
- 5). The operator will then connect an interpreter onto the line to provide assistance.
- 6). The interpreter will identify themselves with an ID number which should be retained for future reference. Once such administrative tasks are completed, the police employee should then advise the interpreter what information is needed from the non-English speaking person.
- 7). The interpreter will then question the individual and relay needed information to the police employee. This process shall then continue until all inquiries have been satisfied.
- 8). The police employee should advise the interpreter when the call is to be terminated.

## B. Resource Material

Language Line Identification Cards are available to all bureaus and divisions within the Police Department. The ID card is designed to assist police agencies in identifying the language spoken by those non-English speaking individuals they contact in an official capacity.

The Language Line ID Cards should be utilized as follows:

- 1). The name of the language is written in English on the left side of each block and in the foreign language on the right side of each block.
- 2). The instructions underneath the name of each language advise the individual to point to their native language and that an interpreter will then be called.

- 3). The employee will then match the foreign language with its English name and use this to advise the language line operator of the type of interpreter required.

### C. Technical Arrangements

- 1). The Language Line is accepted over standard telephone lines. Communication from police employees can take several forms once an interpreter is available.
  - a. Receiving phone calls from non-English speaking persons
    1. In those instances where a non-English speaking individual contacts this department via phone, the call may be directly conferenced with the language line service by dialing 1-800-523-1786. Once an interpreter is on the line, the employee only need to sequence a conference call to conduct a three-way conversation.
    2. At the time an operator comes on line, the department employee will provide them with the client ID number, personal ID number, and the name of the department and City.
    3. Employees are to speak slowly and clearly. Phone lines, regional accents, and background noise may negatively impact legibility.
    4. Employees are to avoid the use of technical terms, jargon or slang, and speak in laymen's terms whenever possible.
  - b. Face-to Face encounters with non-English speaking persons
    1. Should two phones be available for use, the employee should take one and direct the non-English speaking individual to the other. A three-way conversation involving an interpreter can then take place.
    2. In those instances where only a single phone may be available, the employee and the non-English speaking person should utilize the phone in turn to speak to an interpreter.

## IX. EMPLOYEE TELEPHONE USAGE.

Most City employees are provided with a land-line telephone for conducting City-related business in their assigned work areas. It is understood that there may be times during the working day when it is necessary to make or receive a personal call; however, other than emergency situations, such calls should be limited to lunch or break periods whenever possible. Personal phone calls should not interfere with official duties.

The City also provides a hybrid cellular phone service for a large number of department employees and each marked police car has a cellular phone mounted in same. These will primarily be used for communication between the department and individual officers, and between the officers themselves where confidentiality is a concern. Both land line phones and cellular phones are governed by the same procedures with the exception that the cellular system allows for a certain number of minutes which renew monthly and are shared by all cellular equipment. Further, a list of all assigned cell phones shall be maintained by the commander of the Investigations and Support Bureau.

Employees are strongly discouraged from holding/dialing a cellular phone while driving on city business. Employees should park their vehicles to use a cell phone or make use of a hands free headset.

### A. Reimbursement of Personal Calls

Department employees shall be responsible to fully reimburse the City for the costs of personal calls made over City phone lines or equipment. This shall primarily be restricted to long-distance personal calls over land line phones.

Monthly telephone bills shall be reviewed by the Police Department's Investigations and Support Bureau and any irregularities shall be investigated by that unit. Upon completion of the review, copies of monthly long-distance phone bills shall be forwarded to each police department employee assigned a specific phone number. The employee will then be expected to review the bill and indicate which of the calls were made for business or personal reasons.

Payment for personal calls shall then be forwarded to the Finance Department.

Excessive personal use of City provided phones may be grounds for disciplinary action. Similarly, irregularities noted in phone usage may, following substantiation by investigation, also result in disciplinary action against the employee(s) involved.

## X. Monitoring of City Communication Equipment.

All electronic and telephone communication systems and all communications and information sent through, received, or stored in these systems, are the property of the City of Clayton and are

provided to be used for job-related purposes. The city retains the right to monitor all of its electronic and communications systems at its discretion, including listening to voice-mail messages and recorded conversations, and reading and/or printing e-mail messages. By using these systems, employees consent to such monitoring.

BY ORDER OF:

THOMAS J. BYRNE  
Chief of Police

TJB:dld