

700 MHz Radio SOP

207.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish guidelines for the proper use, care, and maintenance of the 700 MHz Radio equipment. It also provides an outline for transmitting and storage of the 700 MHz radio. Additionally, the audio recordings have shown to be of value in the prosecution of traffic and criminal offenses, the gathering of evidence for accusations of misconduct, training, and ensuring transparency of police activity. In order to maximize the utility of this equipment in these and related areas, officers shall follow the procedures for radio usage and equipment.

207.2 SCOPE

The procedure shall apply to all department employees who are assigned the radio equipment, which are designed to transmit and record audio through two-way communications. The department and individual officers are likely to be scrutinized whenever radio audio is unclear or not audible regarding an event.

207.3 PROCEDURE

- (a) Radios will be assigned and utilized for the entire shift.
- (b) At the beginning of an officer's shift, to include Extra Duty and/or Special Events, the Police Communication Operators will conduct a radio check with the police officers assigned to the shift. This will ensure proper radio function.
- (c) Officers who discover an operating issue with a radio must notify their direct supervisor immediately and arrange for a replacement radio. The radio shall be submitted to the inspecting supervisor with a radio repair form.
- (d) The radio SHALL be utilized to gather, transmit and record all police activities to include special events and the incidents following these types of events, whenever possible, by all officers involved.
- (e) To prevent dissemination of confidential and/or sensitive information, Police Communication Operators and the Police Officers will transmit confidential information on a secured channel. In the event of suspected exposure to blood borne pathogens and/or other potentially infectious diseases, the language "Universal Precautions" will be used to identify the event or person.

207.4 OPERATION

- (a) Police Communication Operators, Police Officers and Command Staff members will not transmit unnecessary signals or messages of a personal nature or use profane, indecent or obscene language. Only pertinent information will be transmitted to minimize use disruption and maximize radio use for the efficient delivery of police services. ***This is in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 18 U.S.C. § 1464 "prohibits the utterance of any obscene, indecent, or profane***

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language by means of radio communication." This is to include any explicit or graphic description or depiction of sexual or excretory organs or activities.

- (b) Police Communication Operators, Police Officers and Command Staff members will not knowingly transmit false calls or distress signals, such as the Signal 13 alert tone. This is in accordance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) 47 U.S. Code §325 false, fraudulent, or unauthorized transmissions that states "No person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall knowingly utter or transmit, or cause to be uttered or transmitted, any false or fraudulent signals of distress."
- (c) The University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department recognizes there are certain circumstances where officers may require immediate action to prevent injury, destruction of evidence, escape of a prisoner, or the assistance of other police agencies. In the event an officer has to have lateral radio communication with another agency, the unit should obtain permission from the Shift Supervisor. Once permission is granted, the officer MUST advise the Police Communication Operator the agency which they are communicating. Once, on the channel, the unit should transmit, requesting permission to communicate on their frequency to avoid interrupting any air traffic. Once the outside agency Communication Operator or Dispatcher acknowledges, the unit should provide their agency and unit ID and the nature of the request. Once the radio transmission is completed, the unit will switch back to their parent channel advising both the Shift Supervisor and Police Communication Operator that they are back on the channel.
- (d) In the event of or during a major event or critical incident, the Police Communication Operator will advise units which channel to utilize. Either UMB TAC 1 or UMB TAC 2 will be assigned and monitored under the guidance of the Shift Supervisor or Command Staff member. The Police Communication Operator will conduct a "roll call" of the units assigned to the incident to ensure all units are on the proper channel. The Police Communication Operator will monitor or transmit on the primary channel.
- (e) In the event of a multi-agency incident and there is a need for a secured channel, the Police Communication Operator ascertains from Central Maryland Regional Communications Committee (CMARC) or Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) the assigned channel pertaining to the event and provide that information to the on scene units. The University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department Units will suspend the usage of 10-Codes and utilize plain language.

207.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

To ensure that this program maintains its integrity, it is imperative that supervisors adhere to the following procedures:

- (a) Supervisors will ensure every member is equipped with a working radio prior to leaving roll call.
- (b) If the radio is not operationally before or during the assigned shift, the supervisor will ensure the member receives a working radio.

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- (c) Shift Supervisors will conduct monthly inspections of the radios and document on the monthly inspection sheet any damage, to include the microphone, antenna, and any other accessories assigned.
- (d) In the event the radio is damaged or not operational, the officer will complete the Radio Repair Form, submitting it to their Sergeant or Shift Supervisor. The Sergeant or Shift Supervisor will submit the form and radio to the member responsible for the maintenance of the radio equipment. The member responsible for the radio equipment will enter the damage or repair issues in the appropriate log and submit the radio to the Police Communication Operator Supervisor to be forwarded to the vendor.

The 700 MHz Radios SHALL NOT:

- (a) Be mishandled by grabbing the antenna, purposely stretching the microphone cord or be marked with any unauthorized engraving.
- (b) Be taken home or used for secondary employment, unless written authorization has been granted by the Chief and Deputy Chief.
- (c) Be intentionally turned off, unless for the purpose of court, during the member's assigned shift.
- (d) Supervisors will ensure complete compliance with this order.

207.6 RADIO AUDIO STORAGE

Audio storage will be maintained on the radio server managed by the Public Safety Information Technology (IT) Department.

207.7 AUDIO REVIEW

- (a) Immediate review for audio can be retrieved and reviewed in the Police Communication Center.
- (b) Sergeants, Lieutenants and Command Staff members can request copies of audio from Public Safety IT.

207.8 SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

The 700 MHz radio requires safe and responsible handling. It is the responsibility of the assigned officer to ensure that the radio is operating and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.

207.9 RELEASE OF RECORDINGS

- (a) It is the policy of the UMBPD that all recordings generated on departmental equipment are the property of the UMBPD. Copying, transmitting or other reproduction of any digital recording segment generated by the UMBPD recording system, or removing such recordings outside the UMBPD, without authorization from the Chief of Police is prohibited.

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- (b) Requests for copies of audio recordings by persons or agencies outside the UMBPD or the State Attorney's Office shall be directed to the Technical Service Lieutenant or designee. The requesting person will be responsible for the cost of duplication pursuant to state statute.
- (c) Officers or other employees shall not retain, or distribute to any person or entity, any original or copy of any recording except as specified in this SOP or as expressly approved by the officer's or employee's supervisor.
- (d) Posting of audio to any social media site without prior written approval from the Chief or designee is strictly prohibited.
- (e) If another assisting law enforcement agency is recorded in the audio that is requested for release or administrative investigation purposes, the affected agency should be notified of the request and a copy provided to them free of charge by the Technical Service Lieutenant or designee as applicable.