


Ocean City Fire Department  
**FIRE CHIEF'S GENERAL ORDER**

FCGO: 23-005

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

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<b>TO</b>	ALL OCFD Personnel
<b>FROM</b>	Fire Chief Richard R. Bowers, Jr 
<b>SUBJECT</b>	RADIO COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

**OCFD Radio Communications and Radio Discipline**

Radio traffic to the 911 Center and from the 911 Center can be overwhelming at times. In order to improve radio communications and radio discipline the following guidelines will be implemented. These improvements will enhance our fire, rescue, marine and EMS operations by developing and practicing these guidelines. Short, direct, clear and concise messaging via the mobile radio or portable radio improves communications to the 911 Center and during incident operations. A radio/or portable radio has never put a fire out, rescued someone in the ocean or performed CPR on a patient.

**Our Problem:** There are consistent routine radio transmissions that are not necessary during incident operations and response. These include transmissions that are not needed for incident management. Radio communications need to be in line with following the chain of command and individual radio traffic is unnecessary and must be eliminated except in the case of an emergency situation.

**Radio Communications Solutions:**

1. **Reduce the number** of radio traffic messages to the 911 Center by being succinct and direct with your messaging.
2. **From the 911 Center,** reduce the amount of information transmitted on the air for a fire, rescue, marine or EMS incident by providing only critical pertinent vital information to the responding unit(s).
3. **“Vital and Critical”** is defined as information that directly relates to the seriousness of the incident to ensure the responding units have info that will assist in rapidly stabilizing the incident scene or an individual(s).

**Radio Discipline**

1. All personnel must embrace radio discipline.
2. Personnel must reduce the number of individual radio transmissions by personnel to improve the facilitation of incident stabilization, firefighter, EMT, paramedic and occupant or patient safety.
3. Unnecessary radio transmissions hinder tactical radio communications during fire, rescue, EMS, marine and special operations incidents. All personnel are to adhere to radio discipline when responding to an incident, operating on a unit or at an incident scene.

### **Radio Discipline Transmission for personnel:**

1. Individual personnel may declare a MAYDAY or signal 13 for themselves or another firefighter at any time during incident and non-incident activities (training, or on the air) via their mobile or portable radio.
2. Officers and personnel are to not ask if a unit should respond to an incident unless they are clearly closer to the incident or have a specialized crew or unit that would best augment the incident operations. Rather, the unit officer shall advise they are responding specifically because they are the closer unit and/or, are a specialized crew or unit to augment the incident operations.
3. Unit Officers or, the individual in the Officers seat, are to make individual transmissions via the mobile radio or a portable radio during incident and non-incident operations.
4. During tactical fireground, rescue, ocean, marine or EMS incident operations radio transmissions must go through the unit officer(s), Division Commander(s), Branch Commander(s), or Incident Commander unless there is a firefighter MAYDAY or Signal 13 situation.
5. Accountability checks via the radio should go through the Unit Officer, Division Commander(s), Branch Commander(s) back to the Incident Commander or the Accountability Officer.
6. All OCFD personnel are not to use the phrase “Ocean King” or “Ten Codes”, on accountability and welfare checks. A plain language response to the 911 Center operators to confirm that the personnel are “OK” with their unit identifier.

### **Emergency Situation Transmissions**

1. **Signal 13** – A transmission from any OCFD personnel or unit to the OC 911 Center requires immediate response by law enforcement and the closest fire and EMS units to the requesting person or unit. Signal 13 incidents are or developing into a life-threatening situation.
2. **Priority** – A message from any OCFD personnel or unit indicating that have a situation or matter of importance that requires air time to make the transmission. “Priority” air time for the message is immediately granted and all other radio transmissions are halted (except a signal 13) so that the “priority” messaging can be completed over the air.
3. **Mayday** – This is a life-threatening situation for firefighters during fireground operations. A “Mayday” may be transmitted by an individual or on behalf of another firefighter or group of firefighters.