Emergency Traffic (Imminent Danger)
Emergency Evacuation (Evacuate structure)
10-24 (Law Enforcement)

Emergency Traffic (Imminent Danger)

- **IC** calls **Emergency Traffic**
- Dispatch sets 2 Alert Tones (5 seconds)
- Dispatch Announces emergency traffic-all units stand by
- IC Announces the reason for the Emergency traffic.
- **Emergency Traffic All Clear** when normal traffic can resume.

Emergency Evacuation (Evacuate structure)

- **IC** calls **Emergency Traffic**
- Dispatch sets 2 Alert Tones (5 seconds)
- Dispatch sets Alert Tones /All companies evacuate the building (repeated twice)
- Units blast Air horns intermittently 1-10 second blowing / follows by 1 -10 seconds of silence.
- All units evacuate and the IC completes a **PAR.**
- Once complete, **Emergency Evacuation All clear** when normal traffic can resume

10-24 (Law Enforcement)
IC calls a **10-24** for an immediate life threatening situation which in.

	Palm Beach County Fire Rescue **Standard Operating Guideline**	
	SOG 210-01	**Communications**
	Issue Date: 08/17/2022	Effective Date: 08/31/2022

PURPOSE:

To provide general and emergency radio procedures while operating on training or emergency incidents.

AUTHORITY:

- Fire Rescue Administrator
- NFPA 1561
- VI-3 Radio Procedures

SCOPE:

This standard guideline shall apply to all Emergency Operations personnel.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: WPB Codes

PROCEDURE:

These guidelines provide a basic framework for most incidents.

1. Refer to Radio Communications (PPM FR-O-201) for additional information (i.e., TAC channel assignments, requesting a mechanic, etc…).

2. **800 MHz Radio Communications**

a. Radio Transmissions

   i. All radio transmissions shall be done with clear text and common terminology. No signals or codes shall be used except for purposes of security or confidentiality. The intent is to paint a clear picture and reduce confusion. Confusion could result in inefficient and unsafe operations causing injury, loss of life or property.

   ii. Radio transmissions shall follow the "military order model", ("hey you, it's me") with the unit ID of the receiver first, followed by the unit ID of the sender. This shall get the attention of the unit being contacted, and ensure the message is heard and understood. The unit ID should be verbalized as separate numbers, to avoid confusion with other units that sound alike.

1. Example:
   a. *"Dispatch, Rescue three-three (R33 is calling Dispatch)"*
   b. *"Engine four-two, Incident Command (Incident Command is calling E42)"*

iii. Building sides and exposures shall be identified using phonetic spelling (i.e., Alpha side, Bravo exposure, Charlie side, exposure Delta 1).

iv. **Personnel (including Incident Command) should "echo back" fireground/tactical orders to make sure they are understood.**
   1. Example:
      a. *"Engine two-four, Incident Command, pull a 1 ¾" pre-connect for Fire Attack on Side Alpha".*
      b. *"Incident Command, Engine two-four acknowledge, 1 ¾" line, Fire Attack side Alpha."*

v. Units should avoid interrupting an ongoing communication (other than when initiating Emergency Procedures as described below). When an interruption does occur, the person who initiated the original communication should tell the interrupting unit to "stand-by" and then continue with the original communication.

vi. **Radio discipline should be utilized during all IDLH incidents, especially when companies are first entering an IDLH. Personnel should avoid nonessential transmissions during this time.**

vii. Good radio communication is critical to safe and effective fireground performance; speak clearly at a practiced rate, deliberately control your emotions and breathing when speaking on the radio. Unnecessary phrases should be avoided. The sender should think about what they shall say before they key the microphone.

b. Radio Procedures

i. All personnel on an emergency scene must have a portable radio, or if not available, be working with personnel who have a radio.

ii. The Mobile Data Computer (MDC) Center shall be used for "Responding," "Arrival," and "Available" or stat with the Communication Center on the appropriate TAC channel.

iii. Units going available on a move up must verbally stat with the Communication Center.
   1. Example: *"Dispatch, Rescue 2-3-0, copy Move Up"*.

iv. Units must also stat with the Communication Center verbally once they have arrived in the move up zone and station.
   1. Example: *"Dispatch, Rescue 2-3-0, available in 5-3 zone."*

v. Refer to *SOG 110-01 Emergency and Non-Emergency Response* for response guidelines.

vi. Personnel dispatched to a non-emergency incident (i.e., Public Assist) shall remain on Firemain (TAC 1A) to monitor for emergency incidents in their response zone.

vii. If an emergency incident is dispatched and a unit assigned to a non-emergency incident (i.e., Public Assist) can handle the emergency incident, they shall advise the Communication Center. The dispatcher shall then advise the unit to switch to the appropriate TAC channel.

c. Additional TAC Channels

    i. The Communication Center shall advise of the radio channel to operate on. If the situation indicates, the Incident Commander may request a separate tactical channel.

    ii. 800 MHz radios have limited range in large reinforced structures. Radios that are unable to communicate inside a building on a repeated TAC channel should be switched to a designated fireground simplex channel (TAC 14A, TAC 15A).

    iii. The Communication Center should be notified before units switch to a fireground simplex channel (TAC 14A, TAC 15A). Fireground simplex channels (TAC 14A, TAC 15A) typically operate within a radius of one (1) mile.

    iv. Incident Commander's may consider requesting an additional TAC channel during incidents for Incident Management assignments (i.e., Base, Medical, Operations, etc…).

d. Additional Alarms

    i. When additional alarms are requested for an incident the added units shall respond on their Battalion TAC channel and MDC's, then switch to the assigned TAC channel.

3. **Benchmarks**

a. Structure Fires

    i. The term **"Primary Complete, All Clear"** indicates the primary search is completed and no victims have been found.

    ii. The term **"Secondary Complete, All Clear"** indicates the secondary search is completed and no victims have been found.

    iii. The term **"Water on the fire"** indicates the company has found the seat of the fire and is applying water to confine and extinguish the fire.

    iv. The term **"Fire under Control"** indicates the Fire Attack company has confined the fire, eliminated further fire extension, and protected any threatened exposures.

    v. The term **"Fire Out"** indicates overhaul operations are complete.

b. Medical Incidents

    i. The term "**MCI level ___**" indicates a Mass Casualty Incident involving multiple patients as classified in *SOG 500-03 Mass Casualty Incidents.*

    ii. The term **"Extrication in Progress"** indicates that extrication activities have begun.

    iii. The term **"Extrication Complete"** indicates that all patients have been removed from the vehicle and no extrication needs still exists.

    iv. The term **"Trauma Alert"** indicates the need for a patient(s) to be transported to a Trauma Center.

    v. The term **"Stroke Alert"** indicates the need for a patient to be transported to designated hospital.

    vi. The term **"STEMI Alert"** indicates the need for a patient to be transported to the hospital for cardiac treatment.

    vii. The term **"Med Alert"** indicates a high probability of an infectious or contagious patient.

c. <u>Maydays</u>

    i. The term "**MAYDAY Firefighter(s) Located**" indicates the mayday firefighter is located.

    ii. The term "**MAYDAY Firefighter ID Confirmed"** indicates the mayday firefighter ID is confirmed

    iii. The term "**MAYDAY Firefighter out"** indicates the mayday firefighter is out.

d. <u>Open Water and Dive Rescue Operations</u>

    i. The term "**Swimmer in the Water**" and "**Diver in the Water**" indicates a swimmer or diver (respectively) has entered the water. If more than one swimmer or diver enter the water the total number shall be announced.

    ii. The term "**Object located**" or "**3 pulls**" indicates a victim or object has been located. The term 3 pulls should be used when discreetness and social sensitivity are needed.

    iii. The term "**Object Out of the Water**" indicates the victim is out of the water.

    iv. The term "**Rescue Mode**" indicates there is a chance to save a life.

    v. The term "**Recovery Mode**" indicates there is no chance to save a life.

    vi. The term "**Swimmer Out of the Water**" and "**Diver Out of the Water**" indicates a swimmer or diver (respectively) has exited the water. If more than one swimmer or diver exit the water the total number shall be announced.

    vii. The term "**Swim Terminated**" or "**Dive Terminated**" indicates the swim or dive operations have been terminated.

4. **Arrival Report**

a. The first unit arriving on scene shall provide an Arrival Report. The exception to this shall be typical medical calls (shortness of breath, fall, etc…).

b. The Arrival Report shall contain four basic components, **CANS**:

    i. **Conditions** – Describe the current conditions visible from the cab of the vehicle (heavy, dense, black smoke coming from side Alpha, four-vehicle Signal 4 with moderate damage, etc.).

    ii. **Actions** – What immediate action the company is going to perform.

       1. Examples:

a. *"Deploying 2 ½" attack line for defensive fire attack"*
b. *"Beginning triage operations"*
   iii. **Needs** – What additional resources are need that are not in the initial alarm assignment (Additional Alarm, Special Operations, Law Enforcement, Utilities, Tow Services, etc...).
   iv. **Statement** of Incident Command – State the Incident Command name, location and mode.
   v. **Offensive mode is assumed, but defensive mode must be declared.**

5. **Personnel Accountability Report**
a. Personnel Accountability Reports shall be followed in accordance with *SOG 220-01 Personnel Accountability.*

6. **Progress Reports**
a. Progress reports are essential to incident management. They allow for effective decision making and assist in prioritizing the commitment of resources. Progress reports allow for effective refinement and revision of the IAP.
b. Company Officers should provide timely Progress Reports to confirm progress and outcomes against objectives.
c. To be effective, progress reports need to be:
   i. Timely
   ii. Complete
   iii. Concise
d. The progress report should include "CAN" information:
   i. **C**onditions
   ii. **A**ctions
   iii. **N**eeds
e. Progress reports should briefly detail where and what actions:
   i. Are being undertaken
   ii. Have been completed
f. Progress reports will occur with greater frequency in the early stages of an incident, typically every 5 to 10 minutes, or as major parts of the job are completed.
g. An Incident Commander may request progress reports on a periodic basis, if reports are not given by those personnel under their command.
h. Each firefighter on the incident scene is responsible for noting pertinent, changing conditions (getting better or getting worse). These changes need to be communicated through the chain of command to the Incident Commander so strategies may be modified.
i. The Communication Center shall announce benchmarks every 10 minutes to assist the Incident Commander with time-tracking.
j. It is recommended that the Incident Commander give a Progress Report of the incident at each 10-minute benchmark.

7. **Emergency Radio Procedures**
a. Priority Traffic
  i. Trauma Hawk may call for **"Priority Traffic"** when immediate communication is required during the landing zone process to ensure that scene safety is maintained. No alert tones shall be given unless the Trauma Hawk requests Emergency Traffic due to an immediate emergent situation.
  ii. Once the need for immediate communication is completed, the Priority Traffic can be released with the term "**Priority Traffic, All Clear**".
b. Emergency Traffic
  i. The term "**Emergency Traffic**" should be used to advise personnel of imminent danger, which is announced by the dispatcher.
  ii. The term "Emergency Traffic" can be requested by any company that has an immediate communication that needs to be broadcasted. Emergency Traffic shall then take priority over routine traffic. This is not to be used for routine traffic transmissions.
  iii. The Communication Center shall use Emergency Traffic to broadcast information related to the health and safety of units responding to an emergency call.
  iv. When a company advises Emergency Traffic**,** the Communication Center shall sound **the alert tones** and broadcast for all units to stand-by. All routine radio traffic shall cease except for the company that requested the Emergency Traffic.
  v. The term **"Emergency Traffic"** shall be used to advise personnel of imminent danger when communicating an Exclusion Zone.
  vi. Once all personnel are clear of the imminent danger, the Emergency Traffic can be released with the term "**Emergency Traffic, All Clear**". When this is announced, the Communication Center shall release the TAC channel and all units shall be allowed to resume normal radio traffic.
  vii. The Communication Center shall log the time Emergency Traffic started and ended in the incident history using a miscellaneous comment.
c. Emergency Evacuation
  i. The term **"Emergency Evacuation"** should be used to advise personnel of imminent danger requiring the evacuation of the scene or area to an established safe place (Rally Point).
  ii. Once Emergency Evacuation has been announced:
    1. The Communication Center shall sound the **radio alert tones** and advise all companies on the incident to evacuate the building immediately. This message shall be **repeated twice**.
    2. Emergency Traffic shall be in effect and all routine radio traffic shall cease.
    3. The units on scene shall blast their air horns intermittently (one to ten seconds blowing, followed by one to ten seconds of silence) for 50 seconds.
    4. All personnel shall immediately evacuate the building or area.

5. All personnel shall report to their supervisor or a pre-designated area.
6. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander to follow *SOG 220-01 Personnel Accountability* and perform a **PAR**.

    iii. Once all personnel are clear of the scene or area of imminent danger, the Emergency Evacuation can be released with the term "**Emergency Evacuation, All Clear**". When this is announced, the Communication Center shall release the TAC channel and all units shall be allowed to resume normal radio traffic. The Communication Center shall log the time Emergency Evacuation started and ended in the incident history using a miscellaneous comment.

d. <u>10-24</u>

    i. The code **10-24** is Law Enforcement's code for help. The code 10-24 shall be used when Fire Rescue personnel are in a <u>life-threatening situation</u> and in need of immediate Law Enforcement assistance.

    ii. The Communication Center should immediately contact the appropriate Law Enforcement agency and respond them with the highest priority to the requesting unit's last known position. **No further explanation shall be required of the unit**.

    iii. The Communication Center **should not** attempt to ask a reference from a unit announcing 10-24, nor should they activate the radio alert tones. These actions could compromise their situation.

    iv. Emergency Traffic shall be in effect, and should remain in effect until Law Enforcement arrives, and/or the requesting unit advises the scene is secure.

    v. The Communication Center shall log this in the incident history as a benchmark.

e. <u>Alert Tones and Channel Marker</u>

    i. The Communication Center shall **only** sound the radio alert tones for Emergency Traffic, Mayday, and Emergency Evacuation.

    ii. When an alert tone is sounded, the Communication Center shall initiate the channel marker.

    iii. **The channel marker** is designed to provide a timed, short beep over the radio channel to indicate an emergency event is in progress and radio transmissions on the channel should be kept to an absolute minimum.

8. **Multi-Jurisdictional Incidents**

a. During a multi-jurisdictional incident, the Incident Commander shall verify that other agencies have direct communications with Incident Command. This can be accomplished by one of the following:

    i. <u>Compatible Radio Systems</u> – In-coming units with compatible radio systems shall be instructed as to what frequencies are being utilized.

    ii. <u>Incident Command Post Representative</u> – In the event that incompatible radio systems prevent direct communications with mutual aid companies,

a representative shall respond with the units from their jurisdiction to establish a direct communications link with the Incident Commander at the Unified Command Post.

    iii. <u>Disseminate Radios</u> – The requesting agency shall provide radios to mutual aid companies with a frequency allowing communications with the Incident Commander.

    iv. <u>Merge Companies</u>– Mutual aid companies shall be merged with companies that have communications with the Incident Commander.

9. **VHF Radio Procedures**

a. <u>General VHF Radio Transmissions</u>

    i. Begin VHF radio communications by hailing the other agency, using their agency name three times, on the appropriate operating channel, followed by Palm Beach County Fire Rescue (PBCFR).

    ii. Each radio transmission shall end with "over."

    iii. Example to reach PBSO Marine Unit:

        1. "PBSO Marine unit, PBSO Marine unit. Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. Over."

        2. PBSO Marine will respond: "Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, this is PBSO Marine. Over."

    iv. Once communications are established, the PBCFR VHF radio operator should reply with an operating channel to switch to.

        1. Example, channel "68." Then both agencies will change to channel 68 to exchange information.

    v. When all radio transmissions are done and the radio communications are ready to be terminated, the VHF radio operators say their agency name followed by "out." This will let everyone know that the agencies are done using that radio channel. Example, to terminate communications:

        1. "Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, out."

b. <u>USCG Response</u>

    i. Use Channel 16 (refer to FR-O-201 Radio Communications).

    ii. "Coast Guard, Coast Guard, Coast Guard, this is Palm Beach County Fire Rescue; we have an open water incident and request your assistance over."

    iii. The USCG will respond and request more information and may direct the call to Channel 22-USCG Operations Channel

    iv. PBCFR shall contact the Communications Center via landline or the 800 MHz radio requesting them to contact a Bridge-tender to hold a bridge for emergency vehicles.

    v. VHF Radios can be used to contact the Bridge-tender directly to hold a drawbridge for emergencies using VHF Channel 9 - "Hailing Channel."

        1. Hail the Bridge - Tender twice, then identify your agency name and request, finalized with "Over."

2. Example: "PGA Bridge, PGA Bridge, this is Palm Beach County Fire Rescue. Hold the bridge."

Supersession History
1. SOG #1205, issued 06/01/2005
2. SOG #1205, issued 10/01/2012
3. SOG #210-01, clerical 05/01/2018
4. SOG #210-01, issued 05/21/2018
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