



**COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS  
LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

**Policy No.** 4325 **Date Issued:** June 1, 1996  
**Section:** 4300 – Radio Procedures **Date Revised:** February 14, 2022

**SUBJECT: RADIO SILENCE**

**APPROVED:** <signed copy on file>  
Chairperson, Law Enforcement Users Subcommittee

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**1.0 Purpose**

As a matter of routine, dispatchers should initiate a radio silence if a circumstance or situation of imminent danger exists to ensure the radio channel is available for immediate use by involved officers for emergency traffic.

**2.0 Definitions**

Typically, a radio silence is used only until an immediate threat or danger is resolved (code 4). Examples of dispatcher-initiated radio silences include, but are not limited to, the following in-progress incidents:

- Pursuits
- Robberies or robbery alarms, once field units are on the scene
- Shots fired at the scene
- Large fights or disturbances with weapons, once field units are on the scene
- Building searches, when an officer requests a cleared frequency
- High risk car stops
- Requests for cover by field units

## 3.0 Procedure

### 3.1. Initiating Radio Silence

- 3.1.1. Additionally, a radio silence should be initiated, regardless of incident, at the request of any on-scene or responding officer or the patrol supervisor. Dispatchers will activate a channel marker automatically for the duration of the radio silence, except when a frequency is cleared for a building search. Field units may request a channel marker be canceled at any time.
- 3.1.2. Field personnel not directly involved in the situation shall maintain complete radio silence (with the exception of emergency radio traffic) on all channels until the radio silence is lifted. Whenever practical, NetCom may open a secondary channel for a subsequent, unrelated emergency or other non-incident related routine traffic while a radio silence is in effect on the primary channel.
- 3.1.3. A channel priority should be initiated on a secondary channel (yellow or red) by either NetCom or field units if a tactical situation exists requiring a separate, open frequency for tactical traffic, including: setting perimeters, requesting specialized units, and directing on-scene activities. By opening a secondary (tactical) channel, officers can talk freely regarding all aspects of the detail without competing with routine, unrelated traffic.
- 3.1.4. To initiate a channel priority, use a single alert tone (alert 1) on both the primary and secondary channel and broadcast: “(Agency) units on the scene or responding to (incident/location) switch to the (secondary) channel for tactical operations. All other units remain on the (primary) channel until further advised.”

### 3.2. Lifting Radio Silence

- 3.2.1. To resume normal traffic, a single alert tone (alert 1) and simulcast on primary and secondary channels, "Resume normal traffic on the (primary/secondary) frequency. Units on the (primary/secondary) frequency, switch back to the (primary/secondary) frequency.”
- 3.2.2. To close the tactical channel and lift a channel priority, follow the same procedures as lifting a radio silence.