



**COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS
LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Policy No. 4410	Date Issued: June 1, 1996
Section: 4400 – Telephone Procedures	Date Revised: May 9, 2022
Accreditation Standards:	
SUBJECT: GENERAL TELEPHONE PROCEDURES	
APPROVED: <signed copy on file>	_____
	Chairperson, Law Enforcement Users Subcommittee
APPROVED: <signed copy on file>	_____
	Amethyst Uchida, General Manager

As a communications dispatcher, you are the public’s critical link to help in an emergency. Many of our callers will be frightened, angry or confused. Remember that your initial conversation with the caller sets the tone for the entire incident. You should never come across to a caller as sounding sarcastic or impatient. COURTESY is the key note.

- Be prepared.
- Answer promptly.
- Answer with a smile.
- Stay calm.
- Prioritize multiple calls.
- NEVER ASSUME. There is no such thing as a routine call.

Always be prepared. Have all of your tools and equipment at hand and ready. Answer telephones promptly and treat each call as a potential emergency. To the caller, each ring may seem an eternity. Give your full attention to each call. Listen to what the caller is saying and make sure you understand what services s/he needs. Do not continue another conversation, eat or chew gum while you are answering a phone call. Speak directly into your headset microphone.

NEVER MAKE ASSUMPTIONS OR BECOME COMPLACENT. There is no such thing as a routine call. Do not assume that the call you are receiving is the same as a call taken a few minutes before. For example, a traffic accident may trigger a second collision in the same area.

A calm, competent, decisive and courteous dispatcher will assure the caller of prompt action. Speak calmly, with concern and courtesy, and take control of the conversation. Maintain a courteous and professional attitude; you may have to interrupt a caller to obtain essential information. Ask the proper questions: where, what, when, who, how, weapons.

Take complete and accurate information regarding the incident. Enter all information directly into CAD as you receive it. Never trust anything to memory.

Show interest in the caller. To him or her, this call is very important and details insignificant to you may be of utmost importance to him/her. This phone call may be his/her only chance to ask for help.

Always explain delays for responding officers. If there is an extended response time, call the reporting party back to assure them you have not forgotten and you will dispatch an officer as soon as one is available. Avoid giving the caller an exact time an officer will respond as we may encounter additional delays.

Explain waits and delays when checking on information for a caller. Always advise a caller when they are being transferred to another extension or agency. Use language the caller will understand.

End all calls positively and courteously. Make sure the caller is aware of how we will handle his/her call, e.g., an officer will contact them to take their report, an officer will respond to their location, etc.

- Be flexible. You must be able to deal with a variety of people and their individual needs.
- Be empathetic. Be sensitive to how it would feel to be in the caller's shoes; empathy is not sympathy.
- Be professional. Use the tools you have to meet the caller's needs and expectations.
- Be courteous. Have genuine consideration and respect for the caller's feelings and expectations. Treat the caller the way you would want a loved one to be treated. There is never an excuse for rudeness. If a caller is rude, be professional; ignorant, be informative; boorish, be courteous.
- Be an expert. Know the agency's policies and procedures. Know your equipment, jurisdiction, and resources.
- Use common sense. Know your limitations; don't hesitate to ask for help. Don't get in too deep trying to handle it all or answer a question you are not sure of.

Always check with yourself before ending a call. Do you:

- Understand what the caller is reporting?
- Clearly know where the incident is taking place?
- Know what the caller expects and have you explained how you will handle the call?

Remember, once you have answered the phone you have accepted responsibility to handle the matter.