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I. Responsibilities of the Communications Center Telecommunicators, and Field Users

1.1 Management/Discipline of Fire Service Communications System

It is both a necessity and a legal requirement that the Berks County Communications Center Fire Services System be properly disciplined at all times. Both Center telecommunicators and system field users must continually keep in mind the need for the most efficient use of “airtime.”

Telecommunicators and field users must also bear in mind the need to keep the system geared toward the best interest of the public by following established procedures for language, pronunciation, dispatch, reporting, record-keeping and development of emergency planning.

The Berks County Fire Services System needs to be ever-changing in an effort to meet the continuing new developments of the fire services field. By virtue of its central role within that field, it is incumbent upon the Communications Center to make policy changes as necessary; however, change must also be fostered from the ranks of the system’s field users. It is a policy of the Communications Center to encourage such input. Ideas and suggestions on the operations of the Berks County Fire Services System shall be submitted to the Communications Center Administration in written form, and suggestions given merit shall be recommended by both the Communications Advisory Committee and the Berks County Fire Chiefs Association for discussion and possible implementation.

1.2 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Regulations/Guidelines

By federal law, the Berks County Communications Center operates the Fire Services System as a privilege extended by the Federal Communications Commission. Like any other privilege, it can be taken away if abused. The FCC, of course, considers the impact on the people the system serves; but, it has methods designed to punish those who fail to follow established guidelines. Heavy fines and imprisonment are two of the more imposing methods used to enforce those guidelines. Most of the basic rules that apply to this system are outlined below. It must be clearly understood that breaches of these regulations cannot be accepted from either the field user or the telecommunicator. To avoid some of the more common infractions that can result in adverse FCC actions, both telecommunicators and field users should remember that it is **UNLAWFUL UNDER FCC REGULATIONS** to:

1. Fail to identify your station with its prescribed call-sign either once every half hour, or following the completion of each series of radio transmission.

2. Transmit other than official system traffic, including personal signals or messages.
3. Use profane, indecent or obscene language on the air.
4. Willfully damage, or permit to be damaged, any radio equipment.
5. Cause unlawful or harmful interference with any other radio communications.
6. Intercept, use or publish the contents of radio transmissions for other than official purposes without the express consent of the proper authorities.
7. Make any adjustments, repairs or alterations to any equipment without holding proper FCC licenses or permits, with the exception of those functions intended to be altered or adjusted by the equipment user.
8. Transmit any call-sign, number or series of numbers of letters that resemble a call sign, with the exception of the assigned call sign.
9. Permit access to any radio equipment, and/or radio equipment records to any person, other than a properly identified representative of the FCC at any reasonable hour.
10. Fail to keep the station license(s) current and to continually meet the provisions of the license(s).
11. Willfully ignore or interfere with any emergency radio transmission.

Detailed rules and regulations of the FCC can be found in a copy of Part 90 of the Commissions's rules. A copy of this part will be kept on file for reference in the Communications Center, and telecommunicators should take the opportunity to familiarize themselves with these rules. Continued or willful ignorance of the FCC Rules and Regulations will cause serious ramifications for a telecommunicator, individual field user or fire services organization with regard to continued association with the Berks County Fire Services System.

1.3 Communications Center Role in Training

The proper operation of any public safety communications system is dependant on the people using it. Berks County Communications Center policy is to continually update the knowledge of its telecommunicators and field users. Listed are some of the ways the Communications Center participates in a continuing education program:

1. Send telecommunicators to conferences, seminars, meetings, etc. held by various organizations with regard to new developments in the Fire Services System.
2. Provide individual/group tours of the Communications Center.
3. Permit field users to observe the Communications Center operations with prior approval from Center management.

4. Encourage telecommunicators to observe or participate in fire service organizations.
5. Provide telecommunicators to fire service organizations as speakers at training sessions or meetings to promote understanding and goodwill.

It is the goal of the Berks County Communications Center to become involved to the maximum extent in the fire services system as an ongoing effort to increase the efficiency to the overall system.

1.4 Communications Center Organization

The Communications Center is operated under the authority of the Berks County Commissioners, and all of its personnel are County employees.

The Commissioners appoint a person or persons to manage the Communications Center. These people are responsible to the Commissioners for the operation and administration of the Center, and serve as liaison between the County and the organizations representing police, fire and emergency medical services.

A representative of the Berks County Communications Center should be available to attend each Berks County Fire Chiefs Association meeting and any invitation of the individual Fire Zones.

Additional middle management personnel have been appointed to assist upper management with its duties. At all times, a “shift supervisor” is on duty in the Center, and is accountable for ongoing operations. The shift supervisor is responsible for what occurs on the shift, and is the individual responsible for dealing with organization officers who have questions or complaints about Center actions during the shift.

The shift supervisor may refer questions to other middle management or upper management personnel, in accordance with standard operating procedures of the Center itself.

The “working” or “operating” personnel in the Center are full- and part-time telecommunicators. These people receive calls for service, route them to the appropriate public safety departments and assist these departments in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Telecommunicators perform their functions in accordance with specific service procedures and the standard operating procedure of the Center; they are not permitted to deviate from these established parameters, and are not empowered to arbitrate disputes or explain policy rationale.

1.5 News Media Policies and Guidelines

It must be recognized by everyone connected with the Berks County Fire Services System that many of their activities fall within the domain frequently referred to as “the public’s right to know.” Because of this, an established policy of dealing with the news media needs to be formulated and disseminated to all concerned media organizations. The keystones to any successful relationship with the media hinges on a two-fold principle: first, an amicable relationship aimed at helping both parties do their jobs better; and, second, the need to balance the public’s need to know with the privacy of those who come in contact with the fire service. The following guidelines shall apply to the news media:

1. Do not lie to or willfully mislead media representatives. If not in a position to answer a specific question, you should advise the representative of this, and attempt to refer them to someone who is in a position to answer their questions.
2. Relate to the media representative only what is known to be a fact. Telecommunicators can give information as to what units were dispatched, where they were dispatched to, what time they were dispatched and if the incident is under control. A telecommunicator cannot attest to the specifics of the incident, such as what type of building is involved, what the cause of the fire was, injuries and any other types of information that has only been heard on the radio.
3. All involved should be cordial with the media, and if not in a position to release the information being sought, make understood the reasons for your inability to be of assistance.
4. Make every effort to have the media representative understand your job and the conditions you must work under, and, in return, extend the same effort toward understanding their job. This will help in building an amicable and productive relationship that will assist both sides in reaching their goals.
5. If problems with a particular news organization or its representative arise, the supervisor should be advised; it will be their responsibility to take proper action. **AT NO TIME** should you become abusive or discourteous with any media representative.

II. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER REGULATIONS AND OPERATION

2.1 Berks County Fire Services System Guidelines

The fire service community, through a variety of means, has established many standard practices with regard to communications. These are subject to change. However, it is the responsibility of all Berks County Fire Services System users to keep up-to-date on any such practice. This, of course, infers the acceptance of that practice by all concerned. Recognized communications practices will be kept on file. Alterations to these practices can be made only through the procedure outlined in Section 1.1. TELECOMMUNICATORS AND FIELD USERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO MAKE ALTERATIONS!!!!

It is the responsibility of the on-duty fire services telecommunicator to insure all proper communications practices are followed. Organizations or individuals that violate these practices should be courteously advised of the infraction in such a way that it prevents embarrassment while understanding repeated problems or offenses should be referred to the Communication Center administration, in writing, for action. Infractions of these rules and regulations by a telecommunicator shall be brought to the attention of the shift supervisor or Center administration by a field user in a position of authority. Repeated problems or offenses shall be directed to the Center administration, in writing, for action.

Specific questions with regard to the policies and practices used on the Berks County Fire Services System should be directed to the on-duty shift supervisor or the Center administration.

2.2 Communications Center Procedures and Regulations

Telecommunicators should, at all times when on-duty, be aware of their obligation to follow any and all policies set down by the administration of the Center. They should also recognize the need to assist and communicate with any other Communications Center functions, as the occasion may arise. Updates of any rule changes/policy alterations will be kept on file for easy reference by all.

2.3 Field User Procedures and Regulations

Field users should, at all times, be aware of their obligation to follow any and all procedures and policies set down by the administration of the Center. They should also recognize the need to assist the Communications Center, however possible, as the occasion may arise. Updates of any rule changes/policy alterations must be kept on file at all companies for easy reference by all personnel.

2.4 Communications Center Basic Rules for Voice Operation

In conjunction with references in this manual relating to airtime, the following guidelines should also be followed. These few basic principles will aid in expediting message handling while promoting a good working relationship between all concerned:

1. Mobile operators with tube-type radios (and some transistorized radios) should keep in mind that such radios require a brief warm up period. Allow transmitters of this type to stabilize before attempting to transmit.
2. Organize your thoughts before transmitting. The over-eager operator is a source of wasted time and confusion when they try to “think” on the air.
3. Speak distinctly, and pronounce words carefully. Speak at a moderate speed using a conversational tone of voice with a natural emphasis and rhythm. The total message should be spoken by phrases, and not by use of one word at a time.
4. The use of any code or signal is not authorized. The standard abbreviations and phrases listed in this manual shall be used at all times.
5. Make sure that the microphone push-to-talk button is fully depressed, then pause briefly before starting to talk. Mobile operators should hold the microphone about one-inch from their lips, and should speak across the mouthpiece. Do not hold the microphone directly in front of your mouth; rather, slightly to the side, and at an angle of about 45-degrees. This will prevent ‘blowing’ into the microphone.
6. Mobile operators should attempt to avoid transmitting while sirens are operating. It is understood this is not always possible, so common sense prevails.
7. During all transmissions the mobile operator should attempt to remain calm. Be careful to avoid UNCIVIL, ANGRY, ABUSIVE, DEROGATORY, SARCASTIC OR FOUL REMARKS OR LANGUAGE. When faced with such a situation, maintain control and do not attempt to retaliate. Pause to gain your composure, then proceed with the business at hand.

III. DISPATCH FUNCTION OF THE BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICES SYSTEM

3.1 Definition of the Dispatch Function

The Berks County Fire Service System plays a major role in providing fire services to the County. In order to best aid the public, it has been well-documented that a reliable, efficient and functional method of communications is needed between field personnel, allied public-safety agencies and others within the total fire services system. Providing this method of communications in the best possible way aids in attaining the overall goal of everyone connected with the provision of the fire services.

It must be recognized that in many of the incidents the system will deal with speed is essential. Therefore, the telecommunicator must:

1. Obtain all possible information from the caller as to what the emergency is, what is involved and the exact location of the emergency.
2. Obtain this information with all due speed, but never at the expense of reliability.
3. Have a good working knowledge of the total fire services system so that proper personnel and equipment can be routed to the emergency scene in shortest amount of time.
4. Prepare themselves to “think ahead” of the responding units as to what kind of additional aid might be needed and where it can be obtained.
5. Aid field personnel by properly maintaining discipline on all radio channels, offer advice from a communications point of view and act in a communications control function. In doing this, telecommunicators must understand, however, that they are not in a command position.

3.2 Berks County Fire Services Identification System

For the purpose of providing fast and reliable communications, a designated numbering/identification system will be used. The use of names or numbers other than those approved will not be allowed.

3.2.1 Communications Center Identification

The Communications Center will be known as “Berks.” This word will be spoken when a unit is making its initial call to the Communications Center.

EX: BERKS (pause), 1-10

3.2.2 Company Identification

Each separate company that will in some fashion use the Berks County Fire Services System shall use an assigned number.

EX: COMPANY 42 refers to the building where the Cedar Top Fire Company keeps its equipment. It also refers to the entire membership that supports the functions of that company.

A complete list of company identifiers can be found in Appendix 'A'.

3.2.3 Unit Identification

The following is an example of the numbering system accepted by the Berks County Fire Chiefs Association for the numbering of the fire apparatus using the Berks County Fire Services System.

(## = Company Number)

Engines: Engine ##, Engine ##-1, Engine ##-2, Engine ##-3

Rescues: Rescue ##, Rescue ##-4

Brush: Brush ##, Brush ##-5, Brush ##-6

Tankers: Tanker ##, Tanker ##-7, Tanker ##-8

Squads: Squad ##, Squad ##-9

Aerials: Truck ##, Ladder ##, Aerial ##, Tower ##

Cars: Car ##, Car ##-1, etc.

Officers (Fire company appointed/elected):

Chief: ##-10

Assistant Chief: ##-11, ##-12, ##-13

Other Officers: ##-14, ##-15, ##-16, ##-17

Fire Marshal: ##-18

Officers (Municipal appointed):

Chief: Chief – (municipal #)

Coordinator: FC- (municipal #)

Fire Marshal: FM – (municipal #)

Fire Police:

Fire Frequencies (Fire police captain/lieutenant only):
##-19, ##-20

Fire Police System: (Municipal #)-201; (Municipal#)-202; etc.

Fire Police Captains and Lieutenants **ONLY** will be permitted to use the Fire Services System on **FIRE POLICE RESPONSES ONLY**. The Fire Police Captain or Lieutenant whose jurisdiction the call is in may report “responding.” From that point on, no other fire police officers should contact the Communications Center to respond. Fire Police officers will be identified using the municipal numbers outlined below:

MUNICIPALITY # + 201, 231, 261 (Captain)

MUNICIPALITY # + 202, 232, 262 (Lieutenant)

EX: 38-201 (West Reading Fire Police Captain)

EX: 65-232 (Rehlersburg Fire Police Lieutenant)

Additionally, four specific identifiers have been assigned for use by appointed municipal officials who may use the Fire Services System. These identifiers must be followed with the municipality number.

EX: CHIEF 39 (Wyomissing Boro Fire Chief)

FC 43 (Spring Twp. Fire Coordinator/Marshal)

FM 25 (Exeter Twp. Fire Marshal)

EMA 26 (Amity Twp. EMA Coordinator)

3.2.4 Call Numbers

A unit’s identification is also its “call number.” The word ‘dash’ must be included whenever a numerical suffix follows a company number ending with a zero (10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70):

EX: BRUSH 70-dash-5

The assigned numbers will always be used when communicating with the Berks County Communications Center or any other unit on the system. Portions of numbers used to send or receive transmissions are considered to be a violation of the system policy.

3.3 Communications Center Standard for Terminology and Pronunciation

The Berks County Fire Services System will operate in accordance with the overall policy developed for the Berks County Communications Center. Currently, this means the use of a standard phonetic alphabet, the use of specific phrases and the prohibited use of any kind of ten-code or signal code. A list of acceptable terminology can be found at the rear of this manual.

3.4 Calls Received and Dispatched by the Communications Center

3.4.1 Telephone Calls Received

Generally, any call relating directly to the providing of fire and rescue services will be received by the Communications Center. These calls are divided into two categories: emergency and non-emergency calls.

3.4.2 Emergency Calls Received

All emergency calls will be received on emergency telephone lines:

1. 9-1-1
2. 610-655-4911
3. 800-372-9111

Calls received on these lines shall be answered in accordance with procedure. Emergency calls include:

1. House, shed, barn or any structure fire, or any item in, on or attached to these that is on fire.
2. Brush or grass fire
3. Vehicle fire
4. Hot wires down and / or on fire
5. Sewer fire
6. Unknown type of fire
7. Tree or woods fire
8. Flooded basements where a life is threatened or a fire hazard exists
9. Broken water pipes where a hazard exists due to electrical lines or a life is threatened
10. All calls of a rescue nature. This includes such things as cave-ins, collapses, accidents, etc.
11. Washdowns or spills where there is a threat of fire
12. Natural gas leaks
13. Carbon monoxide alarms
14. Home lock-outs where there are children left inside or with food on the stove

15. Any call that the Communications Center shift supervisor believes, in good faith, to be an emergency

On any of the above calls, the telecommunicator who receives the initial notification will be responsible for ascertaining the following information:

1. The correct address or location of the emergency. When a HELP number is given, the road name shall also be obtained.
2. The nature of the emergency
3. The caller's name
4. The caller's telephone number
5. The caller's address (if different from incident location)
6. Other information believed important by the telecommunicator taking the call. However, obtaining such information should be balanced against whether the nature of the call allows time for obtaining it.

3.4.3 Non-Emergency Calls

Generally speaking, all non-emergency calls will also be received on the FIRE/EMS emergency lines. Non-emergency calls include:

1. Special animal cases
2. Flooded basements where there is no life or fire hazard
3. Washdowns with no threat of fire
4. Home lock-outs at the request of the police department only
5. Any call related to normal fire service operation or social business

On any call of this type, the telecommunicator receiving the call will be responsible for asking the appropriate questions relating to the call. Basically, these questions will be those listed in Subsection 3.4.2 (Emergency Calls). For those calls relating to normal fire service operations or social business, the caller should be referred to the appropriate phone number; however, in some instances, it may be necessary to have a company representative return a call. If a return call is to be made, make certain the calling party is made aware of this.

3.4.4 Administrative Calls Received

Any call received by the Communications Center from fire service personnel, except emergency calls, should be received on the incoming administrative telephone line of 610-655-4921 or 800-237-0079. Some examples of administrative calls include:

1. Checking times from a call
2. A chief arranging a work detail
3. A chief receiving a message

3.4.5 Telephone Calls Made

Generally, the Communications Center will make any reasonable telephone call for any unit of the fire service. It is understood that this might include some personal calls for those at the scene of an emergency. At the same time, it should be understood that the telecommunicator may not have time to make such personal phone calls, so field users should not become upset when a request is denied. Any call that the Fire Services Communications System telecommunicator is requested to make should be directly related to that service. Any call that would be related to any other service should be referred to that service.

EX: A fire service unit, on the scene of a motor vehicle accident, is not responsible for asking for a tow truck. This would be the responsibility of the police service only.

After a call has been made, the telecommunicator shall advise the requesting unit the party was notified. No acknowledgment is necessary by the requesting unit.

3.5 Incidents Dispatched by the Communications Center

Generally, any call relating to the provision of fire or rescue service will be dispatched by the Communications Center. These calls can be divided into two categories: emergency and non-emergency.

3.5.1 Emergency Calls Dispatched

A list of examples of emergency calls includes:

1. House, shed, barn or any other structure fire, or any item in, on or attached to these that is on fire.
2. Smoke detectors that have been activated
3. Fire alarms received from a central station such as ADT, Security Service, etc.
4. Fire alarm bells ringing

5. Brush or grass fires
6. Vehicle fires
7. Hot wires down and /or on fire
8. Sewer fires
9. Unknown type fire, including smoke conditions or smoke odors
10. Tree or woods fire
11. Flooded basements where there is a fire hazard or life threatened
12. Broken water pipes where there is a fire hazard from electrical lines or a life is threatened
13. All calls of a rescue nature. This includes such things as cave-ins, collapses, accidents, etc.
14. Washdowns or spills where there is a threat of fire
15. Natural gas leaks
16. Home lock-outs where children are left inside or with food left on the stove
17. Carbon monoxide alarms
18. Fire police-only responses
19. Medical assists
20. Any call that the Communications Center Supervisor, in good faith, believes to be an emergency.

3.5.2 Non-Emergency Calls Dispatched

Non-emergency calls dispatched include:

1. Flooded basements where there is no life or fire hazard
2. Washdowns where there is no threat of fire
3. Home lock-outs at the request of the police department only
4. Work details
5. Special animal cases
6. Medical assists for lifting purposes
7. Calls to contact personnel
8. Any other calls received which do not meet criteria established in Section 3.5.1 or in which there is no threat to life or threat of fire

3.6 Dispatching Procedures of the Communications Center

3.6.1 Order of Transmission for Dispatches

After the telecommunicator receiving the call obtains a location and call-type, he shall advise the fire telecommunicator, then continue to obtain other pertinent information. When advised of a call-type and location, the fire telecommunicator will follow this procedure:

1. Transmit the alert tone for 3 seconds
2. Announce the municipality name, the location of the call and type of call

The fire telecommunicator shall then determine the correct response for the call based on the Communications Center information. No changes to the dispatch will be made until after the dispatch is complete. The dispatch will be completed as follows:

3. Transmit the company tones in the order due
4. Announce the company in the order due
5. Announce the municipality name, the location of the call and the type of call
6. Announce the time
7. Transmit the siren tone(s) if applicable *
8. Announce the company(s) in the order due
9. Announce the municipality name, the location of the call, and the type of call with a brief description if available
10. Announce the time

* If the company does not use a siren, wait 5-seconds between steps 7 and 8.

3.6.2 Emergency Dispatches

An example of emergency dispatch:

Alert tone for 3 seconds; Cumru Township, Rtes. 724 and 625, structure fire; Company tones; Company 70, Cumru Township, Rtes. 724 and 625, a structure fire; time; siren tones, if applicable; Company 70, Cumru Township, Rtes. 724 and 625, a structure fire; time.

3.6.3 Emergency Assist Dispatches

In the event that a company should call for assistance from another company after the initial dispatch has been made, the following order of dispatch will be followed:

1. Transmit the assisting company tones
2. Announce the company number(s)
3. Announce the municipality, the location of the call, and the type of call
4. Announce the phrase, "Assisting Company #"
5. Announce the time
6. Transmit the sire tones, if applicable
7. Repeat steps 2 – 5

3.6.4 Emergency Dispatching of a Second Incident/Fire

In the event that a second incident/fire should arise while the first-due company is on a call or otherwise unavailable, the telecommunicator will consult Communications Center information and immediately dispatch the next-due company(ies). The order of the dispatch will be the same as Emergency Dispatches, with the phrase "Covering for Company #" inserted after the type of incident/fire. During such dispatches, the first-due station's alert tones will also be activated.

3.6.5 Repeating the Dispatch

When the original dispatch is made, the Company should acknowledge receipt of the call within four (4) minutes. After four (4) minutes, the telecommunicator will announce, "Company # _____, response check." If there is no response after one (1) additional minute, the telecommunicator will repeat the original dispatch. During this second dispatch, the telecommunicator will insert the phrase 'second dispatch' after the company number is announced. If there is no acknowledgment from the company one (1) minute after the second dispatch, the telecommunicator will refer back to Communications Center information and dispatch the next-due company.

If the dispatch is for a non-emergency call, a response check will be given after nine (9) minutes and the dispatch repeated after an additional one (1) minute. If no response is received for a non-emergency dispatch within fifteen (15) minutes of the initial dispatch, the next-due company(ies) shall be dispatched.

3.6.6 Emergency (Special) Assignment Dispatches

Occasionally, a call is received for some type of emergency incident that involves sensitive information that should not be announced over the air. Such calls should be dispatched in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section 3.6.1; however, personnel should be advised to “report to your station for an emergency detail.” Details of the call should then be relayed via telephone.

EX: Bomb threats
Hostage situations

3.6.7 Non-Emergency Dispatches

The dispatch of non-emergency calls will be as follows:

1. Transmit the company tones
2. Announce the company number
3. Announce the municipality name, the location of the call and the type of call
4. Announce the time

Examples of non-emergency dispatch:

1. Company tones; Company 69, Kenhorst Boro, Cortland and Kenhorst Boulevard, a washdown; time
2. Company tones; Company 4, report to your station for a work detail; time. (The time to report would be included, where applicable.)

3.6.8 Additional Information After Dispatch

In the event that any important information must be relayed to all responding units, the telecommunicator will sound the alert tone three (3) times and announce the information.

EX: Beep, Beep, Beep; Units responding to 521 Madison Ave., be advised that a handicapped person is on the third floor.

3.6.9 Standby/Relocating Dispatches

In the event a company is requested to stand-by at the request of another company, the telecommunicator will follow either the existing Communications Center information or orders of the OIC of the company. The order that these calls will be dispatched is as follows:

1. Transmit the company tones for the company to be dispatched.
2. Announce the company number.
3. Announce 'You are on stand-by for Company #__'.
4. Announce the time.

An officer of the stand-by company must telephone the Communication Center to acknowledge receipt of the stand-by dispatch.

In the event that a company is requested to stand-by at another company, the phrase "Relocate to Company #__" will be inserted after the company number. An officer of the stand-by company must telephone the Communications Center to acknowledge receipt of the relocation dispatch.

A response check will be given after nine (9) minutes and the dispatch repeated after an additional one (1) minute. If no response is received for a Standby/Relocation dispatch within fifteen (15) minutes of the initial dispatch, the next due company(s) shall be dispatched.

Note: In most cases, a stand-by or relocate dispatch will not be made while emergency dispatch or radio traffic is in progress. The fire telecommunicator will make such dispatches at the earliest practical time.

3.6.10 Quick Response Squad (QRS) Dispatches

In the event that a fire company-operated QRS is requested to respond, the procedure outlined in Section 3.6.1 should be followed by the telecommunicator.

3.6.11 Medical Helicopter Standby/Landing

Any time a medical helicopter has been placed on stand-by or requested to fly to an EMS incident, the company with jurisdiction at the incident site shall be dispatched. It shall be the responsibility of the company to determine an appropriate response, and the Communication Center shall keep company officers and units aware of the helicopter's flight status. The responding company shall be responsible for designating a landing zone, a landing officer and recommending a landing frequency.

3.6.12 Storm/Heavy Traffic Dispatches

In an effort to quickly dispatch emergency incidents and conserve airtime when conditions adversely impact on the Fire Services Communications System, the on-duty shift supervisor may opt to abbreviate the dispatch procedure outlined in Section 3.6.1 (Order of Transmission of Dispatches) by dropping items 1-2 'preannouncement' and items 8-10 'second announcement'. The shift supervisor may also direct the use of alternative frequencies for any incident that occurs. A general broadcast shall be made when the procedure is initiated and when it is subsequently canceled.

3.6.13 Mutual Aid Request from Another County

When another County requests general assistance from all Berks County units for manpower, equipment, etc., the Berks County Communications Center will give a five (5) beep tone alert with a message of which County is requesting assistance and what type of assistance is needed followed by any other pertinent information.

If another County specifically requests a Berks County unit(s), the Communications Center will tone-out each individual Berks County unit requested.

3.6.14 Incident Evacuation Plan

A procedure to alert ALL personnel (fire, EMS, police, hazmat or other) to evacuate an unsafe building and/or incident area will be handled as follows:

The Incident Commander activates the plan by notifying the Berks County Communications Center of the incident identity and for all personnel to evacuate immediately.

The Communications Center will then activate an alert tone and announce, "All units operating at the _____ incident, evacuate immediately." This will be repeated twice by the telecommunicator simultaneously on all frequencies in use at the scene.

When the plan is implemented, all vehicle operators at the incident will sound their air horn devices simultaneously and continuously for a minimum of thirty (30) seconds.

Upon the command "evacuate immediately," all personnel shall leave the building or incident area and report to their respective company officer.

All (safety) officers responsible for personnel shall take an immediate count of their personnel and report to the Incident Commander of anyone who is unaccounted.

The Incident Commander shall decide when to resume operations by notifying the Communications Center. The Communications Center will activate three beep tones and announce, "All units operating at _____ incident can resume normal operations."

NOTE: When the special evacuation tone and announcement are transmitted, ALL unnecessary radio traffic shall cease until the all-clear is given.

3.7 Dispatch Acknowledge by Mobile Units

3.7.1 Emergency Dispatches

When going on an emergency call, it shall be the responsibility of each individual apparatus to acknowledge its response. This will be accomplished by that unit calling the Communications Center, announcing its identifier and its response.

EX: Mobile : Berks, Engine 7 responding
Base: Okay, Engine 7 responding (time)

Note: A two-part message is used to facilitate responses to conserve airtime and expedite the responses of multiple units; however, it is possible that these responses may not be acknowledged or noted by the telecommunicator. The chief and assistant chiefs from the Company with incident jurisdiction may report “responding.” An assisting company chief officer may report “responding,” but it shall be one officer only.

3.7.2 Non-Emergency Dispatches

The method of acknowledging a non-emergency dispatch depends on the nature of the dispatch. If the unit is acknowledging by radio, a two-part message is required.

EX: Mobile: Berks, Aerial 45 reporting/responding
Base: Aerial 45 reporting/responding (time)

Additional information is not required unless it is necessary to ensure the telecommunicator is aware of some special action that may be required.

3.8 Repeating/Relaying Messages

It shall be the responsibility of the on-duty telecommunicator to be ready to repeat or relay any message, any time. It is not possible to list all the things that should or should not be repeated. Below is a list of examples to be followed; however, keep in mind that common sense prevails.

Repeating permissible:

1. The first unit and officer on location.
2. The visual report given when a unit arrives on the scene.
3. Whenever there is an incident/fire condition change.
4. Whenever an officer gives specific instructions for any/all units.
 - A. Normal Flow of Traffic
 - B. Prepare to evacuate
 - C. All personnel stand-by at your unit
 - D. Etc.
5. Whenever an officer makes a status change for the entire company.
 - A. Company 68 available
 - B. Company 13 at station
 - C. Etc.

3.9 General Communications Procedures

3.9.1 Communications Center with a Mobile Unit

1. When making an initial contact, the Communications Center shall call the designated unit followed by the word “Berks”.
2. When the unit answers, the telecommunicator will repeat the unit’s designator before proceeding with the message.
3. If multiple units are being called, each unit designator will be repeated before proceeding with the message.
4. The unit designator shall be used at the start of each ensuing transmission from that unit. This is necessary to prevent any confusion among mobile units and the Communications Center.
5. The designator ‘Berks’ will be used only in the initial contact between the Communications Center and the mobile unit.

3.9.2 Mobile Units to the Communications Center

1. When calling the Communications Center, you shall use the designator, “Berks” followed by the unit designator. After this is spoken, you will release the microphone button and await a reply.
2. Use the mobile unit designator at the start of each ensuing transmission.
3. When answering a call from the Communications Center, it is necessary to answer with your designator only.
4. The designator “Berks” shall be used only when the mobile unit is attempting to establish initial contact with the telecommunicator.
5. MOBILE UNITS ARE NOT TO CALL “BERKS” TO ACKNOWLEDGE A DISPATCH UNTIL ALL TONES HAVE BEEN TRANSMITTED, INCLUDING SIREN TONES.

3.9.3 Mobile Units to Mobile Units

Always state the designator of the unit you are calling before saying your own unit designator. The word “Berks” should not be used in mobile-to-mobile communications.

3.10 Air Priority

In situations where radio frequencies become congested because of multiple company operations in progress, the Communications Center may order an “air priority.” After this message is given, all units will use the radio only for the transmission of an emergency message. Any reports of units changing status must be deferred, handled by telephone or, if absolutely necessary, be done on another frequency. This “air priority” will not exceed ten (10) minutes in length. When emergency traffic conditions have returned to normal, the Communications Center will announce “Air priority now lifted.” As always, common sense prevails.

3.11 Priority Message

When radio traffic is heavy or an air priority is in effect, any unit that has an emergency message will call the Communications Center in the following manner: ‘Berks, Aerial 64, Priority’. An emergency message will be given a top priority over all other messages. Because of this, the emergency category is restricted to those situations where a life or personal injury is at stake, or a critical situation requires immediate additional assistance or attention.

3.12 Fire Grounds Communications and Reports

3.12.1 Reporting on Location

Only the FIRST piece of apparatus of EACH company arriving at the incident shall report ‘on location’ to the Communications Center by announcing its identifier and “on location.”

EX: Mobile: Berks, Tanker 34, on location.
Base: Tanker 34 on location, (time)

NOTE: A two-part message is used to facilitate arrivals to conserve airtime and expedite other communications; however, it is possible these responses may not be acknowledged/noted by the telecommunicator. Units arriving later need not advise the Center they are on location; however, they may announce their arrival for the benefit of other units assigned to the incident.

EX: Mobile: Engine 73 on location, hydrant at Reading and West Wyomissing.

3.12.2 Visual Reports

The first unit of officer on location shall give a brief, visual report.

- EX:
1. Berks, Engine 56 on location, nothing showing.
 2. Berks, 11-12 on location, heavy fire showing.
 3. Berks, 2-10 on location with a working fire.

The telecommunicator shall repeat the message given by the first unit or officer arriving on location.

3.12.3 Incident/Fire Condition Reports

The officer in charge of the scene, after assessing the situation, shall, as soon as possible, make a condition report to the Communications Center. He/she shall update the Communications Center of any condition changes throughout the incident/fire.

3.12.4 Entrapment Reports

Calls on which a company is assisting an emergency medical services unit on an entrapment-type call require the officer-in-charge (or an authorized member) to advise the Communications Center when the victim(s) have been extricated. It may also be desirable to provide progress reports during the rescue.

3.12.5 Recall/Normal Flow of Traffic

When a recall is ordered by the officer-in-charge, the telecommunicator will transmit five (5) alert beeps and recall the company(ies) involved. The recall phrase used is "Company #___, recall per (OIC), time." After this announcement is heard, an officer from each company shall acknowledge the recall for their entire company. If no apparatus from a company has responded to the dispatch before the recall is directed, that company's alert tones will precede five (5) alert beeps. For any apparatus that is ordered by the officer-in-charge to proceed at the normal flow of traffic, the procedure shall be the same as that for a recall. Five (5) alert beeps and the words "proceed at normal flow of traffic" shall be used in the place of the word "recall." There will be no acknowledgment required from any responding apparatus. As always, common sense prevails.

3.12.6 Normal Flow of Traffic and Hold

For any apparatus that is ordered by the officer-in-charge to proceed at normal flow of traffic and hold, the procedure will be the same as that for a recall. Five (5) alert beeps and the words “proceed at normal flow of traffic and hold” shall be used in the place of the word “recall.” All apparatus that have gone “responding” on radio will proceed at normal flow of traffic and any apparatus still at station shall hold at station. There will be no acknowledgment required from any responding or holding apparatus. As always, common sense prevails.

3.13 Status

3.13.1 Status Keeping

Whenever possible, routine or non-emergency status changes will be conducted by telephone. Examples of telephone status changes:

1. Going to a parade.
2. Going out of service for repairs.

These two examples may be done by radio for the purpose of mutual aid companies being advised of apparatus status. However, if you wish the telecommunicator to know the specific reason for the apparatus being out of service, it is advisable to contact him/her by telephone.

There is no need to notify the Communications Center for the following status changes:

1. Going for fuel and returning.
2. Going out for driving training.

If it is not feasible to make a status change by telephone, use of the radio is permitted. Groups of units or company changes are acceptable; however, individual unit changes are preferred because the use of the individual system allows for little room for error or unnecessary repetition of information. Company captains, lieutenants, fire police, etc., shall not report their status to the Communications Center unless they are acting as the OIC for an incident.

3.15.2 33.68 MHz

A tactical frequency has been developed as an integral part of the Fire Services Communications System in an effort to relieve congestion on 33.94 MHz and allow for (relatively) interference-free communications on the firegrounds. As such, all affiliated companies must have the capability of using this frequency. 33.68 MHz can be used at the direction of the Communications Center or an incident OIC. It should be noted, however, that simultaneous incidents or other similar conditions may require the Center to disallow use of 33.68 MHz for a given incident. Further, it should be noted that use of 33.68 MHz in some areas of poor reception may prevent effective monitoring or tape recording of radio traffic by the Center; the County will not be responsible for any communications errors or oversights in records maintenance caused by the use of 33.68 MHz. Finally, it is the responsibility of an incident OIC who is using 33.68 MHz to ensure that at least one unit at the scene is monitoring 33.94 MHz at all times.

3.15.3 33.80 MHz

The County has licensed 33.80 MHz as a second tactical frequency, and it may be used by any company affiliated with the Communications Center on an as-needed basis. This frequency is to be used in the same fashion as outlined in Section 3.15.2 (33.68 MHz).

3.15.4 154.310 MHz (F-1)

The primary communications frequency used by the members of Zone-4 is 154.310 MHz. Facilities exist to use this frequency as both a simplex channel or as the output of a repeater (input frequency 153.890 MHz). Alerting of all companies and unit status maintenance is done on this frequency.

3.15.5 154.400 MHz (F-2)

This frequency may be used at the discretion of the Center, or if units do not have a need to converse with the Center, at any time mobile-to-mobile communications are required. Requests to use this frequency must be initiated through F-1. It must be understood, however, that the Center may not necessarily be able to converse on or monitor F-2 at any given time.

3.15.6 154.160 MHz (F-3)

This frequency may be used at the discretion of the Center, or, if units do not have a need to converse with the Center, at any time mobile-to-mobile communications is required. Requests to use this frequency must be initiated through F-1. It must be understood, however, that the Center may not necessary be able to converse on or monitor F-3 at any given time. Primary access to F-3 is given to the Tanker Task Force, secondary access is provided to the Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) and tertiary access is available for other units.

3.15.7 154.355 MHz (F-5)

This frequency may be used at the discretion of the Center, or, if units do not have a need to converse with the Center, at any time mobile-to-mobile communications are required. Requests to use this frequency must be initiated through F-1. It must be understood, however, that the Center may not necessarily be able to converse on or monitor F-5 at any given time.

3.15.8 Frequency Authorization

The frequencies used by the member companies of Zone-4 are intended for use by Zone-4 companies and those other companies or organizations that provide some type of mutual aid to Zone-4. The frequencies are licensed to the County, and written authorization for their use (along with applicable restrictions) must come from the County; however, it has been agreed that such authorization will only be made following the advice and consent of Zone-4, in accordance with its organizational procedures.

3.15.9 Station Identification/Time Checks

Communications Center personnel do not, as a rule, provide station identification time checks as required by the Federal Communications Commission. Base stations comprising the Zone 4 companies are equipped with automatic Morse code station identifiers.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RESOURCE INFORMATION

4.1 Run Card Information

Run card assignments should be filled out and completed by all fire chiefs. If an assignment area is not completed on the run card, the following defaults will happen;

AFA RESPONSES: Unless otherwise stipulated, an 'initial response' will be dispatched.

CMA RESPONSES: Unless otherwise stipulated, an 'initial response will be dispatched.

See Appendix 'D' for a sample blank run card and a completed run card.

4.2 Station Resource Information

To be affiliated with the Berks County Fire Services Communications System, it shall be necessary for a company to provide resource information. This will serve as the telecommunicator's guide to dealing with that company, and must follow a prescribed general format. Information contained should include:

1. Pertinent telephone numbers, including officers, company, personnel, etc.
2. Vehicles operated by the company, including a general overview of equipment. Particular attention should be paid to special pieces of equipment on a vehicle, or special vehicle capabilities that might make the Center more aware of situations in which the unit or equipment could or will be used.
3. Detailed street maps or areas serviced by the company.
4. Special instructions for business/industry, handicapped persons, disaster plans, etc.
5. A listing of response information. This will detail what units are to be dispatched on different kinds of calls, and must include back-up companies, rescue companies, and special hazard notices.
6. Other information which the telecommunicator should be aware of in order to dispatch the company in the most efficient manner.

The Communications Center should be consulted by the company that is developing information for advice and assistance. The reference information must be updated yearly in order to be effective.

4.3 Special Services Information Manuals

The Communications Center will, as a matter of policy, build and maintain a library of current materials that affect, directly or indirectly, the provision of fire services. Any person, company or other interested party that has new or updated information is encouraged to pass it along to the Communications Center. Such information shall be studied by all telecommunicators who shall be advised of its existence.

4.4 Municipality/Community Emergency Response Plans and Information

By law, every municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is required to design and implement an emergency operations plan that outlines different kinds of responses for different kinds of emergencies. Since many of the emergencies these plans deal with have the possibility of affecting the fire safety of people in that area, it is obvious the local fire service providers should be aware of it.

In reality, many of these plans have not been written. In other cases, however, the author has not advised the various service of what is expected. In still other cases, though, fire service providers are aware of their role in such plans; therefore, a basic outline of the plan should be on file in the Communications Center. Telecommunicators should be as familiar with such plans as those who are expected to execute such plans in the field.

Additionally, fire companies are expected to keep municipal officials aware of response policies they believe to be in the best interests of those they serve, and must seek the advise and consent of such officials before formally implementing these response policies. The County will make a practice of conferring with municipal officials on the subject of emergency responses within their jurisdiction, and in all cases will accept the direction of the municipality over any other entity with respect to policy implementation or modification.

v. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

For both legal and protective reasons, virtually everything done by anyone connected with the Berks County Fire Services Communications System is documented in some form. In many cases, documentation is duplicated. Such documentation is a necessary part of communications.

5.1 Explanation of Documentation Procedures

The telecommunicators operating the Fire Services Communication System are under orders to document by assignment everything they do. This includes everything from taking a telephone call to filing a discrepancy report. Should either a staff member of the Berks County Communications Center or some other group or organization with legitimate interest in a particular piece of information have need of it, it will be made available.

Since documentation of any kind is only as good as what is entered, telecommunicators are trained (and field personnel are strongly urged and advised) in the types of information that can and should be documented. Questions on the necessity of documenting certain pieces of information shall be referred to the Communications Center administration.

5.2 Assignments

Every incident that is either dispatched by the Communications Center or an affiliated organization shall be processed on a computerized or manual assignment.

This will include the following information and time-recorded documentation:

1. Incident number
2. Location of incident
3. Type of incident
4. Additional incident information (caller, phone number, etc.)
5. Unit(s) assigned to handle the incident
6. Time incident reported
7. Time incident dispatched
8. Time company responded to the incident
9. Time company arrived at incident location
10. Other times dictated by the procedures in this manual
11. The name, number or initials of the telecommunicator who processed the call.
12. Other information deemed necessary or valuable for documentation

Assignment information can be sent to the company involved upon request at a convenient time, and copies shall be retained by the Communications Center for a period of time deemed necessary by the Center.

Information obtained on the assignment shall be considered as available only to properly authorized individuals. If questions on the subject of authority arise, they shall be settled by the Communications Center administration.

5.3 Communication Center Logging Recorder System

All communications received or transmitted by the Communications Center either by radio or telephone are logged on a continuously-logging recorder. Records are held for approximately six (6) months before being recycled. Personnel interested in reviewing the contents of a recording of either telephone or radio transmissions should contact the Communications Center, in writing, at the earliest possible time to ensure the recording is not recycled.

If the need to review a recording is of an immediate nature, verbal requests may be accepted by the Center management. If requested in writing, permission may be granted for a copy of the pertinent conversations to be made. Also, if requested, an entire recording may be held beyond the usual period. However, if such a request is anticipated, the Center management should be notified at once.

5.4 Communications Center Discrepancy Report Forms

In the event of a problem with any facet of Communications Center operations, an entry will be made in the Center logbook. This logbook is a legal record of Center operations, and will be kept on file for whatever length of time is necessary. In the event the Communications Center encounters a particularly severe problem with an affiliated company, or there is a repeat of a minor problem that has not been rectified, the involved telecommunicator will present a written report to the Communications Center administration for action. The involved organization will be given an opportunity to reply, and the Center shall make a final judgment in solving the matter. In the event an organization realizes a significant problem with the Communications Center or a member of its staff, it, too, is invited to present a written report to the Communications Center administration. After gathering the pertinent facts and making a disposition, a reply will be made and a copy kept by the Communications Center for a period of time deemed necessary by the administration.

VI. TESTING AND GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT PROCEDURES

6.1 Testing of Pagers and Sirens

Routine testing of monitoring devices and sirens for the companies affiliated with the Berks County Fire Services System will be controlled and conducted by the Communications Center. All company and pager testing will be conducted during the first full week of every month. A list of the dates and times these tests will be conducted can be found in Appendix 'B' of this manual.

The phrase to be used in conducting this test is, "Company #____, your monthly test, (time)." If the test is conducted at any other time than that appointed for the monthly test, the phrase, "Berks testing for Company #____" shall be used. In the event of an emergency in progress during the scheduled testing periods, the test will be canceled. If the chief of any company feels the monthly test must be conducted, he will contact the Communications Center by telephone and arrange a time for the test to be done after the emergency ends.

6.2 Radio Maintenance Testing Procedure

The Communications Center will assist in conducting tests for any properly licensed radio repair technician or any authorized company member for purposes of testing radio equipment at any time there is no emergency traffic in progress.

6.3 Announcements

In order to keep the airwaves free for emergency traffic to the greatest extent possible, the following guidelines shall be observed with regards to general announcements:

1. Permissible announcements:
 - a) Equipment out of service announcements will be made at 0830 and 1800 hours daily. Long term apparatus out of service announcements will be made at 0830 and 1800 hours each Monday of the week. This announcement does not include the activation of any company tones.
 - b) Announcing apparatus being placed in and out of service either by radio or phone.
 - c) Emergency weather reports.
 - d) Special training programs or other special meetings affecting an entire company or

multiple companies (including, but not limited to, zone and Berks County Fire Chiefs Association meetings)

- e) Funeral announcements. It is the intention of the Communications Center to make such announcements for active or former firefighters or fire police personnel, and not for “social” members, spouses, etc. Officers are to use their best discretion when making requests for a funeral announcement.
- f) Any message approved by Center management.

Announcements pertaining to individual companies or officer pages shall be repeated by the telecommunicator.

2. Impermissible announcements:

- a) Fire hydrants out of service. If such a call is received by the Communications Center, the chief will be advised by telephone.
- b) Street closings. Any pertinent street closings shall be announced by the telecommunicator during an actual dispatch.
- c) Announcements with a limited target group, usually involving only a small segment of company personnel.
- d) Regular company meeting dates and times.

APPENDIX 'A'

Berks County Fire Services Fire Company Numbers

1	Mt. Penn	43	Lower Heidelberg
2	Reiffton	44	Kempton
3	Stonersville	45	Fleetwood
4	Lower Alsace	46	Kutztown
5	Oley	47	Womelsdorf
6	Monocacy	48	Wernersville State Hospital
7	Birdsboro	49	Amity
8	Alsace Manor	50	Strausstown
10	Goodwill of Hyde Park	51	Sinking Spring
11	Temple	52	Stouchsburg
12	Blandon	53	Frystown
13	Central of Laureldale	54	Bethel
14	Bally	55	Greenfields
15	Friendship of Boyertown	56	Gouglersville
16	Keystone of Boyertown	57	Mohnton
17	New Berlinville	58	Hereford
19	Earl Township	59	
20	Bechtelsville	60	Fritztown
21	Topton	61	Hamburg
22	Barto	62	Hamburg Center
23	Gibraltar	64	West Reading
24	Geigertown	65	
26	Robesonia	67	Shillington
27	Reheresburg	69	Kenhorst
28	Mt. Aetna	70	Grill
29	Bernville	71	
30	Mt. Pleasant	72	Brecknock
31	Wernersville	73	
32	Walnuttown	74	Car Tech
33	Virginville	75	Lucent
34	Ruscumbmanor	76	Reading Airport
35	Lyons	77	Port Clinton
36	Kulptown	78	Cryovac
37	Leesport	79	Wyomissing
38	Central Berks	81	Berks Emergency Strike Team, Inc.
39	Seisholtzville		
40	Shoemakersville	85	Spring Twp. Fire Department
41	Shartlesville	86	Spring Twp.: West Lawn
42	Cedar Top	87	Spring Twp.: West Wyomissing
		88	Spring Twp.: Lincoln Park
		89	Spring Twp.: Vinemont

APPENDIX “B”

Berks County Fire Service Tone Testing Schedule

1. Mt. Penn		
2. Reiffton	Tuesday	1800
3. Stonersville		
4. Lower Alsace		
5. Oley	Friday	1800+Chiefs
6. Monocacy		
7. Birdsboro		
8. Alsace Manor	Tuesday	1830
10. Goodwill of Hyde Park		
11. Temple		
12. Blandon	Wednesday	1800
13. Central of Laureldale		
14. Bally	Friday	1800
15. Friendship of Boyertown		
16. Keystone of Boyertown		
17. New Berlinville		
19. Earl Township		
20. Bechtelsville		
21. Topton	Thursday	1830
22. Barto	Friday	1800
23. Gibraltar	Saturday	1500
24. Geigertown		
26. Robesonia	Monday	1800
27. Rehrersburg	Saturday	1210
28. Mt. Aetna	Monday	1930
29. Bernville	Tuesday	1900
30. Mt. Pleasant	Tuesday	1830
31. Wernersville	Saturday	1200
32. Walnuttown	Saturday	1300
33. Virginville	Tuesday	1830
34. Ruscombmanor		
35. Lyons	Saturday	1200
36. Kulptown	Saturday	1300
37. Leesport	Saturday	1200
38. Central Berks	Monday	1830
39. Seisholtzville	Monday	1900
40. Shoemakersville	Tuesday	1800
41. Shartlesville	Tuesday	1800
42. Cedar Top	Monday	1800
43. Lower Heidelberg	Thursday	1800
44. Kempton	Wednesday	1830
45. Fleetwood		

46. Kutztown	Friday	1830
47. Womelsdorf	Saturday	1215
48. Wernersville State Hospital	Wednesday	1800
49. Amity		
50. Strausstown	Tuesday	1800
51. Sinking Spring	Monday	1800
52. Stouchsburg	Saturday	1210
53. Frytown	Saturday	1130
54. Bethel	Monday	1900
55. Greenfields	Tuesday	1800
56. Gouglersville	Thursday	1800
57. Mohnton	Monday	1800
58. Hereford	Saturday	1230
59. Lincoln Park	Tuesday	1800
60. Fritztown	Thursday	1800
61. Hamburg	Friday	1900
62. Hamburg Center		
64. West Reading	Friday	1800
65. West Lawn	Monday	1800
67. Shillington	Tuesday	1800
69. Kenhorst	Friday	1800
70. Grill	Tuesday	1800
71. Vinemont	Friday	1800
72. Brecknock	Wednesday	1800
73. West Wyomissing	Monday	1800
74. Car Tech		
75. Lucent		
76. Reading Airport		
77. Port Clinton	Saturday	1145
78. Cryovac		
79. Wyomissing	Wednesday	1800
81. Berks Emergency Strike Team Inc.		

APPENDIX 'C'

Berks County Fire Services Phonetic Alphabet

A- ALPHA

B- BRAVO

C- CHARLIE

D- DELTA

E- ECHO

F- FOXTROT

G- GOLF

H- HOTEL

I- INDIA

J- JULIETTE

K- KILO

L- LIMA

M- MIKE

N- NOVEMBER

O- OCEAN

P- PAPA

Q- QUEBEC

R- ROMEO

S- SIERRA

T- TANGO

U- UNIFORM

V- VICTOR

W- WHISKEY

X- X-RAY

Y- YANKEE

Z- ZULU

APPENDIX 'D'

Berks County Fire Services Sample Run Card

Shown below is a sample blank run card as required to be filled out by all fire chiefs:

Fire Run Card Number:	
Notes:	
Structure Alarms:	
Initial:	
First:	
Second:	
Third:	
Fourth:	
Brush:	Medical:
Misc:	Vehicle:
AFA:	Fire Police:
Accident:	CMA:
Hazmat:	Rescue:

Shown below is a sample completed run card for reference:

Fire Run Card Number:			
Notes:	100-799 Franklin Street West Reading Borough		
Structure Alarms:			
Initial:	64,79,67,69		
First:	55		
Second:	65,10		
Third:	51,73		
Fourth:	70, RFD-L1		
Brush:	64	Medical:	64
Misc:	64	Vehicle:	64
AFA:	64, 79	Fire Police:	64
Accident:	64	CMA:	64
Hazmat:	64	Rescue:	64, 67

APPENDIX 'E'

Berks County Fire Service Terminology

For the purpose of clarifying this manual, the following terminology, definitions and phrases are used:

ALERT TONE:	An electronic tone sent out over the radio for the purpose of attracting attention or advising of certain conditions or procedures to be followed.
“AT STATION”:	The unit is at the station and ready to answer a call.
“AVAILABLE”:	The unit is on radio and can answer a call.
“BE ADVISED”:	This is to inform you (something did happen, is happening or will be happening).
“CAN HANDLE”:	The fire/incident can be handled with the equipment that is on location or already enroute.
CAPTAIN:	A senior officer of a fire company who ranks below a chief and assistant chief in the line of authority.
CHIEF:	The senior officer of a fire company who is in charge of all firefighting and related activities. This term is also used to refer to assistant chiefs.
“CONDITION CHECK”:	A request for a report on the fire/incident situation (i.e.: is the incident under control, out of control, etc.)
“CORRECTION”:	An error has been made, and what follows is the corrected version of the message.
“DISREGARD”:	Ignore or forget that I called.
“DISREGARD THE LAST MESSAGE”:	Ignore or forget the entire last message.
E-T-A:	Acronym for “estimated time of arrival”
FIRE GROUND:	The site of a fire.
H.E.L.P. NUMBERS:	A unique identification number for most properties in Berks County. These numbers are keyed to a set of maps maintained by the Communications Center and many fire companies.
“INVESTIGATING”:	Checking the fire/incident upon arrival.
LIEUTENANT:	A junior officer of a fire company whose authority lies immediately below that of a Captain. NOTE: For the purpose of this “junior” refers to authority, not age.

MEDICAL ADVISORY:	A notice to a particular fire company of an emergency medical unit requesting assistance. It is understood the responsible company makes no guarantee of its ability to respond to the medical advisory or the furnishing of personnel with medical training
MOBILE OPERATOR:	A person who is using either a fixed or portable radio transmitter at a location other than the site of a base station.
NORMAL FLOW OF TRAFFIC:	The terminology for apparatus to respond without emergency lights and sirens activated, following all applicable Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Codes.
NORMAL FLOW OF TRAFFIC AND HOLD:	The terminology for apparatus to respond without emergency lights and sirens activated and following all applicable Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Codes. Any apparatus that did not report “responding” is to remain at station on standby.
OFFICER:	Collective term that refers to all chiefs and senior and junior officers. It does not include social/organizational officers such as presidents, secretaries, trustees, etc.
OFFICER-IN-CHARGE (OIC):	Refers to the person in charge of the fire or incident scene or station personnel. Depending upon the situation, the officer-in-charge could be any officer or other person given overall responsibility in accordance with company policy.
“OKAY”:	Your message has been received, understood and, if necessary, will be complied with.
“ON LOCATION”:	Your unit is arriving at the fire/incident.
“OUT OF SERVICE”:	The unit is unable to answer a call for an extended period of time, but not to exceed one (1) week.
“OUT OF SERVICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE”:	The unit is unable to answer calls for an extended period of time that will exceed a week.
“PROCEED”:	Send your message.
“PROGRESS REPORT”:	Same as “condition check.”
“RECALL”:	You are not needed at the fire/incident scene, and you should return to your station or previous location.
“REPEAT”:	Repeat your last transmission.
“RESPONDING”:	The unit is on its way to a call.
“RESPONSE CHECK”:	Are you responding?

“STAND BY”:	You are to wait in an alert manner for a possible dispatch. When used regarding a radio transmission, this indicates you have been heard, but you should not call again until told to proceed (except in an emergency).
STATION TONES:	A tone or tones that are uniquely assigned to a company for the purpose of activating alert devices
“STATUS CHECK”:	Is your unit available, unavailable, etc.?
TEST COUNT:	A numerical count from one to five for the purpose of radio tests.
“UNAVAILABLE”:	The unit is not able to answer calls for a short period of time.
“UNDER CONTROL”:	The fire/incident can be handled with the equipment that is on location or already enroute.
WATER CONDITION:	Refers to things such as flooded basements, broken pipes and similar situations.
WORKING FIRE:	A fire that is not contained or under control, and the need for additional equipment may arise. NOTE: This does NOT indicate additional equipment should be dispatched; rather, everyone concerned should be prepared for a possible dispatch.

“ “ indicates a phrase for use on radio

APPENDIX 'F'

Berks County Fire Services Computer Aided Dispatch Information

Monthly reports may be received from the Berks County Communications Center by each fire company by submitting a written request.

The following information is included on monthly fire/EMS printouts:

There are three (3) parts you may see listed.

1. @EX or @21 = This is the identification of the company
2. 505A, B, C = A, B and C are for Crew Status
3. 581, 582, etc. = Units

Unit Types:

E = Engine	M = Medic
R = Rescue	Q = Quick Response Unit
A = Aerial	S = Squad
T = Tanker	HE = Helicopter
B = Brush	AM = Ambulance
CO = Company	OF = Officer
TR = Truck	

Status Keeping Commands:

D = Dispatch	FE = Enroute to Incident
FA = On Location	FEH = Enroute to Hospital
FAH = At Hospital	FLH = Leaving Hospital
FRS = Returning to Station	FAR = Available on radio
FC = At station (Cleared incident)	
FUU = Crew Out of Service	FUC = Crew in Service
FRT = Radio Traffic	FHD = Recall

1. The first column (to the far left) will have which company, squad or unit for which status has been kept.
2. The second column is the assignment number.
3. The third column is the date.
4. The fourth column shows the times.
5. The fifth column shows location of incident, radio traffic comments and any location changes made by the unit/officer.
6. The sixth column shows the unit type (see list above).
7. The ninth column shows the type of call. Most of the abbreviations are self-explanatory.

APPENDIX ‘G’

Berks County Fire Services Board of Review

A Board of Review will consider any complaint or infraction of the Berks County Fire Services Standard Operating Procedures presented to it in written form whether from the Communications Center or from a field user. All written complaints should be sent to the Berks County Fire Chiefs Association which will forward them to the Board of Review. A copy should also be sent to the Berks County Communications Center director. Sample complaint forms are found in Appendix ‘H’.

If the Board finds merit in the complaint or that an infraction has occurred, a letter of reprimand will be sent to the fire chief or the communications director. If within sixty (60) days the infraction is not corrected, a letter will be sent to the municipality governing the fire company to handle the issue. If within ninety (90) days the infraction is still not corrected, further disciplinary action will be taken under consideration by the County Commissioners. Infractions that happen a year apart will be considered a new infraction.

The Board will consist of two (2) representatives from each Zone (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) along with two (2) representatives from the Communications Center. Those representatives shall be sanctioned by the members of the Berks County Fire Chiefs Association and will be appointed each year at the January Meeting.

In order to be a representative on the Board of Review you:

1. Must be active in the fire service and a member in good standing with a Berks County Fire Company.
2. You do not have to be a member of the Berks County Fire Chief’s Association.
3. You do not have to be a line officer (but this is preferred).
4. You must be an individual who is open-minded and rational.

APPENDIX 'H'

Berks County Fire Services Complaint Form

BERKS COUNTY FIRE SERVICE COMPLAINT **FORM**

COMPANY NAME: _____

INCIDENT #: _____

DATE: _____ **TIME:** _____

PROBLEM: _____

FIRE CHIEF'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE OF COMPLAINT: _____

Send original to:

Berks County Fire Chiefs Assn.
895 Morgantown Road
Reading, PA 19607

Send copy to:

Berks County Communications
Attn: Director of Communications
633 Court Street, 17th Floor
Reading, PA 19601-3540