

# McKinney Police Department Communications Division Standard Operating Procedure

212.084

Subject <b>SMS to 911 Requests for Service</b>	
Reference	
Effective Date <b>July 15, 2013</b>	Revised Date <b>August 26, 2014</b>
Related General Orders	Related SOPs
TPCAF Recognition Program Standards	CALEA Standards <b>81.2.10</b>
Related Public Safety Software Information	Comments

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the McKinney Police Department Communications Division to provide service to all persons using SMS (text messaging) to request emergency services.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **TEXT MESSAGE** – Alpha numeric message sent via a mobile communication device such as a phone or tablet computer.
- B. **SMS**– Acronym for *Short Message (or messaging) Service*, a system that enables mobile communication device users to send and receive text messages.
- C. **WIRELESS SERVICE PROVIDER (WSP)** – The provider of mobile communication service, including but not limited to Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Metro PCS, etc.
- D. **MMS** – Acronym for *Multimedia Messaging Service*, a system that enables cellular phones to send and receive pictures and sound clips as well as text messages. MMS to 911 is not supported at this time.
- E. **SESSION** – SMS to 911 requests are referred to as “sessions” instead of “calls”.
- F. **SMS to 911 APPLICATIONS**– Software designed to handle SMS to 911 requests for service. Different applications may be used by different WSP’s in the area.
- G. **LOCATION**- *Location information provided is not the same as wireless phase 2 voice calls*. Exact location of device cannot be obtained; location provided is based on triangulation of cell towers and represents a close approximation of sender’s device.
- H. **BOUNCE BACK MESSAGE**– Automatic reply message advising sender to make a voice call to 911. Reply is sent to anyone attempting to send SMS to 911 via a WSP that does not support SMS to 911 services or to a PSAP that is not capable of handling SMS to 911 sessions. This insures the sender knows their text to 911 was not received.

## III. RECOGNIZING A SMS to 911 SESSION

- A. At the start of each shift, all communications personnel will sign on to the SMS to 911 application(s) and keep them open for the duration of the shift.

- B. Incoming SMS sessions produce a distinctive alert tone from the phone console. New SMS requests will appear in the unassigned queue. Click on the highlighted blue number to read the initial message.
- C. SMS sessions are equivalent to 911 telephone and TTY calls in terms of priority and information gathering requirements. Call takers will be primarily responsible for monitoring the SMS to 911 queue(s). However, it is the responsibility of all Communications personnel to respond to SMS to 911 requests for service, whether assigned a radio channel or not.

#### **IV. PROCESSING SMS to 911 CALLS**

- A. OSSI CAD events will be entered using the appropriate nature code.
- B. All of the pertinent call taking information based on nature code will be asked to help ensure bystander, victim, suspect and responder safety. All safety information will be documented and relayed to the responding units as appropriate.
- C. Communications personnel will utilize appropriate etiquette and dialogue when communicating via SMS.
- D. When communicating via SMS, Communications personnel should use clear and plain language. Do not use abbreviations that may be misunderstood. Example: Instead of typing “where r u” type “what is your location?”
- E. Several pre-defined messages are included in the program drop down menus and should be used when appropriate.
- F. Communications personnel should immediately request location of the emergency through pre-defined message (McKinney 911, where is your emergency?) followed by immediate retransmit in order to gather updated X & Y coordinates. If sender is mobile then continue to rebid for location updates. Communications personnel will advise sender the requested assistance is being sent to location (1234 Main St) to help ensure the location is correct.
- G. All sessions will be ended with the pre-defined message “Ending session, if you need more help, contact 911”. The primary call taker handling the call should be the only one to end a session.
- H. All SMS to 911 sessions, including test sessions, will be entered on the NCTCOG Log and printed for permanent record keeping.
- I. After completing and printing each session, use the red “End Session” button to close out the session.
- J. Communications personnel monitoring ongoing sessions should not click the “End Session” button as it will close the session out for the entire Communications Center.
- K. Answer times for SMS requests will be equitable to answer times for all other calls.

#### **V. TRANSFERRING SMS to 911 CALLS**

- A. Communications personnel will use the rebid feature to obtain a current location of the sender. If the sender leaves McKinney jurisdiction, the call taker will transfer the

session to the agency responsible for that jurisdiction if they are capable of receiving SMS sessions.

- B. In the event the receiving PSAP does not have SMS to 911 capability, Communications personnel will continue with the session and relay incident information verbally to the receiving agency. Release sender when appropriate for situation or when the local agency is on scene.
- C. When transferring a session to another agency, Communications personnel shall notify the sender that s/he is being transferred and provide contact information for that agency at end of session or when appropriate.
- D. Communications personnel should not “End Session” until they have confirmation from the receiving agency that the transfer has been successfully completed.

## **VI. EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH**

- A. The first priority of SMS to 911 sessions should be obtaining and confirming location of the emergency.
- B. Senders who are requesting medical assistance should be strongly encouraged to either call 911 or allow Communications personnel to contact them via voice, if they can safely do so, in order to provide the highest level of care.
- C. If the sender cannot be contacted by voice after confirming location, Communications personnel should dispatch medical help and then begin EMD via SMS as per NAEMD standards

## **VII. NON-RESPONSE FROM SENDER, ACCIDENTAL AND MISDIRECTED MESSAGES**

- A. An event will be entered in OSSA CAD for every non-response or misdirected SMS to 911 message received.
- B. Senders that do not respond to requests for information or who send accidental or misdirected messages will be handled like hang-up and abandoned 911 telephone calls.
- C. If sender indicates it was an “accidental text”, response should always be “Ending session, if you need more help, contact 911”.
- D. If text is for a questionable or potential emergency, enter call for service and send units to check the area for any obvious emergency.
- E. If a misdirected message is received, transfer it to the proper agency if they have SMS to 911 capabilities. If the receiving PSAP does not have SMS capability, Communications personnel will continue with the session and relay incident information verbally to the receiving agency. Release sender when appropriate for situation or when the local agency is on scene.
- F. When transferring a session to another agency, Communications personnel shall notify the sender that s/he is being transferred and provide contact information for that agency at end of session or when appropriate.

## **VIII. SHIFT CHANGE PROCEDURES**

- A. All queues are to be checked at shift change by the Communications Supervisor or Specialist in Charge. Communications personnel will ensure a response is provided to unread or in-progress sessions prior to ending their shift.

**IX. EQUIPMENT**

- A. Each work station used to receive calls in the Communications Center is equipped with a device for receiving and responding to SMS to 911 sessions.
- B. North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) provides and maintains Positron Power 9-1-1 telephone and SMS to 911 equipment used by MPD Communications. SMS to 911 equipment will be kept in working order and tested regularly to ensure proper function.
- C. All malfunctions will be documented and immediately reported to NCTCOG for repair. The Communications Supervisor on duty should be notified for tracking purposes.

**X. TRAINING AND TESTING**

- A. Communications personnel will receive initial and periodic refresher training on SMS to 911 equipment provided by NCTCOG. Additional training will be provided to employees in-house as needed.
- B. Communications personnel are required to complete two (2) test sessions per month. All test sessions will be printed, logged and records maintained as required by law and NCTCOG regulations. Failure to complete required test sessions may result in disciplinary action.

**XI. LIMITATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. Language Line is not available for direct transfer/interpretation of SMS to 911 sessions. Communications personnel will relay the information verbally to Language Line if necessary.
- B. SMS to 911 availability is WSP specific. Verizon was the first WSP to implement SMS to 911 in the area; AT&T and Sprint were implemented as of August 2014. Other WSP's voluntarily agreed to make it available by May 2014 but are not active yet.