




# MBTA Transit Police

DEPARTMENT MANUAL

## CHAPTER 191

### General Order No. 2019-35

SUBJECT <b>COMMUNICATIONS</b> Radio Procedures		DATE OF ISSUE 10/08/2019	EFFECTIVE DATE 10/13/2019
REFERENCES 81.1.2, 81.2.4, 81.2.5, 81.3.4, 81.2.10	PAGE 1 OF 8	ISSUING STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS	ISSUING AUTHORITY  Kenneth Green Chief of Police

- 1.0 **POLICY.** Radio communications serve as a vital link between Officers in the field and Police Operations (central communications), thereby providing efficient and effective public safety services while enhancing officer safety. The MBTA Transit Police Department will ensure that all Officers engaged in a field assignment will have access to radio communications (car or portable) at all times. Uniform radio procedures are essential for maximum effectiveness of the two-way radio system. All transmissions, regardless of their origin, must be clear, concise, accurate, and courteous. Only essential information should be transmitted. {81.2.2}
- 2.0 **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC).** All radio communications will be conducted in accordance with FCC regulations and procedures. {81.1.2}
- 3.0 **RADIO CHECK AND RADIO ACCESSORIES.** All Officers will check their radio(s), mobile and portable, and their batteries at the beginning of each tour of duty. All Officers are issued two (2) batteries for the type of portable they are assigned. Officers with batteries not holding a 10-hour minimum charge will contact their immediate Supervisor for a replacement battery. Officers who work a detail before or after a shift will have in their possession a second fully charged radio battery. Malfunctions will immediately be brought to the attention of the Officer's Supervisor for appropriate action. Officers are encouraged to utilize a remote earphone that has been issued and/or authorized by the Department. {81.2.2}
- 4.0 **TRANSMITTING PROCEDURES.** The following procedures should be used prior to and during radio transmissions:
  - plan the message and transmission, when possible; {81.1.2}
  - listen to make sure another transmission will not be interrupted; {81.1.2}
  - hold the microphone 1-3 inches from the mouth, key the microphone and wait one second for the radio ID. to transmit, as verbal communications will not transmit during this short period; {81.1.2}
  - speak at an angle to the microphone, not directly into it; {81.1.2}
  - speak normally and clearly, using an evenly modulated tone of voice, as in a phone conversation (avoid any vocal displays of emotion such as loss of temper, nervous excitement, sullenness, etc., as they tend to distort a radio transmission); {81.1.2}
  - identify yourself by using the proper call sign, and give your location, being as specific as possible; {81.1.2}

- do not transmit your message until the Dispatcher acknowledges your initial transmission, except in an extreme emergency; {81.1.2}
- avoid, if possible, lengthy messages (if the message is long, transmit a portion of it to ensure that it has been acknowledged, and then continue); {81.1.2}
- avoid unnecessary communications; {81.1.2}
- use clear, concise, and accurate transmissions; {81.1.2}
- speak with courtesy and professionalism; {81.1.2}
- do not use the names of Officers during transmission; and {81.1.2}
- do not use loud, uncivil, indecent, or profane language (profane and obscene language is a violation of FCC rules and regulations, as well as Department policy). {81.1.2}

5.0 **RADIO CALL SIGNS.** The Department's Radio Call Signs have been designed to ensure that personnel can quickly identify the type of unit and District of the Officer initiating the communications or assigned to respond to a call. The call signs noted will be utilized for all radio communications between the Dispatcher and Department personnel. Command Staff members will be assigned the following call signs: {81.2.4 c}

Chief of Police	"Tango One"
Superintendent	"Tango Two"
Deputy Superintendent of Patrol Operations	"Tango Three"
Deputy Superintendent of Administrative Services	"Tango Four"
Deputy Superintendent of Investigative Services	"Tango Five"

**SUPERVISOR'S CALL SIGNS:** The Call Sign for Lieutenants is the designation "Lima" followed by their three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., L ###). The Call Sign for Lieutenant Detectives is "Lima-Delta" followed by their three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., LD ###). {81.2.4 c}

The Call Sign for District Patrol Sergeants is the District identifier noted below (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie) followed by the designation "S" (Sierra) and their three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., Alpha S ###). The Call Sign for Last Half Patrol Sergeants is the identifier Tango followed by the designation "S" (Sierra) and their three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., Tango S ###). The Call Sign for Sergeant Detectives is "Sierra-Delta" followed by their three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., Sierra D ###). {81.2.4 c}

North District	"Bravo Sierra ### (R#)"
Central District	"Alpha Sierra ### (R#)"
South District	"Charlie Sierra ### (R#)"

**PATROL UNIT CALL SIGNS:** Patrol Unit call signs consist of a single area designation followed by the appropriate three (3) digit "Unit description" number. The area designations are as follows: {81.2.4 c}

- the designation "**Alpha**" will be utilized for all patrol units in **Central District**;
- the designation "**Bravo**" will be utilized for all patrol units in **North District**;
- the designation "**Charlie**" will be utilized for all patrol units in **South District**; and

- the designation “**Tango**” will be utilized for all patrol units on **the Last Half Shift**. {81.2.4 c}

**UNIT DESCRIPTION NUMBERS:** All Patrol Units will be identified by a three (3) digit “Unit Description” number assigned in accordance with the following guidelines: {81.2.4 c}

- the first digit will designate the Sector of assignment (1 thru 7) within the District; {81.2.4 c}
- the second digit will reflect the number (1 thru 3) of Officers in the Unit, the second digit for all Last Half Units will be 7;
  - 1-single-Officer assignment;
  - 2-two-Officer assignment;
  - 3-line team assignment; and
  - Station Assignments will be called by their location.
- the third digit of all call signs will be a shift designation. 1 through 5 will designate a Day Shift assignment, 6 through 9 will designate an Evening Shift assignment. The third digit for all Last Half Units will be the unit designation: {81.2.4 c}
  - Alpha 131 is a two-Officer Day Shift line team assignment in the Central District;
  - Bravo 211 is a single-Officer Day Shift cruiser in the North District;
  - Charlie 616 is a single-Officer Evening Shift cruiser assignment in the South District; or
  - Tango 775 is a single-Officer cruiser on the Last Half shift.

**CANINE CALL SIGNS:** Officers assigned to the K-9 Unit will utilize their “R Number” preceded by the call sign “Kilo”. {81.2.4 c}

Example: Kilo ### to Operations.

Officers assigned to the Explosive Detection Unit (EDU) will utilize their “R Number” preceded by the call sign “Echo Tango” for EDU Technicians and K9s and “Echo Kilo” for EDU K9s. {81.2.4 c}

Example: Echo Tango ### to Operations.

**R NUMBER CALL SIGNS:** Officers may utilize their “R Number” Radio Call Sign when communicating directly with another Officer regarding an administrative or non-call related issue (such as at a multiple Officer detail location). The appropriate Call Sign is the letter “R” followed by the Officer’s three digit Computer Identification Number (e.g., R ###). {81.2.4 c}

**DETECTIVE CALL SIGNS:** Detectives will utilize their “R Number” preceded by the call sign “Delta”. {81.2.4 c}

Example: Delta ### to Operations.

**JUVENILE OFFICER CALL SIGNS:** Officers will utilize their “R Number” preceded by the call sign “Juliet”. {81.2.4 c}

Example: Juliet ### to Operations.

**PLAIN CLOTHES POINT OF ENTRY POLICING.** Officers assigned to Plain Clothes Point of Entry Policing shall utilize "PC" (Plain Clothes) the unit number 1, 2, 3, etc. preceded by the District (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie). {81.2.4 c}

Example: Alpha PC1 to Operations.

**CIVILIAN CALL SIGNS:** A civilian employee who must use an MBTA Transit Police radio for a public safety emergency will use the call sign, "ADMIN", followed by their three digit Computer Identification Number. {81.2.4 c}

Example: ADMIN ### to Operations.

6.0 **DISPATCHING PROCEDURES.** The following procedures will apply to all radio dispatch communications:

6.1 **UNIT DESIGNATIONS.** When calling a unit, the Dispatcher will broadcast "Operations to ---" followed by the particular unit designation.

Example: Operations to Alpha 111.

6.2 **RADIO CONTACT.** When a unit is contacted via radio, the Officer will respond with his/her location, and stand by for the message.

Example: Operations to Alpha 111.  
Alpha 111, Arlington Outbound.

6.3 **OFFICER INITIATED TRANSMISSION.** When a unit initiates a radio call, Operations will acknowledge the call by repeating the unit's call sign. The unit may then continue transmitting.

Example: Alpha 111 to Operations.  
Operations answering Alpha 111.  
Alpha 111 is off at -----.

6.4 **REQUESTS TO "STAND BY".** Operations should avoid asking a unit to "stand by" unless there is an emergency requiring the undivided attention of all Operations personnel.

A unit initiating radio communications should never start a long transmission without first receiving confirmation from Operations that it is clear to transmit. Failure to comply with this often results in confusion, multiple units transmitting at the same time, missed information, and the necessity to repeat information.

6.5 **DISPATCHING UNITS.** All calls for service will be dispatched via the Department radio system. Cellular phones, including direct connect messages, will not be used for dispatching calls for service. Dispatching a unit should be done with as few words as possible. However, the Dispatcher will always ensure that he/she relates as much information as necessary to the unit. Normally, the type of incident and location will suffice. The Dispatcher will provide any responding units with all available information (e.g., armed suspects, description, etc.) regarding the incident. The Dispatcher will then record the information in the computer aided dispatch system and update it as necessary. {81.2.10}

Example: Operations to Alpha 111.  
Alpha 111, DTC Red line.

Alpha 111 respond to Park St. Red line south for a disorderly group.

6.5.1 The unit will indicate receiving and understanding the transmission.

Example: Alpha 111, Park Red south, Roger.

6.6 **ARRIVING AT A CALL.** All units will announce their arrival at a call by giving the unit call sign followed by 10-6 or "ARRIVED". {81.2.4 a}

The Dispatcher will acknowledge their arrival either by stating "Roger" or by repeating the message. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the call, the Dispatcher will also state the time of arrival as displayed on the dispatch console.

Example: Alpha 111, off at South Station Commuter Rail.  
Roger Alpha 111 at 0800 (or) Alpha 111, off at South Station Commuter Rail at 0800.

6.7 **CLEARING A CALL.** All calls for service will be cleared via the Department radio system. Cellular phones, including direct connect messages, will not be used for clearing calls for service. All calls should be cleared promptly so that unnecessary units will not be dispatched to assist, and other calls may be responded to. Units will indicate that they are clearing a call by calling Operations and stating they are "10-7" or "CLEAR." {81.2.4 a, 81.2.10}

7.0 **RADIO RESPONSE.** All Officers will be attentive to the radio and answer promptly when called by the Dispatcher or any other unit.

7.1 If any Officer or unit fails to answer when called three (3) times, the Dispatcher will immediately notify the appropriate Supervisor of the non-response.

The Supervisor will be dispatched to the last known location of the Officer, to ensure the Officer's well being, and check the Officer's radio and initiate a communications check. The Supervisor will submit a report of his/her findings to the Duty Supervisor or Unit Commander/Supervisor who will investigate the circumstances and take appropriate action, as necessary.

7.2 When on-duty, all units assigned to Patrol Operations are presumed to be on the air at all times and available to respond to calls from Operations. If a unit deems it necessary to go out of service or off the air for any reason (i.e., become unavailable for calls), the unit will request permission from their Supervisor and notify the Dispatcher, giving their location. {81.2.4 b}

8.0 **FIELD INTERROGATION AND OBSERVATION (FIO)/VEHICLE STOPS.** When a unit makes a motor vehicle stop or conducts an FIO, the following information will be transmitted via the police radio to the Dispatcher: {81.2.4 a}

- location;
- license number and vehicle description;
- number of occupants (or subjects for FIO);
- description of occupants or subjects;
- the reason for making the stop or FIO; and
- if there is an emergency and/or officer safety concern. {81.2.4 a}

For officer safety reasons, all information must be exchanged via the Department radio system.

- 9.0 **ADMINISTRATIVE RADIO RESPONSE CODES.** The following radio response codes may be used to expedite routine radio transmissions.

10-3 Call the Station  
10-4 Received (Roger)  
10-6 Arrived  
10-7 Clear  
10-9 Return to Headquarters  
10-10 Request a Warrant Check/FIO  
10-18 On Duty for Detail or Overtime + Location  
10-19 Off Duty for Detail or Overtime + Location {81.2.4 b}  
10-20 Request Break  
10-21 Call Detail Unit  
10-22 Call Home  
10-40 Supervisor Inspection  
10-41 Station Check  
10-43 Directed Patrol  
10-44 Bus Check  
10-45 Bus Ride Along  
10-50 Detective Off the Air on Investigation {81.2.4 b}  
10-80 Revenue Escort  
10-88 Open Sally Port Doors (Front/Rear)

- 9.1 Officers are advised that transportation personnel use radio codes to describe certain situations. For informational purposes, the codes are described below:

Code 1 Fire or Smoke	Code 5 Send Ambulance
Code 2 Person Under Train	Code 6 Unusual Occurrences
Code 3 Train Derailed	Code 7 Bomb Threat
Code 4 Send the Police	Code 8 Civil Disorders

- 10.0 **PHONETIC ALPHABET.** Whenever a radio message involves the use of letters (such as in a motor vehicle license number or the spelling of a name), words must be used for the letters to avoid confusion with similar sounding letters (e.g. C-D-E-V-etc.). In order to maintain uniformity, the Department will use whole words and/or the accepted military phonetic alphabet. Examples of whole words and the phonetic alphabet are as follows:

Military	Whole Words	Military	Whole Words
A-Alpha	Adam	N-November	Nova
B-Bravo	Boy	O-Oscar	Ocean
C-Charlie	Charlie	P-Papa	Paul
D-Delta	David	Q-Quebec	Queen
E-Echo	Echo	R-Romeo	Roger
F-Foxtrot	Frank	S-Sierra	Sam
G-Golf	George	T-Tango	Tom
H-Hotel	Harry	U-Uniform	Uncle
I-India	India	V-Victor	Victor
J-Juliet	John	W-Whiskey	William
K-Kilo	King	X-X-ray	X-ray
L-Lima	Lima	Y-Yankee	Yankee
M-Mike	Mike	Z-Zulu	Zebra

- 10.1 To properly use the phonetic alphabet, Officers will replace the letter with the appropriate word or give both the letter and the word.

Example: Alpha 111 needs a listing on Mass. 123-Alpha-Tango-Echo (123-ATE); or

Alpha 111 needs a listing on Mass 123-A-Alpha, T-Tango, E-Echo (123-ATE).

- 10.2 The same process will be used to phonetically spell out a name to be transmitted. If a warrant check is requested, the last name will be given first, followed by the first name, date of birth and social security number (if available).

Example: Alpha 111 needs a 10-10 (warrant check) on last name Cruise, C-Charley, R-Romeo, U-Uniform, I-India, S-Sierra, E-Echo, first name James, DOB 05/05/55, SS # 000-11-2222.

- 11.0 **BAPERN SYSTEM.** The MBTA Transit Police radio system is part of the Boston Area Police Emergency Radio Network (BAPERN). Most of the Department's radio communications are conducted on Channel 1, the Department's primary channel. Communications on this channel are restricted to MBTA Transit Police radios and are not repeated on other BAPERN channels. {81.2.10, 81.3.4}

Other channels available on the BAPERN system allow MBTA Transit Police Dispatchers, mobile units, and individual Officers to communicate with other police departments within the BAPERN system. {81.2.4 d}

When using the BAPERN system, the following procedures will be adhered to:

- IT IS MANDATORY that all units identify themselves by Department and unit number. Operations centers are always referred to by the Department name followed by "Operations".

Example: Transit Alpha 111 to Milton or Transit Operations to Revere 105.

- All transmissions on the BAPERN system will be given in plain language (no codes) and the phonetic alphabet will be used for any letters.
- If the use of a BAPERN channel is required for exclusive MBTA Transit Police use, the Duty Supervisor will request permission from Newton (BAPERN administrator) prior to switching from channel 1 to any BAPERN channel. {81.2.4 d}

- 12.0 **DETAIL PROCEDURE.** All Officers/Supervisors reporting on and off duty of an assigned detail will contact Operations via the radio with their R/S/L number and their detail location. Any Officer/Supervisor performing a detail at a station/garage shall tap their MBTA issued employee identification card at the fare gate, at the beginning and end of their tour of duty and ensure activation of the fare gate. Officers/Supervisors assigned to riding buses, shall tap their card each time they board a bus and ensure activation of the fare box. Supervisors of a multi Officer detail will report on and off duty via the radio for the Officers under their supervision, all Officers must still tap at the fare gates.

The Dispatcher will log the Detail Officer into the CAD Duty Roster using their R/S/L number and the detail (DETL) assignment code. The Dispatcher will place the Officer on a self initiated call in the CAD System using the call code 7777 Detail Assignment. Multi-Officer details with a Supervisor may be entered as one call.

The Duty Supervisor of each shift will ensure the details are entered into the CAD System and will review the detail system to ensure that all Officers listed are accounted for in the CAD System. Appropriate action will be taken by the Duty Supervisor if any discrepancy is detected.

Section 12.0 added 10/15/2010  
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