



## *Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

# **Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE: RECEIVING CALLS FOR SERVICE</b>		<b>NO: E-100</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Commander Tim Posey</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE: May 1, 1995</b>	<b>REVIEWED: October 2, 2023</b>	<b>REVISED: October 2, 2023</b>	<b>UPDATED: October 2, 2023</b>

### **POLICY**

The first contact a citizen has with the Kern County Sheriff's Office, when making a request for police assistance, is through the telephone system. Communications Section personnel will be professional and thorough in their telephone contacts with the public. Personnel will gather accurate, pertinent information from callers and complete their event entries in a manner that supports both public and officer safety.

Dispatchers on primary radio frequencies should avoid answering the incoming calls when staffing allows. Every effort will be made by personnel not on primary radio frequencies to answer the telephone before a radio dispatcher feels obligated to do so. 9-1-1 lines take priority over seven digit phone lines.

### **PROCEDURE A. INCOMING 9-1-1 CALLS**

- **When a 9-1-1 line rings, the call taker will answer with a pre-recorded 9-1-1 greeting from one of the following:**
  - "9-1-1, where is your emergency?"
  - "9-1-1, what is the nature of your emergency?"
  - "9-1-1, what is the location of your emergency?"
  - "9-1-1, do you have a life and death emergency?"
- **If the 9-1-1 call is not an emergency, the call taker will:**
  - Take appropriate action to help the caller.
    - Place call on hold and assist incoming 911 calls.
- **If the 9-1-1 call is an emergency, the call taker will:**
  - Remain on the line, determine the situation, and enter a call for service if needed.
  - Transfer the call to the appropriate agency or jurisdiction if it is not a law enforcement situation or if it is out of our jurisdiction.

- All calls for other agencies and jurisdictions will be transferred to the appropriate agency. The call taker will stay on the line until the receiving agency has voice contact with the caller and the location is provided.
- If the call is a major incident (ie shooting, stabbing) the call taker will provide the call type information to the agency before disconnecting the line.
- If the receiving agency does not answer, or their lines are ringing busy, **and the caller is not directly involved** in the incident the call taker will:
  - Gather the nature and location of the emergency, and the caller's contact information and inform the caller that KCSO will notify the responding agency.
  - Then disconnect with the caller and contact the responding agency to ensure they are responding and have the caller's information if needed.
- If the receiving agency does not answer, or their lines are ringing busy, **and the caller is directly involved** in the incident the call taker will:
  - Remain on the line, determine the situation, and enter a call for service.
  - Ask a co-worker to contact the responsible agency on a private phone line or on the radio and request they respond.
  - Remain on the line until the caller has been successfully transferred to the responding agency.
- **When receiving a 9-1-1 call and the ALI is incorrect or shows "Record Not Found", the call taker will:**
  - Complete the "Incorrect Location" form in VESTA and list the correct ALI data on the form, then print the form and place it in the 9-1-1 Coordinator's incoming box.

#### **PROCEDURE B.    DEMEANOR WITH CALLERS**

- **When answering any 9-1-1 or seven digit phone line the call taker will:**
  - Make every reasonable effort to assist the caller and enter a call for service if needed.
    - Talk in a clear, calm, and respectful voice.
    - Not use profanity, be discourteous, or disrespectful.
    - Furnish name and CAD number upon the request of any citizen.
- **When receiving a phone call and the caller is using profanity, yelling, belligerent, disrespectful, or abrasive, the call taker will:**
  - Inform the caller they are being placed on hold for a supervisor and then place the caller on hold.
    - Contact a Senior Dispatcher or a Dispatch Supervisor to handle the call.

#### **PROCEDURE C.    EVENT ENTRY INTO CAD**

- When entering a call for service into CAD, the call taker will complete the appropriate form entering all pertinent information in a clear, concise, and professional manner.
- The call taker will make note in the call for service if in person contact from a deputy is requested.



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE:</b> 9-1-1 HANG-UPS/OPEN LINES		<b>NO:</b> E-200	
<b>APPROVED:</b> Commander Tim Posey			
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> January 1, 1994	<b>REVIEWED:</b> November 6, 2019	<b>REVISED:</b> November 6, 2019	<b>UPDATED:</b> November 6, 2019

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Section to help anyone who calls with a request for service. Not every caller is able to talk to the Communications Section when a call is placed. In order to help those who are in a situation where they are restricted or unable to make voice contact, the Communications Section will make every effort to re-contact the calling party or enter a call for service.

**PROCEDURE A. OPEN 9-1-1 LINES**

**When answering a 9-1-1 line and there is no voice contact with the caller the call taker will:**

- Remain on the line and attempt to make voice contact.
- Utilize the Detect TTY function in VESTA to determine if the caller may be using a TDD device.
- For payphones:
  - If there are **no** indications of distress the call taker will disconnect and take no further action.
- For landline phones:
  - Enter a call for service.
  - If there are any indications of distress, the call taker will remain on the line and update the event as necessary.
  - If there are **no** indications of distress the call taker will disconnect and attempt at least one call back to determine the situation.
  - Cancel the event if voice contact is made with caller and there are no indications of distress.

- For wireless devices:
  - If there are **no** indications of distress the call taker will disconnect and attempt at least one call back to determine the situations and/or utilize the texting feature on Smart911 by sending the caller a text message, adhering to Communications Center Policy E-800.
    - Take no further action if the call was made from a disconnected cellular phone.
    - If there is no answer on call back or the line is busy, call taker will take no further action.
    - If voice contact is made and no response is needed, cancel the event and workload permitting, obtain the caller's name and home address and update the event with the information.
  - If there are any indications of distress, the call taker will remain on the line and enter a call for service including any relevant location information. The call taker may also utilize text feature on Smart911 by sending the caller a text message while remaining on the line.
    - If available, utilize the Update function in VESTA to continue to gather GPS data for the device and update the CAD event as necessary.
    - Notify a Senior Dispatcher or Dispatch Supervisor of the event and request they contact the wireless provider to obtain subscriber name and address information.

## **PROCEDURE B. ABANDONED 9-1-1 CALLS**

**When call taker has received an abandoned 9-1-1 call the call taker will:**

- For landline phones:
  - Enter a call for service with event type "911".
  - Attempt at least one call back to determine the situation.
  - Cancel the event if voice contact is made with caller and there are no indications of distress.
    - Call may be cancelled if a deputy has responded for the same type of event within the last 30 days and has determined there is a malfunction with the phone line.

- Not cancel the event if there are any indications of distress and will update the event accordingly.
- For payphones and disconnected cell phones:
  - Take no further action.
- For wireless devices:
  - Will attempt at least one call back to determine the situation and/or text the number back utilizing the text feature on Smart911.
    - If there is no answer on call back or the line is busy, call taker will take no further action.
    - If there is no response via text message after 2 minutes. The Call Taker may disconnect the session.
    - If there are any indications of distress, the call taker will remain on the line and enter a call for service including any relevant location information.
    - Notify a Senior Dispatcher or Dispatch Supervisor of the event and request they contact the wireless provider to obtain subscriber name and address information.



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE: TDD CALLS</b>		<b>NO: E-300</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Commander Tim Posey</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE: May 1, 1995</b>	<b>REVIEWED: November 12, 2019</b>	<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>UPDATED: January 27, 2015</b>

**POLICY**

If a call for service involving a TDD device is received, the call taker will indicate in the text that the reporting party is hearing impaired. The dispatcher will advise the responding deputy that the reporting party is hearing impaired.

**TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) procedures**

TDD calls can come into the communications center through a relay service, or directly dialed from the hearing impaired through a TDD device.

**When a call is received from a relay service, the dispatcher will:**

- Remain on the line and determine the situation and enter a call for service if needed, or refer the caller to the correct agency to assist them.

**When the call is received directly from the caller through a TDD device, the dispatcher will:**

- Observe the TTY window activation in VESTA.
- Click on the boxes to ask questions or manually key in questions.
  - If keying in questions, you will need to access the VESTA keyboard and you must end each question with “ga” indicating to the caller to “go ahead”. If ending the phone call, key in “sk” indicating to the caller to “stop keying”.
- Determine the situation and enter a call for service if needed, or refer the caller to the correct agency to assist them.



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>DISPATCHER RESPONSE TO ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, FELONY CRIMES, THREATS MADE TO A SCHOOL, MISSING AND FOUND PERSONS CALLS</b>	<b>NO: E-400</b>
<b>APPROVED:</b>	<b>Commander Tim Posey</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b>	<b>REVIEWED:</b>	<b>REVISED:</b>
<b>June 3, 1994</b>	<b>September 14, 2020</b>	<b>September 14, 2020</b>
		<b>UPDATED:</b>
		<b>September 14, 2020</b>

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Section to protect the public safety by following the mandates of law, policy, and the standards of professional performance within the field of public safety dispatching. The legislature has established certain requirements in the area of domestic violence and sexual abuse. This procedure has been developed to ensure all of state laws are met.

**PROCEDURE**

**When a call is received pertaining to sexual abuse, neglect, endangerment or domestic violence, against any child, adult or elderly person to also include found juveniles, missing persons and all follow up investigations related to these types of crimes, personnel will:**

- Enter a call for service in accordance with Communications Section Policies and Procedures E-100.

**Additionally, when a call is received pertaining to any threat made towards a school or school property, including all follow up investigations related to the original call, personnel will:**

- Enter a call for service in accordance with Communications Sections Policies and Procedures E-100, using the call for service type "SCHOOL".

**If a caller re-contacts the Communications Center and attempts to cancel a call for service listed above, personnel will:**

- Inform the caller the event will not be cancelled and update the event with any additional pertinent information.





***Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section***

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE: RESTRAINING ORDERS &amp; EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDERS</b>		<b>NO: E-500</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Commander Tim Posey</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE: May 1, 1995</b>	<b>REVIEWED: November 12, 2019</b>	<b>REVISED: November 12, 2019</b>	<b>UPDATED: November 12, 2019</b>

**DIRECTIVE**

Restraining orders do not need to be on file with our department to be valid. It is not the responsibility of the Communications Section personnel to verify the validity of such orders prior to dispatching a patrol unit.

**PROCEDURE A. RESTRAINING ORDERS**

**Upon receiving a call indicating the violation of a restraining order and the crime is in progress, the call taker will:**

- Enter a call for service.
- Obtain suspect information: Name, physical description, and vehicle description.
- Attempt to verify the validity of the restraining order by making a CLETS inquiry.
- Document in the call for service whether a restraining order was located.

**PROCEDURE B. EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDERS**

**After receiving an EPO at the Communications Division, the Dispatch Supervisor or designee will:**

- Enter an ALERT into CAD under the victim's address entry to include:
  - The EPO expiration date
  - Victim name
  - Suspect name
  - Brief suspect description
  - Case Number
- Write on the EPO the date it was entered in CAD and the entering employee's CAD ID.

- File the EPO in the Emergency Protective Order binder.



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE:</b> CITIZEN'S REQUEST: FOR STOLEN WEAPONS, VEHICLES, OR PROPERTY		<b>NO:</b> E-600	
<b>APPROVED:</b> Commander Tim Posey			
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> January 1, 1994	<b>REVIEWED:</b> November 12, 2019	<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>UPDATED:</b> January 27, 2015

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Section, if time and staffing permits, to check the California DOJ CJIS and FBI NCIC databases at the request of a citizen, to ascertain if a piece of property or a weapon has been reported stolen.

**PROCEDURE**

**When a citizen requests a weapon, vehicle or other property checked to determine if it is stolen, the dispatcher will:**

- Obtain the name, address, and telephone number of the caller.
- Obtain the type of property or weapon and serial number.
- Inform the caller they will be placed on hold while the check is completed..

**If the property, vehicle or weapon is not entered as stolen, the dispatcher will:**

- Notify the caller the property is not listed as stolen at this time.

**If the property, vehicle or weapon is entered as stolen, the dispatcher will:**

- Enter a call for service to recover the stolen property



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*

**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE:</b> CITIZEN REQUEST: DIRECTIONS, DISPOSITIONS, OR WARRANT INFORMATION		<b>NO:</b> E-700	
<b>APPROVED:</b> Commander Tim Posey			
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> May 1, 1995	<b>REVIEWED:</b> November 12, 2019	<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>UPDATED:</b> January 27, 2015

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Center to assist the public to the best of their abilities. At times the public will request information that the Communications Center is unable to give. If possible, Communication Center personnel will refer the caller to another source where the caller can receive the information they are looking for.

**PROCEDURE A. DIRECTIONS**

**When a private person calls asking for directions, the call taker will:**

- Notify the caller they are not allowed to give out directions.

**PROCEDURE B. ALARM DISPOSITIONS**

**When an alarm company calls for the disposition or event times of an alarm, the call taker will:**

- Provide the alarm company with requested information if workload permits or ask the alarm company to call back at a later time if necessary.

**PROCEDURE C. WARRANT REQUESTS**

**When a civilian calls requesting warrant information on themselves, or on another person, the call taker will:**

- Inform the caller that we do not give out warrant information on the telephone and direct them to the court or the nearest Sheriff's facility to inquire about the warrant.
- If the caller has a location for a subject that is possibly wanted or wants to turn themselves in, the call taker will obtain the subject's information and location and enter a warrant service event into CAD if a warrant is located.



*Kern County Sheriff's Office – Communications Section*  
**Policies and Procedures**

<b>TITLE: TEXT-TO-911</b>		<b>NO: E-900</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Commander Tim Posey</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> February 13, 2018	<b>REVIEWED:</b> November 12, 2019	<b>REVISED:</b> June 6, 2018	<b>UPDATED:</b> June 6, 2018

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communications Center to follow the procedures set forth in this policy for the processing of calls received via Short Message Service (SMS) to 911.

**PROCEDURE A. TEXT-TO-911**

In lieu of voice communications, callers may opt to contact 9-1-1 via text messaging. Text-to-911 provides equal access to emergency services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community as well as an alternate method of reporting emergencies when other traditional avenues are unavailable.

The Short Message Service (SMS) also known as text messaging provides support for wireless subscribers to send 911 SMS text messages to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) by using the single code 911 as the destination address of the SMS message.

Calls received via text messaging will be delivered to the Communications Center on the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Workstation via Comtech EMedia Solution.

**PROCEDURE B. LOGGING ON & OFF OF THE COMTECH EMEDIA 911 PLATFORM**

At the beginning of shift, Call Takers assigned to receive Text-to-911 (SMS) messaging will log into the Comtech EMedia Platform. Call Takers can log on as they are relieving their partner. However, there shall be no more than **2** sessions logged on at one time other than shift change or break relief.

At the end of shift, or a change in assignment, the Call Taker will log off of the system after confirming their partner is available. During periods of shift change it is incumbent upon the Call Taker to provide and receive briefing or call information that is relevant to any active SMS calls for service.

Volume control shall **not** be turned down or silenced. The volume control is one of the indicators that a new 9-1-1 text message has been received.

## **PROCEDURE C. RECEIVING A TEXT-TO-911 CALL**

All 9-1-1 calls are processed equally without regard to hierarchy and therefore Text-to-911 (SMS) lines will be accepted and answered immediately without delay and all calls shall be prioritized based on the nature of the call whether voice or text.

Each Call Taker assigned to Text-to-911 will process no more than **2** text sessions at once. The highest priority Text-to-911 will be determined by the nature of the emergency.

The call location accuracy displayed for the caller may only have the accuracy of a Wireless Phase 1 (WPH1) depending on the carrier. The call taker must always confirm the location and not depend on the accuracy of the location provided.

The Call Taker is limited to a maximum of **5** rebids for updated location accuracy. The highlighted letter/number in the center of the map indicates the number of times the location has been rebid. Upon transferring to another PSAP, the new dispatcher will receive a new allocation of **5** rebids.

## **PROCEDURE D. HOW TO PROCESS A TEXT-TO-911 CALL**

Text messages are expected to be processed using the same standards for processing emergency and non-emergency voice calls for service.

As emphasized in basic call-taking, the most important piece of information to obtain is the location of the emergency followed by the type of emergency. This procedure will be followed on text to 9-1-1 calls.

Call Takers shall make all attempts to confirm that the caller can be reached at the same number the text is originating from.

Canned messages should be used whenever possible to both expedite the call taking process and for consistency between calls. The flow of the text conversation should emulate those of voice 9-1-1 calls in that the 5 W's; Where, What, Who, When, Weapons, and How should be answered. Dispatchers will not use jargon, abbreviations, or acronyms but rather spell out questions to avoid misunderstanding with the callers.

The caller shall be greeted with the following canned message. "Kern County Sheriff's Office what is the location / address of the emergency you are reporting?"

If a text message is received without or with vague information; the call taker will send a preset message stating "Kern County Sheriff's Office, we received a 911 text from this number. Do you have an emergency? If there is no response after **2** minutes the call taker will end the session.

All other pertinent information will be asked for by the call-taker to help ensure bystander and responder safety. All pertinent and proper information shall be added to the call for service in CAD and relayed to the responding unit(s) as appropriate. The call-taker shall note that the call

was received by text when creating the call in CAD. When the call is dispatched over the radio, the responders will be advised that the call is being received by text message.

#### **PROCEDURE E. TRANSFERRING CALLS TO ANOTHER PSAP**

The dispatcher shall stay on the line until the text session is taken over by the receiving PSAP. The receiving PSAP will receive the previous text conversation as well as the transferring PSAP name and operator name.

The Call Taker making the transfer should continue to monitor the text conversation to ensure the correct jurisdiction/agency has been reached, and there is no information pertinent to the Call Taker's own agency as some jurisdictions are in close proximity to each other. The Call Taker may monitor the conversation for suspect(s) descriptions, officer safety information, etc.

#### **PROCEDURE F. HANDLING CALLS FOR INCIDENTS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS (WITHOUT TEXT CAPABILITIES)**

If a text message is received and it is determined that the emergency is occurring in another jurisdiction, and that agency does not have text capability all pertinent information will be gathered and relayed by phone to the appropriate PSAP. The session should be kept open by the Kern County Sheriff's Office, until contact is made with the appropriate jurisdiction. A call will be created in CAD using event type "TEXT", include caller's phone number for documentation purposes. Close the CAD call with the disposition code NFA.

At no point should the caller be advised that they have reached the wrong agency and need to call or text a different number to reach the correct agency.

#### **PROCEDURE G. WHEN TO END A TEXT MESSAGING SESSION**

A text session does not end until the call-taker selects the "End Session" button. This allows the call-taker to remain in texting contact with the caller. Once the call session has ended, the Call Taker will not be able to send a text message to the phone. If there is a law enforcement need to make contact after the session has ended, make a voice call to the phone number or use the texting functionality in Smart911.

Under no circumstances shall the Call Taker text the caller from their personal cell phone.

#### **PROCEDURE H. RE-ESTABLISHING CONTACT AFTER A SESSION IS CLOSED**

Call Takers are authorized to make a voice call to the caller or use the texting functionality in Smart911 if needed. This will need to be done if additional information is needed from the caller or if responders are having difficulty locating them. If the Smart911 texting feature is used the call taker will make note of this in their CAD log for record keeping.

A caller should not be called back in cases where their safety, or the safety of another, is in question. If an officer is requesting that a callback be made in this situation, the dispatcher will advise the officer of the safety concern. If the officer still requests a callback at that point, the callback request will be honored.

#### **PROCEDURE I. UTILIZING INTERPRETATION SERVICE**

If it is determined that Interpreter services are needed, a voice call will be placed to the caller and then transferred to the Interpretation service. If the call taker is certified to read and write in the Language received, the call taker may engage in a text conversation. The call taker may use google online translation service as a resource to attempt to identify the language.

If the call taker is unable to reach the caller by making a voice call using the Interpretation service, the on-duty Supervisor should be notified to contact the phone provider and request subscriber information and address, so that an officer can be dispatched to check the welfare at the callers listed address. If the address is with another jurisdiction the appropriate jurisdiction should be notified to check the welfare at the subscriber's address. The call taker may also use an online translation service as a resource to see if they can further assist the caller.

#### **PROCEDURE J. ALTERNATE ANSWER**

The Kern County Sheriff's Office will not be utilizing the EMedia alternate answer. Kern County PSAPS have collectively agreed to have Text-to-911 default to the bounce back message in the event where a PSAP has to divert 911 lines. Landlines and Wireless alternate answer procedure will strictly adhere to Communications Policy C-100.

#### **PROCEDURE K. DENY LIST**

The Kern County Sheriff's Office will not be utilizing the Deny List.

#### **PROCEDURE L. MULTIMEDIA MESSAGE ATTACHMENTS (MMS)**

In the unlikely event a text message contains multimedia content; the Call Taker shall **not** open the content, click any link, or open any dialog box containing the content. Instead, the Call Taker will indicate in the text of the call for service that multimedia content was contained in the text along with the time stamp.

#### **PROCEDURE M. ECATS REPORTS**

As with standard practice in the Communications Center, Text-to-911, is for official business and will fall under the same standards of recording and retention. Reports will be retained for **2** years. The 9-1-1 Coordinator will access ECats Reports to obtain any Text-to 911 transcripts at the request of the Custodian of Records.



**PROCEDURE N. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH TEXTING PROGRAM**

Notify the on duty Dispatch Supervisor, 9-1-1 Coordinator and the Communications Commander.