



Kern County Sheriff's Office
Policies and Procedures

TITLE: USE OF MOBILE DATA COMPUTERS		NO: E-850	
APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner			
EFFECTIVE: December 17, 2008	REVIEWED: 9/22/2017	REVISED: 00/00/00	UPDATED: 9/22/2017

POLICY

Mobile Data Computers are tools used to provide accurate and timely information to field units actively engaged in the protection of life and property. Proper use of the Mobile Data Computer will eliminate routine radio traffic making those radio channels available when needed for urgent traffic, thus enhancing the safety of field units.

The MDC is a tool to reduce routine radio traffic and enhance safety. All authorized members of the Kern County Sheriff's Office will use the MDC system as fully as possible and comply with all Sheriff's Office directives on usage. Members will safeguard the equipment, information and integrity of the system, and its information.

DIRECTIVE A (Authorization)

Only authorized personnel trained in the proper use of the terminals shall have access to the MDC. Non-sworn personnel shall only use MDCs under the supervision or direction of authorized personnel.

DIRECTIVE B (Safety)

All personnel are expected to fully comply with Kern County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedure Sections E-100 (Emergency Driving) and E-800 (PPV) at all times while utilizing the MDC. Use of the MDC should never distract or interfere with the safe practices or operation of a moving vehicle. Users must not allow MDC operation to put themselves or others in danger.

- MDC Users operating a moving vehicle will be restricted to 12 keystrokes per transaction.

DIRECTIVE C (Official purpose)

- Transmission of data by Mobile Data Computers will be limited to data that can be described as official in nature. Official is defined as any act that is pertinent to a

lawful police function.

- Kern County Sheriff's Office Policy & Procedure J-1610 requires that the access of computer databases be limited to official queries pursuant to a lawful police function where there is not only a right to know, but also a need to know.
- Instructions regarding the functional operation of the Mobile Data Computer shall not be made via voice radio. This refers to information such as how to log on or how to run inquiries as well as commands for operating the MDC. This prohibition is intended to prevent unauthorized persons from obtaining a working knowledge of our digital communications system. It does not refer to instructions regarding procedural operations such as whether or not to send a message in a particular situation.

DIRECTIVE D (General use)

- Authorized personnel will use the MDC to log on and log off the CAD system.
- After each shift change the concerned dispatcher shall determine if any Sheriff's Office members have completed their shift but failed to log off. If it appears there are units that have failed to log off, the following procedures will be followed:
 1. The dispatcher will attempt to contact the unit via radio and MDC.
 2. If this meets with negative results, the Communications Supervisor shall notify the Sergeant or Watch Commander, providing the unit's last known location and activity.
- The MDCs will be used to log units enroute to calls, arriving and clearing from calls, and will be used to enter call dispositions and receive case numbers.
- The MDCs are capable of inquiries into most CAD system databases such as DMV, CJIS, and NCIC. Rather than voice transmissions, MDCs should be used for such inquiries in order to reduce radio traffic. However, MDC use should not compromise officer safety procedures. In these cases, voice transmissions are appropriate.
- Whenever possible, field units shall make their own inquiries into CAD databases rather than asking a dispatcher to make the inquiry.
- MDCs will be used for non-urgent communications between field units and between field units and dispatchers. These messages shall be limited to official business.
- MDC users shall not use profanity, racial, ethnic, religious slurs, or sexual comments.

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Users shall not be rude or disrespectful when sending messages via MDCs.

- Indiscriminate transmissions of text messages will backlog the officer's and dispatcher's terminal, burying more important messages and impeding the entire CAD/MDC system. Only messages of operational relevance will be transmitted on MDCs.
- All MDC transmissions to the Communications Center and between cars are recorded by the Computer Aided Dispatch System and can be reproduced at any time.

DIRECTIVE E (Tactical dispatching & transmissions)

- Car stops, subject stops, and on-site activity will be transmitted by voice.
- All calls will be dispatched via the MDC. High priority calls such as crimes in-progress, impending injury to a citizen or officer, disturbances involving weapons, gang fights, or calls requiring a back-up officer, will be dispatched simultaneously by voice and MDC. Supplemental information to these types of calls will also be voice dispatched.
- Accidents, hazardous materials incidents, and similar hazard/safety type calls shall also be dispatched by voice to warn other personnel in case they need to avoid the area for safety reasons or may be closer to respond than the dispatched unit.
- Priority calls may be dispatched via the MDC when directed to do so by the Watch Commander in special circumstances. This practice should be limited to specific tactical situations when the use of voice is not practical because of security considerations, threats to the public, or officer safety.
- The radio system shall be used for all urgent communications or any communications in situations where the MDC is either unavailable or impractical, i.e.; when a member is away from the patrol car or at the direction of a supervisor.
- Calls that would normally be considered high priority, but are actually not in progress or are "cold calls" and only require "taking a report," may, at the dispatcher's discretion, be dispatched by MDC rather than voice.
- All broadcasts that are FELONY or Officer Safety in nature shall be voice dispatched by the dispatcher in addition to being sent via MDC. Misdemeanor or minor broadcasts shall only be sent via MDC, unless the dispatcher or a supervisor feels it should be voice dispatched.

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DIRECTIVE F (Maintenance)

- Although MDCs are designed to withstand hard use, they are electronic equipment and subject to malfunction when components get wet or are physically abused. Avoid bumping or hitting the MDC. Avoid using it as an armrest or working bench. Avoid dropping foreign objects on, or spilling liquids into, the MDC.
- Personnel who become aware that their MDC is inoperative or in need of repair or cleaning, shall contact the Technology Services Section Help Desk for resolution. If another MDC equipped car is available, it should be used.

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