

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATIONS

1. GENERAL. Every Motor Carrier Specialist (MCS) must be able to communicate clearly using a variety of communications equipment. This chapter should be taught in a manner that allows trainees to demonstrate their communication abilities. The focus of this chapter is on proper use of the telephone -(including pagers), the Management Information System (MIS), and departmental two-way radios.

2. TELEPHONES.

a. Trainees shall be instructed on the operation and proper use of the telephone systems used in their Division office and assigned Area office.

(1) Telephone Etiquette.

(a) Answer the phone promptly and pleasantly. A telephone conversation is often the first contact a MCS I has with industry personnel. This first impression could significantly affect the MCS's working relationship with these carriers in the field.

(b) Identify the Department, the Unit and yourself. The greeting preference may vary in different Divisions (see Division/MCSU SOP).

(c) Tone of voice should convey a willingness to help.

(d) Treat every phone call as an important call. Each call is important to someone.

(e) Conversations should be conducted in a business-like manner. Recognize and avoid the tendency to "gab," but avoid abruptly cutting off a caller who has that tendency. Instead, steer the conversation back to the real point of the call. Most callers will respond by becoming more businesslike, since few callers are inclined to call the CHP unless they have a specific business reason for doing so.

(f) Keep writing materials close to the phone.

(g) Avoid giving "guesses" over the phone. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, inform the caller that you will research the issue and call them back. Do not keep a person waiting on the phone while

conducting research, except when you know exactly where to find the specific answer, and the source of the answer is immediately available.

NOTE: Trainees should refrain from answering questions from industry, the general public, and allied agencies until adequate training is completed and they are authorized by their supervisor to do so.

(h) When necessary, obtain adequate caller information (i.e., the person's name, company name, phone number, date, time of call, and best time to call back with answer).

b. Telephone Procedures and Restrictions.

(1) Personal use of the departmental telephone system is generally not permitted. Specific reasonable exceptions may be authorized by the commander of the office from which a personal telephone call might be made.

(2) Review Division/MCSU policy concerning collect calls and the use of departmental telephone credit cards.

(3) California Integrated Network (CalNet).

(a) CalNet calls are not free and may not be used for personal long distance calls. Long distance calls are routinely audited. Disciplinary action may be taken against employees of any classification or rank who intentionally misuse the telephone system.

(b) Trainees should be informed that the CalNet line should be used whenever possible for long distance calls, as CalNet rates are somewhat lower than commercial long-distance rates. Departmental funds not spent on unnecessary commercial telephone service are funds that can be used for improving other equipment or facilities sooner than might otherwise be possible.

(c) Trainees should be informed of the location of the state and local telephone directories.

(d) The MCSTO should review the state telephone directory with trainees and ensure that they are aware of the CalNet listings in front of the book (green pages).

c. Operational Dial Telephones (ODT). Many offices have one line on their telephones marked "ODT." The ODT is a microwave system intended to be used during emergency situations when conventional phone systems are not operable

(GO 11.3). The ODT is often referred to as the "green phone," after the original system installation during the cold war years when each office had a separate single-line telephone that was distinguished from the regular black business telephones by its green color. The "green phone" system still exists, but is now a separate button on the main telephone system of each office, rather than a separate telephone.

d. Record of Calnet and Toll: or Cellular Telephone Calls (CHP 83). All long distance phone calls (including CalNet) shall be logged on a CHP 83 in accordance with Division or Area policy.

3. THREATENING TELEPHONE CALLS.

a. Trainees must be instructed in proper procedures in the event of a bomb threat or other threatening messages. Trainees shall be made aware of the location of the CHP 34, Bomb Threat Telephone Calls. These information cards are normally located by each phone. The cards serve as a guide for attempting to get information from a threatening caller, and can be used for any type of threat, not just bomb threat calls. The location of the cards could vary, depending on Division policy.

4. PAGERS. Trainees shall be instructed on the operation and proper use of their assigned pager in accordance with the appropriate Division and/or MCSU SOP.

5. VEHICLE TWO-WAY RADIOS.

a. Basic Knowledge. The MCSTO shall provide information on this subject consistent with the Division SOP and/or procedures. A tour of the dispatch center is encouraged. HPM 60.1, Telecommunications - Dispatch Operations Manual, Chapter 5, contains useful information on radio procedures.

b. CHP Radio Frequencies. The primary and secondary radio frequencies, referred to by color designations (red frequency, green frequency, etc.), for the geographical areas to which the trainee will be assigned should be explained to the trainee, along with their purpose and which frequency trainees are to use when in a particular geographical area.

c. Special emphasis should be placed on the seriousness with which abuse of the CHP radio system will be viewed, and that due to the nature of radio communications, any unwise use of the radio will be heard by a large number of listeners.

d. Radio Equipment. Trainees should be familiarized with the radios they will be using.

- (1) Turning on the power.
- (2) Setting the volume.
- (3) Setting the squelch.
- (4) Selecting the proper frequency (channel).
- (5) Tone control.
- (6) Using the microphone.
- (7) Electrical hazards associated with antennas when transmitting.

e. Aural Brevity Codes.

- (1) Trainees should be furnished a copy of CHP 254, Aural Brevity Codes.

NOTE: This is confidential information and is not to be provided to anyone outside of the Department. This also applies to radio frequencies, e.g., 154.920 megahertz.

- (2) Trainees shall possess general knowledge and be familiar with some of the more important and frequently used codes.

- (a) Code 33 Clear radio channels for emergency traffic.

NOTE: A Code 33 is for extreme emergency conditions only (immediate threat to life), not for calling in an accident or requesting an ambulance. Code 33 is declared by a Communications Operator, not a mobile unit, although an officer may request it.

- (b) 10-1 Reception poor.
- (c) 10-2 Reception good.
- (d) 10-4 Message received.
- (e) 10-6 Busy, please standby.
- (f) 10-7 Out of service.

- (g) 10-8 In service.
- (h) 10-9 Repeat transmission.
- (i) 10-10 Off duty.
- (j) 10-19 Return to (location).
- (k) 10-20 Location requested.
- (l) 10-21. Telephone.
- (m) 10-30 Improper radio traffic.

(3) Radio Etiquette.

(a) Explain the need to collect one's thoughts prior to initiating a communication. The appearance of not knowing what one is doing is amplified by hesitant or uncertain speech over the radio.

(b) Citizen's Band (CB)-type language and profanity are not permitted over CHP frequencies. Attempts at "cuteness" or humor over the radio are risky, and often backfire on the sender. They are often followed by an order to 10-19 to the office or other specified location to meet someone. In the case of Division employees, such abuse may result in a telephone call to the appropriate Division supervisor.

(c) If proper brevity codes cannot be remembered, use plain English.

(4) Radio Call Numbers.

(a) Trainees should be informed of their radio call number as assigned by Division.

(5) Signal 10-11.

(a) If called upon by dispatch to "signal 10-11," respond by call sign and "KA 4993." This exchange is initiated by Communications Operators on an occasional basis to comply with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations governing the use of the airwaves by FCC-licensed radio systems. The CHP's radio license is identified by the call sign "KA 4993."

6. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM.

- a. All CHP field offices and dispatch centers are equipped with at least one terminal and printer which are interconnected by a network of high-speed communication lines, called the Management Information System (MIS).
- b. One of the uses of the MIS is to relay messages from other agencies, such as bulletins from other police agencies concerning fleeing felons, armed and dangerous persons, escaped prisoners, stolen vehicles or weapons, missing persons, overdue travelers, and other common police matters.
- c. The Comm-Net system is also used for administrative messages between CHP offices. The Comm-Net system is used for messages that are intended to be shared with specific groups of CHP employees, or all employees.
- d. Transmission of any Comm-Net message requires, at a minimum, the prior approval of the commander of the originating office.
- e. Other systems accessible via the Department's MIS are governed by law, and severe penalties for abuse of certain functions are imposed, up to and including criminal prosecution. For example, an attempt to obtain any information about the President will result in swift investigation of that inquiry by the California Department of Justice and the United States Secret Service, and a stressful time for the person who initiated the inquiry. Similar reactions occur regarding inquiries about other dignitaries or celebrities if the inquiry was not an authorized, legitimate use of the system.

(1) MIS System Functions.

- (a) Each trainee should be instructed on the functions of the MIS pertinent to their job.
- (b) The MCSTO should instruct trainees only on system functions that the MCSU is authorized to use, and ensure the trainee understands under what circumstances each function may be used.
- (c) The functions used most frequently by the MCS I are the Management Information System of Terminal Evaluation Records (MISTER), California Vehicle Registration Inquiry, and Driver License Status Inquiry.

7. MISTER.

(a) MISTER has been developed to monitor the overall safety performance of motor carriers.

(b) For a complete overview of MISTER functions, refer to HPM 84.1, Chapter 15.

(2) California Vehicle Registration Inquiry.

(a) The MCSTO should instruct the trainee on the use of this function in accordance with Division and departmental policy. Departmental policy reflects the authorized functions for use by MCS, and Division policy will generally be focused on when and where MIS terminals may be used, so that users with routine message traffic never delay users with high-priority message traffic.

(b) The trainee should understand that at Area offices, there are many daily functions performed on MIS terminals that must occur on schedule in order to coordinate electronically with nightly automated programs in Sacramento. Therefore, inquiries on the MIS that can be run at any time must yield to those that cannot.

1 These constraints do not mean that the work of the MCS is of low importance, they only mean that the MIS can handle only so much traffic at a time, and certain types of traffic must occur at certain times.

2 Sometimes even certain types of non-emergency criminal research by officers must be postponed a few hours to allow mass transactions performed by Area office clerical personnel to be processed on time.

(c) The information contained in these files is to be used on a need-to-know basis and is not for public disclosure.

(3) California Driver License Inquiry.

(a) The MCSTO should instruct the trainee on the use of this function in accordance with Division and departmental policy.

(b) The information contained in these files is to be used on a need-to-know basis and is not for public disclosure.

(4) Authorized Use. Trainees shall not use the MIS terminal unsupervised until their MIS training is complete and they are authorized to do so.

8. ELECTRONIC MAIL.

a. Trainees should be instructed on the operation and proper use of the Department's electronic mail (e-mail) system. E-mail may be used for sending messages between employees within this Department subject to the following conditions:

(1) E-mail is to be used for state business only.

(2) E-mail messages shall not contain any offensive or inappropriate language.

(3) Conservative choices of words are always best in e-mail, as it is easy to inadvertently offend a recipient with written messages, when the same message delivered verbally in person with a smile and a pleasant tone would be received in the spirit in which it was intended. The smile and the pleasant tone do not travel with an e-mail message, and the bare words can easily be considered abrasive when the reader does not receive the pleasant "attitude" along with the message.

(4) E-mail messages should not be typed in all capital letters, as this is often perceived to be the equivalent of shouting.

b. Even though e-mail can be addressed to a specific individual, e-mail should never be considered private or secure, and the content of all messages should reflect that realization. The Department's computer network administrators do not monitor e-mail, but when ordered to do so as part of an internal investigation, they can recover any e-mail message that has been sent, going back a long time, even if it has been deleted from both the sender's and the recipient's local personal computers (PC).

c. A good rule of thumb is, if the sender would be embarrassed to see their message posted on an office bulletin board, the message should not be sent as currently worded.