Operational Guideline

PURPOSE: To promote professional and efficient use of the E-911 North Island fire dispatch radio systems.

SCOPE: Fire dispatch and North Island 9-1-1 fire departments

POLICY: Industry Canada has rules that must be observed for all transmissions.

PROCEDURE:

1.0   General

1.1   Users may not deliberately interfere with transmissions from another station.

1.2   Users may not transmit unnecessary or false distress signals or messages (conversations) containing profane or obscene words.

1.3   Users are prohibited from discussing policy or personnel matters over the radio.

1.4   Users shall transmit information using plain English in a clear and concise manner.

2.0   Initial Dispatch Cycle

2.1   Dispatchers will activate pre-alert and paging tones, followed by a voice announcement. The voice announcement will be as follows:

  a)   Department name
  b)   Dispatch code (problem type) as per the attached table "Appendix A"
  c)   Location of the reported incident
  d)   Repeat steps a, b, c
  e)   Announce the time of day
  f)   Announce cross street or building name information as applicable

2.2   Upon receipt of a page, one designated member of a fire department shall voice announce that the page out was successful as soon as is practical. For example, *"Sayward Fire, page received."*

2.3   Fire Departments are to wait for fire dispatch to say go ahead before transmitting on the radio. For example, *"Fire Dispatch, Beaver Creek Duty Officer".* Dispatch reply, *"Go ahead Beaver Creek Duty Officer."*

2.4   Dispatch will track vehicle movements. Upon the first transmission, as per 2.3 of a vehicle responding, additional incident details will be broadcast. For example, *Fire Dispatch, Courtenay Chief 19 responding,"* dispatch reply, *"Roger, Courtenay Chief 19, the caller reports that the fire is in the rear bedroom and is getting worse."*

2.5   All responding vehicles shall transmit as per 2.3, including jurisdiction, vehicle type and vehicle unit number when they are responding and when they arrive at the

scene. For example, *"Fire Dispatch, Nanoose Rescue 311"* or *"Parksville Ladder 49 on scene."*

2.6 Once command has been established, all communications with dispatch should include the jurisdiction name and the applicable benchmark being announced. For example, *"Fire dispatch – McNeill Command",* dispatch replies*, "Go ahead McNeill Command",* McNeill Command replies *"RCMP & BCEHS on scene."*

NOTE: Dispatchers will use the term **"Standby"** during radio communications with fire departments as an indicator that they are momentarily **_not available_** due to processing a new incident(s) or gathering information for an existing incident. **Fire departments are requested to hold off broadcasting further information until dispatch acknowledges they are ready.**

3.0   Police to Respond or Wait for Police Notifications

3.1 One of the FCABC Essential Benchmarks, as found in "Appendix B," refers to **Code 5 – Police**. There are times when Incident Commanders or Duty Officers require police to attend an incident but do not want to use the word "police" in front of people or over the air. A request to dispatch to "have the fives attend" or "Code 5 to this address" will be understood by dispatchers.

The reciprocal is that BCEHS, at times, will flag an incident as "wait for the police." In these cases, dispatchers may use the term "wait for fives" or "wait for code 5." In all cases, a "wait for police" notice should trigger the responding officers to stage apparatus well out of sight of the incident's address, not in front of the address in question.

4.0   Paging Secondary Calls

4.1 **Career Fire Departments:** During priority incidents such as a structure fire, dispatch will use the terminology "department name" + "standby crew" when alerting a fire department of a second call for service. The senior standby officer can respond, whether the department is a) able to respond and b) which vehicle(s) are to be assigned to the second incident. On-scene Incident Commanders are only to be advised of the second call if a standby crew has not been established.

4.2 **Composite and Paid on Call/Volunteer Fire Departments:** Fire Dispatchers will activate the pagers for any secondary call as a general page, unless only a duty officer is required, even when the department is already responding to an incident. Dispatchers will activate pre-alert and paging tones, followed by a voice announcement. The voice announcement will be as follows:

a) Department name
b) Dispatch Code (problem type) as per the attached table "Appendix A"
c) Location of the reported incident
d) Repeat steps a,b,c
e) Announce time of day
f) Announce cross street or building name information as applicable.

5.0   Fire Department's Use of Dispatch Channels

5.1   In many cases, multiple fire departments share a common dispatch frequency.

a)   Priority radio channel use will be granted to the fire department involved in the most serious incident.

b)   In all cases of multi-call situations, every effort shall be made to give priority to the fire department responding to the most urgent emergency.

c)   In all cases, every effort shall be made to minimize radio traffic on a common dispatch frequency by switching to a tactical frequency once on scene for operations.

d)   At no time shall a department use a common dispatch frequency to direct traffic, conduct training operations, or notify other members of non-emergency functions.

6.0   Benchmarks

6.1   The BCFTOA and the FCABC have completed work on an "Essential Benchmarks" document for the fire service in British Columbia. This project aimed to identify those communications that must be captured during an incident and ensure a consistent definition of these terms. These benchmarks are not intended to be a complete list of radio communications. These are merely those communications that are critical to document and, in some cases, are the current NFPA standard. See "Appendix B."

7.0   Service Levels – First Responder and Services Outside Fire Protection

7.1   Participation by fire departments in the First Responder Medical Program and services delivered outside fire protection varies for each jurisdiction. To maintain a consistent approach to service delivery, a list of available service levels can be found in "Appendix C," and the forms are to be used by fire departments whenever increasing or decreasing service levels.

8.0   Service Levels During an Evacuation of Fire Dispatch

8.1   In the event that the primary fire dispatch center is compromised or requires evacuation, **and at the discretion of the dispatch manager, service levels may be reduced from full-service dispatch with monitoring to basic service with call drop.** In the event call drop services are invoked, dispatchers will notify the fire department of the incident type and location. Once the involved fire department acknowledges receipt of the page, the dispatcher will disconnect the radio link. Vehicle movements and benchmarking **will not** be tracked. Mobile CAD and electronic paging may also not be available.

Responding fire departments may obtain additional information by dialing **1-800-918-9168** or by calling Prince George Fire Dispatch at **1-888-253-9999**; however, fire departments must refrain from calling either of these numbers unless absolutely necessary.

9.0   NI 911 Corp Radio Equipment in Fire Halls

9.1   North Island 9-1-1 Corporation has fire dispatch radio equipment located in many fire halls throughout the service area. These systems are integral to communications with fire dispatch and rely upon constant 110V power to maintain batteries in the event of a power outage. Fire departments shall refrain from unplugging, re-locating or connecting or disconnecting microphones, computers, modems, phones or any related cables or other devices without the express written approval of the North Island 9-1-1 Technology Manager.

REFERENCE: O.G. 7.2.0 Appendix "A"; O.G. 7.2.0 Appendix "B"; O.G. 7.4.2

Stephanie Bremer Assistant Fire Chief	May 27, 2009
Issued/Amended by	Created
	Jul. 29, 2019; Feb. 25, 2021; Apr 1, 2022; Aug 29, 2024, December 18, 2024, June 4, 2025
Signature	Date(s) Amended

Appendix A – Dispatch Codes

	Suggested Terminology for Dispatching Calls	
Dispatch Code:	Calls relating to:	Page:
ABANDONED 911	Hang up, lost contact calls before full info received	"Abandoned 911"
ALARMS COMMERCIAL	Alarm activation: business or multi-family alarms	"Alarm Activation" "Alarms Commercial"
ALARMS RESIDENTIAL	Alarm activation at single-family dwelling or duplex	"Alarm Activation" "Alarms Residential"
ALARMS HAZMAT	Alarm activation involving hazardous material	"Alarm Activation – Hazmat"
ALARMS NON-EMERGENCY	Alarm activation: non-emergency	"Alarm Activation Routine Response"
ASSIST OTHER AGENCY	Assisting agencies such as RCMP, Coast Guard etc.	"Assist Other Agency" Assist RCMP
AVIATION INCIDENT	Aircraft incident (crash, fire)	"Aircraft Incident" "Aircraft Fire"
BEACH/BRUSH	Beach /Ground cover or Brush fires emergency	"Brush Fire," "Stump Fire" "Grass Fire"
BEACH/BRUSH NON-EMERGENCY	Burning complaint, beach fire, smoldering bark mulch, smoke report	"Beach Fire" "Bark Mulch" "Smoke Report"
BOMB THREAT	Bomb threat	"Report to Station" followed by
BURNING COMPLAINT	Burning complaints, backyard fire, fire pits	"Burning Complaint"
CARBON MONOXIDE	Possible victims	"CO Detector Activation Emergency"
CARBON MONOXIDE: NON-EMERGENCY	Investigation, no victims	"CO Detector Activation Routine"
CHIMNEY FIRE	Fires contained within chimney or firebox	"Chimney Fire"
DUTY INVESTIGATION	Public concern or request; General inquiry	"Duty Officer Contact on Landline"
FIRST RESPONDER	BCAS Responder calls Purple to Blue, Assist Routine or Emergency, Delay B/C, Delay D/E	"First Responder" "First Responder Assist" "First Responder Delay"
FUEL LEAK/SPILL/OTHER	Fuel leak or spill, large quantities, emergency	"Fuel Spill Emergency"
FUEL LEAK/SPILL/OTHER: NON-EMERG	Small fuel leak or spill, non-emergency	"Small Fuel Spill" "Fuel Spill Non-Emergency"
GARBAGE CONTAINER	Dumpster or garbage bin fires	"Dumpster Fire"
HAZMAT	Chemical substance spill or release	"Hazmat Incident" "Duty Officer Contact on Landline"
HAZMAT NON-EMERGENCY	Small contained spill or release	"Hazmat Non-Emergency" "Duty Officer Contact on Landline"
HYDRO TROUBLE	Power lines down, hydro pole fire, fire / arcing/sparking	"Hydro Trouble"
HYDRO TROUBLE NON-EMERGENCY	Power lines not down, not arcing/sparking	"Hydro Trouble Non-Emergency"
MARINE INCIDENT	Boat or Dock fire or sinking in water	"Boat Fire" "Boat Sinking" "Floatplane Fire" "Dock Fire"
MUTUAL AID	A request from another fire department	"Mutual Aid"
MV FIRE	Motor vehicle incident involving fire or possible fire	"Motor Vehicle Fire"
MVI	Motor vehicle incident	"MVI"
MVI/EXTRICATION	Motor vehicle accident with extrication in area	"MVI, Extrication Required"
MVI - PED STRUCK	Motor vehicle incident involving pedestrian	"MVI Ped Struck"
NATURAL GAS LINE BREAK	Natural gas line rupture	"Natural Gas Line Break"
NATURAL GAS/PROPANE	Problem involving natural gas or propane inside or outside of structure	"Natural Gas/Propane Leak" "Natural Gas / Propane Incident"
NATURAL GAS/PROPANE NON-EMERG	Investigation of non-emergency natural gas/propane issue	"Natural Gas/Propane, Non-Emergency"
OUTDOOR FIRE	Miscellaneous fires including boats and sheds	"Outdoor fire with description"
PUBLIC SERVICE	Request or inquiry; refer to D/O investigation	"Public Service"
RESCUE-ROAD	Any MVI that involves entrapment, out of area	"Road Rescue"

RESCUE-CONFINED	Confined space rescue	"Confined Space Rescue"
RESCUE –ELEVATOR	Elevator Rescue	"Elevator Rescue
RESCUE-HIGH ANGLE	High Angle or steep embankment rescue	"High Angle Rescue"
RESCUE-LOW ANGLE/BCAS ASSIST	Assisting BCAS with a trapped patient/other rescue	"Low Angle Rescue", "BCAS Assist"
RESCUE-MARINE	Marine rescue	"Marine Rescue"
RESCUE – OTHER	Unusual rescue calls	"Rescue Other"
RESCUE-SWIFT WATER	River rescue	"River Rescue" "Swift Water Rescue"
STRUCTURE – FIRE	Heavy smoke or visible flames inside or extending from a residence or building, fires involving all or part of a room	"Structure Fire," "Kitchen Fire," "Garage Fires"
STRUCTURE-ELECTRICAL TROUBLE	Electrical trouble inside residence	"Electrical Trouble Inside Structure"
STRUCTURE-SMOKE	Smoke inside structure or light smoke showing from	"Smoke in Structure", "Smoke Showing From Structure"
STRUCTURE – SMOKE ODOUR	Smoke odour inside structure	"Smoke odour inside"
STRUCTURE – SMOKE (FIRE IS OUT)	Fire in a structure reported as out	"Structure Smoke – Fire is out"
TRAIN DERAILMENT	Train off tracks or Train Accident	"Train Derailment"
TSUNAMI ADVISORY	EMBC Notification of Tsunami Advisory	"Tsunami Advisory"
TSUNAMI WARNING	EMBC Notification of Tsunami Warning	"Tsunami Warning"
TSUNAMI WATCH	EMBC Notification of Tsunami Watch	"Tsunami Watch"
WILDLAND	Fire involving multiple trees/ Forest / Interface Fires	"Wildland Fire"

FIRE DEPARTMENT	O.G. NO. 7.2.0
TITLE: Dispatch Procedures for User Fire Departments	Page 7 of 11

Appendix B – Essential Benchmarks

ESSENTIAL BENCHMARKS		
Term Used	**Definition of Term**	**Comments**
Page Acknowledged	Response is confirmed by Dept.	Dept. & Unit/designation
En Route (responding)	Responding to the incident	Dept., & unit type/designation
On Scene	Arrived at the incident	Dept., unit type & number
Command Established	I/C identified at incident	Dept. & Geo. Location i.e. Smith Rd Command
Nothing Showing	No visible emergency evident at the location	
Working Fire	Working Fire	State Attack Type: Offensive, Defensive or Transitional
Smoke Showing	Smoke Showing	Fire Response Only
Investigating	Looking to gather information on incident	
Primary Search – All Clear	Primary search completed	
Secondary Search – All Clear	Secondary search completed	
Under Control	Situation has been stabilized	Should be used for all type of incident
Mayday	Firefighter(s) in distress	
Abandon	Firefighters to leave the building immediately	Leaving equipment; leave quickly.
Evacuate	Firefighters to assist Citizens /Public to leave the building	
Withdraw	Firefighters to leave the building, bringing all equipment with them in a rapid manner	
Fire Struck	Fire is out	Fire Response Only
RIT Established	Rapid Intervention Team has been established	Requirement of WorkSafe BC when SCBA required to enter a building or similar enclosed location.
Loss Stop	Property conservation is complete, Salvage and overhaul complete	All incident types, structure, MVI, etc.
PAR (commenced or completed)	Personal Accountability Report is being conducted/completed	
Clear of Scene	Apparatus is leaving the incident	State apparatus designation
Incident/Command Terminated	Incident substantially concluded	I/C no longer required
Code 2 or Routine	Routine response	
Code 3	Emergency Response	Lights and sirens
Code 4	Possible death or fatality	
Code 5 or 'the 5's'	Police	Wait for or request of police.
Code 9 or Universal Precautions	Universal Precautions/Infectious Disease are advised or required.	

Appendix C – Department Service Levels
INSIDE FIRE PROTECTION AREAS

Incident Type	Paging Options (check one)
First Resp Arrest	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Purple	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Red	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Orange	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Yellow	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Blue	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Assist Emergency	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Assist Routine	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Delay Purple	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Delay Red	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Delay Orange	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Delay Yellow	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General
First Resp Delay Blue	_____No Response (department does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide on a case-by-case basis) _____1st Resp (if dept equipped with separate FR paging) _____General

Department Name_____

Fire Chief (print) _____ Signature_____ Date _____

CAO or Designate_____ Signature_____ Date _____

Please return the completed form with attention to the Fire Dispatch Manager:

Email: firedispatch@ni911.ca and CAD_Admin@campbellriver.ca

RESCUE AREAS ONLY

Incident Type	Paging Options (check one)
Road Rescue	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCR Task Number Required Yes_____ No _____
Hazardous Materials Response	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General Task Number Required Yes_____ No _____
Wildland Fires	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General Approval from Wildfire Protection Branch Required Yes_____ No _____
Low Slope Rescue < 45-degree slope	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCR Task Number Required Yes _____ No _____ Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment

High Angle Rescue
   > 45-degree
       slope
	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified)
	_____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond)
	_____General
	EMCR Task Number Required Yes _____ No _____
	Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment

Rescue Other	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCR Task Number Required Yes_____ No _____ Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment
Confined Space	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCE Task Number Required Yes _____ No _____ Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment
Marine	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCR Task Number Required Yes _____ No _____ Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment
Swift Water	_____No Response (dept does not respond and will not be notified) _____Duty Officer (D/O to decide case by case basis if dept will respond) _____General EMCR Task Number Required Yes _____ No ___ Task Number will only be provided if SAR not available or there is entrapment _____

Are there any situations where the department will respond to a request to provide fire/ rescue services outside of legally defined boundaries without a PEP task number or other enabling agreement in place?   No _____Yes_____

If yes, please describe _____

_____

Department Name_____

Fire Chief (print) _____ Signature_____ Date _____

CAO or Designate_____ Signature_____ Date _____

Please return the completed form with attention to the Fire Dispatch Manager:

Email: firedispatch@ni911.ca and CAD_Admin@campbellriver.ca