

# Department of the Interior

## Departmental Manual

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**Effective Date:** 10/4/00

**Series:** Law Enforcement and Security

**Part 446:** Law Enforcement

**Chapter 16:** Communications Systems

**Originating Office:** Office of Managing Risk and Public Safety

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### 446 DM 16

**16.1 Purpose.** This chapter establishes guidelines for implementing policy and standards for law enforcement communications systems.

**16.2 Policy.** An efficient communications system will be maintained in all Departmental bureaus/offices with law enforcement responsibilities.

#### 16.3 Responsibilities.

A. Each bureau/office with law enforcement responsibilities shall develop and implement guidelines and standards to assure an adequate communications system for their law enforcement programs. Guidelines should be aimed at establishing and maintaining efficient telephone systems, improving coordination of field law enforcement units with command sites and overcoming the apparent weakness of the saturated radio frequency spectrum.

B. Each law enforcement unit within the Department shall maintain a communications system that adheres to Departmental regulations and meets minimum technical standards.

**16.4 Standards.** If law enforcement operations and services are to function effectively, the communications system for law enforcement programs within the Department warrant continual assessment and improvement, if required. All component parts, telephone systems, command and control operations, and radios must be included and considered. Each bureau/office shall take the necessary steps to meet the following minimum standards:

A. There should be full-time telephone service capable of providing prompt answering of calls for service, assistance, and information. Emergency trunk lines, in addition to and separate from general business lines, should be sought where appropriate, feasible and affordable. Recorded message and remote playback devices should be utilized where practical and affordable.

B. Fail-safe recording equipment for continuous recording and instantaneous playback of radio transmissions and of all incoming telephone complaint calls should be utilized.

C. Install a 24-hour, two-way radio system capable of providing continuous

communications between mobile, field units and base stations or provide a tie-in service on a 24-hour basis with another agency, if feasible.

D. The bureau/office head will establish guidelines and procedures to ensure a reasonable response time to answer both emergency and nonemergency calls.

E. For law enforcement emergencies, there shall be an established radio transmission priority procedure. Law enforcement administrators shall ensure that the law enforcement radio system is used only for law enforcement purposes and in accordance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations. If a bureau/office law enforcement unit does not utilize a dedicated law enforcement frequency, a radio transmission priority procedure shall be established to facilitate the broadcast of all law enforcement emergency transmissions.

F. Equip on-duty officers, when necessary, with portable radios capable of providing adequate two-way communications.

G. Ensure that the appropriate law enforcement personnel (see 446 DM 14.6) have access to the information contained in the following computer-based systems:

- (1) FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC);
- (2) National Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (NLETS); and
- (3) Any other computerized law enforcement information system deemed appropriate by the bureau/office head.

H. Each law enforcement bureau/office head shall designate law enforcement personnel to receive and send sensitive information. These employees shall have received the appropriate security clearance.

I. Each bureau/office shall ensure that all incidents which are of potential national significance or may adversely impact the Department shall be reported in accordance with the Serious Incident Reporting guidelines (see 446 DM 17).

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