
Communications Bureau

802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of the Communications Bureau. It addresses the immediate informational needs of the Department in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

802.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Irvine Police Department to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance. The Department provides two-way radio capability providing continuous communication between the Communications Bureau and department members in the field.

802.3 COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SECURITY

The communications function is vital and central to all emergency service operations. The safety and security of the Communications Bureau, its members and its equipment must be a high priority. Special security procedures should be established in a separate operations manual for the Communications Bureau.

Access to the Communications Bureau shall be limited to Communications Bureau members, the watch commander, command staff and department members with a specific business-related purpose.

802.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

802.4.1 COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU SUPERVISOR

The Chief of Police shall appoint and delegate certain responsibilities to a Communications Bureau Supervisor. The Communications Bureau Supervisor is directly responsible to the Support Services Division Commander or the authorized designee.

The responsibilities of the Communications Bureau Supervisor include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of the Communications Bureau in coordination with other supervisors.
- (b) Scheduling and maintaining dispatcher time records.
- (c) Supervising, training and evaluating dispatchers.
- (d) Ensuring the radio and telephone recording system is operational.
 1. Recordings shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law.
- (e) Processing requests for copies of Communications Bureau information for release.
- (f) Maintaining the Communications Bureau database systems.
- (g) Maintaining and updating the Communications Bureau procedures manual.

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1. Procedures for specific types of crime reports may be necessary. For example, specific questions and instructions may be necessary when talking with a victim of a sexual assault to ensure that his/her health and safety needs are met, as well as steps that he/she may take to preserve evidence.
 2. Ensuring dispatcher compliance with established policies and procedures.
- (h) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided and accepting personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (i) Maintaining a current contact list of City personnel to be notified in the event of a utility service emergency.

802.4.2 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

The Communications Bureau Supervisor should establish procedures for:

- (a) Recording all telephone and radio communications and playback issues.
- (b) Storage and retention of recordings.
- (c) Security of audio recordings (e.g., passwords, limited access, authorized reviewers, preservation of recordings past normal retention standards).
- (d) Availability of current information for dispatchers (e.g., watch commander contact, rosters, member tracking methods, member contact, maps, emergency providers, tactical dispatch plans).
- (e) Assignment of field members and safety check intervals.
- (f) Procurement of external services (e.g., fire suppression, ambulances, aircraft, tow trucks, taxis).
- (g) Protection of essential equipment (e.g., surge protectors, gaseous fire suppression systems, uninterruptible power systems, generators).
- (h) Protection of radio transmission lines, antennas and power sources for the Communications Bureau (e.g., security cameras, fences).
- (i) Handling misdirected, silent and hang-up calls.
- (j) Handling private security alarms, if applicable.
- (k) Radio interoperability issues.

802.4.4 SUPERVISING PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCHERS

Supervising Public Safety Dispatchers (SPSD) report to the Communications Bureau Supervisor. The responsibilities include that of a dispatcher listed below and of the SPSP that include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Organizes, coordinates, and leads public safety dispatch center activities as a working supervisor during assigned shifts. Provides direction to dispatchers in the handling of emergency situations to assure department procedures are followed and standards are met.

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- (b) Monitors and documents employee performance. Assigns individual goals and objectives and monitors to ensure completion. Prepares and presents employee evaluations. Investigates complaints.
- (c) Develops and designs work schedules, maintaining set minimum staffing levels. Reviews and approves time off requests.
- (d) Contacts off-duty employees and make necessary adjustments in shift schedules to fill vacancies.
- (e) Develop and provide training and guidance to new dispatch personnel. Assists qualified personnel to train new employees.
- (f) Monitors the progress of both trainer and trainee. Provides on-going legal and procedural training updates to dispatchers.

802.4.4 DISPATCHERS

Dispatchers report to the Supervising Public Safety Dispatchers. The responsibilities of the dispatcher include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Receiving and handling all incoming and transmitted communications, including:
 - (a) Emergency 9-1-1 lines.
 - (b) Text to 911
 - (c) Business telephone lines.
 - (d) Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Text Telephone (TTY) equipment.
 - (e) Radio communications with department members in the field and support resources (e.g., fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), allied agency law enforcement units).
 - (f) Other electronic sources of information (e.g., text messages, digital photographs, video).
- (b) Documenting the field activities of department members and support resources (e.g., fire department, EMS, allied agency law enforcement units).
- (c) Inquiry and entry of information through the Communications Bureau, department and other law enforcement database systems (CLETS, DMV, NCIC).
- (d) Monitoring department video surveillance systems.
- (e) Maintaining the current status of members in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.
- (f) Notifying the watch commander or field supervisor of emergency activity, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Vehicle pursuits.
 - 2. Foot pursuits.
 - 3. Assignment of emergency response.

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802.5 CALL HANDLING

This Department provides members of the public with access to the 9-1-1 system for a single emergency telephone number.

When a call for services is received, the dispatcher will reasonably and quickly attempt to determine whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency, and shall quickly ascertain the call type, location and priority by asking four key questions:

- Where?
- What?
- When?
- Who?

If the dispatcher determines that the caller has a hearing and/or speech impairment or disability, he/she shall immediately initiate a connection with the individual via available TDD/TTY equipment or Telephone Relay Service (TRS), as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If the dispatcher determines that the caller is a limited English proficiency (LEP) individual, the dispatcher should quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a language-appropriate authorized interpreter is available in the Communications Bureau, the dispatcher should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter.

If no authorized interpreter is available or the dispatcher is unable to identify the caller's language, the dispatcher will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the dispatcher, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

Dispatchers should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

802.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered an emergency when there is an immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage, and the timely arrival of public safety assistance is of the utmost importance. A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the dispatcher has obtained all necessary information to ensure the safety of the responding department members and affected individuals.

Emergency calls should be dispatched immediately. The watch commander shall be notified of pending emergency calls for service when department members are unavailable for dispatch.

802.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS

A call is considered a non-emergency call when there is no immediate or potential threat to life or property. A person reporting a non-emergency may be placed on hold, if necessary, to allow the dispatcher to handle a higher priority or emergency call.

The reporting person should be advised if there will be a delay in the dispatcher returning to the telephone line or when there will be a delay in the response for service.

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802.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

The police radio system is for official use only, to be used by dispatchers to communicate with department members in the field. All transmissions shall be professional and made in a calm, businesslike manner, using proper language and correct procedures. Such transmissions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Members acknowledging the dispatcher with their radio identification call signs and current location.
- (b) Dispatchers acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Members keeping the dispatcher advised of their status and location.
- (d) Member and dispatcher acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

The Communications Bureau Supervisor shall be notified of radio procedure violations or other causes for complaint. All complaints and violations will be investigated and reported to the complainant's supervisor and processed through the chain of command.

802.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

Irvine Police Department radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

802.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

Radio call signs are assigned to department members based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or member identification number. Members should use their call signs when initiating communication with the dispatcher. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the dispatcher can acknowledge the appropriate department member. Members initiating communication with other law enforcement or support agencies shall use their entire radio call sign, which includes the department station name or number.

802.7 DOCUMENTATION

It shall be the responsibility of the Communications Bureau to document all relevant information on calls for service or self-initiated activity. Dispatchers shall attempt to elicit, document and relay as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the member and assist in anticipating conditions that may be encountered at the scene. Desirable information would include, at a minimum:

- Incident control number.
- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- Type of incident reported.
- Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- Location of incident reported.

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- Identification of members assigned as primary and backup.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of the responding member's arrival.
- Time of member's return to service.
- Disposition or status of reported incident.

802.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Information that becomes available through the Communications Bureau may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All members of the Communications Bureau shall treat information that becomes known to them as confidential and release that information in accordance with the Protected Information Policy.

Automated data, such as Department of Motor Vehicle records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal police files or medical information, shall only be made available to authorized law enforcement personnel. Prior to transmitting confidential information via the radio, an admonishment shall be made that confidential information is about to be broadcast.

802.9 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Dispatchers shall receive training consistent with minimum standards established by POST (Penal Code § 13510).

802.10 UNIFORM POLICY

Communications personnel will follow the Uniform Regulations policy related to uniforms and appearance. Exceptions and/or additions to that are detailed below.

New employees will be issued:

- 1 long sleeve shirt
- 2 short sleeve shirts
- 2 pants
- Female employees may also opt for 1 pant and 1 skirt
- Belt
- Sweater and/or Jacket

Neckties - When wearing a long sleeve shirt, female dispatchers may wear crossbow ties, if so desired. Ties may only be worn with long sleeve shirts.

Skirts and Pants - Skirts and pants will be navy blue in color, tailored to fit the dispatcher. Skirts shall be approximately knee length and pants will touch the shoe laces or top of the shoe.

Nylons - Nylons shall be of a natural skin color, sheer black or sheer white, with no noticeable patterns or designs.

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At the successful completion of probation, employees can request a soft uniform,

- One 5.11 polo shirt
- One 5.11 pant

802.10.1 PERSONAL APPEARANCE STANDARDS

Employees shall adhere to the grooming standards as outlined in the Personnel Appearance Standards policy. This section addresses facial hair, jewelry, body art, and piercings. Employees shall have their hair in a fashion considered to be well groomed and not extreme in fashion or appearance. Unnatural or unusual hair color will not be allowed. This includes hair extensions and/or hair attachments.

802.10.2 WEARING OF CIVILIAN ATTIRE

Wearing of civilian clothing will be permitted in the dispatch center when circumstances present themselves, i.e. pregnancy, medical condition (accompanied by a doctor's note) or other instances where the request has been submitted through the chain of command and approved by the Bureau Supervisor or Supervising Dispatcher.

Communications personnel will follow the Uniform Regulations policy related to plain clothes attire. If maternity uniforms are issued to employees, they will be worn, unless prior supervisory approval has been received. All other uniform guidelines and restrictions will apply.

802.11 WORK HOURS AND MEAL BREAKS

Dispatchers will work shifts and hours as assigned by the department to maintain adequate staffing levels in the Communications Bureau.

Part-time call-takers and/or dispatchers may be scheduled to augment staffing levels, as necessary.

Any communications supervisor may reduce or increase minimum staffing levels; based on information they have available to them.

Generally, dispatchers will be entitled to one 30-minute meal break and two 15-minute breaks during their shift. Dispatchers are encouraged to take their breaks outside of the Communications Center. Dispatchers are paid for their lunch time and therefore need to be accessible to return if needed. Food will be allowed in the Communications Center when workload and/or staffing prevent dispatchers from leaving the center. Beverages will only be allowed in covered containers.

Communications personnel reporting late will be required to forward an tardy/absence form to a supervisor, stating the reason for the tardiness, prior to the end of their shift.

802.12 PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

General seniority for part-time employees will be based upon their start date in the part-time communications program.

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Part-time employees will be excused from a shift they are scheduled to work if a sickness or emergency exists, as any full-time employee would be.

Part-time employees shall not work over 39 hours per week, unless extenuating circumstances exist and only with supervisory approval.

The scheduling supervising dispatcher will publish all available hours on a monthly basis, when possible. Part-time dispatchers will volunteer for time in Schedule Express and will be assigned based on seniority. Supervision retains the right to re-evaluate and/or re-structure the process by which hours are assigned or distributed.

In order to facilitate this sign up process, dispatch will be notified via text and email when hours are posted in Schedule Express. Part-time dispatchers must then volunteer for their desired time. If the part-time dispatcher does not volunteer before hours are to be assigned, the part-time dispatcher will be passed up and those hours will be made available to the next part-time dispatcher in order of seniority or to full time staff.

Part-time dispatchers should be cognizant of the number of hours they have signed up to work and notify dispatchers and supervision of their limit when being recruited for fills. This process and limit applies to both time off fills and last minute fill situations.

If a part-time dispatcher is unable to work hours they signed up for, it is their responsibility to repost their hours in Schedule Express for a fill.

In order to maintain their proficiency, part-time employees will be required to work an average of 24 hours per month. It will be the responsibility of each dispatcher to meet this requirement. An exemption to the above may be granted due to vacations, extended sick leave, and/or any other reason approved by supervision. The minimum hour requirement is intended to ensure dispatchers maintain acceptable skill level. If the minimum hours are not worked supervisors will evaluate their perishable skills. It is the employee's responsibility to notify a supervisor in writing when they are unavailable to work the required minimum hours per month. Part-time employees who show a pattern of not meeting this requirement may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

It will be the responsibility of each part-time dispatcher to monitor the number of hours they sign up to work and ensure that they do not exceed their yearly-allotted hours.

Part-time dispatchers may not sign up for special event overtime or grant funded events.

802.13 SHIFT ROTATION

Communications personnel will work rotating shifts.

Communications shift assignments are selected on a seniority basis by full-time hire date in dispatch. Seniority for Supervising Dispatchers will be based upon their promotion date.

No Public Safety Dispatcher or Supervising Public Safety Dispatcher may work more than three consecutive shifts (12 months) on the same shift.

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Based on the needs of the department, the Communications Bureau Supervisor and/or the Business Services Administrator has the authority to override this decision

The default shift assignments for Supervising Public Safety Dispatchers are:

Sunday/Monday/Tuesday (alternate Wednesday)

Thursday/Friday/Saturday (alternate Wednesday)

Modifications to these work days can be made with mutual agreement by the supervisors and with approval by the Communications Bureau Supervisor and/or Business Services Administrator.

Supervision maintains the right to assign communications personnel to their shifts.

802.14 TIME OFF REQUESTS

- CTO and Personal Leave

Full-time dispatchers may accumulate and/or be granted the use of CTO and personal leave time in accordance with the Irvine City Employee's Association (ICEA) Memorandum of Understanding.

- Holidays

Full-time dispatchers may be granted holiday time off in accordance with the Irvine City Employee's Association (ICEA) Memorandum of Understanding. Holiday time off requests will be granted on a seniority basis by hire date in dispatch, regardless of classification. Staffing levels on holidays will be determined by Command Staff and requests for the holiday off will be granted in order of seniority.

Employees may be ordered off on holidays. If no employee requests the holiday off, it may be assigned, also based on inverse seniority and prior holiday off assignments.

- Vacations

Full-time dispatchers will accrue and be granted use of vacation time in accordance with the Irvine City Employee's Association (ICEA) Memorandum of Understanding. Annually, communications personnel will sign up for vacation for the following year. Vacations will be granted based upon full-time hire date in communications. Vacation sign-ups will be for a 12-month period (January to January shift change).

Only one dispatcher (including supervising dispatchers) will be allowed off on an annual vacation, requiring mandatory fills, during the time period from December 15th through January 3rd of each year. Other requests for time off will be considered during this time period, however, it will be the employee's responsibility to find any necessary fills. Dispatchers are encouraged to consider pre-approved vacations posted before selecting their shifts/days off to prevent conflicts and allow for holidays off.

- Vacation sign-ups will be done in order of seniority.

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- Vacation requests for full-time personnel that will require mandatory fills must be for a minimum of 36 hours and must be submitted when the monthly schedules are requested by the scheduler.
- Only one dispatcher, per shift (days or nights), including supervisors, will be approved for mandatory vacation at the same time. The department maintains the right to deny vacations due to staffing and/or training needs. The employee will not be subject to draft on their days off immediately preceding or following an approved mandatory vacation.
- The department will fill behind two blocks of time taken off as vacation each year. It will be the dispatcher's responsibility to arrange fills for any additional blocks of time taken during the same calendar year.
- Requests for Time Off.

Dispatchers shall submit an absence request online. For advance notice, the scheduling supervisor will determine if a fill is required and post the appropriate time for fills with all monthly overtime. For last minute requests, any supervisor may approve the request and post it to dispatch personnel.

- Filling Time Off Requests

Fills to accommodate time off will be published first to part-time dispatchers before being made available to full-time dispatchers. {In order to provide for supervisory coverage, time off requests for supervising dispatchers may be published to other supervising dispatchers before being made available to part-time or full-time dispatchers}

A dispatcher who no longer wants overtime that he or she volunteered for but was not assigned, should delete their availability/request in Schedule Express.

802.15 SICK LEAVE REPORTING PROCEDURE

- Reporting

Communications personnel shall follow the Sick Leave policy regarding reporting sick for work, use of sick time and the sick leave management program.

- Sick Leave Fills

Communications personnel notified of an absence will complete an absence slip indicating the date and time notified. The supervisor will check the duty schedule for the affected shift to insure that minimum staffing levels will be met. If a fill is necessary, it shall be their responsibility to fill the shift appropriately, using the draft system, when necessary.

802.16 DRAFT SYSTEM

A draft system has been established to fill vacant shifts caused by illness, mandatory vacations, mandatory trainings and meetings, vacancies, and/or unexpected circumstances. Full time dispatchers can expect the possibility of being drafted to work for unexpected vacancies or

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mandatory fill situations and will only be exempt from a draft during mandatory vacation, mandatory training schools or extended sick leave.

The draft system is designed to allow for some degree of fairness to all dispatchers, however any full time dispatcher may be drafted at any time to meet the needs of the department. This system is not intended to restrict the activities of off-duty personnel or require off-duty personnel to make themselves available.

As stated in policy specific to hours worked, "Absent emergency operations, members should not work more than 16 hours in one day (24 hour) period or except in very limited circumstances members should have a minimum of 5 hours off between shifts. Supervisors should give consideration to reasonable rest periods and are authorized to deny overtime or relieve to off-duty status any member who has exceeded the above guidelines." When a draft in Communications is necessary, however, Communications employees will be given a minimum of eight (8) hours off before being required to return for duty. If a dispatcher is scheduled to fill a shift vacancy on an overtime basis and arrives to work to find they are not needed, they shall receive 2 hours of premium overtime.

Drafting Personnel

If a draft fill is required, the supervisor, or most senior dispatcher on duty, shall take the following steps in this order:

- All OT hours are counted as draft credits (not just mandatory hours).
- PT PSA will be given 2 days to volunteer.
- Mandatory OT shifts be made available for volunteers for one week.
- The remaining mandatory OT shifts will be sent out for a second round of sign-ups with the potential draftee listed, based on draft credits for the month.
- After all mandatory hours have been assigned, non-mandatory time will then be posted for volunteers.
- Shifts will be posted on Schedule Express. An email and text notification will be sent to notify you of the posted hours. Mandatory hours will be posted for seven days prior to assignment.
- Any supervisor shortage (direct or indirect) will be offered to supervisors to fill. The exception would be if we are still at minimum staffing (no fill needed or authorized).
- Part time personnel will have two days advanced noticed to sign up for overtime.
 - (960 yearly part time limitations) = 36 hours per pay period (hours adjusted based on use)
 - Part timers CANNOT exceed 40 hours in any one week
- In the event two employees volunteer for a mandatory shift, the shift will be assigned to the employee that is able to take the entire block rather than a portion of the block. If two employees volunteer for the entire block of time, the normal shift distribution

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rules will be used to determine who will receive the shift. Seniority and employee classification do not take priority over filling the entire shift.

- Non-mandatory overtime shifts will then be assigned to dispatch personnel on a first come, first serve basis regardless of full or partial volunteers.
- Outside PS personnel can volunteer for overtime and will be assigned, as long as no other dispatcher has volunteered. Outside help will be assigned based solely on seniority.
- The mandatory drafts will be assigned and an email notification will be sent within a few days of the assignment of hours, so employees are made aware of the draft and can repost to get it covered.

LAST MINUTE FILL Draft Procedure

The primary goal of drafting behind a last minute fill is to cover minimum staffing in the Communications Center. The following procedure will be followed to draft an employee behind a call-out:

1. The supervisor will send out a page asking for any volunteers.
2. The employee whom offers the most coverage will be drafted (regardless if working a regular or OT shift) not exceeding 16 hours a day and having at least 8 hours between shifts. If hourly coverage would be same between all employees, see #3 and #4.
3. The employee with the least amount of draft credits. If employees are equal in credits, the employee with least overall seniority will be drafted.
4. Employees on an overtime shift will be drafted as last resort.

Any last minute sick fills need to be made by calling into the Communications Center and speaking with the supervisor on-duty. Requests for volunteers should be sent by the supervisor on-duty unless there isn't a supervisor working, and then should be handled by the most senior dispatcher on the floor.

If a non-mandatory time off request is less than 4 days away, it is the employee's responsibility to ask the on-duty supervisor to send out one overtime request (page) and the employee can send out an email if they choose.

If outside personnel volunteer for the overtime a second message should be sent to dispatch staff indicating that the hours will be assigned to outside staff unless the time is volunteered for by a dispatcher within an hour.

Additional Notes:

- During concert season, concert hours will be posted with shift overtime. This is provided we were notified before the monthly hours have been posted. If not, they fall under last minute fill procedures.
- Part-time employees cannot work concerts, special events, or DUI check points but they may fill a position in the room and a full-time dispatcher already on duty can work the event.

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- Extra hours for part-time personnel need to be approved in advance by the scheduling supervisor designee.
- Please refer to the DRAFT Procedure for the Communications Division Number C002
- The only way to volunteer for posted overtime is to check Schedule Express. It is available to access 24/7 if the employee chooses to volunteer for overtime.

802.17 USE OF CELLULAR PHONE

In the event of any radio interference, all wireless communications devices brought into the Communications Center shall be turned off.

Members of the Communications Bureau, while on duty, shall not make or receive telephone calls within the Communications Center using wireless communications devices.

Communications trainees shall not use any personal wireless communications device while on duty.

Communications personnel shall not use any personal wireless communications device while working the primary radio position.

At no time, shall personal wireless communications devices be plugged into department computers.

Communications supervisors may restrict personal wireless communications devices in the event it interferes with any dispatch duties.

802.18 ON-DUTY EMPLOYEE INJURIES

Communications employees shall adhere to the Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury policy, when reporting incidents that occur while on-duty.

In the event of an on-the-job injury, the injured employee will immediately notify the Communications Bureau Supervisor, Supervising Dispatcher or the on duty Watch Commander. The employee will be directed to one of the approved medical treatment locations. In the event of a severe injury, paramedics will be called for emergency care and the employee will be transported to the nearest hospital.

The employee's signature must be obtained on this form and submitted to the Human Resources Liaison within one (1) working day. A copy of this form must be given to the injured worker. A "Receipt for the Employee's Claim for Worker's Compensation Benefits Form" should be completed and distributed only if the injured employee chooses not to sign the "Employee's Claim" form (DWC-1).

If an employee receives a minor injury (i.e. first aid) and chooses not to seek medical treatment, a Declination of Medical Evaluation/Treatment form must be completed, along with a Supervisor's Report of Injury and Employee's report of Injury.

Distribution of Forms:

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Copies of these reports will be forwarded to the Human Resources Liaison.

If an employee suffers moderate or serious injuries as a result of an on-the-job accident, the Supervising Dispatcher or Watch Commander will notify the Bureau Supervisor, Business Services Administrator and Human Resources Liaison. It will be the responsibility of the Business Services Administrator to notify the the Support Services Division Commander.