

Radio Communications

801.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of radio communications. It addresses the immediate information needs of the Office in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

801.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office to provide two-way radio capability for continuous communication between Emergency Communications Center and office members in the field.

801.3 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO) receives communication services from the St. Mary's County Department of Emergency Services (DES), the agency which provides emergency services to the county. The SMCSO has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DES for the provision of those services through its communications center, the Emergency Communications Center (ECC). The sheriff's radio system is for official use only, to be used by dispatchers to communicate with office 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 not be 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 Director of the St. Mary's County Department of Emergency Services 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.

The Duty Officer and/or Patrol Supervisors may overrule assignments which are made by the ECC. Such changes must be based on their knowledge of the situation and to ensure compliance with Sheriff's Office policy.

The police radios should be tested daily. Any problems will immediately be reported to radio maintenance personnel.

For procedures related to Radio Communications, see the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office LE Procedures Manual: [Police Radio Procedures](#)

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office

LE Policy Manual

Radio Communications

801.3.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE

St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

801.3.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION

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

801.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Automated data, such as Motor Vehicle Administration records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal sheriff's 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.