

LOCAL RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT PLAN

	Adopted	Amended	Approved by

POLICY

Agency will maintain the most current response assignment plan as approved by the Dispatch Steering Committee (DSC) for each event type where responders will be dispatched. For cases where the Priority Dispatch System (PDS) is used, response assignments will be based on the determinant code including variations based on the attached suffix where applicable. The response assignment plan will be reviewed and updated as often as required. Any recommended changes must be submitted to the DSC for approval. The DSC will make final updates to the response assignment plan in consultation with the LOCAL AGENCY AUTHORITY.

PURPOSE

To ensure the response assignment plan is maintained and kept current with changes in PDS protocols, local law, policy, procedures, research and standards. In order to meet the needs of the local community, the response assignments will subject to regular review and revision.

PROCEDURE

I. Review Frequency

- a. All Response assignments will be reviewed:
 - i. At a minimum, annually
 - ii. Schedule a transition date for use of the updated version once approved by the Dispatch Steering Committee (DSC)
 - iii. Based on changes to response capabilities of the response agencies
 - iv. Based on recommendations for change made by Emergency Dispatchers (EDs) or field responders
 - v. As deemed necessary by the Westcomm Anytime there is an update to the PDS Protocol

II. Review Process

- a. The Westcomm will evaluate the response assignment plan by comparing response assignments for each event type and PDS determinant descriptor to available data, including disposition information, local policies and procedures, and the availability of system resources
- b. The LOCAL AGENCY AUTHORITY will make final recommendations on proposed changes to the response assignment plan and provide this plan to the DSC
- c. The LOCAL AGENCY AUTHORITY will list specific event types or PDS determinant codes for which response changes are made, with a written rational for each change

III. Approval Process

- a. The DSC will review the recommendations made by the LOCAL AGENCY AUTHORITY
- b. The DSC will approve any changes and ensure that the approved changes are made to the response assignment plan.

IV. Implementation

- a. When response plan modification is complete within CAD, all EDs will be notified of changes by CAD Administrator, and all field responders will be notified by their department administration or appropriate supervisor. Notifications will be in writing of response plan changes and will be provided with the required training associated with the change no later than seven (7) days before the actual implementation of the new plan
- b. The DSC and the LOCAL AGENCY AUTHORITY will review the updated response assignment plan 90 days after any changes have been made to ensure the desired effect has been achieved.

OVERRIDING ProQA SOFTWARE FINAL CODING RESULTS

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The Emergency Dispatcher (ED) may override the ProQA™ determinant code to a higher level when the caller spontaneously reports a situation or condition not identified by standard protocol questioning. When the situation or condition requires a higher level than the ProQA™ results for a case, and the ED suspects the situation exists due to conflicting, ambiguous, or suspicious information provided by the caller, the ED must follow the process detailed in this policy.

PURPOSE

To provide EDs with a defined procedure for overriding the standard PDS Determinant Code when the ED suspects a more serious situation or condition exists.

PROCEDURE

I. Selecting An Override Code

- a. The ProQA™ software will display the determinant code results immediately after all required Key Questions (KQs) have been answered (there may still be remaining KQs that will not effect the code). The code will be highlighted green on the “Send” screen determinants area as well as in the “Send” button in the upper right-hand portion of the screen.
 - i. When the ED, in his or her judgement, believes that a higher determinant coding is necessary based on the conditions stated in this policy, he/she will select by clicking the override codes highlighted in yellow on the “Send” screen determinants area.
 - ii. Once a determinant code has already been selected, the ED may determine based on additional questioning or information that becomes available during instructions that a higher code is necessary
 - 2. If the change is due to a change to a previously selected answer, the ED will go to the KQ tab of ProQA™ and change the answer and receive the new determinant code result
 - 3. If the change is based on other conditions described in this policy not related to available KQ answers the ED will return to the “Send” screen by clicking on the “Reconfigure response” button in the ProQA™ toolbar
- a. The ED will make a special note in the text of the case explaining his/her rationale for the upgrade.

INCIDENTS REQUIRING MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE RESPONSE

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For any incident requiring an emergency response from multiple public safety entities (EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement), the Emergency Dispatcher (ED) shall first utilize questioning from whichever discipline best provides for safety and scene stabilization. This includes gathering information, initiating a response and providing instructions to protect callers, victims, patients, bystanders and responders. Once primary safety concerns and scene stabilization issues have been addressed, the calltaker will utilize questioning from another discipline, whenever necessary, to gather further information, determine the correct categorization, response assignments, and instructions to callers.

PURPOSE

To provide a standardized procedure for call taking and protocol use in situations requiring a combined response from multiple public safety agencies. Whenever the caller(s), victim(s), patient(s), and bystanders are in any danger from violent or threatening persons or scene hazards, it is the first responsibility of ED to provide sufficient interrogation and instructions to protect lives, as well as secure and maintain the safety of all involved.

PROCEDURE

I. Combined Law Enforcement/EMS Cases With Danger Present

- a. For incidents requiring both Law Enforcement and EMS responses, the ED will immediately begin interrogation using Law Enforcement questioning for all cases reported as:
 - i. Assaults, sexual assaults, shootings, stabbings, suicide attempts, violent or disruptive psychiatric events, dangerous animal attacks, homicides or attempted homicides, riots, fights, suspected terrorist attacks, SWAT team cases and any other cases involving violent crimes and In-Progress or Just-Occurred crimes where suspects may be present
- b. When an EMS response is required, the ED will begin Medical interrogation following the completion of all necessary Law Enforcement questioning, dispatch coding, and instructions
 - i. Any questions already answered through Law Enforcement interrogation will be considered obvious and EDs are not required to ask those questions a second time
 - ii. The ED will assign the correct Medical dispatch coding to the case and provide all necessary instructions when it is safe to do so
- c. For cases where a serious crime is In-Progress or Just-Occurred, and there is a patient/victim who needs medical attention, EMS responders will be directed to 'stage' a safe distance from the incident scene until law enforcement personnel have secured the scene for other responders

II. Combined Law Enforcement/EMS Cases With No Immediate Danger Present

- a. For crimes with injuries or illness, where there is no immediate danger present and EMS response is needed, the ED shall first use Law Enforcement questioning to verify that the scene is safe
- b. The ED will then immediately pivot to the Medical questioning and complete dispatch coding and instructions as appropriate

III. Combined Fire/EMS Cases With Fire Or Hazard Present

- a. For incidents requiring both a Fire and EMS response, the calltaker will immediately begin interrogation using Fire questioning for all cases reported as:
 - i. Fires, natural disasters, hazardous materials incidents, major transportation accidents, structural collapse, entrapments, land or water rescues, or any incident that requires and immediate response from specialized fire apparatus to contain hazards or protect life
- b. When an EMS response is required, the ED will begin Medical questioning following the completion of all necessary Fire questioning, dispatch coding, and instructions
 - i. Any questions already answered through Fire interrogation will be considered obvious and EDs are not required to ask those questions a second time
 - ii. The ED will assign the correct Medical dispatch coding to the case and provide all necessary instructions when it is safe to do so.
- c. For cases where Hazardous Materials are involved, or where there are unstable environments and there is a patient/victim who needs medical attention, EMS responders will be directed to 'stage' a safe distance from the incident scene until fire personnel have secured the scene for other responders

IV. Combined Fire/EMS Cases With No Fire Or Immediate Hazards Present

- a. For fire incidents where there is no immediate danger present and EMS response is needed, the ED shall first use Fire questioning to verify that the scene is safe
- b. The ED will then immediately pivot to the Medical questioning and complete dispatch coding and instructions as appropriate

V. Combined Law Enforcement/Fire Cases With Criminal Risk To Responders

- a. For incidents requiring both a law enforcement and fire response, the calltaker will immediately begin interrogation using Law Enforcement questioning for all cases reported as:
 - i. Riots or mob actions (including those with looting, arson, explosions, release of toxic materials, persons trapped, etc.)
 - ii. Suspected terrorist acts (including those with explosions, release of toxic materials, hostage situations, use of weapons of mass destruction, etc.)
 - iii. SWAT Incidents (including those involving trapped victims, explosions, fires, or release of toxic materials, etc.)
 - iv. Any incident where suspected criminal activity may interfere with firefighters' actions
- b. When a fire response is required, the ED will begin Fire questioning following the completion of all necessary Law Enforcement questioning, dispatch coding, and instructions
 - i. Any questions already answered through Law Enforcement interrogation will be considered obvious and EDs are not required to ask those questions a second time

- ii. The ED will assign the correct Fire dispatch coding to the case and provide all necessary instructions when it is safe to do so
- c. For cases where a serious crime is In-Progress or Just-Occurred, and there is a fire related issue, fire responders will be directed to 'stage' a safe distance from the incident scene until law enforcement personnel have secured the scene for other responders

VI. Combined Law Enforcement/Fire Cases With No Criminal Risk To Responders

- a. For all fires or fire incidents where no criminal risk is suspected, the ED will immediately invoke Fire questioning where criminal suspects pose no immediate risk to firefighters or firefighting activity. For example:
 - i. Fires intentionally set with suspects gone or in custody by security, etc.
 - ii. Intentional releases of toxic materials with suspects gone or in custody by security, etc.
 - iii. Rescues and persons trapped with suspects gone or in custody, etc.
- b. When a law enforcement response is required, the ED will invoke Law Enforcement questioning following the completion of all Fire questioning, dispatch coding and instructions.
 - i. Any Law Enforcement questions already answered through Fire interrogation will be considered obvious and EDs are not required to ask those questions a second time
 - ii. The ED will assign the correct Law Enforcement dispatch coding to the case and provide all necessary instructions when it is safe to do so.

DUPLICATE INCIDENTS; MULTIPLE CALLERS FOR SAME EVENT

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POLICY

When more than one call is received for the same incident, the Emergency Dispatcher (ED) **must** complete the Initial Call Handling process (see policy — Initial Call Handling). For cases where Priority Dispatch System (PDS) protocols are appropriate, any remaining Case Entry interrogation must also be completed. The ED will determine if a complete interrogation beyond Initial Call Handling or Case Entry is required based on the caller's answers to the initial questioning.

PURPOSE

To provide EDs with a standard procedure for processing incidents where multiple calls are received in the Communications Center for (potentially) the same event. Incidents occurring in public places commonly generate multiple calls from different callers for the same event.

PROCEDURE

- I. Before determining if a reported event is a duplicate of an active incident, the ED must confirm that the address/location and incident description is the same as an existing incident that has already been entered in CAD. (Note: more than one incident may occur in close proximity to each other, requiring a separate CAD incident and response)

- II. The ED will complete the Initial Call Handling interrogation as well as any remaining PDS Case Entry questions if applicable
 - a. When the caller is a first or second-party caller (either a victim/patient or someone with the victim/patient), the ED must complete the full interrogation, assign a final dispatch code, as well as provide appropriate and possible instructions

 - b. When the caller is third-party (not in the immediate vicinity of the event/victim), and the ED determines that the event is a duplicate incident,
 - i. If no new information is offered by the caller during interrogation, the ED may terminate the phone call once the Initial Call Handling and PDS Case Entry (if applicable) interrogation is completed

 - ii. If new information is provided by the caller during Initial Call Handling or Case Entry, the ED must continue with complete interrogation and assign a final dispatch code as well as provide appropriate and possible instructions

- III. The ED shall answer every emergency call with the expectation that the caller will be reporting new information not yet received from previous callers even if it is a duplicate call.

EMERGENCY RULE

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POLICY

In situations of extreme system overload in the communications center, the Emergency Dispatcher (ED) may suspend interrogation/instructions once enough information has been gathered to correctly determine a dispatch code. For cases where the Priority Dispatch System (PDS) is utilized, the Case Entry, Key Questioning and Final Coding are to be completed.

PURPOSE

To ensure that EDs complete the minimum requirements for a safe and effective response during situations of extreme system overload.

PROCEDURE

I. Emergency Rule Situations

- a. When there are numerous unanswered telephone/text calls waiting in the emergency queue, the ED will make every effort to answer those calls after any case(s) currently being processed are given an appropriate dispatch code and the required responders are notified (or will be notified by a co-worker).
- b. The following are the acceptable reasons for calltakers to suspend or discontinue interrogation:
 - i. Mass Casualty Incidents (while both phone and radio traffic are extreme)
 - ii. Extreme weather conditions
 - iii. Emergency situations profoundly effecting normal operations of the Communication Center secondary to an acute event
- c. Every attempt should be made to complete the interrogation sequence; at a minimum enough of an interrogation must be completed to correctly assign a dispatch code

II. Authorization and Tracking Of Emergency Rule Cases

- a. Determination of when the Emergency Rule applies will be made by the supervisor or shift lead on duty at the time.
- b. If no supervisor or lead is available, the most senior person on duty will make the determination followed by notification to Dispatch Management and all Dispatch Supervisors.
- c. The ED must record all incidents where he/she applies the Emergency Rule.
- d. A report will be generated at the beginning of each month to determine the number of times the Emergency Rule was invoked and the durations of each event.

III. Releasing the Caller

- a. When faced with an Emergency Rule situation, the ED will release the caller with the following statement (or similar);
 - i. Medical example, "I need to hang up now to take another call, the paramedics are on their way. If he/she gets worse in any way, call us back immediately
 - ii. Law Enforcement example, "I need to hang up now to take another call, the police have been notified. If the situation gets worse in any way, call us back immediately
 - iii. Fire example, "I need to hang up now to take another call, the fire department is on the way. If the situation gets worse in any way, call us back immediately.

LANGUAGE TRANSLATION POLICY

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POLICY

Emergency Dispatchers (EDs) with the appropriate language skills must ensure that any translation of standard interrogation scripts, whether using spontaneous translation, scripted translation or language translation service reproduces the same meaning, syntax and phrasing as contained in the primary language used in the communications center.

PURPOSE

To provide all EDs with the requirements for interrogation when the caller speaks a language other than the primary language of the communications center.

PROCEDURE

I. Spontaneous Translation

- a. Translation shall only be performed by EDs who are fluent in the language spoken by the caller
- b. If an ED does not speak the language fluently, the ED will turn the call over to another ED in the communications center who does speak the language:
 - i. If no ED is on duty who speaks the caller’s language see Language Translation Service process listed below
- c. When translating, all requirements and processes for interrogation will be followed as usual – just in the caller’s language
- d. If the case requires the use of the Priority Dispatch System (PDS) Protocol the ED managing the case will use the PDS Protocol as described below
 - i. PDS Foreign Language protocols available
 - 1. PDS protocols in the following languages are available to EDs
 - 2. These protocols shall be used by EDs skilled in the specific language for the interrogation of callers to the emergency system, and for the provision of PDIs and PAIs
 - 3. It is recognized that the various language versions of the PDS may not always contain language understood by all persons given cultural and geographic diversity. Subsequently, EDs with the required skills may render those words and phrases necessary to aid the caller’s understanding of the question or instructions in their own words after the scripted question or instruction has been attempted at least once.
 - iv. PDS Foreign Language Protocols not available

5. EDs with the appropriate translation skills may interrogate the caller using the PDS Protocols in the caller's language, so long as the translation contains the same meaning/intent as the original protocol text
6. If an ED with the required translation skills is not available, and the caller is unable to understand and/or converse in the primary language of the communications center, the ED must make every reasonable effort to obtain the minimum information necessary to affect a dispatch to the caller/ victims location. If an ED gets a verified address but no other reliable information, the ED will use the following protocol Chief Complaints
 - a. Medical Protocol 32 – UNKNOWN PROBLEM
 - b. Fire Protocol 53 – SERVICE CALL
 - c. Police Protocol 134 – UNKNOWN PROBLEM

VII. Language Translation Service

- a. If the ED has been able to determine a location of the incident they will assign a dispatch code to the case and send resources. If the PDS is to be used, the appropriate Unknown/Investigation determinant code will be found within the protocols listed above.
- b. If the ED was unable to determine the location or if the Unknow/Investigation determinant code was utilized, the ED will proceed with the following process
 - i. When an ED does not understand the caller's language, he/she will need to use the communications center's approved language translation service (e.g. ATT, Language-Line, Qwest, State Service)
 - ii. The ED will attempt to determine the caller's native language by asking "Which language do you speak?" If the caller does not understand this question, the ED may rephrase the question or attempt to verify through other questions (e.g. "Which country are you from?")
 - iii. Once the caller's language is determined, the ED will contact the approved language translation service. Once connected to an operator, the ED will announce his/her name or dispatcher ID, agency ID and authorization code. The translation service operator will ask which language is required, then they will proceed to contact the translator.
 - iv. When connected to the translator the ED will say: "Hello translator, this is the Agency emergency dispatch center, can you please repeat my questions to the caller in his/her language?"
 - v. The ED will then continue with the interrogation and, if necessary, reconfigure the case to a more specific dispatch code
 1. When using the PDS, the ED will state all Case Entry & Key Questions to the translator and assign a determinant code when sufficient information is obtained
 - vi. The ED will provide all appropriate and possible instructions through the translator prior to disconnecting

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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POLICY

The quality improvement process shall follow a standardized procedure as detailed below and as required by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) to meet accreditation standards related to the use of the Priority Dispatch System (PDS) Protocols.

PURPOSE

To provide dispatch personnel with the necessary understanding and skills as they relate to the efficient and effective provision of Quality Assurance (QA) within the communications center. QA processes shall be sufficient to meet the standard of the IAED for recognition as an Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE).

PROCEDURE

I. Quality Improvement Case Review

- a. The dispatch center has committed to provide quality interactions with all emergency callers
- b. In an effort to ensure all Emergency Dispatchers (EDs) are providing high quality interactions the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) will review cases by listening to the recorded audio and viewing written documentation (Logs, CAD, ProQA™)
- c. Case review will be checked, tabulated and tracked using AQUA™ case review software
- d. Case performance will be measured by comparing the EDs performance to the most current IAED ED-Q Performance Standards
- e. Cases will be selected based on the following factors
 - i. Random selection of cases
 - 1. The sample size will ensure adequate review of dates, times, and EDs to provide for a clear picture of performance during the review timeframe
 - 2. The random sample will include at a minimum the IAED recommended number of cases per week for all PDS disciplines
 - a. The IAED recommended number of cases will be determined by the QAU annually by using the Case Review Calculator that is found on the IAED website or in AQUA™
 - 3. Randomization will be accomplished by the QAU when importing cases from ProQA™ using the randomization feature of AQUA™

- ii. Focused review of cases will be conducted based on the needs of the agency and requests from responders, ED requests, and as listed below:
 - 1. Requests for specific call type review may also be made by the Dispatch Steering Committee (DSC) or Dispatch Review Committee (DRC)
 - 2. Request for specific call type review for research purposes as requested by response agency administration
 - 3. Any case where inquiries (Commendation, Complaint, Field Feedback) have been received by the communications center
- f. Cases not randomly selected will be placed in a separate case list in AQUA™

II. Case Review Feedback Process

- a. Completed Incident Performance Reports generated through the AQUA™ will be forwarded by the QAU to the EDs Supervisor on a regular basis
- b. Supervisors will distribute each Incident Performance Report to the ED and discuss with them in a timely manner
- c. When circumstances dictate, the Supervisor will develop an action plan
 - i. Action plans may be necessary if remedial training is required
 - ii. A deadline for completion of the action plan will be given
 - iii. The QAU must be informed of the completion of any action plan
- d. Supervisors may request further QAU follow-up or action if required
 - i. QAU follow-up or actions may include
 - 1. Requests for Continuing Dispatch Education
 - 2. Letters of commendation
 - 3. Challenges to a review
- a. Copies of QA documentation will be kept by the QAU

III. Individual Performance Reports

- a. Compliance data for individual EDs shall be generated from AQUA™ and forwarded to Supervisors on a monthly basis
 - i. Data on ED performance will be treated as confidential and viewed only by the ED's supervisor and the required administrative staff
- b. Action plans will be developed, when necessary, based on average and/or cumulative compliance
 - i. A deadline for completion of the action plan will be given
 - ii. The QAU shall be informed of the completion of any action plan
- c. Supervisors may request further QAU follow-up or action if required

IV. Shift Performance Reports

- a. Compliance data for each shift will be generated from AQUA™ and will be posted in dispatch at monthly intervals by the QAU
- b. Shift compliance scores may be reviewed by the DRC and recommendations for additional training will be made to assist in improving performance

V. Agency Performance Reports

- a. An Agency Performance Report will be generated from AQUA™ and will be posted in dispatch at monthly intervals by the QAU
- b. The DRC will review all monthly Agency Performance Reports
- c. The DSC will receive quarterly updates based on monthly compliance

VI. Field Feedback Reports

- a. Field Feedback forms will be made available to all field response personnel
- b. Forms will be utilized to provide feedback from the field to dispatch in the event of exemplary dispatcher performance or if a case proves problematic.
- c. Completed forms will be forwarded directly to the QAU
- d. Upon receipt of a form, the QAU will review the recording of the relevant call and evaluate the case for compliance to protocol
- e. A reply to the initiator of the query or feedback will be provided within 14 days of receipt of the form by the QAU
- f. Copies of completed Field Feedback Reports will be kept by the QAU in the ED's file and in a file dedicated to the completed Field Feedback Reports
- g. Copies of reviewed Field Feedback Reports will be distributed to the ED, the EDs Supervisor, and the Communications Center Director
- h. Field Feedback Reports will be brought to the next scheduled DRC meeting for review

VII. Committee Responsibilities

- a. Dispatch Review Committee (DRC) will
 - i. Review the Agency Performance Reports at monthly intervals
 - ii. Identify performance issues and recommend actions for performance improvement
 - iii. Make recommendations for changes to agency policies to the DSC
 - iv. Review Field Feedback requests and assess the need for training or process improvements
- b. Dispatch Steering Committee (DSC)
 - i. The DSC will review the Agency Performance Report at quarterly intervals
 - ii. The DSC will evaluate, refine/revise, and approve any policy changes proposed by the DRC.