Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services
GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 400.02

DFRS Communications and Technology Support

BUREAU OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Issue Date: **January 09, 2019**
Revision Date: **N/A**

1	**APPLICABILITY**

2 All Personnel

3	**POLICY**

4 The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) shall provide
5 effective technical support for its communications and technology systems. Personnel shall be
6 able to request technical support through efficient established systems. Requests for support
7 shall be evaluated and assigned a priority based on the impact to critical service delivery, with
8 technical support being available within two hours for high priority issues, and for low priority
9 issues the next business day.

10	**DEFINITIONS**

11 ➢ **Tier One Issue:** An urgent or critical technology issue involving the 911 communications
12 and alerting system.
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14 ➢ **Tier Two Issue:** An urgent or critical general technology issue.
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16 ➢ **Tier Three Issue:** A non-urgent technology issue involving the 911 communications and
17 alerting system.
18
19 ➢ **Tier Four Issue:** A non-urgent technology issue.
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21 ➢ **DFRS Fire Communications Liaison (FCL):** Support staff positions within the Bureau of
22 Technology Services that support 911 call-taking and fire emergency dispatcher
23 operations at the Howard County Public Safety Answering Point, and have duties related
24 to supporting related technology systems, such as the Computer Aided Dispatch, mobile
25 and portable radio, and responder alerting systems.

26	**PROCEDURES**

27 Unauthorized personnel, those not part of the Bureau of Technology Services (BOTS)
28 technology support system, shall not attempt to fix County-owned communications,
29 technology, or hardware issues beyond basic troubleshooting practices.

30 EXCEPTION TO THE FOLLOWING PROCESS FOR LOGGING IN AND OUT OF CAD: Requests to log

31 emergency units in and out of CAD may be made by emergency personnel directly to Public

32 Safety Answering Point Emergency Dispatchers (Howard Communications). If *problems* are

33 encountered in this process, a request for communications support as outlined below shall be

34 made. Dispatchers shall not be asked to troubleshoot Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) login

35 *problems*, once identified.

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37 **TIER ONE, TWO, THREE, AND FOUR ISSUES: REQUESTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS OR TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT:**

38 Requests for BOTS communications and technology support shall generally occur using one of

39 two methods. These methods are suitable for Tier One, Two, Three, and Four issues. Tier One

40 and Two issues may justify an additional action (see next section).

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METHOD ONE: Submit a BOTS Help-Desk Request
The below links are available on the DFRS SizeUp intranet. If the request is for an issue believed to be Tier One or Tier Two, personnel may also contact their chief officer via the chain of command to also request initiation of the Chief Officer Method, as outlined below.
General Technology Issues
http://fireweb.howardcountymd.gov/IMS
Radio, Station Alerting, and Communications Issues
http://fireweb.howardcountymd.gov/HCFRNet/CommTech/communic/newhd/comm_request.asp

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METHOD TWO: Call BOTS Phone Support at 410-313-6050
The behind-the-scenes process for this method will vary depending on day and time, as outlined below. If the request is for an issue believed to be Tier One or Tier Two, personnel may also contact their chief officer via the chain of command to also request initiation of the Chief Officer Method, as outlined below.
Monday through Friday from 0800 hours to 1700 hours • Answered by an on-duty member of the BOTS team. Monday through Friday from 1700 hours to 2200 hours • Extension 6050 shall be forwarded to the Fire Communications Liaison (FCL) desk, or to a designated team mobile phone number as needed. Monday through Thursday 2300 to 0800, Friday 2300 through Monday 0800, and on County Holidays • Extension 6050 will ring to a voicemail line which is set to page the On-Call BOTS Support Technician (OCBST).

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44 Requests submitted using these methods shall be assessed and prioritized by BOTS personnel

45 within 15 minutes during business hours, and 30 minutes after hours. Typical response

46 intervals to the requesting user should be:

47 • Tier One or Tier Two issues:

48   o 15-30 minutes.

49 • Tier Three and Four issues

50   o Occurrence during business hours: By the end of the current business day.

51   o Occurrence outside of business hours: Next business day.

52

53 If the requesting user does not receive communication from a BOTS Support Technician by the

54 time periods outlined above:

55   • Tier One and Two Issues:
56   o Contact one's chief officer and request the Chief Officer Method of contact.
57   • Tier Three and Four Issues:
58   o Personnel may have their company officer directly email the BOTS Bureau
59   Director and Deputy Director.

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61 **TIER ONE AND TWO ISSUES: ALTERNATIVE METHOD FOR REQUESTING COMMUNICATIONS OR TECHNOLOGY**
62 **SUPPORT:**

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CHIEF OFFICER METHOD: Contact Howard Communications (410-313-2950 or Alpha 6) and directly page BOTS Support Technicians.
• This method assures the most rapid response to high priority issues. It is reserved for Help Requests that are believed to be Tier One and Tier Two issues ONLY. This method must be initiated by a chief-level officer or their specifically directed designee.
• When this method is initiated, whenever feasible, the chief officer shall also file the request using Method One as outlined above, to establish the highest possible clarity of the critical issue.   • Alternatively, chief officers may attempt to directly contact, call, or text the designated technician on standby in lieu of having them paged.

Chief officers shall request Howard Communications to page:
    • For Tier One Issues
         o On-Call Fire Communications Liaison (the OCCS tones)
    • For Tire Two Issues
         o On-Call BOTS Support Technician (the OCIT tones)
Following the page, if after 15 minutes the chief officer has not been contacted by a BOTS support technician, the chief officer should attempt direct phone contact a BOTS representative using the department contact List.

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66 **EXPECTED ACTIONS OF BOTS SUPPORT TECHNICIANS:**
67   • Ensure the Department Standby Schedule accurately lists the BOTS Support Technician
68   that is on Standby.
69   • Initiate the support actions outlined in this general order and Attachment A.
70   • Follow-up with other types of communications (text message, phone) to those
71   individuals and others as necessary and appropriate to ensure receipt.
72   • Initiate attempt to resolve the issue per the tiered priority guidelines.
73   o Could include completing a help-desk request for the caller, directing the
74   completion of a help-desk request, remote resolution of the issue, scheduling an
75   appointment for the work to be done, or initiating a physical response to
76   facilitate immediate issue resolution.
77   o Tier One and Two requests shall be addressed immediately.
78   • Initiate physical response as indicated in the *Prioritization of Communications and*
79   *Technology Service Requests* and *BOTS After-Hours On-call Service Support Program*
80   section of this General Order.
81   • Initiate communication with any vendors whose assistance is required, as appropriate.
82   • Record activities to facilitate required log and program reporting.
83   • At a minimum, an email to the requestor shall be sent indicating the assigned priority
84   and expected actions.

85 **PRIORITIZATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT REQUESTS**

86 See attachment A for support actions and prioritization criteria examples.

87 ## REFERENCES

88 • GO 100.26: Emergency Standby and Standby Programs

89 ## SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

90 New General Order

91 ## FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

92 • Attachment A: Support Actions and Prioritization Criteria Examples

93 ## APPROVED

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98 _____
99 Christine M. Uhlhorn, Fire EMS Chief
100 Office of the Fire Chief
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103 Author:
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108 _____
109 Steve Wilson, Chief Technology Officer
110 Bureau of Technology Services
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TIER ONE ISSUES	TIER TWO	TIER THREE	TIER FOUR
SUPPORT ACTIONS	**SUPPORT ACTIONS**	**SUPPORT ACTIONS**	**SUPPORT ACTIONS**

• Technical support shall be initiated by on-duty and/or on-call BOTS Fire Communications Liaison personnel.
• Prioritization of issue within 15 minutes during business hours, or 30 minutes outside of business hours.
• Contact with requestor within 15 minutes during business hours, or 30 minutes outside of business hours to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
• If required, on-site technical support to begin within two hours.
• Remote issue resolution as appropriate.
	• Technical support shall be initiated by on-duty and/or on-call BOTS Support Technicians.
	• Prioritization of issue within 15 minutes during business hours, or 30 minutes outside of business hours.
	• Contact with requestor within 15 minutes during business hours, or 30 minutes outside of business hours to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
	• If required, on-site technical support to begin within two hours.
	• Remote issue resolution as appropriate.
		• **During business hours**
		  o Prioritization of the issue within 30 minutes.
		  o Contact with requestor within 60 minutes to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
		  o Technical support scheduled to occur during business hours.
		  o Remote issue resolution if appropriate.
		• **Outside of business hours**
		  o Prioritization of issue the next business day during business hours.
		  o Contact with the requestor the next business day or applicable shift during business hours to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
		  o Technical support scheduled to occur during business hours.
		  o Remote issue resolution if appropriate.
			• **During business hours**
			  o Prioritization of the issue within 30 minutes.
			  o Contact with requestor within 60 minutes to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
			  o Technical support scheduled to occur during business hours.
			  o Remote issue resolution if appropriate.
			• **Outside of business hours**
			  o Prioritization of issue the next business day during business hours.
			  o Contact with the requestor the next business day or applicable shift during business hours to indicate the assigned priority and expected actions.
			  o Technical support scheduled to occur during business hours.
			  o Remote issue resolution if appropriate.

EXAMPLES	**EXAMPLES**	**EXAMPLES**	**EXAMPLES**
• Alerting failure - Radio – multiple stations • Alerting failure - Radio - single station • Alerting failure - USDD - multiple stations • Alerting failure - USDD - single station all devices • MDT connection failure – single unit – Command unit (BC1, BC2, Safety1, MDO1, MDO2) • MDT connection failure - multiple units • Network error - one or multiple facilities • CAD outage	• Payroll outage (OCBST) • RMS outage (OCBST) • Server outage (OCBST) • TeleStaff outage (OCBST) • VMWare access – multiple units (OCBST) • Malware issues – with critical impact	• Alerting failure - USDD -single station, not all devices • Alerting failure - USDD - single station single incident • MDT connection failure – single non-command unit MDT login failure • LifePak connection Issues • Active directory permissions (e.g. network drive access, etc.) – single user • Industrial Scientific docking station server (DSS) down - multiple • Email group changes • Hardware Error - single • Account lockouts o All users should be registered with	• Ad hoc data reports • Alerting failure - USDD - single device (require a scheduled technician visit) • Hardware install • Hardware request • Software install • Software request • County phone request • Technology training request

		http://password.howardcountymd.gov • Malware issues – no critical impact • Meeting support • Miscellaneous login • Network error - single • Personal data form • Printer issues • General questions • Radio failure – configuration issues (e.g. need for reprogramming) • RMS report errors • Software error – multiple (unless software is listed under Tier one) • Software error - single • User change • VMWare access - single	

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