



SPECIAL ORDER

SPECIAL ORDER 2014.12

Replacement of 10-78 with Signal 2

CIT

Issue Date: 04/02/2014

Expiration Date: Issuance of the revisions to General Order 410.01, Communications

OVERVIEW

It is the goal of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, and the communications center (Howard), to provide the fastest response when a call for emergency assistance is received from a provider that is in physical danger.

General Order 410.01, Communications, currently specifies in Section 01 that the code 10-78 shall be used to advise a dispatcher when any personnel are in need of immediate police assistance.

Police departments in our region, to include the Howard County Police Department, have been moving away from most "10 codes" in favor of more "plain speak" in regards to radio transmissions. Recognizing that some situations require an emergency code that is not generally recognizable to the public, the region's police chiefs have collaborated to use a common code for an officer in trouble, public safety personnel in trouble, etc. The new language for fire service personnel to indicate distress is "Signal 2".

This order becomes effective immediately for use in Howard County, as well as in counties that we respond to for mutual-aid assistance.

General Order 410.01, Communications is under revision. When the revision is published, it will replace this Special Order.

DEFINITIONS

- **10-78** - Under the current General Order 410.01, the verbiage of unit(s) experiencing distress. **-NO LONGER TO BE USED**
- **Emergency Button** – For the purpose of this Special Order, a means of communicating to Howard that a unit or person is under threat of physical violence. There are emergency buttons on all mobile radios, portable radios, and MDTs.
- **Signal 2** - Effective immediately, the verbiage of unit(s) experiencing distress.
- **Shall** – Indicates mandatory requirement
- **Howard** - Howard County Fire Dispatch or the Communications Center
- **EID** – Individual and unique Emergency Identification number of all uniformed personnel



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- **Channel Marker** – A tone that sounds every 10 to 15 seconds, placed on the channel by a dispatcher, to indicate that only emergency transmissions shall be made due to unusual circumstances, to include Signal 2 requests for immediate assistance.

TOPIC DETAILS

In December, 2012, The Howard County Police Department was required to discontinue the use of a majority of their “10 Codes” and transition to using common language when making a radio transmission. There are some new codes to replace some of the higher priority “10 Codes”. The transition was implemented to ensure that there is consistency statewide among law enforcement agencies. One of those changes was moving from the 10-78 Code to the new “Signal 2” Code. Howard County Call-takers and Dispatchers are thus becoming accustomed to hearing Signal 2, and not 10-78.

In the interests of sending assistance as fast as possible and clear communications between agencies, all personnel shall reply, upon the activation of an emergency button, and the existence of a true emergency need, with "Signal Two," **if at all possible**. The use of the 10-78 code shall be discontinued.

Additionally, in order to assure Howard that an accidental activation is truly accidental in nature, the following statement, which includes the providers EID number, **shall be the only acceptable way** to clear an activation of the emergency button. Any variation shall be considered by Howard as an attempt to direct emergency police department assistance to the unit’s location.

Example:

HOWARD: “Howard to Paramedic 95, receiving signal 2, advise”

P95: “Paramedic 95 to Howard, accidental activation, EID 1486”

If a unit is truly in immediate danger and in need of emergency police department response to their current location, the following terminology is to be verbalized, if possible, clearly and as calmly as possible, over the channel that the unit is operating on.

Example:

P95: “P95 to Howard, Signal 2”

HOWARD: “All units, Signal 2 for P95, hold the air”

When a Signal 2 is clearly received from any person or unit, by Howard, an immediate police department “unit in distress” dispatch to the signaling unit’s location shall be initiated. The operations channel shall be marked with the single beep, channel marker tone, indicating to all units to hold the air.

Incidents dispatched after the Signal 2 is called shall be directed to operate on another tactical channel (Alpha 3, Bravo 2, etc.)

Additionally, the unit’s appropriate Battalion Chief shall be immediately notified on ALPHA 6 of the situation. If the event occurs after 2100 hours, the appropriate Battalion Chief shall be paged to call extension 2944 immediately. No further discussion of the activation of the Signal 2 shall be had **on the operations channel** so as not to give any perpetrator additional means of irritation or upset.



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If a unit in distress is able to free themselves from the situation and provide any updated information on the events occurring, in a safe and calm manner, they may do so on the operations channel. If the unit is unable to do this, the channel shall remain clear and marked with the single beep channel marker tone to indicate to other units that only emergency transmissions shall be made. Howard shall not make any further attempts to contact the unit over the air but wait for any response back from the signaling unit as to their status.

In circumstances where the ONLY way to signal for help would be to push the emergency button, and the unit is unable to verbalize either a positive, or an accidental alert, it will be assumed by dispatch to be a true emergency and police department response shall be started immediately.

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS/REFERENCES

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Wilson", written over a horizontal line.

Steve Wilson
Chief Information Officer