



California State University, Los Angeles
Department of Public Safety

NUMBER: V-6 APPROVED: _____
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SUPERSEDES: Reviewed/Revised: _____

SUBJECT: **Alternative Methods of Communication (Text-to-9-1-1 & Rave Guardian)**

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Department Order is to establish criteria and procedures when utilizing alternative methods of communication for reporting incidents of concern or emergencies to our Communications Center (i.e. text-to-9-1-1 and the Rave Guardian application).

II. POLICY:

It shall be the policy of this department to monitor and respond to all text-to-9-1-1 and Rave Guardian communication received via the E-Media Tech and Rave Guardian platforms.

III. DEFINITIONS:

None.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. Text-to-9-1-1 and Rave Guardian provide equal access to emergency services as well as an alternate method of reporting emergencies when other traditional avenues are unavailable or when deemed necessary.

1. The Short Message (SMS) also known as text messaging provides support for wireless subscribers to send 911 SMS text messages to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) by using a single code, 911, as the destination address of the SMS message.
2. The Rave Guardian app, developed by Rave Mobile Safety, provides for direct contact to the Department of Public Safety to report issues of concern or

suspicious activity and allows for anonymous reporting by a user via the application.

- B. As with standard practice in the Communications Center, both platforms, are for official use only and will fall under the same standards for recording and retention.
- C. Logging on and off
 - 1. Dispatchers and/or personnel assigned in the Communications Center will log into the Comtech EMedia 9-1-1 and Rave Mobile Safety platforms at the beginning of their shift and monitor and respond to all communication received during their scheduled work shift.
 - 2. Personnel assigned to work in the Communications Center will ensure the software is open and operational at all times.
 - 3. At end of shift, the personnel logged in will sign out of each system in its entirety (Note: Simply closing the browser will not log you out and may cause system issues).
 - 4. During periods of shift change, it is incumbent upon both dispatchers or personnel assigned to work in the Communications Center to provide and receive briefing or call information that is relevant to any active SMS or Guardian calls for service.
- D. Dispatchers may not turn down or silence the volume control as it is one of the indicators that a new 9-1-1 text message or Guardian message has been received.
- E. Prioritizing calls
 - 1. All 9-1-1 calls are processed equally without regard to hierarchy and therefore text-to-9-1-1 (SMS) lines will be accepted and answered immediately without delay and all calls shall be prioritized based on the nature of the call whether voice or text.
 - 2. All Guardian calls or messages will be accepted and processed according to the nature of the call and prioritized accordingly.
- F. Location Accuracy
 - 1. It is imperative that the location be obtained and verified at the earliest convenience since routing for location accuracy varies between cellular providers.
 - 2. At this time, the text-to-9-1-1 platform allows a dispatcher to a maximum of five (5) rebids/refresh for updated location accuracy. The highlighted letter/number in the center of the map indicates the number of times the location has been rebid/refreshed. Rebid should only be used if you are unable to obtain a good location for the caller. Keep in mind the limits as you

continue to process the call. In any case in which the call is transferred to another PSAP, the new dispatcher will receive a new allocation of five (5) opportunities to rebid/refresh the location.

G. Text-to-9-1-1 dropdown question menu and call taking procedures

1. There are several frequently asked questions designated as pre-set messages that the call taker may use to ease the processing of the text conversation. The canned messages should be used whenever possible to both expedite the call taking process and for consistency between calls. The flow of the text conversation should emulate those of voice 9-1-1 calls in that the 5 ½ W's (Where, What, Who, When, Weapons and How) should be answered. Dispatchers will not use jargon, abbreviations or acronyms but rather spell out questions to avoid misunderstanding with the callers.
2. The caller should be greeted with the following script, "Cal State LA Police, what is the location/address of the emergency you are reporting?"
3. The dispatcher should ask the caller if they can call in by voice and if it is safe for them to do so.
4. The dispatcher should ask the caller if they can receive a voice callback if necessary and if it is safe for them to receive a call from 9-1-1.
5. The dispatcher should wait for a response before asking further questions.
6. The dispatcher should make every attempt to not group questions together.
7. Once it has been determined that a field unit response is necessary the dispatcher will generate the call for service in CAD via the Automated Records Management System (ARMS). The CAD entry must note the call was received via SMS or text-to-9-1-1.
8. If it has been determined that no field unit response is necessary, the dispatcher will generate a call in CAD with details of the call and what, if any, notifications were made (i.e. call transferred, watch commander notified, etc.). The CAD entry must note the call was received via SMS or text-to-9-1-1

H. Guardian call messaging (aka "Chat") procedures

1. The dispatcher should ask the caller if they can call in by voice and if it is safe for them to do so.
2. The dispatcher should ask the caller if they can receive a voice callback if necessary and if it is safe for them to receive a call.
3. The dispatcher should wait for a response before asking further questions.
4. The dispatcher should make every attempt to not group questions together.
5. Once it has been determined that a field unit response is necessary, the dispatcher will generate the call for service in CAD via the Automated Records Management System (ARMS). The CAD entry just note the call was received via Guardian and must include the ticket number generated by the system.

6. It has been determined that no field unit response is necessary, the dispatcher will generate a call in CAD with details of the call and what, if any, notifications were made (i.e. watch commander notified, etc.). The CAD entry must note the call was received via Guardian and must include the ticket number generated by the system.

I. Multiple text-to-9-1-1 or Guardian conversations

1. Since multiple text or Guardian sessions may be handled at once, the highest priority call will be determined by the nature of the call/emergency.
2. It is imperative that if you receive multiple texts or Guardian messages that you respond to each to ensure which call takes priority.
3. If multiple messages are received about the same call or incident, you must respond to each to ensure that they are indeed related and not a different call.

J. Jurisdictional boundaries

1. The caller is anchored to the originating PSAP until the dispatcher ends the conversation.
2. Text-to-9-1-1 SMS may be transferred to another jurisdiction that accepts text-to-9-1-1 calls. Upon successful transfer, the session will end. The dispatcher making the transfer may continue to monitor the text conversation by using the refresh button to ensure the correct jurisdiction/agency has been reached and that there is no information pertinent to the dispatcher's own agency.
3. SMS is an emerging technology and it is possible to receive a text from a caller that is not in your jurisdiction. If the text session enters another jurisdiction, then the incident will be passed on to that agency, either by transferring the session or by relaying all the information by voice.
4. If an SMS caller, via text-to-9-1-1, travels into a different jurisdiction, the dispatcher will transfer the text session to the agency responsible for that jurisdiction if they are capable of receiving text sessions.
5. If an SMS caller, via text-to-9-1-1, travels into a different jurisdiction and the receiving agency does not have the capabilities of receiving text, the original dispatcher will maintain the session open and relay the information to the appropriate agency.
6. Guardian messages are accepted and ended only by Cal State LA Police Dispatch.

K. Medical/Fire Calls

1. If a call is received via text-to-9-1-1 requiring medical attention, and the responding agency is capable of receiving text sessions, the dispatcher will transfer the call via text to the appropriate Fire/EMS agency.

L. High priority calls for service (Code-3 response)

1. The dispatcher will keep a SMS or Guardian session open to obtain and update officer safety information as well as update the call accordingly until field personnel have made contact.

M. Calls received in languages other than English

1. There are currently no translation services provided via either platform. In any case where the dispatcher is unable to communicate with a caller due to a language barrier, the dispatcher will direct them to make a voice call to Public Safety or 9-1-1.

N. Non-Response

1. If there is language within the original text to indicate that there may be a legitimate emergency, the dispatcher will message back the following: "If you have an emergency, text or call 9-1-1."
2. If there is no response create a call for service using the best known location and notify the watch commander.
3. If the language within the original text does not indicate that there is an emergency or that it was a misdial or accidental text, the dispatcher will message back the following: "If you have an emergency, text or call 9-1-1."

O. Handling Abandoned or Misdialed Calls

1. Abandoned Calls – Upon receipt of an abandoned call via Guardian a call is to be placed to that number immediately.
 - a. The dispatcher shall identify themselves and advise the person that answers the call that they have received an emergency call activation from that number. The dispatcher shall ask if there is any emergency and verify the phone number the original call was placed from is the same number that was dialed.
 - b. During the callback the dispatcher is to listen to any indication of a problem at the location, for example: arguing in the background, suspicious noises, or possible duress in the voice of the person on the line.
 - 1) If the dispatcher has any indication that there may be a problem at the location, a police unit is to be dispatched immediately on an unknown trouble call (Dispatch to provide officer the details of the callback).
 - 2) Upon callback if the dispatcher is unable to establish contact because of an open line creating a busy signal, the dispatcher shall dispatch a police unit to an unknown trouble-busy on call back call.

- 3) The dispatcher shall make additional attempts to establish contact with the caller's location during the police response.
- 4) The dispatcher shall update the officers en route to the call as information becomes available.
- c. For abandoned calls that result in an open line the dispatcher shall:
 - 1) Listen for background noises; and
 - 2) Dispatch a unit to an unknown trouble call – open line.
2. Misdialed Calls – For a misdialed call, if the dispatcher, based on their experience with emergency calls and the criteria listed in Section O, 1 a-b, is satisfied that a misdial has occurred, then verification of the phone number shall be conducted prior to the dispatcher terminating the call.
 - a. Subsequent to any misdialed or abandoned emergency call, a complete ARMS/CAD radio log entry shall be made to include the name, address and telephone number of the caller with a brief disposition of the call in the narrative field.

P. Anonymous text

1. At this time, using the interim text-to-9-1-1 solution, the caller must have a data plan through a wireless carrier so there will not be a truly anonymous text.
2. Guardian messaging will allow a caller to activate an option for anonymous reporting.

Q. Ending a call

1. Before ending a call, the dispatcher will advise the caller that the requested assistance is being sent.
2. The dispatcher will notify the caller the session will end.
3. The dispatcher may then end the session (Note: a text messaging session cannot be restored or initiated by the dispatcher).
4. Make sure to transfer all required information from the call to CAD prior to ending a session.

R. Multimedia Message Attachments (MMS)

1. In the event a text message via the text-to-9-1-1 platform contains multimedia content, the dispatcher shall not open the content, click any link, or open any dialog box containing the content. Instead, the dispatcher will indicate in the text of the call for service that multimedia content was contained in the text and the time stamp.
2. Guardian does allow for multimedia content from the caller. If multimedia content is received via Guardian, the dispatcher will indicate the type of content received in as much detail as possible in the notes of the call.

