

CHARLOTTESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Note: This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer’s liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by the Charlottesville Police Department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Type of Directive: GENERAL ORDER	Number: 85-99
STATE-WIDE INTERDEPARTMENTAL RADIO SYSTEM - SIRS	Date: June 18, 2018
VLEPSC Number: ADM. 24.06	Manual Number: 561.01
	Effective Date: 06/18/18
Authorization: Chief R.M. Brackney <i>Rm Brackney</i>	Follow-up Date: As Needed

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Charlottesville Police Department to understand the rules and regulations in the use of the Statewide Interdepartmental Radio System (SIRS).

II. PURPOSE

SIRS was created as a law enforcement communications link to assist law enforcement agencies in providing more efficient service to the public and to help in reducing crime. It is to be used for interdepartmental (between departments) purposes only. This means that no SIRS member should routinely dispatch its own units on the SIRS channel. SIRS provides a base station-to-base station and car-to-car network across the state, part of which did not previously exist. It also provides direct car-to-car contact with key state agencies such as the Department of State Police and the Department of Corrections. SIRS was designed to be used to assist departments in carrying out their everyday law enforcement duties and it is not restricted to emergency operations. Certain non-law enforcement agencies, which have demonstrated a need, have been granted a restricted SIRS membership and those agencies should observe the restrictions. Generally speaking SIRS members can use the System for any police business of an interdepartmental nature.

An advisory board made up of Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs and representatives of the State Police and State Corrections governs SIRS.

III. PROCEDURE

A. System Use

1. The success or failure of SIRS will be determined by whether or not dispatchers constantly monitor the channel. If a base station or car from another agency cannot contact your dispatcher, the system will not function.
2. The Board recognizes that a wide variety of “APCO 10 Series” signals are in use. Therefore, to avoid confusion, the Board recommends that “plain language” be used on the SIRS channel. Basically, the system function as follows:

- a. If a car from Department A needs to contact a unit from Department B, Car A should call the dispatcher at Department B and state which unit he needs to contact. The Department B dispatcher will contact its unit on the Department B normal dispatch frequency and advise them on the traffic and request the Department B unit to switch to the SIRS channel. If the A and B cars are within 10 miles of each other, they should be able to talk car to car. If not, the Department B dispatcher should either relay the traffic or direct its unit toward the Department A unit until the car to car contact is established. When the units have completed their business, they should both switch back to their normal department dispatch channel.
- b. Likewise, a dispatcher can respond to a request from one of its units to contact another local or state unit. If the request involves a unit from an adjacent local department, the dispatcher can contact that department by appropriate means and set up the contact. If the local unit wants to reach a state police unit and is unable to do so by calling car to car, he can request the dispatcher to contact the state unit by the base station and arrange for the necessary contact.
- c. The State Police will have no dispatch capability on SIRS. All State Police patrol cars will be equipped with a SIRS radio and it will be monitored at all times.
- d. Any station or unit with emergency traffic should be given priority and all other routine traffic suspended until the emergency is resolved.
- e. Some agencies have mobile radios with a monitoring receiver that permits the officer to hear both the normal dispatch channel and the SIRS channel without moving the channel selector switch. This will enable these cars to bypass the dispatcher in some cases, especially where the cars are within the 10-mile range. However, it is important to note that the dispatcher never loses contact with their unit because the base station monitors both the normal dispatch channel and the SIRS channel.
- f. If a priority call comes in while a unit is handling routine business on the SIRS channel, the dispatcher should call the unit on the SIRS channel and ask them to switch to the normal dispatch channel; the dispatcher should then give them the priority message.
- g. The above-described procedures will govern both local and state law enforcement usage of the system. Remember that SIRS was designed to help you. It is supposed to be used to make you work easier and more efficient. Please use it wisely!

B. System Discipline

1. In order for SIRS to accomplish its purpose, it must have “free” time to permit easy access to the channel. This means that all SIRS users must cooperate and make certain that traffic on SIRS is of a direct law enforcement nature and necessary. Base station dispatchers should be especially aware of this rule since base stations have a much greater range and thus cause more wide-spread

interference. Dispatchers should always try to find alternate means for communication with other base stations for routine administrative messages. The telephone, VCIN and Inst-phone are suggested for consideration. In those areas where departments have maintained the 39.500 MHz channel, this frequency could serve as a point-to-point communications link.

2. All SIRS users should strive to use good radio procedure and accomplish each SIRS transaction in the minimum time possible. Remember that SIRS is a “plain language” system so please avoid the use of the “10 series signals”.
3. In the event a department is found to be abusing the SIRS channel or violating the Board’s guidelines, such infractions should be reported to the head of your department. Department heads receiving such criticism should report the circumstances to an Advisory Board member. In order for SIRS to accomplish its purpose, everyone must abide by the rules.