

Subject: RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Date: October 22, 2008

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Replaces Policy Dated: September 27, 2000

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to document employee responsibilities for the proper, secure, and lawful use of the Pinal County Radio Communications System(s).

APPLICATION: This policy applies to all authorized full time, part time and temporary employees of Pinal County; all contractors and third parties that are granted access to the Pinal County Radio Communications System(s).

DEFINITIONS:

- FCC:** The Federal Communications Commission.
- 2-way radio:** A device that will transmit and receive voice communications. Pinal County has various base-stations, mobile (vehicle mounted) and hand held 2-way radios.
- County-issued radio:** A 2-way radio issued by the County that has been programmed with approved channels and licensed frequencies.
- Transmit** Depressing the button that activates the microphone on a two-way radio. Releasing the button stops the transmission.
- Squelch** A control on some radios that adjusts the sensitivity of the receiver.
- Radio Abuse** The misuse of County 2-way radios that include but not limited to the Prohibited Uses listed below.

POLICY: Pinal County maintains radio communications systems. These systems are provided to assist in the conduct of business within the County. Pinal County is licensed to provide radio-coordinated activities for the various County departments and divisions. Radio communication is the method that has proven the most effective in improving group operations to meet the increasing public demand for additional services and faster restoration of services after interruptions. All radio systems are licensed and governed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Violations of FCC rules or regulations can result in the revocation of the license to operate, and in Federal disciplinary action against individual violators.

PERMISSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS: As noted by Federal law; Title 47, Part 90, of the FCC rules and regulations, to assure the following:

1. Communications directly relating to the safety or protection of persons or property.
2. Communications considered essential to the efficient conduct of County business, subject to the condition that no harmful interference is caused to safety communications of other licensed stations.

These rules are clear in their meaning; however, they do allow sufficient latitude for essential communications resulting in better services to the public.

PROHIBITED USES OF COUNTY RADIO COMMUNICATION SYSTEM(S)

1. FCC rules prohibit the use of any profane or indecent language on the radio.
2. Personal messages unrelated to County business are prohibited, unless of an emergency nature.
3. Do not reprimand over the air.
4. Do not click your microphone or make odd noises on the air.
5. Do not transmit anything other than your voice.
6. Do not intentionally transmit over someone else unless an emergency exists.

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OPERATION

1. To test a radio, call another person or base station, do not click microphone.
2. A Radio Basic Operation sheet is attached.
3. Departments assign radio call signs (numbers) to individuals. You must obtain a call number to utilize the radio system(s).

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:

The IT Radio Communications Department is responsible for the oversight of the Pinal County Radio Communications system(s), including radio equipment, sites and frequencies. The Department needs to be notified as to the assignment or reassignment of these assets so inventory can be serviced and maintained. All requests for equipment, services, frequencies, repairs, and installations need to go through the IT Radio Communications Department so that standards and procedures are met.

Employees are responsible for:

1. Understanding and adhering to the Radio Communications System(s) Policy.
2. Understanding the Radio Basic Operation Guidelines.
3. Using common sense and good judgment in the use of County 2-way radio system(s) as determined by this County Policy.
4. Advising Management of breaches of this policy.
5. Maintaining reasonable precautions to safeguard their 2-way radio from unauthorized use.

Management is responsible for:

1. Understanding this policy and related policies and documents.
2. Advising their employees about this policy and appropriate use.
3. Notifying the department head when circumstances warrant monitoring or disciplinary action of an employees misuse/abuse of 2-way radio operations

PROCEDURES:

The Human Resources Department will provide all employees with a copy of this Radio Communication Policy. Employees required to engage in radio communication will be required to acknowledge their understanding of this policy by signing the policy acknowledgment. When the acknowledgment has been endorsed by the employees supervisor it should be forwarded for inclusion in the employees personnel file.

If a violation of this Policy occurs or is suspected, the appointing authority or designee should Document the circumstances, approach the department head of the suspected violation, and Report incidents to Human Resources and initiate disciplinary action as appropriate under the circumstances.

FORMS: The following forms shall be used in conjunction with this policy.

1. Radio Basic Operation Guidelines
2. Pinal County Employee Radio Communications Systems Policy Acknowledgment

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Radio Basic Operation Guidelines

There are several hundred radios, both mobile and portable, in the Pinal County Communications System(s). Your cooperation is essential if the system is to be effective. The following are some guidelines to proper radio operation.

1. To turn the radio on, turn the volume control clockwise, a click will be heard, and adjust the volume by listening to other units or call for a radio check. Some older radios have a power-on button or switch instead of turning on via the volume control.
2. In some vehicles the radio is operative only when the ignition switch is turned on and the radio switch is on. In these vehicles it is suggested that the radio switch be left in the on position at all times.
3. Older radios have a squelch control that adjusts the sensitivity of your receiver. To adjust the squelch turn the knob until you hear a noise similar to static, then turn the knob the other way until the noise just quits.
4. To talk, hold the microphone or portable radio about 2 to 3 inches from your mouth at an angle of approximately 30 degrees and push the transmit button. Speak clearly and distinctly into the microphone. Speak in a normal voice; do not raise your voice or whisper.
5. After pushing the transmit button, hesitate for a second before talking. There is a signal being transmitted as soon as you push the button, which will cover up the first part of your voice, if you begin talking too soon.
6. To receive, simply release the transmit button.
7. Before calling someone, listen to see if the radio channel is clear of transmissions. If channel is busy, wait until the current parties "clear" off the air. To call, push the transmit button, wait a second, then identify yourself. For example; "482 to 11". This would mean that call sign 482 is trying to get in contact with call sign 11.
8. Wait for their response then go ahead with your message. If you don't get an answer right away, try again in a few seconds.
9. When someone calls you on the radio you should respond accordingly. For example, when call sign 11 hears 482 calling, the response should be; "11 go ahead".
10. When you have finished with your conversation, clear the air by stating; "(your call sign), clear".
11. If, during the course of your working day, you go for a long period of time without hearing anything over your radio, call someone for a radio check. If after several attempts you are unable to get an answer, turn the radio off and arrange to have repairs made.
12. To turn the radio off, turn the volume control counter-clockwise until it clicks or on older radios, switch the power button/switch to the off position.
13. Know what you want to say before you push the transmit button. The radio is not and should not be used like a telephone.

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Radio Basic Operation Sheet

14. All conversations should be brief and business-like, no personal greetings.
15. If your message is going to require a lengthy discussion, arrange to meet with the individual, or contact them by telephone. Don't tie up the radio.
16. If the message can wait until later, or tomorrow, wait until then.
17. While it is not necessary to have a license to operate a 'county-issued' radio, individuals using them should be trained in their operation and use.
18. Supervisors are responsible for insuring that their personnel are trained to use the equipment assigned to them, including their radios.