General Order

Houston Police Department

ISSUE DATE:	NO.
June 19, 2020	600-01

REFERENCE: Supersedes all prior conflicting Circulars and Directives, and General Order 600-01, dated July 17, 2014

SUBJECT: RESPONSE MANAGEMENT

POLICY

The department has standards and procedures for managing responses to *calls for service* and *events* and Houston Police Department (HPD) unit activity.

Response management is primarily based on the level of the threat to human life and/or property and is considerate of the safety of citizens and officers.

This General Order applies to all employees.

DEFINITIONS

Assist Event. Any event for which emergency assistance is requested by or for any police or fire department personnel.

Beat and Boundary Descriptions. A reference guide that serves as the official designation of the jurisdictional beats and boundaries for the Houston Police Department.

Call Code. A code that represents the type of event, offense, or incident for which a *call for service* or on-view activity is being entered. See the *HPD Call Codes by Priority* list on the department's Intranet Portal.

Call for Service or Event. A record of a caller's request for police service or an event on-viewed by an officer that is entered into the *Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)* system. Also referred to as a call or call slip.

Call Taker. An employee of the *Houston Emergency Center (HEC)* designated to enter calls for service into the CAD system as they are received from the public.

Call Type. The type of event, offense, or incident represented by a *call code*. Also event type.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD). The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system consists of the software and hardware that facilitates the management of calls for service and unit activity, among other functions.

Crisis Intervention Response Team (CIRT). A team comprised of a uniformed CIT officer with a licensed mental health professional to respond to persons exhibiting mental health crisis.

Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT) Officer. An officer who has successfully completed the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) 40-hour Mental Health Peace Officer/CIT course.

Houston Emergency Center (HEC). A department of the City of Houston, responsible for processing all inbound 9-1-1 emergency and non-emergency telephone calls for service from the

public. Police and fire personnel work there and are responsible for dispatching all police and fire department calls received.

Mobility Response Team (MRT). Uniformed civilians who are trained and equipped to perform traffic control duties.

Past Queue. Refers to a call that has been held beyond the *queue standard* for that call's *priority response code (PRC).*

Patrol Desk Unit (PDU). A unit in the Emergency Communications Division (ECD), staffed by police officers who have the authority to handle certain citizen calls for service from within the HEC facility.

Priority Response Code (PRC). A code (i.e., "E" or one through nine) given to police calls for service that reflects the urgency and determines the manner of response based upon a specific set of standards. Typically, the first number of a *call code* designates the priority. See the chart in section 1 of this General Order.

Queue. The queue is where calls are sequentially displayed pending dispatch and are viewable by the dispatcher.

Queue Standard. The maximum time allowed for a call for service to be held in queue before being dispatched.

Response Time. The elapsed time from when a *call for service or event* is received by the dispatcher to the time the first officer arrives at the scene.

Teleserve. A unit in the Emergency Communications Division authorized to handle certain calls for service or events via telephone or computer.

1 CALL MANAGEMENT

Dispatcher Authority

The dispatcher speaks with the authority of the Chief of Police. Officers are to respond promptly to the dispatcher and carry out their assignments courteously and promptly. Emergency Communications Division (ECD) and field supervisors may reassign calls with due consideration of all relevant information to better carry out the police mission.

Response Priorities

Response priority is designated by the *priority response code* (PRC) and dictates whether an emergency, immediate, direct, delayed, or diverted (*Teleserve*) response is most appropriate (see below chart). When responding to any *call for service or event*, officers shall drive using the most direct and expedient route, recognizing that an unknown amount of time may have elapsed before notification was given to the police department. Officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of themselves, fellow officers, and citizens.

Any responding unit that may be delayed for any reason (e.g., coming from the station, heavy rain, or at a considerable distance from the call location) shall advise the dispatcher by radio only as to the circumstances causing the delay so the dispatcher can make adjustments on responding units. The dispatcher retains the discretion to request officers to send a message via the mobile computing device (MCD) when responding to preserve the radio air for emergency traffic.

This section defines the various response priorities.

Response Typology

Response Priority	Description	Queue Standard
E (Emergency)	Assist the officer or firefighter or pursuit	Immediate
1	Life threatening in progress	1 Minute
2	Life threatening just occurred; property crime in progress	5 Minutes
3	Life threatening delayed report; property crime just occurred	18 Minutes
4	Serious criminal incidents delayed reports; non-emergency police response calls	23 Minutes
5	Minor property crime; municipal offense; check by to confirm service request; possible referrals	30 Minutes
6	Service requests handled by PDU personnel	35 Minutes
7	Teleserve eligible calls requiring a field response	40 Minutes
8	Self-initiated police action	None
9	Used to document a citizen was referred to some other entity; a General Broadcast - For Your Information (GBF) was initiated by dispatcher; no dispatch of patrol units required	None

Priority "E" (Emergency):

Priority "E" represents assist the officer or firefighter or pursuit situations, and assumes that a potential threat to life or the potential threat of serious bodily injury to an officer or firefighter is in progress.

Response to priority "E" calls for service is by uniformed officers in marked vehicles with the use of emergency lights and a siren and who remain at this response level until a supervisor, a unit, or dispatcher advises the situation is under control. When advised of such, officers who have not arrived on the scene shall reduce their response to the priority dictated by the dispatcher, but shall continue to the scene unless otherwise instructed by a field supervisor or dispatcher.

Officers in plainclothes and/or unmarked vehicles (e.g., investigators, Crime Suppression Team [CST] officers) who may be responding to the priority "E" call shall respond as quickly as they can safely do so.

Priority One (Emergency Response):

Priority one assumes that a potential threat to life or the potential threat of serious bodily injury is in progress, and is used for all urgent calls other than assist the officer or firefighter or pursuit calls.

Response to priority one calls for service is by uniformed officers in marked vehicles with the use of emergency lights and a siren. However, if circumstances are such that the officer believes that an optional response (priority one silent, priority two, or lower) is most appropriate, then the officer may opt to run the call in that mode, but the dispatcher shall be immediately advised of the deviation from the standard response.

Priority Two (Immediate Response):

Priority two calls for service represent in-progress property crimes and/or a potential threat to human welfare, and assume that if not in-progress, the event recently occurred or response to the scene is urgent.

Response to priority two calls for service is without emergency equipment. However, if the situation clearly warrants the use of emergency equipment, the officer has the option to use that mode, but that decision shall be immediately communicated to the dispatcher via police radio.

Priority Three (Direct Response):

Priority three calls are incidents in which no known emergency exists, but which shall be handled expeditiously because of the potential for the situation to escalate or the potential for criminal activity to occur. No emergency lights or siren shall be used unless the officer has additional information justifying the use of emergency equipment and immediately communicates the decision to do so to the dispatcher via police radio. Officers responding to priority three calls for service shall obey all traffic laws.

Priority Four (Delayed Response):

Calls under this priority involve the delayed reporting of criminal incidents that are serious in nature. Priority four calls also include incidents such as minor crashes and other incidents when the reporting of the necessary information is required in an expeditious manner. No emergency lights or siren shall be used unless the officer has additional information justifying the use of emergency equipment and immediately communicates the decision to do so to the dispatcher via police radio. Officers responding to priority four calls for service shall obey all traffic laws.

Priority Five (Delayed Response):

Calls under this priority involve delayed reports of criminal incidents that are non-violent in nature such as property crimes, various silent 9-1-1 calls, and certain alarm calls. Priority five also includes calls that are eligible to be handled by the *Mobility Response Team (MRT)*.

No emergency lights or siren shall be used unless the officer has additional information justifying the use of emergency equipment and immediately communicates the decision to do so to the dispatcher via police radio. Officers responding to priority five calls for service shall obey all traffic laws.

Priority Six (Diverted Response):

Priority six calls consist of service requests handled by *Patrol Desk Unit (PDU)* personnel in the Emergency Communications Division via the telephone. Officers assigned to the PDU serve as an alternative to a field unit response. They are authorized to service certain calls that do not require a field response, provide information for field units, and advise citizens of options in an effort to more efficiently respond to their request for service.

Priority Seven (Diverted Response):

Priority seven consists of *Teleserve* eligible incidents. The primary responsibility of Teleserve personnel is to enter incident reports from information received from citizens via the telephone. Calls for service that are eligible for referral and diversion to *Teleserve* include minor offenses in which the safety of the citizen is not in question and no major crime scene or evidence exists. The types of reports handled by Teleserve shall be determined by the Chief of Police and recorded in the ECD SOPs. If it is determined by ECD that a field response is necessary, then a new response priority code shall be assigned:

Priority Eight (Direct Response):

Priority eight consists of self-initiated activities that originate with an officer rather than the dispatcher or other external sources. These activities do not involve on-view investigations in which an officer is "flagged down," but are initiated solely by an officer's own actions. The officer shall advise the dispatcher as to the nature of the event. The dispatcher can then create an event slip containing the appropriate priority eight *call code*.

Priority Nine (Diverted Response):

Priority nine consists of activities in which the dispatcher can refer complainants, reportees, or witnesses to another source to obtain incident assistance. Priority nine also consists of incidents for which the information is needed only on an advisory basis and/or an incident number needs to be generated. In this case, the *call taker* or dispatcher shall create an event slip and the dispatcher shall broadcast the information to the patrol area for all personnel to hear on an information only basis and then dispose of the call using the disposition code: GBF (General Broadcast – For Your Information).

Flagged Down (Direct Response):

Events that result from an officer being "flagged down" and that would have likely been or should have been reported to HPD shall be given the appropriate four digit code that best describes the event. This coding shall be done by the dispatcher based on information provided by the field officer.

Response to High-Risk Situations

Dispatchers shall send at least two officers and a field supervisor to scenes involving individuals exhibiting violent or irrational behavior, extreme agitation and/or brandishing a weapon. If the information in the call-slip involves individuals experiencing mental health issues then the dispatcher shall request a CIRT unit to make the scene. In all high-risk situations, if time and other circumstances allow, the responding supervisor and officers shall assess the scene and develop a plan for approach. In cases of imminent danger, responding officers should not delay

the approach to wait for backup unit(s) or a supervisor. ECD dispatcher shall notify an ECD supervisor of the high-risk call as defined above and the supervisor shall monitor the call.

Dispatchers shall send at least two officers to scenes involving any of the following:

a. Priority "E" or priority one call

b. CIT call

c. Weapon

d. High-priority, in-progress event

e. Disturbance

f. Situation in which officer safety is in question

Calls involving large crowds and calls requiring crowd or traffic control shall have an appropriate number of back-up units assigned. The dispatcher shall ask the affected field sergeant for input.

The dispatcher has the discretion to assign back-up units to calls that would not normally necessitate more than one field unit. If a field unit expresses a back-up unit is not needed on a call, the dispatcher has the authority to assign a back-up unit as a safety precaution.

When officers on scenes request additional units, (thereby exceeding two units at the scene) or when there are more than two units dispatched to a scene, a field supervisor shall also be dispatched to the scene along with the additional units, regardless of the priority of the call.

Emergency Traffic Notification via Radio Communications

If an officer requires immediate, uninterrupted access to a radio channel, the officer shall state his assigned unit number and immediately follow this transmission with the words "emergency traffic." The dispatcher shall acknowledge receipt of the transmission, secure the radio channel for the officer's exclusive use, and notify a dispatch supervisor.

2 CALL PRIORITIZATION

Call Prioritization

Response priority (i.e., "E" or one through nine) is accomplished through a component of the *Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)* system called SINS (Special Instructions). SINS utilizes specific questions presented by *call takers* to callers. Through this automated means, a *call type* is generated in CAD based on the answers given by callers.

When a call for service record is transmitted to a dispatcher, either the PRC or the *call type* may be upgraded or downgraded by the dispatcher under the following conditions:

a. A dispatcher may upgrade a call for service based on information in the call slip or received from a *call taker*, a dispatch supervisor, a PDU officer, field personnel, or citizen that indicates

a change in the threat level to life or property. Upgraded priorities shall conform to the parameters set forth in the response priorities definitions in section 1 of this General Order.

b. A dispatcher may downgrade a call for service with authorization from a dispatch supervisor, a field supervisor, or a non-emergency call for service PDU officer, when additional information indicates a change in the level of threat to life or property. Downgraded priorities must conform to the parameters set forth in the response priority definitions listed in section 1 of this General Order.

Assignment of calls for service to field units shall be made according to the appropriate priority. Assignments of high-priority calls shall be made before assignments of lower priority calls. Units may be preempted from lower priority calls to respond to higher priority calls. Unless proper justification exists, dispatchers, officers, and sergeants shall always ensure the highest priority calls in *queue* are assigned first.

Note: Officers shall NOT volunteer to accept lower priority calls via the radio or MCD when higher priority calls remain in *queue* unless a clear and defensible reason is provided.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES DURING CALLS FOR SERVICE

Dispatcher Responsibilities

As soon as a priority "E," one, or two call for service is received, the dispatcher shall immediately assign it to an available unit and then voice the call. If no unit is available, the dispatcher shall preempt any district unit or assign a district sergeant to respond to the call in accordance with the provisions of this General Order.

The dispatcher may preempt any field unit from a meal break, another out-of-service activity, or lower priority call for service to respond to a priority "E," one, or two call.

Dispatchers shall not general broadcast (GB) any priority "E," one, or two call as a primary means of attempting to assign the call to a field unit. These calls shall be directly assigned to the appropriate unit. Priority "E," one, two, and three calls for service shall be dispatched by voice, unless ECD standard operating procedures (SOPs) indicate otherwise. This pertains to both dispatchers and to field units who on-view events for which a priority has been established.

Follow-up information may be transmitted over the MCD unless the information affects officer safety or changes the nature of the scene, in which case the information shall be voiced. ECD personnel shall use voice communications as the primary assignment medium in all instances in which an officer's safety would be best served by having other field personnel aware of the officer's location and assignment.

Officer Responsibilities

Code E, 1, and 2 Responsibilities:

When responding to priority "E," one, or two calls for service with the use of emergency equipment, officers shall drive with due regard for the safety of themselves, fellow officers, and

citizens. Units are to travel directly to the scene and not stop any traffic violators or other persons for minor offenses.

Field personnel shall notify their dispatcher via the radio when en route to and arriving on priority "E," one, or two calls for service, unless otherwise directed. Responding officers shall advise the dispatcher by radio of any delays in their response, as well as all status updates such as en route, arrived, under control, or clear. Field personnel are responsible for updating their unit status in a timely and proper fashion. Deviations from established procedure shall not be condoned.

While field personnel are on duty, they shall be directly available via radio and MCD or at least by radio if not in their vehicle. If not available, they shall obtain authorization from a supervisor and relay the authorizing supervisor's name or unit number to the appropriate dispatcher.

Code 3, 4, and 5 Responsibilities:

When an officer responds to a priority three, four, or five call for service, the officer shall proceed to the call without unnecessary delay. However, if while responding, the officer on-views a situation more serious than the call assignment, then:

a. The officer shall immediately inform the dispatcher of his location and activity.

b. Once the immediate situation has been handled, the officer shall proceed directly to the originally assigned priority three, four, or five call unless the dispatcher has already reassigned the call.

c. If the on-viewed situation is one in which the officer cannot proceed to the assigned call in a timely manner, the officer shall inform his supervisor of the situation causing the extended delay.

Officers who volunteer to handle calls for service from their MCDs shall take the highest priority calls first (e.g., priority three versus priority four or five), unless their proximity to a call is so close it necessitates they take the lower priority call first.

Field Supervisor Responsibilities

Code E, 1, and 2 Responsibilities:

For a priority "E," one, or two call for service, supervisors shall perform the following responsibilities:

a. Receive assignments to check for victims, preserve and identify evidence, and hold the scene until a field officer arrives at the scene.

b. Ensure that a proper response is made by the appropriate number of units according to the priority code.

c. Decide whether to recommend the dispatcher modify some aspect of the response, when such modification is warranted (i.e., additional information is received).

d. Ensure the dispatcher has been properly notified as soon as the situation has been adequately controlled and no additional units are required.

e. Ensure units not needed at the scene are immediately returned to service.

Code 3, 4, and 5 Responsibilities:

For priority three, four, or five calls for service, field supervisors may utilize and draw from whatever resources are available to them at the division level to assist the dispatcher in servicing a call. While doing so they shall continue to monitor the police service needs of their assigned areas. Available options for field supervisors to service a call include, but are not limited to:

f. Ensure that a proper response is made by the appropriate number of units, according to the priority code.

g. Preempt a district unit from an existing call.

h. Assign the call to an available unit currently not in the call for service loop, (e.g., radar and print units). This does not include CST and storefront personnel.

i. Reassign a unit from a lower priority call or special assignment.

j. Confer with adjacent field supervisors for assistance from available units or with preempting an adjacent district unit from a lower priority call.

k. Call the complainant and, depending on the nature of the call and the circumstances, discuss possible alternative service delivery options.

l. Reprioritize the call if aware of circumstances that warrant the change.

m. Handle the call personally.

n. When manpower prevents servicing the call, advise the dispatcher to hold the call for the next available unit.

If while en route to a priority three, four, or five call for service, an officer on-views an incident that will cause an extended delay in responding to the original call and the officer has notified the supervisor of such, the supervisor shall exercise one of the following options:

o. Advise the officer to disregard the original call for service and to proceed to handle the on-viewed situation. If this option is exercised, the field supervisor shall decide what alternate unit is to run the original call and communicate that information to the dispatcher.

p. Approve an extended delay in response and direct the officer to handle the on-viewed situation and then proceed to the original call for service. If this option is exercised, a field supervisor shall ensure that the reportee on the call is informed of the delay.

q. Advise the officer to clear the on-viewed situation and to proceed directly to the assigned call.

Regardless of which option the field supervisor chooses for servicing the call, the call shall be handled without further delay. Field supervisors shall be held accountable for the dispatch and arrival times of a call once the responsibility for servicing the call has been transferred to the field supervisor from the dispatcher.

Field supervisors are responsible for ensuring that officers who volunteer to handle a call using their MCDs take the highest priority call first, unless the officer's proximity to a lower priority call is such that it would be prudent to handle that call first.
Under normal situations, arbitrarily holding calls shall NOT be allowed. If a district sergeant arbitrarily advises to hold calls, the dispatcher shall discuss the situation with an ECD floor supervisor.

On those occasions when holding calls becomes necessary, the district sergeant shall be able to articulate a specific justification for exercising the hold option. At shift change, the field sergeant who held the calls shall notify the on-coming patrol lieutenant and the roll call sergeant, when available, of the reason(s) why calls for service are *past queue*.

Extended High-Priority Events

When a priority "E" call for service, a pursuit, or a similar critical incident is of an extended nature and the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Detail or any other specialized unit shall be called to the scene, the dispatcher shall perform the following responsibilities as soon as possible:

a. Advise all involved units to switch to a channel determined by an ECD supervisor.

b. Advise all other units to refrain from using the designated emergency channel.

Assist Event Involving Other Agencies

When there is a request for emergency assistance for or from any agency's police officer or firefighter, the procedures described below shall be followed:

a. Because the officer initiating the *assist event* is usually the best judge of what resources are required to control the situation, the dispatcher shall abide by the requesting officer's preferences, if possible. If those preferences cannot be communicated, dispatch personnel shall determine which units shall respond to the assist event or pursuit and which response priority is appropriate.

b. If the officer requesting assistance does not specify his location or the number of units needed, or sufficient information is not available, or if a citizen rather than an officer initiates the call, a basic response team consisting of all of the following shall be dispatched to the scene:

    1. Two units sent priority one

    2. Two units sent priority two

    3. A supervisor sent priority one

    4. If possible, a helicopter unit

c. Emergency equipment shall be used for all assist events.

d. Units not dispatched to the *assist event* shall not use the police radio until on-scene personnel have downgraded the incident and the dispatcher has officially cleared the radio channel.

e. Responding units shall immediately advise the dispatcher of their arrival. As soon as the situation is under control, the first unit on the scene shall provide an evaluation of the situation to the dispatcher.

4 CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINED (CIT)

When dispatchers receive a call requiring a CIT response, an available CIT unit shall be located using the designated identifying symbol located on the dispatcher's CAD screen. CIT calls shall NOT be general broadcasted and then placed in queue.

CIT units shall be utilized regardless of the beat; however, CIT units in the concerned beat shall be considered first. CIT units may be dispatched across beats and districts within a division to respond to CIT calls. No prior supervisory approval is necessary. However, a patrol supervisor's approval is required to dispatch a CIT unit outside division boundaries.

CIT officers shall always attempt to peacefully resolve scenes or situations involving persons exhibiting mental health crisis in accordance with CIT officer training and as outlined in General Order 500-12, **Response to Mental Health Incidents**.

Crisis Intervention Response Team (CIRT)

Officers requiring the assistance of a CIRT at a scene shall notify their supervisor of the situation and request the assistance of a CIRT through their dispatcher. When called to assist at a scene with a person exhibiting mental health crisis, the CIRT shall make the final determination as to the disposition of the call.

CIRT officers are not restricted by districts or beats and may go to any area of the city where a CIRT response is warranted. In addition, HPD and the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) operate off an inter-local agreement to provide CIRT coverage to all of Harris County. HPD CIRT officers may respond to calls in unincorporated Harris County when requested. HCSO CIRT officers may respond to calls within the Houston city limits when requested.

5 ONLINE REPORTING

The department's internet-based incident reporting system serves as an alternative reporting method by allowing reportees to make a police incident report and receive a police incident number via the internet system.

The internet-based incident reporting system is monitored by and under the supervision of ECD. Technology Services, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, shall continue to have the responsibility for the technical operation of the system. Technology Services shall work with ECD and the RMS Unit to achieve the goals and operation of this system.

6 ROSTERS

All police stations utilizing field units shall enter roster information into the CAD system. Division commanders are responsible for ensuring that roster information is entered timely and accurately. Rosters contain important information related to unit activity, officer capabilities, assignment decisions, and officer safety. The police stations shall enter the rosters before the beginning of a shift for the information to be accurately captured by the CAD system during shift log on by the dispatcher.

Any changes made to a police station's roster after the beginning of a particular shift shall be provided to the appropriate dispatcher in a timely manner so that an update can be initiated for the units (e.g., unit changes vehicles or swaps handheld radios).

7 SIGNING ON OR OFF DUTY

Each field officer that signs on for duty shall notify the dispatcher of the following:

a. The unit number.

b. The unit is signing on and is in service.

c. The number of officers assigned to the unit.

d. If the unit is hosting a ride-along participant.

Officers shall sign on for duty via radio or MCD with the dispatcher within 20 minutes after the beginning of the shift whether they are in service or not. Officers shall advise the dispatcher, and give the authorizing supervisor's name or unit number when they are unable to go on duty within 20 minutes after the start of the shift or when they are held out of service.

If a roll call sergeant anticipates a roll call shall be extended, it is the roll call sergeant's responsibility to advise the dispatcher and the ECD on-duty shift supervisor that the shift shall be signing on late. Officers shall not be required to notify the dispatcher of the late sign on in such instances.

After signing on for duty, officers shall go directly to their assigned beats unless they are otherwise assigned. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring these procedures are followed.

Field officers shall not leave their assigned beats more than 20 minutes prior to the end of their shift. Division commanders may increase this time limit if necessary to accommodate an extended travel distance between a particular beat and the unit's police station. If travel time is increased, the division commander shall ensure ECD is notified of the change.

If field officers sign off from duty early, they shall notify the dispatcher of the supervisor's name or unit number that authorized the early off-duty time.
If an officer is dispatched to a call for service while en route to the station to go off duty or otherwise needs to work past the normal off-duty time, the officer shall request authority to do so from an on-duty supervisor. After completing the assignment, the officer shall inform the dispatcher of the disposition of the call for service and then return to the station to go off duty.

Upon arrival at the station, officers shall notify the dispatcher that they are now off duty. Officers shall report to the appropriate supervisor before leaving the station.

Once a shift has ended, officers shall sign off from duty with the dispatcher upon arrival at the station. It is the responsibility of the dispatcher to ensure that all units have properly notified the dispatcher of their off-duty status. If an officer fails to notify the dispatcher of off-duty status, the dispatcher shall notify an ECD supervisor who shall work with appropriate patrol division personnel to determine what the correct status is.

8 BEAT INTEGRITY

Beat integrity refers to patrol officer assignment and provision of police services based on the geographic area of a police beat. Beat integrity supports the concept of *beat accountability* as outlined in General Order 600-02, **Beat Accountability**.

Calls for service within a particular beat shall be dispatched to police officers assigned to that beat based on call priority, police unit availability, and supervisor oversight. If another unit is closer to a call for service location than the dispatched unit, the closer unit shall notify the dispatcher of the unit's location. The dispatcher may assign the closer unit and disregard the original unit regardless of the location and beat.

When call volume outpaces staffing, dispatchers are authorized to dispatch police units to run calls for service in another beat or district within the unit's assigned division boundaries. However, dispatchers shall have authorization from a patrol supervisor to dispatch units to address situations or calls outside the unit's assigned division boundaries, if such need arises.

At the request of a field-training officer, the dispatcher may authorize an appropriate assignment (e.g., out of beat, district, or division assignment) to a unit containing a field training officer and a trainee. Such assignments are for training purposes only.

Officers are advised that once they receive their beat assignment, they are primarily responsible for providing police services within that beat. There are times when activity in another beat in the same district is either so frequent or is so severe that officers shall need to spend time working in those areas as opposed to remaining within their respective assigned beat. Once those instances subside, officers are expected to return to their assigned beat to provide needed services.

9 CATASTROPHIC LOSS OF COMMUNICATION

In the event of catastrophic radio and computer (MCD) failure, all on-duty patrol personnel, including supervisors, are to report to their assigned Houston Police Station. Once there, a supervisor shall provide information, equipment, and assignments consistent with the particular emergency and the orders of the Chief of Police. Communications, assignments, and specific duties shall be developed by the Chief of Police for each emergency and distributed via the chain of command.

For more information regarding mobilization during catastrophic events, see General Order 200-10, **Emergency Management**, and the department's *Emergency Response Plan*.

10 HEC / ECD CONTINUITY

Any proposed changes to policies or procedures governing actions taken by *Houston Emergency Center (HEC) call takers* that have an effect on the operations performed by Emergency Communications Division (ECD) personnel, shall be reviewed and agreed upon by the ECD division commander and chain of command prior to adoption and implementation by HPD.

11 BEAT AND BOUNDARY DOCUMENTATION

Employees shall be aware of and retain working knowledge of the beat and boundary jurisdictions of the department. All employees shall be mindful that modifications to the jurisdictional beats and boundaries of the department are initiated in the Office of Planning and Data Governance (Planning) and approved only by the Chief of Police.

Any permanent changes to beat, district, or division geographic boundaries may be initiated only in the department's Office of Planning and require approval by the Chief of Police.

Planning shall have primary responsibility for clearly defining the jurisdictional boundaries between divisions, districts, and beats, and establishing jurisdictional guidelines between neighboring law enforcement agencies. The Office of Planning shall work with the City of Houston Planning and Development Department to evaluate requests involving street name changes or the creation of new streets. Planning also facilitates the review of requests for permanent street closures and quiet zones from the City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department, as well as requests for temporary road and construction closures from the Texas Department of Transportation.

Planning maintains the *Beat and Boundary Descriptions* guide as agreed upon by concerned commanders and approved by the Chief of Police. Planning will ensure that all commands or divisions who use the jurisdictional boundary lines as a function of their mission are provided a copy of the approved boundary descriptions as soon as approved.

After modifications are made to the Beat and Boundary Descriptions guide, Planning is responsible for communicating the changes to the HPD Crime Analysis & Command Center, RMS Unit, Emergency Communications Division, and commander(s) assigned to the districts affected by the changes.

Art Acevedo
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