

Module 5

Operational Communications

Introduction

The description of community patrolling as being the “eyes and ears”, clearly indicates that communicating effectively with a range of people is an essential skill for a Community Patrol volunteer.

What Is Communication?

Communication involves being able to give and receive messages.

The Communication Process

Communication is a process which involves:

- The person having a reason (purpose) to communicate
- The person sending a message (through speaking or writing)
- The person receiving the message (through listening or reading)
- The sender checking that the receiver has correctly understood the message

The Purpose Of Communication

Every communication has a purpose. The purpose is the message or information that you need to give or that you need to receive. Interpersonal communication skills are those skills that allow you to communicate with others in a way that maintains respect but also achieves the purpose of the communication.

As a Community Patroler you will have two main purposes for communicating:

- To give information
- To obtain information

Successful Communication

For communication to be successful the message that we are giving needs to be understood by the person we are sending it to. We need to understand the message the other person is giving to us.

As Community Patrollers we are often required to use our interpersonal communication skills to give (supply) information to others or to get (obtain) information from others.

Giving And Receiving Information

To be effective in obtaining and giving information the following interpersonal communications skills are important:

- Being able to assess the person’s body language
- Having a friendly and confident manner
- Building rapport with the giver or receiver of information
- Being aware of the other person’s culture
- Being aware of your tone of voice and the language you use
- Clearly stating the information you need
- Asking the right questions to obtain the required information
- Using active listening skills to obtain information
- Asking clarifying questions
- Supplying the correct information to people
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Maintaining integrity throughout the communication process

Electronic Equipment

Community Patrols often utilise electronic equipment to support patrollers’ safety, observations and reporting.

Each piece of electronic communications equipment will have a specific purpose. Equipment that you may use includes:

- GPS
- Mobile phone
- Radio
- Electronic Reporting System (tablet)

Care And Maintenance

Electronic communications equipment will last longer and operate more effectively if it is cared for, well maintained and used appropriately. Always check the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the use and maintenance of your equipment.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS)

GPS is used to determine your location and provide directions to destinations. It is used to:

- Display your position on an electronic map
- Provide directions to a specific location
- Identify your location and hasten someone coming to your assistance
- Give alternative routes and provide information on traffic
- Protect the vehicle from theft

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are commonly used by Community Patrols. They allow patrollers to contact Police and other emergency services as well as to receive information. Phones that can send and receive text messages allow information to be viewed by the patrollers or Police.

Mobile phones help keep you safe by giving you an opportunity to call someone to come to your assistance. Some mobile phones have features such as:

- Panic buttons
- No motion alerts
- Remote timekeeping
- Alerts

Radios

These are used to keep you in touch with Communications Centres or local Police and other patrollers.

Electronic Reporting System (ERS)

The Electronic Reporting System is an electronic means of recording and reporting and can be used to store and send data. Typically this

system is set up using an App on a device such as an iPad or a tablet.

Restrictions On Use

There will be places and situations where there are restrictions on the use of particular pieces of communications equipment. Some of these will relate to your patrol activities, but these restrictions may include the following:

- When driving - it is illegal to operate a mobile phone while driving
- Explosive atmosphere - electronic communication devices should be used with caution in areas where there are gas or petrol fumes that could ignite. There is a risk that a spark from the device's battery (particularly if the phone is dropped) could ignite the gas vapour
- Medical installations - electronic communication devices may interfere with the operation of medical equipment. It is important to look for signs at hospitals, or ask a staff member to find out what is permitted
- Aircraft - electronic communication devices such as cell phones may interfere with the plane's instruments or radio frequencies
- Blasting operations - electronic communication devices may not be able to be used in areas where blasting operations are being done. This is because electric detonators operating through radio frequencies may control the blasting. There is the risk that the detonator may be set off too soon and cause serious injury or loss of life
- Unattended bags or suspicious packages or parcels - do not use radio or cell phones near suspicious packages, parcels or bags.

Communication Discipline

Operating electronic communications equipment and communications in the Police environment in general, requires a Community

Patroller to have some knowledge and understanding of communication procedures that are a little different from their normal day-to-day environment. In particular you should have an understanding of the following:

- Twenty-four hour clock time references
- Communication discipline
- Initiating and ending communication
- Routine messages
- Communication checks
- Safety or welfare checks
- Emergency communications
- Phonetic alphabet
- Security and brevity codes
- Prowords

Please note - a Community Patroller does not have to know all of these things but should be aware that they exist.

Twenty-four Hour Clock

It is important that you are familiar with twenty-four hour clock times.

| 12 hour | 24 hour |
|---------|----------|
| 1am | 0100 hrs |
| 2am | 0200 hrs |
| 3am | 0300 hrs |
| 4am | 0400 hrs |
| 5am | 0500 hrs |
| 6am | 0600 hrs |
| 7am | 0700 hrs |
| 8am | 0800 hrs |
| 9am | 0900 hrs |
| 10am | 1000 hrs |
| 11am | 1100 hrs |
| 12am | 1200 hrs |
| 1pm | 1300 hrs |
| 2pm | 1400 hrs |
| 3pm | 1500 hrs |
| 4pm | 1600 hrs |
| 5pm | 1700 hrs |
| 6pm | 1800 hrs |
| 7pm | 1900 hrs |
| 8pm | 2000 hrs |
| 9pm | 2100 hrs |
| 10pm | 2200 hrs |
| 11pm | 2300 hrs |
| 12 pm | 0000 hrs |

Converting a 12-hour time to 24-hour time is straightforward, though a little confusing until you get used to using it.

From 1:00 PM to 12:00 PM you add 12 hours.

For example:

1pm + 12 = 1300 hrs
5pm + 12 = 1700 hrs
12pm + 12 = 2400 hrs

From 1:00 am to 12:00 midday you simply add zeroes. For example:

1am = 0100 hrs
5am = 0500 hrs
12 noon = 1200 hrs

Be aware that some agencies call midnight 0000 whereas others call midnight 2400.

Procedure Words (Pro-words)

Procedure words or pro-words are words or phrases limited to radio telephone procedure and are used to facilitate communication by conveying information in a condensed standard verbal format. Examples of this are:

- **“Acknowledge”** – “Let me know you have received and understood this message”
- **“Advise”** – “Give me the following information”
- **“Affirm”** – “Yes”
- **“Approved”** – Permission for proposed action granted
- **“Break”** – Indicates a separation between portions of the message
- **“Confirm”** – “Have I correctly received the following?” or “Did you correctly receive this message?”
- **“Contact”** – Establish radio or telephone contact with
- **“Disregard”** – Consider the transmission as not sent
- **“Go ahead”** – “Proceed with your message”
- **“I say again”** – “I repeat for clarity or emphasis”.
- **“I spell”** – “I will spell the next word phonetically”

- **“Negative”** – “No” or “Permission is not granted” or “That is not correct”.
- **“Over”** – “My transmission is ended and I expect a response back from you”
- **“Out”** – “My transmission is over and I expect no response from you”
- **“Read Back”** – “Repeat all, or the specific part, of this message back to me exactly as received”
- **“Report”** – “Tell me the situation regarding...”
- **“Request”** – “I need you to do the following...”
- **Roger** – I have received your last transmission.
- **“Say again”** – “Repeat all or part of your last transmission”
- **“Speak Slower”** – Speak more slowly
- **“Standby”** – “Wait and I will call you”

It is important that everyone using codes understands the message that is being communicated. If not this can:

- Lead to confusion or misunderstandings about what was meant
- Put health and safety at risk
- Cause breaches in security

Initiating And Ending Communication

Initiating a radio communication must be done carefully so that you do not break into someone else’s radio transmission. Before commencing your transmission listen to see if there is already a conversation going on. When you do start, speak clearly and confidently and know what you want to say.

How you initiate and end communication is very important. The procedure words that you use to signal the start or end of the communication may be different depending on the communication equipment you are using.

For example:

- When using a radio, you may say “Comms from (your patrol call sign)”, to start a communication or say “out” to indicate you have finished talking and don’t need a reply

- When using a mobile phone, you may say “hello” to initiate a communication and “thank you” or “goodbye” to end the conversation

Routine Messages

Routine messages will relate to the routine tasks that you perform, such as reporting in after a patrol. The message will show that you have completed the task. It may also indicate that there is nothing unusual to report.

Communication Checks

Communication checks are regular checks made between the base or Comms and the Community Patrol. The purpose of these checks is to:

- Ensure that a communications channel still exists
- Check that your communications equipment is still functioning correctly
- Send assistance if you do not respond to the check

Safety And Welfare Checks

Safety or welfare checks are similar to communication checks. They are to make sure you are safe and well. Performing a safety or welfare check may involve you calling in every hour to advise base or Control that you are safe and well. It may also involve the Police operator calling you and checking on you.

Emergency Communications

Emergency communications are communications that you make to alert others to an emergency situation and should only be used in emergency situations. When using your radio or mobile phone to report an emergency, remember to keep calm and speak clearly.

Give the following information:

- Who you are
- Where you are
- What you are doing
- What help or assistance you require

Phonetic Alphabet

It is very handy to know the phonetic alphabet when you are using a radio on a police channel or when you are using a mobile phone while working with police.

| | |
|---|----------|
| A | Alpha |
| B | Bravo |
| C | Charlie |
| D | Delta |
| E | Echo |
| F | Foxtrot |
| G | Golf |
| H | Hotel |
| I | India |
| J | Juliette |
| K | Kilo |
| L | Lima |
| M | Mike |
| N | November |
| O | Oscar |
| P | Papa |
| Q | Quebec |
| R | Romeo |
| S | Sierra |
| T | Tango |
| U | Uniform |
| V | Victor |
| W | Whiskey |
| X | X-Ray |
| Y | Yankee |
| Z | Zulu |

10 Code Meaning

| | |
|---------|---|
| 10 - 1 | Message for all units on channel |
| 10 - 2 | En route to a CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) event |
| 10 - 3 | Available for dispatch to an event |
| 10 - 4 | Please repeat last message |
| 10 - 7 | Arrived at scene of event |
| 10 - 9 | Urgent message follows |
| 10 - 10 | Officer in danger and requires immediate assistance |

K Code Meaning

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| K - 1 | No further action required |
| K - 3 | No offence has been disclosed |
| K - 6 | Written report to be submitted |
| K - 8 | Leaving job for another unit |
| K - 9 | Arrest has been made |

Standard Brevity Codes And Their Meanings

Brevity codes are codes that can be used to shorten the message and its transmission time. There is no hidden meaning. Standard police brevity codes, called '10 codes' or 'K' codes which are used regularly include: