

POLICE COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUND

The Police Communications Section is the Primary Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) for all 911 calls placed within Tampa City limits. After determining the nature of the emergency, the 911 operators forward the calls to the appropriate agency for a response. Emergencies which require a Tampa Police Department response are forwarded to the dispatch consoles. Using a CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system, the dispatchers select the most suitable unit (s) to respond.

Phone calls which are non-emergency in nature are also handled by Police Communications. In addition, criminal histories and motor vehicle information requests are processed for officers in the field and for the Detective Division at the Wants and Warrants desk.

SCOPE

The audit will cover the period beginning 10/1/94 through 9/30/95.

PLANNING

1. Prepare and send an entrance letter to the Police Chief.
2. Begin an in-house review which includes examining the following:
 - a. prior audit reports,
 - b. Mission and Management Analysis,
 - c. Annual Budget,
 - d. standard operating procedures (SOP),
 - e. organizational chart,
 - f. relevant state and local statutes.
3. Schedule and hold an entrance conference with the Police Chief and the appropriate division personnel. Obtain the name of the primary contact person and arrange for workspace.
4. Begin the preliminary survey portion of the field work by interviewing appropriate staff members. Document the interviews with narratives in the file.
5. Review and document the internal control system. Conduct several transaction walk-throughs. Revise documentation as necessary.
6. Prepare a preliminary survey memo and risk analysis. Discuss with the Audit Supervisor, including suggested audit objectives and testing procedures.
7. Prepare the audit program and include a time budget for completion. Index the work file and turn it in for review.
8. Clear review notes and revise program as necessary.

OBJECTIVE # 1:

Determine if police officers are responding to emergency calls promptly and reporting arrival times accurately and consistently.

1. Obtain a report of all dispatched police responses which occurred in FY 95.
2. Determine which police vehicles use MCTs (mobile computer terminals) and which don't.
3. Select two samples from the above, one for MCTs and one for vehicles which do not have computers.
4. Determine the average response times for each class of calls for both samples. Determine the percentage of time that arrival times are reported for the non-MCT vehicles.
5. Compare the average times for each sample to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) requirements. Also, compare the averages and the frequency of apparently accurate reporting to each other.
6. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #2:

To determine if emergency calls are dispatched promptly.

1. Obtain a report from MIS which shows all dispatched incidents in FY 95.
2. Select a sample of dispatched incidents for each priority class. Calculate average hold time (from dispatcher receipt until dispatch occurs).
3. Compare the call hold time to the arrival time goals to assess reasonableness.
4. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #3:

To determine if the employee turnover rate has improved.

1. Using personnel records, calculate the turnover rate for FY 95.
2. Compare the result to prior years and, if possible, to other communications centers.
3. Discuss turnover rates with management and determine what steps if any they have or plan to take to address the issue.
4. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #4:

To determine Communications Technicians are receiving and maintaining the proper training and certifications.

1. Determine what certifications are required by the various agencies involved (NCIC, 911, etc.) and the frequency of re-certification.
2. Check the personnel folders of the Communications Technicians in order to determine compliance with training criteria.
3. Locate and call the National Association of Dispatchers, in order to determine what, if any, certifications are required. Discuss the training program curriculum.
4. Check with the appropriate parties regarding the criteria used in the accreditation process in order to determine if it was properly addressed.
5. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #5:

Determine if there are adequate controls in place to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing NCIC/FCIC data.

1. Interview staff at the "Wants and Warrants" desk to determine what controls are in place that would prevent or detect unauthorized entry to NCIC/FCIC data.
2. Interview the Communications Manager regarding control problems over access which may have been discovered.
3. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #6:

Determine if phone calls are answered promptly in accordance with stated guidelines.

1. Verify and discuss with 911 officials the time requirements for answering emergency calls.
2. Obtain testing reports. Compare the results to the established standards and note deficiencies.
3. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #7:

Determine if information is being correctly input is being accurately and completely input into the NCIC/FCIC databases.

1. Select a random sample of "pickup tickets" tickets which have been input to the NCIC/FCIC computer during FY 95.

2. Compare the data on the form to the computer printout to assess accuracy and completeness.
3. Interview key personnel and determine the level of internal controls over the function.
4. Summarize and conclude.

OBJECTIVE #8:

Determine if total staff size is adequate to meet the communication needs of the Police Department.

1. Obtain the state issued 911 staffing guidelines from the County 911 office.
2. Determine if the number of call takers utilized by TPD Communications is adequate to meet the state guideline for responding to incoming telephone calls.
3. Determine what the hourly staffing needs for Communications is, including call takers, dispatchers, pick-up desk personnel, and supervisory staff.
4. Calculate a relief factor based on the number of hours which a Communications Tech is available to work (total work hours per year, less sick leave, annual leave, training time, etc.).
5. Apply the relief factor to the average staffing needs calculated in step 3 to obtain a total staff size.
6. Discuss findings with the Combinations Manager, and attempt to reconcile the total staff size needed with the overtime usage to date.
7. Summarize and conclude.

WRAP-UP

1. Complete and index workpapers.
2. Prepare a preliminary draft of the audit report. Turn in to the Audit Supervisor with the file for review.
3. Clear review notes and make changes as appropriate.
4. Send copy of draft report to the Police Chief with instructions for written responses. Schedule an exit conference, if necessary.
5. Incorporate the Chief's responses into the final audit report.
6. Submit the final report to the printer.
7. Follow standard submittal procedures.