I. POLICY

The American with Disabilities Act and regulations of the U.S. Department of Justice require emergency services agencies provide operable direct communications access to individuals who use Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) or computer modems. Access through a third party or relay service does not satisfy the direct access requirement.

II. PROCEDURE

A. TDD Calls

1. When a TDD or potential TDD call is received, dispatch will:
   a. Initiate conversation by transmitting a pre-programmed message (located in the drop down box on the phone monitor) or by typing a message to the caller from the TDD panel. Dispatch should use the common abbreviation list for TDD callers.
   b. Dispatch may use the following two methods to transmit questions and answers to the TDD caller;
      1. Transmit complete questions or entire sentences by first clicking the “buffered” check box, typing the text, clicking the “buffered” check box again or pressing ENTER.
      2. Or, transmit each keystroke directly to the caller as you type.

2. There are important differences between a TDD call and a typical phone call, which are;
   a. The 9-1-1 system provides integrated TDD functionality and is configured for automatic detection of TDD devices. However, this may not be reliable due to the possibility of a silent caller. If there is a silent call, the dispatcher should type a TDD response.
   b. TDD callers will often press their space bar when they know the number they dialed is shared by a voice line and TDD. Pressing the space causes a series of audible tones to sound. When these tones (a series of high-pitched beeps) are heard, a reply message should be returned to the caller.
   c. A 9-1-1 hang-up that has a silent pick up on the call back could be a TDD call. In these cases, call back on the TDD.
   d. An “operator break through” is not possible on a TDD call in progress.
   e. Placing a TDD call on hold or transferring the call may disconnect it.
   f. Some TDD devices have a synthesized voice message which announces that the call is from a TDD. When this message is heard the call can be processed by typing a TDD reply.
g. The TDD user may connect and not type anything. TDD users often expect normal telephone procedures to be followed, which would be an acknowledgment first before they type, just as a voice caller would expect the called party to answer with “hello” or “hi”. If there is silent call, send a TDD response to verify it is not a TDD call.

B. TDD Training

Dispatchers shall practice one TDD call every month and initial the TDD Training Log.

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