

April 16, 2011

**CITY OF FERGUSON
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**

Index as:

Telephone Calls, Dispatch

GENERAL TELEPHONE HANDLING

604.00 PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy and procedure for the proper handling of telephone calls by department personnel.

604.01 POLICY

On all police phone lines, calls will be answered within 60 seconds. On the emergency lines the calls will be answered within 30 seconds.

604.03 PROCEDURE

Due to incidents where departments may be asked to assume financial responsibility for an act based on what a communication officer told a citizen that he could or should do, the following should be followed:

- A. Never give advice to a citizen. If you see that he wants advice, transfer to the agency of responsibility, and let them advise him, or send an officer to contact him, or take his name and phone number and have an officer call him. We do not give legal judgments, or give the impression that we can.
- B. Watch what you say. Eliminate the word "OK" from your vocabulary. Some operators use it to mean yes, while others use it to mean that I heard the last statement, and still others use it to mean I agree if you think so, etc. Do not say anything which may be misread by a citizen as to what you are saying.
- C. Speak concisely. Keep your answers short, and to the point, with as little verbiage as possible. This also helps to reduce confusion.
- D. Contact or no contact. On every call for service you must ask the complainant if they wish to be contacted.
- E. When taking a call always ask the reporting person for name, address, and phone number. They will not always want to leave that information, and it is not required that they do, but always try to obtain the information. When the complainant is a business, in addition to the business name, obtain the employee's full name.

April 16, 2011

- F. Always ask the questions to obtain all necessary information, such as on disturbances always ask if any weapons are involved. If you have to interrupt the complainant on an emergency type call, to obtain further information, do so, trying to be as polite as possible. It is more important to obtain needed information on an emergency call as quickly as possible, for the officer's safety.
- G. Dispatchers will not give out any employee's phone number or address to the public.
- H. Dispatchers will not advise the public that all units are busy on calls and an officer will respond when available.
- I. The Commander of the Division of Administration or his designee will require an annual review of the telephone system to evaluate the capacity to handle incoming calls. The review will be initiated and completed by the end of each calendar year.

By order of:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colonel Thomas Jackson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

COLONEL THOMAS JACKSON
Chief of Police

Distribution

All Department Personnel