

BOULDER COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS

Radio Protocol for all User Agencies

Definitions:

BC (800MHz)/ SO (VHF) Law Channel: This is the primary channel for dispatching calls, answering calls, clearing calls, providing information, and initiating activity. There are multiple law enforcement agencies on this channel. It is important to keep radio traffic clear and concise.

BC/SO Law 2: This is a secondary law channel. It may be used for tactical/special operations. It may be a backup or secondary channel when there is a major event/Code 3 on the primary law channel. Communications cannot automatically staff this channel and will announce when it is staffed.

Law 2 is a repeated channel. It is an option for going direct with other officers/deputies when a repeated channel is needed and not in use for dispatching calls for service.

Law 3: This is a repeated law car-to-car tactical channel. This is the assigned law operations channel for incidents requiring evacuations during major incidents and per our communications plan.

NOTE Repeated channels should be used when you are out of range of other radios and need a tower to relay. Repeated channels should not be used in tactical situations you need to communicate with other deputies/officers and a repeater is not available. Use a simplex channel.

Incident Radio Communication Plans: There are pre-designated Comm Plans for various types of incidents. The plans cover communications for standard use, major disasters, and major law events. These plans are found on the Communications Dashboard at BCCDashboard.BoulderSheriff.gov. This document is not a substitute for those specific plans. This document is intended for guidance on everyday use and functions of our systems.

Radio Codes:

- Code 0 – Caution, dangerous person
- Code 1 – Motorist assist
- Code 2 – Traffic stop or vehicle contact
- Code 3 – Stop transmitting/Emergency traffic only
- Code 4 – Under control, cancel cover
- Code 5 – Subject in custody
- Code 6 – Mentally unstable person
- Code 7 – Meal break (Not in use)
- Code 8 – Arrival
- Code 9 – Wanted or stolen indicated
- Code 10 – Emergency help
- Code 12 – Non-emergency cover (BPD Only)
- Code 13 – One unit Emergency cover (BPD Only)
- Code Houston – Officer held hostage
- Code Black – Deceased

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Phonetics:

A = Adam	J = John	S = Sam
B = Boy	K = King	T = Tom
C = Charles	L = Lincoln	U = Union
D = David	M = Mary	V = Victor
E = Edward	N = Nora	W = William
F = Frank	O = Ocean	X = X-ray
G = George	P = Paul	Y = Young
H = Henry	Q = Queen	Z = Zebra
I = Ida	R = Robert	

Approved dispositions:

Clear
Clear Report Clear Arrest
Clear Summons Clear Warning UTL or GOA Clear
Clear Vehicle Tagged Clear Message
Clear attempt (for attempting civil service) Clear Served (served civil papers)
Handled in Service (this means you will take care of it and no further radio traffic is needed. Communications will close the call)

Current Out of Service Statuses (OOS):

Unavailable for ANY calls:

FTO	Roadsides	Range	Training	Extra Duty
Equipment	Code 5	Court	Special Assignment	

Other Statuses with built in delayed response or limited recommendations:

Bike Patrol	Foot Patrol	Motorcycle Patrol	Meeting
Boat Patrol	Horse Patrol	Briefing	Car Wash
Directed Patrol	Light Duty	Investigation/Interview	

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Code 1: Motorist assist/Vehicle contact – Contact with a vehicle for purposes other than enforcing a law or investigating a crime; or contact with an unoccupied vehicle such as an after-hours violation and the vehicle is not occupied (Not reportable for demographic reporting).

Code 2: Traffic Stop - Contact with an occupied vehicle for a violation of law (Reportable for demographic reporting)

Officer Initiated Incidents: Warrant attempts, civil calls, follow up, etc. “589 Code-9 attempt” Dispatch acknowledges then you give the location. “556 and I are arrival at 123 Main”

SO LTAC 1/BC LTAC 11: Law radio to radio channel (VHF and 800 are patched). SO LTAC is simplex; BC LTAC is repeated.

We patch the two channels/systems together for a few reasons:

1. To increase the probability of situational awareness of on-scene communications to those who are still responding in who may possibly be out of range on **SO LTAC**.
2. To carefully bridge the gap (when appropriately used) between BCSO deputies (who have dual band radios with access to both VHF and 800) and those LE officers who may only have 800MHz radios such as CSP or Longmont.

The patch is only as reliable as the VHF infrastructure that we have in the county to receive transmissions on SO LTAC to repeat those transmissions onto 800MHz. We have quite a few receivers on **SO LTAC** scattered around the county but it is not perfect.

BC LTAC 12-14: Law radio to radio 800 MHz repeated channel.

BC LTAC 15: Law radio to radio 800 MHz repeated channel. (ENCRYPTED).

Note: Use simplex channels during tactical incidents when you need to go direct, radio to radio. A repeated channel will not work in large buildings and repeated channels are not effective during on-scene coordination.

The bottom line is this: **All units on scene of an incident are better off using SO LTAC among everyone rather than a mixture of VHF and 800 because there is no absolute guarantee that we can hear all VHF transmissions on the VHF system to patch to 800MHz. Some deputies have reported that BC LTAC works better in some situations. Use what works for you. The important point is to be on a simplex channel when repeated channels don't work in close quarters.**

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Data Channel: This is a simplex channel for clearances, case numbers, and non-emergency or non-priority dispatch radio traffic. You can and should use this for routine requests, such as impounds, advocates, and other requests to avoid tying up Law Channel. Data Channel may be staffed with personnel who are not yet trained on Law or Fire Channels, so be aware of this if you need something that the Law or Fire dispatcher would generally handle for you.

Note: Data is the channel that you will automatically be directed to if you push your emergency button on your Pac-set.

Clearance: Checking a party, plate, or item for records in CCIC and NCIC.

Clearance and DL: Checking a party for records in CCIC and NCIC and checking driver's license status.

Clear and list: Checking a vehicle registration for associated records and air the registration details.

SO Fire Dir/BC Fire: This is the primary fire channel for county fire agencies. If you are responding to a fire call, go to this for updates when practical. It is recommended to use this channel for requesting fire/paramedics when you have time to change your radio channel. This keeps law channel open, and you will be speaking directly to the channel dispatching those resources. This way they have the information directly from you and not given through the law dispatcher. **When asking for a medical response, state the chief complaint. Avoid asking for a "med check". Instead, state the specific nature of what paramedics will be checking. This includes things like "chest pain, shortness of breath, a suspect who was tased/sprayed, shoulder pain," etc. The ambulance needs to know so they can respond appropriately.**

Note: Mtn. View Fire is dispatched by Weld County and Boulder County. All calls in Boulder County and the Town of Erie are dispatched by Boulder County.

Code 3: A Code 3 occurs when law enforcement units need a channel open for emergency traffic.

Flock: An alert system that utilizes automated license plate recognition technology (ALPR).

Flock Hit: Any Flock Hit initiated investigation or event which will include a License Plate

Safe2Tell: Safe2Tell provides students, parents, and community members a safe and anonymous way to report information about any issues that concern their safety or the safety of others. *Safe2Tell™* reports are received via email through the Sheriff's Office's Communications Center 24/7/365.

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Application:

Law Channel Operations:

Beginning of Watch (Beginning of a Shift)

One Person/Officer/Deputy Unit

“551 beginning of watch, district 3”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with
“551, timestamp”

Two Person/Officer/Deputy Unit

“551 and 652 beginning of watch, district
3, break”

“652 FTO, going as 551”

End of Watch (End of a Shift)

Announce each unit number

“551 end of watch” or “551, 652 end of watch” Dispatch will acknowledge with “551 (Timestamp)” **Note:** If you ONLY hear a timestamp, assume dispatch acknowledged a different unit/transmission. **REPEAT** your transmission. **DO NOT** air “Swings end of watch”.

Traffic Stops - Code 2

With Plate

“551 **Code 2**” or “551 suspicious vehicle” etc. (Keyword: **VEHICLE**)

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551 go ahead”

“License plate phonetically (followed by state if **NOT** Colorado) and address or cross streets for anticipated stop location.” **Note:** Dispatch is unable to use a street name combined with a business as a location in CAD. Use cross streets, 100 blocks, specific address, or business name

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alone.

No Plate (Unreadable/No visible plate)

“551 **Code 2**”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551 go ahead” or “551”

“Unreadable plate” or “No visible plate”, address or cross streets of anticipated stop location, brief vehicle description.

Example: “551, no visible plate, 75th and Lookout, Green blazer”

Update/Correct Plate

“551, copy a plate” or “551, corrected plate”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551 Go ahead” or “551” Give plate using phonetics, followed by the state if **NOT** Colorado

Motorist Assist/Vehicle Contact - Code 1

The process is the same as traffic stops. CAD will differentiate **Code 1**s and **Code 2**s.

Officer Initiated Incidents

Initiating an Event/Incident/Call

“551, nature of the call”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551 Go ahead”

“I’m out at ...” or “enroute to ...” address or cross streets. (This may be done with multiple officers)

Example: “Myself and 560 are enroute to...” or “arrival at ...”

Updating Address (Change address of incident) **or Secondary Location** (2nd location related to incident)

“551, update location/address” or “551, secondary location” or “551, secondary”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551” or “551 Go ahead”

“Provide address or cross streets” (specify if you are enroute or arrival)

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Note: Do **NOT** say “551 clear break”, “I am now enroute to BCH to speak with the victim” – If you do this, the dispatcher will close the incident, then must re-open, re-dispatch you AND change your location. If you do it the correct way, the incident remains open, and we just

Clearing an Incident

“551 clear, with (insert disposition from approved list)” Aired with no break.

Out of Service Status (On Duty, Unavailable or limited/delayed response)

“551, out of service (insert reason and/or location if relevant)”

Data Channel Operations:

Any warrant questions should be handled directly between the Jail and the Deputy/Officer. Please use your current arrest standards to decide whether an arrest should be made. Please do not ask Dispatch to ask the Jail if they will accept the warrant unless you are not in cell phone range and cannot make a call or ask a question yourself or if officer safety is at risk. If you would like to look at the warrant yourself to decide, please ask the dispatcher to email it to you. Dispatch is only able to advise on acceptance and validity of Boulder County issued warrants that adhere to its warrant confirmation flowchart.

If your records division is available, please use them for questions, clearances, requests and/or other CCIC items. The Data Dispatcher’s main responsibility is to assist with requests while units are in the field, or on a call/traffic stop. If you are at your respective PD’s and it is during business hours, please have records assist you.

Dispatch will enter the following after hours (nights, weekends, holidays):

- Warrants
- Missing/endangered people
- Guns
- Vehicles

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Note: Emergency Communication Specialist Supervisors or Lead Emergency Communications Specialists may approve an after-hours entry of anything not on this list after request from a law enforcement supervisor. If you need anything else entered, please forward it to your respective records division for entry on the next business day.

Data Radio Traffic Procedure:

Clearing a person only:

“551 **Clearance and DL**” or “551 **Clearance** only” (Driver’s license status will not be aired)

Note: If the license is out of state, then advise the state after airing **Clearance and DL**

Example: “551 **Clearance and DL** out of California”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “551 go ahead”

Air the name first before you spell it phonetically.

Example: “551 last of Smith - **Sam Mary Ida Tom Henry** - first of Mary - **Mary Adam Robert Young**

- Date of Birth - Nineteen ninety-eight zero eight zero three”

If you cannot pronounce the name, then advise you will be spelling it phonetically before you begin.

Example: “551 last phonetically - **Sam Mary Ida Tom Henry** - first phonetically - **Mary Adam Robert Young**”

Note: Date of Birth is always **Year** first (as four digits), **Month** (as two digits), **Day** (as two digits)

Clearing a person and vehicle:

“551 **Clearance and DL** and **Clear and list** a plate” or “551 **Clearance and DL** and **Clearance** on a plate” (Vehicle listing will not be aired)

Note: If the vehicle is out of state, then advise the state after airing **Clear and list** **Example:** “551 **Clearance and DL** out of Colorado and **Clear and list** out of California”

Out of state licenses:

The name needs to be aired exactly as it appears on the license. If there is a middle name then it needs to be given, if there is just a middle initial then that needs to be provided. The sex is also required for an out of state clearance. If the name does not indicate the sex clearly, please provide it to the dispatcher.

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Code 3:

This is usually based on an in progress, high-risk call, or operation. When an officer/deputy needs to notify dispatch of something that is urgent, it is best practice to provide radio traffic on the primary law channel. This includes unavoidable traffic stops or other contacts that can't wait. It is recognized that officer safety is a priority, however, routine traffic should be held until the Code 3 is lifted or a secondary channel becomes available.

It is within policy of the BCCC that, if a Code 3 lasts five or more minutes, a secondary Law Channel will be staffed for routine law enforcement dispatching. **Data Channel** is the first channel to not be staffed when an ECS is needed to staff another channel and staffing levels prohibit Data being staffed. Data is not a reliable resource for routine law traffic during a Code 3.

Example: If operations on **BC (800MHz)/ SO (VHF) Law Channel** required a **Code 3** and have now surpassed the five-minute mark the ECS will assign another suitable channel for law operations, **BC/SO Law 2** is the next appropriate channel.

Special Ops:

When on Special Ops, notify dispatch of all units and what channel is being utilized. This eliminates a long step of putting a unit in service when something happens and the unit needs law, data, fire, etc.

Flock Hit

This is entered into CAD by dispatch as a vehicle contact

“Lincoln 79 **Flock Hit**”

Wait for dispatch to acknowledge with “Lincoln 79 go ahead”

“License plate phonetically (followed by state if **NOT** Colorado) and address or cross streets and direction of travel. **Specify En Route or Arrival.** Then specify type of **Flock Hit** (Stolen vehicle, amber alert, carjacking, etc). **Note:** Dispatch is unable to use a street name combined with a business as a location in CAD.

Officer/Deputy would then switch to **Data Channel** and run the license plate to confirm the entry in CCIC/NCIC is still valid and obtain details of the **Flock Hit**.

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Officer/Deputy switches back to **Law Channel** to ask for a channel to coordinate search and response to the **Flock Hit** if needed per your agency's policy/procedure.

Example: **SO LTAC 1/BC LTAC 11, BC LTAC 12-14** or **BC LTAC 15**

Safe2Tell:

Procedurally, the Communications Center enters the **Safe2Tell** tip into the CAD system based upon the involved school's physical address, prior to dispatching it to a deputy or officer for follow-up investigation. Dispatch may send the **Safe2Tell** tip via electronic communication to the deputy or officer assigned to investigate the tip, **upon request**. The communication is sent only to law enforcement personnel who are assigned to the case for follow-up investigation and who need the information for investigatory purposes.

Emergency Button Use:

The orange button on top of portable radios is programmed as an emergency button. Do not randomly test this feature.



In general, the emergency button will only work if you are on an 800MHz channel such as a BC or LG (ex: BC LAW, etc). It will NOT work on an 'SO' labeled VHF channel or the Simplex 1-5 channels.

To activate: press for 1.5 seconds. The radio will automatically go to BC DATA (radio screen will not indicate channel switch) and alert the dispatcher that you have an emergency. The dispatcher on DATA will attempt to status you. If you do not acknowledge, additional officers will be sent to your last known location, DATA channel will likely be CODE 3, responding officers will coordinate on LAW until you status yourself CODE 4 and the emergency button press is reset/cleared.

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To reset: press the orange button for five seconds.

Code Houston Procedure:

- 1) If a deputy/officer is taken hostage, the deputy/officer should take steps to limit the hostage taker from hearing radio traffic prior to initiating an advisement of their status.
 - If a deputy/officer is not wearing an earpiece, the scan function on the radio should be disabled.
- 2) A deputy/officer who is still able to communicate should signal their distress as part of their radio traffic by using the code word, "HOUSTON," followed by their radio number (e.g., "Houston 559").
 - 2.1. If this is not a practicable format under the circumstances, the deputy/officer can insert "HOUSTON" anywhere into their radio, phone, or text message traffic.
- 3) Dispatch will acknowledge the distress signal by replying with the code word "HOUSTON" in their acknowledgement. Dispatch will identify the radio number of the unit being held hostage and which channel responding deputies/officers should move to for coordinating their response (e.g., "HOUSTON 559 on Blue NW").

Reminder:

Boulder County Communications has a Dashboard and Resource Page at BCCDashboard.BoulderSheriff.gov. You can find lots of useful information there such as hazard maps, Communications Plans, worksheets, emergency alerting information, LE entry forms, and you can check the status of systems like radio, CAD, phones, etc.