



POLICY & PROCEDURE

PORTAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **LAPTOP/MOBILE DATA COMPUTER USE** NUMBER: 1.16

SCOPE: All Department Personnel ISSUED: 06/14/2024

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WILEAG 5TH EDITION

STANDARDS: N/A

INDEX AS: Laptop Computer
Mobile Data Computer (MDC)
Open Records (MDC)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Policy & Procedure is to establish standard procedures and policies for the use of Portage Police Department Laptop/Mobile Data Computers (“laptops”); to set forth rules governing their use; and to define the responsibilities of officers and supervisory personnel when using this equipment, as well as informing users of the impact of the Open Records Law regarding laptop communications.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. PROCEDURE

I. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Portage Police Department to utilize radio and laptop communications in a professional and efficient manner. FCC and State rules ban unnecessary or superfluous communications. The department member using a department laptop shall be personally responsible for the proper and safe use of this equipment. The user of this equipment is capable of broadcasting open text messages to single units or to Columbia County Dispatch.

All messages shall be limited to duty related business. Under no circumstances shall a department member using this equipment transmit messages that are inappropriate.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Laptop/MDC Use.

1. The Laptop/Mobile Data Computer shall be used to enhance and support radio communications. The laptop is not to be considered the primary source of communication between the officer in the field and dispatch. Proper use of the laptop will reduce unnecessary radio traffic, provide the transfer of information in a secure method and allow the officer, in the field, to better utilize available resources.
2. Laptops/mobile data computers, in addition to being a Windows compatible computer system, are fully functional radio transmitters and receivers operating in the 800 MHz radio range. As such, this equipment is subject to regulations of the State of Wisconsin as well as the Federal Communications System (FCC).

B. Restriction on Use of Laptops/MDC.

1. Communications over department laptops/mobile data computers ("laptops") shall be limited exclusively to official department business and shall be done in a professional manner. Indecent or profane language is strictly prohibited.
2. Only authorized Portage Police Department employees shall be authorized and permitted to use department laptops.
3. All department members may be required to be TIME certified before using any department laptop/mobile data computer. CJIS security measures for TIME usage are required and are noted in Policy & Procedure 10.02: Criminal Records/TIME System.
4. Officers shall give due regard to proper driving techniques when using laptop /MDC.
5. Internet usage and Social Media participation on Laptops/MDC's are also governed by department policy; refer to Policy & Procedures 1.15: Computer Procedures.

C. Proper Use of Laptop/MDC.

1. Officers shall log in on the terminal at the beginning of the shift and log off at the completion of their shifts. Officers shall remain logged on to the system during their entire shift.
2. Officers shall log all whereabouts throughout their shift which may include office time, break time, follow up time, complaint time, traffic, etc., on the laptop CAD system via the laptop in the squad vehicle. This provides a permanent record of officer activity.

3. Calls for service will be broadcast to each unit via police radio as well as on the laptop:
 - a) Upon receiving a call for service, the officer shall acknowledge over the police radio and then depress the enroute button or appropriate key stroke on the laptop.
 - b) Upon arrival at the scene of the incident, the officer shall depress the arrival button or appropriate key stroke on the laptop to indicate he/she has arrived at the scene. The officer shall also indicate arrival at the scene over the police radio.
 - c) Upon completion of the assignment, the primary unit or the unit leaving the incident shall clear from the call after indicating if a report was taken or not and including a short narrative for the daily briefing. Any back up units should depress the in-service button on the software to put their unit back in service.
4. Officers making contact with individuals on traffic stops or other occupied vehicles shall contact dispatch via radio and inform dispatch of the officer's location, the vehicle registration number and other descriptive information as appropriate, unless there are extenuating circumstances such as dispatch occupied with emergency calls or in the event of special assignment like saturated patrol. If dispatch is busy, officers will create their own call and as quickly as time permits assure dispatch has acknowledged they are aware of the officers traffic stop.

Once dispatch has been informed, officers generally will conduct all necessary inquiries such as DOT or CIB via the laptop, unless the officer feels circumstances are such that their safety may be jeopardized using laptop.

5. If an officer determines from CIB via the laptop that a particular person is wanted on an outstanding warrant or other type of hold, the warrant or hold will have to be confirmed through dispatch with the originating agency.
6. When dealing with laptop responses on wanted persons, the officer should be mindful of the geographic restrictions found on many wanted entries.
7. When on official business, officers should be communicating with dispatch via lap top as well as radio when out of the squad.
8. Generally, complaints shall be dispatched and acknowledged over the radio. Communications during tactical events or information of a sensitive nature that may be inappropriate to broadcast over the radio shall be transmitted by use of the laptop or on the coded channel.
9. Generally, officers should always go 10-23 (enroute) and 10-24 (assignment completed) over the radio and also on the laptop.

10. Officers shall add notes on the laptop on incidents.
11. Officers shall retain the discretion to use radio transmissions in lieu of the laptop in circumstances when the facts/situation indicate the use of the laptop would jeopardize the officer's safety.

D. Shift Supervisor Oversight and Training.

1. Supervisors may review laptop printouts to ensure that laptop communications are in conformity with the policies and procedures issued on the use of laptops.
2. Supervisors will oversee communications by officers via laptop and radio professionalism and efficiency.
3. Officers will be trained and familiar with proper laptop operations.

E. Laptop Messages and the Open Records Law.

1. The Wisconsin Open Records Law essentially states that any record generated by government must be preserved and be available for public inspection upon appropriate request. Messages sent from department laptops as well as radio voice communications fall within the category of "records" for the purposes of this law.

Every message sent via department laptops shall be recorded and maintained by the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. Likewise, messages received by Wis. DOT and CIB data bases are saved to an audit trail.

Keith J. Klafke
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

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