

Purpose:

To provide a method of supplemental radio alert tones for all Countywide Fire Communication Centers to use as a standardized practice.

Policy:

The San Diego County Fire Chiefs Communications Section has established standard alert tones to be utilized by all Fire Communication Centers. Several optional sets have also been identified and are used at the discretion of each Fire Communication Center. All five Fire Communication Centers have adopted this policy.

Procedure:

The Fire Communication Centers shall be consistent with the use of alert tones, where possible, when providing notifications to field units. Similar alerting methods or tones enhance San Diego County Operational Area responders' safety.

The dispatcher will use the appropriate alert tone prior to any verbal radio traffic for the following purposes:

| | 1 Long Beep | 2 Short Beeps | 3 Short Beeps | Warble Tone | 10-Second Tone |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Dispatch of Calls* | | | SDU HTL METRO | | |
| Cancelling of Calls | | All ECCs | | | |
| Life Hazard Notification | | | All ECCs | | |
| Mayday Situation* | | | | All ECCs | HTL METRO |
| Emergency Button RIC Activation* | | | | All ECCs | HTL METRO |
| Emergency Button/ "Cover Now" (Non-fire Inc.)* | | | HTL METRO | | HTL METRO |
| General Message | All ECCs | | | | |

*See below for specific information. San Diego (SDU) – CAL FIRE San Diego Unit, HTL – Central, METRO – San Diego FD, NCJ – North County Dispatch.

DISPATCH OF CALLS

The standard tone for the dispatching of calls is identified as the “3 Short Beeps”. Each operational zone may opt to not use a dispatch tone or may use a different tone set so long as it is not the tones already identified above. This may include dispatch alert system generating tones or sounds. Currently, North County Dispatch JPA and Escondido utilize alternate tones for the dispatch of calls via the U.S. Digital Designs alerting system.

10-SECOND TONE

The “10-Second Tone” is a short tone that is emitted by the dispatch console every ten seconds and designed to alert units that the air shall remain clear for emergency traffic only and limit transmissions to only additional emergency traffic or until the emergency is either moved to another channel or declared mitigated.

Each Fire Communication Center may utilize the “10-Second Tone” at the discretion of the Incident Commander or as determined within Dispatch Center policy. The “10-Second Tone” may be executed on any channel. The IC may request to discontinue the tone at any point. The “10-Second Tone” should be reserved for serious emergencies i.e. active shooter, firefighter down, building collapse etc.

MAYDAY SITUATION/EMERGENCY BUTTON RIC ACTIVATION

The standard tone to identify a mayday situation while on a fire related incident shall be the “Warble Tone”. Each Fire Communication Center will identify the channel or channels that the tone will be broadcasted and may opt to institute the following:

- At the onset of a RIC activation, the “Warble Tone” will be followed by an announcement to “clear the channel for emergency traffic only”.
- Following the “Warble Tone” and announcement, the “10-second Tone” may be activated.

EMERGENCY BUTTON/COVER NOW (non-fire incident)

Each Fire Communication Center may opt to utilize the “10-second Tone” when personnel or units encounter a cover now situation.

- A cover now will be identified with the “3 Short Beeps” followed by an announcement to “keep radio traffic to a minimum”.
- The “10-second Tone” may then be activated to alert units that the air shall remain clear for emergency traffic only and limit transmissions to only additional emergency traffic or once the emergency is cleared.