TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

# B-42 Portable Radios

**Non-Emergency Manual**

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## Purpose

The following policy will define the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department's policy regarding the use and responsibilities for portable radios.

## Policy/Procedure

The Toledo Fire and Rescue Department has supplied all front-line fire apparatus with portable fire radios in sufficient quantity to allow each member assigned to an apparatus or fire vehicle the exclusive use of a radio throughout their tour or scheduled work hours, including any approved hours beyond their regularly scheduled hours of work.

Portable fire radios are one of the most vital pieces of safety equipment utilized by members of the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department at the scene of an emergency. As the Department cannot control all of the variables that compromise firefighter safety in emergency situations, the Department will make every effort to eliminate or reduce problematic factors that are within its control, especially impediments to effective communication.

The nature of the firefighting profession demands that crews be able to communicate amongst themselves, incident commanders, dispatchers, law enforcement personnel, and other entities, without delay, often times at unexpected moments or under unforeseen circumstances.

For this reason, the following rules shall be effective immediately:

**1.** Each member shall be assigned a portable radio at roll call. They shall be responsible for possession of that radio for the duration of their tour, and for any time that they are "held over" at the end of their tour until relieved by another member. Each member shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate battery charge is maintained, and that the radio is exchanged in good working order with the member assigned to relieve them at the end of their tour. While in quarters, it is permissible for a member to leave their

assigned portable on the rig, maintained in a state of readiness. Hand-held microphones shall not be disconnected. At all times, all members shall be responsible for returning the portable radio to the piece of apparatus, or vehicle, to which they are assigned to that tour or for the hours of their work, at the conclusion of any emergency, or for any emergency, or for any other reason that necessitates removing the portable radio from the apparatus.

**2.** When dispatched to an incident, regardless of the nature of the assignment, members shall carry their assigned radio on their person at all times and shall be responsible for monitoring the channel dedicated to the emergency by the Fire Dispatcher.

**3.** While fire apparatus are not in quarters, and are considered by dispatch to be “on the air” in a nonemergency condition, fire personnel shall carry their portable radio on their person at all times when exiting the rig. Example of non-emergency conditions include, but are not limited to, drill sessions, inspections, pre-plans, public relations events, grocery shopping, maintenance duties, administrative errands, fuel and O2 runs, and the like. When “backing” an apparatus, members positioned at the rear of the rig, assisting with that maneuver shall have their portable radios in service on their person to alert the driver, if necessary, of obstacles to be avoided.

**4.** All fire personnel shall possess a working knowledge of their radio and its operation, capabilities, and safety features. Members who are unsure of proper radio operation, the capabilities of the radio system, and particularly their radio’s inherent safety features shall consult with their officer and shall be afforded proper training by their officer until such time they are comfortable with its use. If any officer is not comfortable in providing this type of training, then that officer shall exhaust all avenues in finding fire personnel to provide the training.

**5.** Loss or damage of a portable radio shall be reported immediately to the unit’s officer. The officer shall make both the appropriate Battalion Chief and Fire Dispatch aware of the loss or damage immediately, and shall make every attempt to locate the radio, returning to the scenes of emergency calls, or locations that were traveled to, if necessary, to search for it. Proper documentation regarding the loss or damage, in the form of Departmental communications, shall be forwarded to the Operations Deputy and Bureau of Professional Standards. Members may be financially responsible for the replacement of a portable radio lost as a result of a negligent act.

**6.** It is understood that, while in the performance of our duties as fire personnel at emergencies, there are times that portable radios may become damaged, and sometimes lost, due to extenuating circumstances brought upon by the nature of what we do and the dangers that we face. The intent of this section of the policy is to address those times when a portable radio is lost and/or damaged unnecessarily or negligently by any member of TFRD and are not in the performance of their duties during an emergency situation. Said employee shall pay for in full, any property that is lost or unduly damaged, as a result of an employee’s negligence. The lost and/or damaged property shall be replaced with an identical item in make, features, quality, and cost. If an identical item cannot be found, the lost and/or damaged item may be replaced with an item of similar make, features, quality, and cost subject to approval by the Fire Administration.

**ALL PORTABLE RADIOS HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED AN ALIAS THAT HELPS FIRE DISPATCH IDENTIFY WHO IS UTILIZING THE RADIO. THIS OF COURSE IS IMPERATIVE IN AN EMERGENCY EVENT. TO ENSURE THAT THE CORRECT PORTABLE RADIO IS WITH THE APPROPRIATE CREW THE FOLLOWING SHALL OCCUR:**

- **ON “TOOL DAY”, THE COMPANY OFFICER WILL COMPARE EVERY PORTABLE RADIO'S ALIAS ASSIGNED TO THEIR STATION THAT DAY WITH THE PORTABLE RADIO ALIAS ROSTER THAT IS ON THE INTRANET UNDER “COMMUNICATION BUREAU”. IN THE EVENT THAT THE PORTABLE RADIO DOES NOT MATCH THE ROSTER, THE COMPANY OFFICER WILL NOTIFY THE ALARM OFFICE LIEUTENANT IMMEDIATELY, AND FOLLOW IT UP WITH AN EMAIL TO “FIREALARM”, DOCUMENTING THE DISCREPANCY.**

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See Also:

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