Updated Ten Code List?

01/21/07 38 W - **+** 14 - 9

A reader requests an updated ten code list for Raleigh/Wake, something more current than this one: http://www.legeros.com/scanner/scanner-ten.shtml. Can anyone assist? Or is the linked page still current?

That is the last list used by people in this county. All fire and ems are supposed to use plain text now, so you won't hear much of that stuff anymore.

Mike - 01/21/07 - 19:29

I doubt they would "update" it since nobody is supposed to be using them anyway. Speaking of which, it really unnerves me that they want everyone to stop using 10-codes but yet an MVA is still dispatched as a 10-50.

pal - 01/21/07 - 19:51

It is my understanding that there is a "Presidential Directive" out there that, among other things, mandates NIMS, which calls for 'plain text'. My interpretation is that we are not supposed to be using codes at all, but then, no one consulted with me on that one. Maybe I am the only one in the county that welcomed the move to plain text. Now, if we could get everyone to reduce the amount of stuff they say. We used to say '10-8'. All we have to say now is 'in service' or 'available'. But it seems like a lot of folks thin k we have to add 'primary response district', 'our district', etc.

Maybe we will all catch on in time.

DJ - 01/21/07 - 23:24

Just out of curiosity, is there any (established) plain text equivalent for "suicide attempt" or 10-96? Wouldn't it become a violation of patient privacy laws if we started saying "suicide attempt" or "psychiatric patient?"

I think using plain text is a good thing, but it also has some negative points. For example, the media (and general public, for that fact) will now be able to understand EVERYTHING we talk about on the radio. Generally, at least around here, we tend to shy away from using terms on the radio that would raise red flags for the media (Bomb Threat, suicide, rape, re-kindle, psychiatric person, etc.) . It would be nice to see if someone has a list of "plain language" terms that will be replacing the 10 codes. That is... if such a list even exists. I would think that in order to streamline things, there would be a list of the terms that everyone should be using; otherwise, what's the point?

Luke - 01/21/07 - 23:43

I've always wondered about the false assumption that public safety used 10-codes to "hide" certain activities from the listening public. I can remember in the early 70's going into Radio Shack in Gastonia to pick up a copy of the Gastonia PD ten-codes that were mimeographed (remember that smell?) for anyone to have. And today, just about any jurisdiction anywhere has there codes posted to one or more websites. Luke, they have known about EVERYTHING we've said on the radio since the day after we installed radios in our apparatus.

10-96s are called Psychiatric patients; suicide attempts are usually described by their nature – with "self inflicted" included in the description. Feds have established that information relayed in the course of dispatching and providing medical information to receiving hospitals are somehow not subject to the privacy legislation.

EMS did create a document when we moved to clear text a year or so ago. I'll see if I can dig it up and send it out for those interested. It created an equivalency list to commonly used 10 codes, signals, etc.

Olson - 01/22/07 - 00:03

Luke (and others)-
Garner PD is a perfect example of an answer to your question...they started using plain text at the beginning of this year BUT kept a few 10 codes/signals for security/privacy...10-96 is one of them...Signal 68 is another...so even though the dept is mostly using clear text a few codes/signals will be used...and for the wake county agencies still using 10 codes/signals (except Wake Sheriff) here is a link to an accurate

list:
http://home.nc.rr.com/nctrafficman/image..
Marshall Sherard CFP[714] (Email) (Web Site) - 01/22/07 - 00:08

So of what operational value is a code, signal, etc. if everyone knows what it means? I used to get a kick out of some FDs in the County when they would activate the pagers (prior to the new system) to have staff report to the station due to 10-13. I knew it was snowing, you knew it was snowing – yet somehow using the "code" made it seem important.
Olson - 01/22/07 - 00:14

Wow- and I thought I was the only one who remembered such stuff as "report to the station reference 10-13". I guess that was the same as ALERT 200, Signal 68, etc. When I got my first Regency 10 channel scanner so many years ago (which I still have, as well as my first Federal Fireball), the folks at Womack Electronics (remember them?) gave me a two page listing of RPD, WCSO, and SHP radio codes. So what was the big secret? Heck, I work for Wake County EMS and there are people listening to scanners that know the Medical Priorities codes better than I do. So who cares if they know what we are doing? If you do not want them to know, you have to use encryption technology. There will always be a firefighter, paramedic, of LEO who will galdly share the codes list with a friend, who will tell two friends, and they'll tell two friends, etc.

As to the concern about using psychiatric, suicide, etc. on the radio, HIPPA does not apply to dispatch. I also heard it said that since we are digitalizing our communications, we have taken 'every' precaution, if any do apply.

I like clear text. That way we are all on the same page. If I am en route to you and the patient is "pale, sweating, and having severe respiratory distress and chest pain", tell me that. That tells me more than "10-18", 10-33", or my favorite from Chatham County- "yellow tag". And if I get on scene at a building fire, I'll tell you that it is a "1 story, wood frame structure, heavy flames and smoke showing at the rear with an LP tank exposure, occupants are out". That way, you know what's going on rather than me just say "working fire" or "condition red".

If we all are communicating so that we can all understand it, everything just works out better. The sooner that we all realize that we are in this together, and learn to communicate clearly, the better we wil all be.
DJ - 01/22/07 - 01:44

if 10-codes were really designed to hide the actual nature of the call, then why would the definitions be so readily accesible?

"building fire". haha. somebody's been reading Brannigan. ;-)
pal - 01/22/07 - 11:01

10 codes were not designed to hide the nature of calls from the public listening with scanners. In the early days of radio, transmissions were usually not very clear, so they developed the ten codes. With the new technology in radio's, the is no need for the ten codes. Also if I'm not mistaken Sec. Chertoff of DHS said that switching to plain text was NOT required to receive Federal Funding. This was over a year ago when he announced this so I'm not sure where to find this info. I remember reading it on Firehouse.com, but have not done a search on their website.
BVP - 01/22/07 - 11:23

BVP, you are correct, Chertoff did say that indeed. I think a lot of pressure came from the law enforcement side to fight the change to clear text for L.E., so it was changed for all. BVP, you get my e-mail?
Silver - 01/22/07 - 12:32

"building fire". haha. somebody's been reading Brannigan."

Yeah, I read Brannigan's stuff way back in the 80s. In the 90s, AACOFD dispatched that way. I made the 'mistake' of saying 'structure fire' over the air. I received a discertation from 2 batalion chiefs, a division chief, and a captain on the error of my ways.
DJ - 01/22/07 - 15:39

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NA: 023-06
NIMS Integration Center
202-646-3850

NIMS AND USE OF PLAIN LANGUAGE

It is important that responders and incident managers use common terminology. There simply is little or no room for misunderstanding in an emergency situation.

The use of plain language in emergency response is matter of public safety, especially the safety of first responders and those affected by the incident. It is critical that all local responders, as well as those coming into the impacted area from other jurisdictions and other states as well as the federal government, know and utilize commonly established operational structures, terminology, policies and procedures. This is what NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS) are all about-achieving interoperability across agencies, jurisdictions and disciplines.

The use of common terminology is about the ability of area commanders, State and local EOC personnel, federal operational coordinators, and emergency responders to communicate clearly with each other and effectively coordinate response activities, no matter what the size, scope or complexity of the incident. The ability of responders from different jurisdictions and different disciplines to work together depends greatly on their ability to communicate with each other.

While the NIMS Integration Center does not require plain language for internal operations, it strongly encourages it, as it is important to practice everyday terminology and procedures that will need to be used in emergency incidents and disasters. NIMS implementation is a long-term effort and it is probably not possible to persuade everyone to change ingrained habits overnight. But we do hope that over time, everyone will understand the important of using common terminology, that is, plain language, every day.

It is required that plain language be used for multi-agency, multi-jurisdiction and multi-discipline events, such as major disasters and exercises. Beginning FY 2006, federal preparedness grant funding is contingent on the use of plain language in incidents requiring assistance from responders from other agencies, jurisdictions, and functional disciplines.

The FY 2006 NIMS Implementation requirement to use plain language does not abolish the use of 10-codes in everyday department communications. Accordingly, the use of 10-codes in daily operations will not result in the loss of federal preparedness funds.

This alert replaces the one on 10-Codes issued on February 8, 2006.

Alyson G. Price
Special Assistant to the Director
NIMS Integration Center
Rink - 01/22/07 - 17:26

First of all, I think it is time for the original plain text document to be "re-released" to all county personnel. Chief Olson originally sent a very detailed document which outlined exactly what to say and it ensured that everyone used the same verbage. If you'll listen now, the newer county 800 users (Cary/Apex EMS especially) and new Fire/EMS employees countywide continue to say "Available" when the system document sent to everyone initially upon 800 conversion says "In Service" is to be used (this is just one example of many). I think there are a lot of new people to the system now that could use a friendly "reminder" of what verbage we're to be using so that everyone is saying the same thing.

The original document was extremely detailed and left no question unanswered as to what to say.

Second, I agree wholeheartedly with DJ! We're saying TOO MUCH on the radio. The telecommunicator does NOT care if you're "Out of service to pick up personnel at Rex ER" or "In Service but following 571 to Wake Med Cary." You're either in service or out of service and that is what matters to the telecommunicator. With as many users as we have on the system today, we need to "trim the fat" and minimize all nonessential radio traffic.

Third, here is an official directive that was issued by the SBI DCI (Division of Criminial Information) to telecommunicators regarding the release of criminal/driving history information over the radio. This directive at the time referenced statute regarding the release of certain information (I don't remember the statutes off hand). DCI states that you may not release driving/criminal history information over the air and they suggest a "code" to indicate if someone is suspended/revoked. Thus the Signal 13 (Suspended DWI) and Signal 14 (Suspended other than for DWI). Communications centers were urged at that time (this was around 1999ish) to stop using plain text for driver history info. We used to say, "Class C Suspended, Failure to pay fine" or "Class C valid, multiple prior speeding" or something similar. This practice had to be stopped due to the DCI directive and a code developed to handle this type of situation. Not all centers changed policy, but most at the time did to comply. I honestly see this as the only exception to the plain text rule, and that is because statute says that the information can only be given to the ONE requesting officer. Third party dissemination of history information is SUPPOSED to be documented. Communications centers are audited every two years by the SBI and documentation of history dissemination is something they check for.

Working as a telecommunicator, paramedic and being a former comm center director, I definately see both sides of the fence here. I can tell you that the telecommunicators would REALLY appreciate us cutting down on "extra" radio traffic that does not affect the end result of our transmissions. On the communications center end, the telecommunicators need to STOP using 10-codes when talking to us. I have had NUMEROUS EMS technicians look at me puzzled when the telecommunicator said, "This is the result of a 10-10" or "Approach 10-0, there is a 10-16 at that location." It works both ways folks, we need to stop being given 10-codes as much as we need to stop saying them ourselves! Kudos to DJ and Olson for their insight – I agree completely with you both! I just had to throw in a little defense for the law enforcement side of things because they are doing as directed with regards to just a couple of the codes (Signal 13, 14, etc.) The rest can fall by the wayside folks! For the safety of EMS and Fire personnel cut it out! EMS and Fire personnel do not know what "101's in the area" are anymore. We are setting our people up to be shot if we don't cut out the codes coming back to us from the other side.

Jason Thompson (Email) - 01/22/07 - 17:33

I'd be willing to bet that with the use of plain text, the media will know 100% what we are saying. True, the **might** have access to the 10 codes, but it is funny that we can dispatch a bomb threat at a wal-mart and get ZERO media calls, but can dispatch a 21yom w/ CPR in progress and get media calls… heck, we're not even the ones that dispatch EMS!

Since I've been in dispatch we've sent units to 3 different bomb threats, never once did we get a single media inquiry. Dispatch a house fire, plane down, or bad sounding medical call and you bet your last dollar the media will be calling before we even get a unit on scene.

Does the media have ALL of our 10 codes or call codes? No. Do they have the obvious ones? Yes, who doesn't!

Luke - 01/22/07 - 18:44

Noted as future discussion point, media bad or media good. Such secrecy!

Legeros - 01/22/07 - 18:50

Many web sites have the 10-codes, in their entirety, that are unique to their own region. I am sure that while all of the codes are not there, http://www.legeros.com is a big resource. Besides, a friend of my wife's asked me, when we were dating, if I responded to many "10-89" calls since 9-11. He was not in the emergency business. Basically, if we say it, and they hear it, they will find out what it means. Heck, all they have to do is ask me.

Besides, bomb threats are old news. It is the 'suspicious package' call that generates all of the media attention. And is this not a good thing? Too often the public knows little about our job, especially EMS. I think they need to know more about it so that maybe the tax dollars will flow a little better. Both of my neighbors have digital scanners, and they have commented on how much they never really realized everything we do. Yes, the public knowing what we do is a good thing.

I have worked in several systems, in several states. Everyone thought 'their' situation was different, but it all boils down to the same things-

"Fire- Put the wet stuff on the red stuff"

"EMS- Air goes in and out, blood goes round and round. Any variation of that theme is not good"

Our situation is no different than anyone elses'. If clear text works for them (and it does), we need to go ahead and throw away the code sheets and get on into the 21st century.

You want codes? Talk in codes. But don't get ticked at me when I ask you what you are talking about (and I will). If you want to tell me my patient can't breath, tell me that. If the scene is not safe as the result of a fight/stabbing/shooting, then say so. Becasue I WILL ask you what is a 10-14, signal 101, etc. Not just for me, but for the new people that ride with me. That way, they learn what is going on, and they learn the fallacies of radio codes. And it works in reverse as well. If the vehicle is on fire, or there is diesel fuel spilled all over the highway, I am going to tell you that, just like that. If I am being shot at, I will probably say, in clear text, "I am being shot at- get me some #@*! cops her now!". That way, we are all on the same page. I do not want the message that I am trying to convey be misinterpeted in any way.

As to the original document on clear text- would not "available" make more sense than "in service" when clearing from a call? I am "in service" as soon as I arrive at 0730-ish every morning, but I am "available" for the next call when I clear the ED. Besides, if I am "in service" after a call, then am I "out of service" when I run the call? I don't know…it's just that to me, "available" makes more sense grammatically.
DJ - 01/23/07 - 12:32

And one more thing…

I have read the 'clarification' provided by DHS. However, from my teaching days, in fire and EMS, one thing that is ALWAYS true. You are going to play the way you practice. And you are going to handle the big ones just like you handle the little ones. If you try and use 10-this and 10-that on your 'normal' day to day stuff, guess what you are going to do when the feces hits the proverbial fan? And it might work if you are only using Wake County units. But throw in a few units from Johnston, Harnett, or Chatham Counties, and let the games begin.
DJ - 01/23/07 - 12:35

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To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question
What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

([Register your username / Log in])

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.

Small print: All html tags except <b> and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.