

 Official Policy Manual	Date issued 08/25/23	Supersedes 04/01/07	Page 1 of 2	Section # A-3015
	Section: Administration			
	Directive: Communications Systems			
	Policy Owner: Director, Administrative Support Services Group			

Communications Systems

Communications is an integral part of providing a safe and secure environment for OMH facilities. It is imperative that the use of all communication devices and systems be restricted to official business only. Being that these communications can be of the utmost importance, it requires that any communication be conducted in a professional manner. This includes the right to privacy of these communications and the right to have requests for information handled in a courteous, professional, and prompt manner.

Radio Communications

Facilities have assigned radio frequencies for their communication use. These frequencies are governed by the Federal Communications Commission (known as the FCC). Facilities must adhere to FCC regulations governing the use of these radio systems. Radio systems utilized within OMH Facilities must have a current license to operate. These systems include Base Radios, handheld (two-way) radios, mobile radios, and pagers. Officers are to use radio systems in a professional and competent manner at all times. Proper names of patients should never be given over the air, except in case of an emergency. Radios should not be used at any time for the purpose of joking, jesting, or non-official OMH business.

Safety Department Roles and Responsibilities:

Safety Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory and account for radio equipment at the start of their shift. • Monitor radio communications to ensure proper usage regulations are being adhered to. • Monitor to assure proper physical handling of radios is being carried out. • Train Officers on proper use of radios. • Ensure licenses are up to date and posted according to requirements. • Ensure maintenance on radio systems is carried out according to manufacturer's recommendations and facility procedures. • Request replacements or new radios from Central Office Administrative Support Services Group (ASSG) as necessary.
Safety Department Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check radios in assigned equipment and posts prior to start of shift. • Ensure radios are charged and ready for service. If appropriate, place radio in charger or connect to charging system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always conduct communications in a professional manner. • Never use radios for unofficial business. • Never use foul language or make jokes over the radio system. • Treat equipment in a manner representative of its monetary and communication value. • Report any problems with radio equipment to supervisor and tag equipment that needs to be placed out of service. • Any communication that will be sent over the air shall be kept as short as possible and to the point. • Acknowledge receipt of a message on the radio and await acknowledgement when sending a message.
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Telephone Communications (Department and Cell)

Safety Department Phones located within the Safety Department Office include the main Safety Department phone line where most calls to the Safety Department will come in. It is important that the main department phone line is always monitored and does not go unanswered.

Safety Officers may also be issued a cell phone. These phones are considered the same as handheld radio devices. Cell phones can have the capability of taking pictures. These phones may conflict with HIPAA regulations and patients' right to privacy. Therefore, OMH has set an official policy regarding the use of cell phones within Facilities; OMH Official Policy Manual Sec. #QA-602 – Use of Cell Phones, Recording Devices, and Wireless Devices in Facilities.

Safety Department Roles and Responsibilities:

Safety Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Officers have reviewed OMH Policy QA-602. • Ensure any use of cell phones by the Safety Department follows Agency policy. • Forward copies of any documentation or reports regarding improper cell phone use to the appropriate person or persons as per facility policy. • Do not use personal cell phones to conduct official agency business/work related purposes. • Ensure department phones are monitored and answered promptly.
Safety Department Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and follow OMH and Facility Policy. • Monitor Staff and Visitor use of cell phone devices and ensure policy compliance. • Document and report any improper use of cell phones. • Do not use personal cell phones to conduct official agency business/work related purposes. • Ensure department phones are monitored and answered promptly.