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AN ADVISORY REPORT

for

OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND

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1979

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This report was made possible through a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant administered through Associated Public-Safety Communications Officers, Inc. (APCO) under Project 17.

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Prepared by: _____
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OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

TASK # 7801101

INTRODUCTION

The following report pertains to the Ocean City, Maryland Police Department. The problem statement for this task stated "Department needs to expand its communications capabilities and service. Is there need to spend additional monies for equipment, or can they reconfigure what they have? They lack long-term plan and short-term objectives which consider summer/winter season problems and need a high degree of flexibility in service. Where should they be heading - where should they be now?"

A site visit was made to Ocean City on 30 November 1978 through 2 December 1978. As a result of this visit, the following areas are addressed:

Telephone System

Public Awareness

System Design and Utilization

Technical Overview

Security

Staffing, Training, Procedures

This report is sectionalized in each of these identified areas, with problem discussion, findings and recommendations being provided for each section.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

Problem Analysis

The telephone is the prime method utilized for the reporting of emergency conditions requiring aid from public safety services. It is generally accepted that in excess of ninety percent (90%) of all requests for emergency aid are placed by the telephone, and that approximately eighty-five percent (85%) of these calls will be handled by the police department. Analysis of the telephone system utilized by the Ocean City Police Department consisted of a review of the equipment currently installed in their headquarters, the current number of trunks both incoming and outgoing, a review of the emergency reporting numbers to access the department, and answering capabilities. A meeting was held with Mr. Ronald L. Townsend, Communications Representative for the C & P Telephone Company, a Bell System affiliate. Discussions with Mr. Townsend included the current central office capability, planned future improvement of central office facilities, potential for provision of 911 service, and 911 system capabilities, when available.

As an aid in determining the current need for telephone facilities within the police department, various formulas were utilized from the report entitled "Call Volume Considerations in a 911 Emergency Answering Center", authored by William W. VanLandingham, Department of General Services, Division of Communications, Bureau of Communications Services, State of Florida. The report is dated January 1975. Although Ocean City, Maryland does not utilize 911 as the emergency reporting number, it is believed that the formula is reasonably applicable as there is a standard seven digit telephone number used by the community to reach the emergency services of the police department.

Calculations based on the above-referenced formula indicate the following call volume projections. Ocean City is considered to be in the "non-high crime - high tourism" type of community. Based on this classification, the average volume of calls per day is 2.2 per 1,000 population ($\frac{\text{Population}}{1{,}000}$ (2.2) = $\frac{\text{Total Projected}}{\text{Calls/Day}}$). Busy hour calls are averaged at fifteen percent (15%) of the total projected calls per day, and the law enforcement component is eighty-five percent (85%) of the busy hour calls. Using population figures provided for Ocean City, the following totals were computed:

		Winter	Average Summer	Peak Summer
Population	=	4,500	150,000/175,000	200,000/210,000
$\frac{\text{Population}}{1K}$ (2.2) = projectcd daily volume	=	9.9	330/385	440/462
Total Busy Hour = 15% of daily volume	=	1.5	50/58	66/69
Law Enforcement Busy Hour Calls = 85% of Total	=	1.3	43/50	56/59

The City governing body has not determined the response time desired to provide service to the public.

Using the generally accepted time frame that requires ninety percent (90%) of all calls received to be answered within ten (10) seconds, the staffing requirements for the busy hour would be three (3) persons [1/] for both the average summer AND peak summer populations. These calculations, however, do not take into consideration the unknown quantity of administrative calls received by the department. Currently, no record is kept on the volume of incoming telephone calls, regardless

1/ See Table I

OPERATOR CAPACITY TABLE

No. of* Operators	BUSY HOUR CALL VOLUME Average Call Length** 30s	40s	50s	60s	1¼m	1½m	2m	3m
1	16	11	8	6	5	4	3	2
2	77	54	42	34	26	21	16	10
3	158	112	86	70	55	45	33	21
4	248	177	137	111	87	71	52	34
5	344	246	191	156	122	100	73	48
6	443	318	247	202	158	130	95	62
7	546	393	306	250	196	161	118	77
8	650	469	365	299	234	192	142	92
9	757	546	426	349	273	225	165	108
10	864	625	488	399	313	258	190	124

*The number of operators required to service a given busy hour call volume of an average call length so that the probability of a caller having to wait longer than 10 seconds is 0.1 (10%), i.e., 90% of the calls will be answered within 10 seconds.

**s = seconds, m = minutes
Does not include unavoidable wasted time which effectively increases call length.

TABLE. I

of nature (emergency, administrative, referred, etc.). Answer time delay also is not measured. When capability is acquired to provide these counts, then specific determination can be made as to staffing requirements, busy hour volume, efficiency of answering personnel, etc.

The Ocean City, Maryland Police Department is presently utilizing one (1) Bell System model 756 switch (PBX system), with a 186 button telephone answering console installed. ALL CALLS for the police department (emergency, general, information and administrative) are routed through the single telephone console. Administrative calls are transferred to the appropriate office or section of the department. Emergency and general information calls are handled by the attendant operating the telephone console, as are nearly all calls beyond normal working hours and on holidays and weekends. Presently, there are eight (8) trunks operational year 'round to serve the department. These trunks are utilized for both incoming and outgoing calls. A separate number for reporting of emergencies is non-existent.

It was stated during interviews that when more than one (1) call is received simultaneously, there is "no way of knowing" if line one, or potentially line eight is an emergency or is for general information or is an administrative call for an individual member or section within the department. Clearly, delays in the answering of emergency calls could be excessive. Additionally, an all-trunks-busy situation could readily develop during prime hours when the administrative staff are making outgoing calls in addition to those incoming.

System modifications to avoid potential, if not existing, problems would include, first, installation of a separate telephone number with "incoming" trunks only for the reporting of emergencies. This would, of course, require a saturating public

awareness campaign of "how to report an emergency" This latter subject is further addressed in the PUBLIC AWARENESS section of this report. The number of trunks required, based on projected call volume, would be at least three (3). These should be in rotary Hunt configuration, i.e., when one is busy, the incoming call will advance to the next available trunk. An "all-trunks-busy" study should be conducted immediately to determine needs of additional trunks.

The ability to provide any improvement in answering time is principally dependent upon adding additional answering positions. The current types of switching console is severely limiting. The C & P Telephone representative advises a second turret (switchboard) cannot be added. This would also be the most costly method of improving answering capability. An alternative, which can readily be provided, is to bridge (parallel) incoming trunks with key telephone instruments as auxiliary answering points during heavy traffic periods. These instruments are available in five (5), nine (9) and nineteen (19) line capabilities with hold feature on each, and are minimal in cost. All incoming lines should appear at all answering positions. This would make it possible for an available position to answer the next call. Some delay would be experienced when an auxiliary position answered an incoming call that must be transferred to an internal extension, as the transfer capability is limited to the existing telephone console. This would require the auxiliary position operator to place the call on hold and notify the console operator of the need to transfer when he/she was available. Regardless, this is a reasonable means of providing service to the unknown, the call yet to be answered, and shifting the delay to the most tolerable, the administrative type call.

Citizen (tourist) access to the police and other public safety agencies is of utmost priority in the effective rendering of service. Nine-one-one (911), the three-digit, nationwide emergency telephone number is designated for this purpose. Ocean City is a prime area for implementation of the next 911 system within the State of Maryland. The need is obvious due to the nature of the City's main source of revenue - tourism. Many of the geographical, political, and jurisdictional problems which commonly plague 911 implementation do not exist within Ocean City.

Ocean City is served by two (2) telephone exchanges. The 524 exchange provides service to the northern portion of the City, and is currently an ESS III Central Office. The boundaries of this exchange coincide with the geographical/political boundaries of the City. The southern portion of the City is served by the 289 exchange and is a step, or switch type exchange. The exchange boundaries extend beyond the limits of Ocean City and serve portions of West Ocean City, a separate municipality. As advised by the telephone company, there are approximately one thousand (1,000) to fifteen hundred (1,500) additional subscribers in the West Ocean City jurisdiction. The 289 exchange Central Office is scheduled for replacement by an ESS CO, within completion scheduled for the Spring of 1980.

The problem exists within Ocean City, which is unique to high tourism areas. Many residents do not subscribe to telephone service for their one (1) or two (2) week stay, which places a heavy reliance on the public pay telephone network. It is also felt that most of the tourists would not know how to access emergency services when they are needed. 911 readily fills these voids, particularly when system features are considered.

Although 911 service is currently not available within the City, the telephone company has made alternate provision for persons who may dial 911 by providing manual operator intercept in both exchanges. 911 service will be available upon

completion of installation of the new ESS Central Office in the 289 exchange. Features which will be available with 911, and should be studied, include:

- No coin (dial tone first) public pay telephones. The advantages of this feature are self-evident in all locations, particularly Ocean City where callers could be in bathing attire and not having proper change in their possession.

- Overflow capability - where all 911 circuits are busy, all additional calls placed to 911 will automatically revert to the telephone company operators. The operators will have special circuits (tie lines or non-published numbers) to transfer the caller to the answering point. The net result, hopefully - never a busy 911.

- Ring back - allows the answering point operator to ring the telephone of a caller if the caller hung up before giving complete information.

- Called party hold - once a call is placed to 911, all telephone switching is locked up. Combined with ring back (previously described), this feature allows the dispatcher to re-signal the calling party if insufficient information was obtained prior to the calling party hanging up. Additionally, manual trace to the calling location is possible, which has proven to save lives in other systems as well as to improve tracing of bomb threat calls, obscene calls, etc.

- Forced disconnect - allows the answering point operator to disconnect an incoming call to clear the 911 trunk.

The telephone company is an advocate of 911 implementation. Their concept, however, is toward county-wide implementation. This approach is quite logical from the telephone company's position. The complexities of telephone exchange boundaries

vs municipal boundaries, which do not coincide, is a nationwide problem. Ocean City, however, is nearly unique in that very little difference exists between exchange and municipal boundaries. The relatively small overlap into West Ocean City becomes quite insignificant when weighted with the advantages of providing 911 service to the City itself. Ocean City should not delay the implementation of 911 due to telephone company policy of desiring total county-wide implementation. Realistically, however, the main barrier to 911 implementation may lie within the City intrastructure. A fragmentation in departments has occurred, resulting in a duplication of services. Fire and EMS dispatching are handled in separate facilities. Such is beyond the scope of this report. However, further study should be provided to determine if this fragmentation will be best supported through technological capabilities or through central call referrals. In either event, the advantages of 911 are most applicable in this situation.

An additional problem expressed by Ocean City, one which is also quite prevalent across the nation, is that of automatic telephone dialers connected as an alarm device with a pre-recorded voice message. Basically, there are two (2) methods of dealing with such devices. First, install separate telephone lines for this express use. The second alternative, which should be combined with the first, is to create local ordinances for the purpose of providing control over their operations. Such an ordinance would require registration with an appropriate fee, and penalty for excessive false alarms.

Findings

- It is a proven fact that work load on a police communications system is directly traceable to the volume of incoming telephone calls. A total incoming call count should be maintained. Efficiencies of operation of the

system can be further evaluated by counting calls which exceed a predetermined answering time, i.e., ten (10) seconds, fifteen (15) seconds, etc. The capability does not exist to record either of these two (2) data.

- Response time to any emergency situation is dependent upon the citizen's ability to access the system. The current single telephone number with its associated trunks is used for all telephone functions: emergency reporting, administrative calls, general information calls, and outgoing calls. This is clearly a less than desirable method of telephone system utilization.

- The projected daily call volume and projected busy hour calls prove beyond doubt that there are insufficient telephone answering positions available to handle the traffic load in summer and peak summer periods.

- The current high utilization and ever-increasing popularity of automatic telephone dialers to report alarm conditions poses a constant threat of tying up incoming telephone lines, increasing the probability of an all-busy condition to a resident reporting an emergency in person.

Recommendations

- Arrange for installation of an "answer time recorder" device to provide a count of total incoming telephone calls and a count of calls delayed in being answered.

- Implement another telephone number with incoming-only trunks for the reporting of emergencies. Utilize the existing telephone numbers for administrative, general information, and outgoing calls.

- Add additional telephone answering positions to handle peak volume of incoming calls.

- Provide separate telephone numbers for automatic telephone dialer devices.
- Initiate a feasibility study, system design concept, and implementation schedule for the providing of 911 service within Ocean City, Maryland.
- Install recording device of suitable capability.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Problem Analysis

The demographic character of Ocean City, with its high tourism and high turnover volume of summer residents (estimated at 1,750,000 per year) creates a serious problem of lack of public know-how to access police and other emergency services. Telephone service frequently is not subscribed to by summer vacationers who will be staying one (1) or two (2) weeks in rental properties. This places heavy reliance upon the public pay telephone network within the city.

The current effort to solve the problem of how to make the public aware of how to access the emergency services has relied heavily on information placed in the inside cover of the telephone directory. Generally, this is a good method. However, the heavy usage of pay telephones with the telephone directories frequently missing requires additional public awareness measures.

There is another related problem - that of persons not knowing, or while under stress, not being able to advise their location.

These problems were discussed with police and telephone company representatives. Several alternatives to the problem were considered. A numerical listing of public pay telephones by telephone number can be supplied by the telephone company. Following the number would be the physical location of the booth. Therefore, by obtaining the number of the pay telephone, the location could be determined.

An alternative to the above would be the placement of stickers at each pay telephone stating: "You are located at _____ _____" (filling in the location of each separate booth). This method would be most subject to acts of vandalism

by the defacement or removal of the stickers. Also, it could prove costly, as each sticker would have to be hand printed, identifying the location.

Regardless, the application of stickers at all telephones, both private and pay, listing emergency number(s) would prove beneficial. Only one (1) type sticker need be designed and printed, which tends to keep costs within a feasible range. Vandalism could be checked by periodic inspection of pay telephones by patrol units, and sticker replacement provided when necessary. The telephone company indicated their support of such a program in the form of bill stuffers to reach private subscribers, and possible assistance in printing of the stickers for pay telephones.

Possible methods of distribution could include the use of the volunteer fire department personnel, local service organizations, clubs, church groups, etc. A combined effort organized into sections of the City is feasible. Solicitation for support of this type program could be arranged either through the Police Department, or the office of the Chief Elected Official. Support from the media would, of course, be required, which could readily be obtained as a public service project.

Inside cover listings were also discussed with the telephone company representative. It was agreed if the Ocean City Police Department instituted a separate emergency reporting number, as recommended in this report, the listing could be differentiated as to emergency, and other. A particular discrepancy regarding the listing of emergency medical service numbers was pointed out. Resolution of this problem was assured.

Findings

- The existing high reliance on public pay telephones by summer residents within the city mandates a more extensive public awareness effort on the part of the Ocean City Police Department.
- A definite need exists for a reverse listing of public pay telephones. This listing would be by number, giving the physical location of the telephone.
- Placement of labels/stickers at all telephone locations, listing the correct telephone numbers fo access police and other emergency services, should be instituted.

Recommendations

- Included in Findings above.

SYSTEM DESIGN AND UTILIZATION

Problem Analysis

Ocean City, Maryland is currently licensed for one (1) low band system and two (2) UHF (460 MHz) repeater (mobile relay) systems. Additionally, they are participants in the Statewide Police Emergency Network on frequency 39.10 MHz, as well as having cross-monitoring capability with the Delaware State Police.

Equipment utilized is state-of-the-art (current or next to current generation). An interview was conducted with Mr. Ron R. Hodges, Shop Manager for Talbot Communications, the maintenance contractor for Ocean City. Mr. Hodges agreed with Officer Hancock that there were no major maintenance or equipment problems existing at the present time. All existing equipment appears adequate as to serviceability and maintainability aspects.

Communications are currently dependent on the low band network as the backbone system on a year 'round basis. Winter time (off season) communications is principally done on this network. Summer time (in season) communication utilizes the low band network, mostly for base to mobile communication. One (1) UHF system is principally used by foot patrols in the boardwalk areas. The second licensed UHF channel is not used at all, as no repeater exists.

The inherent detriments of a low band system make this arrangement questionable, particularly when the capability exists for two (2) UHF repeater systems. The man-made noise environment is particularly high in Ocean City due to its seaside environment. It was reported that frequent problems exist due to high salt content air creating electric line arcing, thus creating disturbances to communications.

The low band systems are prone to harmful interference from such sources.

Operationally, vehicle-assigned officers do not have personal (portable) communications capability during in-season periods as the existing quantities of portable equipment available are used only by foot patrol personnel. A definite lack of communications capability is generated by this operations plan. It is entirely conceivable that a foot patrol can be involved in a particular incident and a vehicle patrol in the immediate area would be totally unaware of the incident because they operate on a different system (low band). The same situation in reverse is also a possibility. This incompatibility also places an added responsibility on dispatch personnel and generates excessive transmissions on all channels. Each urgent message must be transmitted two (2) times for the area the call is located in - once on low band and once on UHF. This is also a waste of limited frequency spectrum.

The reliance on the use of the low band system also raises the question of safety for vehicle-assigned personnel year 'round. The lack of available personal (portable) transceivers during this pericd is obvious. Off-season use of the UHF system is sporadic. It appears through observation and interview that frequently it is more convenient, for equipment accountability reasons, not to sign out a portable when on vehicle patrol.

Coverage on the UHF system is nearly, and can be, totally adequate with some system modification. The stated reluctance to primary use of the UHF system is marginal coverage in the extreme northern portion of the city. This problem could be readily resolved with the installation of one (1), (possibly two (2)), additional satellite receiver locations. The existing problem observed was talk-back capability as

opposed to talk-out coverage. The same consideration of talk-back capability must be considered, if and when the second UHF system is implemented, to insure city-wide coverage for the purpose of redundancy and radio coverage during tactical situations. Adequate satellite receivers must be provided to insure total talk-back capability city-wide on both UHF systems.

The department has progressively developed sections of specialization to better serve the populace of the city. These units work in areas of traffic, animal control, crime prevention, criminal investigation, as well as the more routine functions of administration. The immediate need for personal (portable) communications for administrative units is desirable; not, however, as critical as the need for such units on the streets. In most instances it is felt that administrative functions are more readily adaptable to the officer returning to his vehicle to establish communication as compared to a vehicle or foot patrol having the same requirement.

The departmentment also participates in a cross channel monitoring arrangement with the Delaware State Police. An inherent problem in this type arrangement is due to the open channel (all communications are heard by each party), monitoring configuration. The natural tendency is to "turn down" the volume of a radio receiver which does not pertain to you or the network. Hence, when needed, the call is unheard until initial contact is established by conventional means such as telephone contact.

Findings

- The current and continued use of the low band system, as the prime channel is,

and will continually be, prone to both man-made and electrical interference.

- Continued use of the low band system appears to be based principally on continuation of past practice with little realization of existing current and potential capability to improve communications capability.

- Participation in the low band system should be continued in each vehicle to derive the benefits of the statewide frequency as well as knowledge of the activities of the "other" functions of the department.

- Continued use of the existing low band system should be for the specialized units of the department.

- The UHF licensed systems are totally under-utilized. Co-channel usage of the licensed, but unused, second UHF repeater system could not be evaluated.

- The safety of vehicle patrol personnel needs evaluation, particularly in summer season, due to the lack of personal (portable) communications when leaving their vehicles.

- Current quantities of portables are inadequate to meet average or peak summer needs.

- Cross-monitoring is ineffective as it is currently being done.

Recommendations

- Immediately implement the already licensed second UHF repeater system based on re-evaluation of co-channel usage.
- Procure additional quantities of portable transceivers necessary to insure that both vehicle and foot patrol units are operable on the same frequency.

- Continue use of low band equipment in each vehicle to insure participation in the statewide frequency.

- Use the existing low band frequency (39.48 MHz) for specialized units within the department, and also as a data channel for ownership and wanted checks, as well as general administrative type communications.

- Add necessary satellite receiver locations in the north end of the city to enhance current system talk-back capability.

- Include adequate southern city satellite receiver locations on the recommended second UHF system to insure adequate talk-back capability city-wide.

- Install recording equipment of suitable capability.

TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Problem Analysis

Technical evaluation of the system consisted of an interview with Patrolman James W. (Jay) Hancock, III, Planning Officer for the Ocean City Police Department, and Mr. Ron R. Hodges, Shop Manager of Talbot Communications, Inc., a General Electric manufacturers representative (MR) for mobile radio. Additionally, a site observation was conducted at the headquarters installation, southern satellite receiver at the municipal fuel supply/maintenance yard, and the repeater, voting comparator, and transmitter location. The additional satellite receiver location was not visited; therefore, the findings of those visited should be extended as considerations for the remaining site(s), both for current and future installation(s).

No technical measurement evaluation was made as to equipment performance. The site visit was limited to physical observations considering facility, site capability, installation quality, and security.

The security of sites visited appeared adequate inasmuch as the equipment was contained within buildings which are designed to have limited access. There is a condition existing at the receiver & repeater sites, which should be immediately corrected. The antenna feedline (1/2 inch jacketed foamflex), which is a semi-rigid type of coaxial cable, extends a span of excessive length (from the antenna supportin structure (water tower) to the building housing the equipment) and is totally unsupported. Prevailing winds causes this cable to sway, which will eventually cause cracking in the outer sheath and subsequent loss of communications from the respective site. A messenger cable supporting the coaxial cable would reduce the chance of this happening.

Each current site has the benefit of emergency generator standby power. The capability of the generator and current state of maintenance was not evaluated. At one site it was observed that the generator was a military surplus unit of which immediate repair capability certainly is questionable. In all instances the emergency generator systems are "manual starting", requiring a person to physically travel to each location to restore electric power. This is adequate to maintain the basic purpose of each site, which is to supply water. The same capability, however, is not adequate for the communications system. Battery standby would fill this void. Using existing equipment, it is possible to add DC to 110 volt 60 cycle inverters in a standby mode which would take over operation in event of power failure or, more important, in event of a mechanical generator failing to start.

Alternately, existing repeater equipment could be updated with equipment that has battery standby capability. This would, however, require replacement of the existing base and repeater stations as well as the control stations at police headquarters. Current satellite receiving equipment either does have, or is readily capable of, battery standby options at minimal cost.

Control lines are leased from the C & P Telephone Company. As a result of an interview with the telephone company representative, it was determined that two (2) classes of service are available on leased telephone circuits which are dedicated to radio control. The classifications are standard or basic, and "special circuit protection". Public safety communication circuits warrant the "special service protection". However, it was stated that the class of service currently existing is of the lesser type. The "special service protection" has a definite higher

priority in repair and/or restoration of service. Additionally, the design of these circuits is of higher quality. The cost of this class of service is no higher than standard basic classification.

Findings

- The sites and installation of equipment at the locations visited is adequate with one (1) major exception. The antenna transmission line is free-hanging as it spans from the water tank to the building entrance.

- Although manual start generator standby power is available at all sites, current technology asks for greater reliability and assurance of no loss of communications when commercial power fails.

- Due to the high salt environment present in oceanside communities, a higher percentage of troubles can be expected, and is experienced with, telephone lines used for radio control purposes. The "special circuit protection" class of service available from the telephone company is intended to provide the best circuit design and a higher priority for repair and/or restoration of service at no additional cost.

Recommendations

- Improve installation of coaxial transmission lines by installing a messenger cable to support the coaxial cable.

- Add battery standby capability at all sites, either through direct add-on to equipment or installation of DC to AC inverters of appropriate size for radio equipment.

- Have the class of service changed on all telephone circuits (telephones and radio control lines) to the "special circuit protection" class.

SECURITY

Problem Analysis

Security in the instance of the dispatcher addresses itself to three (3) particular areas:

1. confidentiality and security of information being handled;
2. physical security of equipment;
3. personal security of the individual(s) assigned to telecommunication duties.

The physical layout of the Ocean City Police Headquarters communications area is as follows:

the main access to the building is through a lobby with glass doors which are never locked. Separating the lobby from the dispatch area is a counter approximately three (3) feet high and two and one-half (2½) feet deep. Internal rooms of the department are accessible to the left of the lobby through a door, a conference room and additional staff facilities to the right. An approximate four (4) foot passageway around an end of the counter provides access to an open stairway leading to the Chief's office, records section, criminal section, and other staff functions. Also through this passageway is wide open access to the dispatch area, containing radio control equipment, computer terminal on the State/National Computerized Information Networks, main telephone answering console, and personnel operating same. This also is the route generally utilized when bringing prisoners to the lock-up, which is located in the rear of the communications area, as well as being the path utilized by anyone needing to use the restroom facilities of this "public" building.

There is a separate room which is equipped with a two-position radio console. This facility is utilized during the summer season (mid-May through mid-September) only.

Even during these months, the telephone console and data terminal still remain accessible from the wide open area.

A solution which can be considered includes the sectionalization of the communications section from the entrance lobby, and passageway to the lockup, restrooms, and stairway area.

An alternative would be to move the communications operation totally to the separate room currently utilized during the summer months only.

Either alternative would be approximately equal in cost and effectiveness. If the adjacent room is used, physical renovation controlling access to main entrance and side rooms, stairwell, restrooms and lockup should be done. All access could be controlled by dispatch personnel. Summer operations could be enhanced with the duty desk officer handling walk-in persons at the existing counter.

Sectionalizing of the current dispatch area would offer the same advantages of controlled access, except for a "line of sight from the front entrance" problem. This would require special construction for maximum security.

Findings

- Security as it pertains to the communications area is inadequate.
- It may be that the physical security arrangement would not meet the minimum requirements for participation in the Statewide/National Computerized Information Networks.

Recommendations

- Immediate improvement to the security of the communications area, including:
  - controlled access to all portions of the building accessible through the lobby;
  - moving of the dispatch area or installation of appropriate and adequate barriers for protection of personnel and equipment.

STAFFING, TRAINING, PROCEDURES

Problem Analysis

Assignments to the telecommunication functions are made on a rotary basis, generally from the patrol section of the department. This method serves the positive function of allowing field personnel to be better aware of the dispatcher's duties, responsibility and work load. Conversely, this method of assignment impacts the proficiency and professionalism, which will vary greatly from person to person. Each individual's own personal motivation, understanding of the function of equipment and inherent capabilities are causes for these variations.

Training in all aspects of communications is minimal and limited to on-the-job training. Consequently, adherence to those specific procedures that exist cannot be expected. The procedures used by the department are not documented in a "standard operating procedure/policy manual".

Maintaining a professionally run communications network requires specialization by selected personnel assigned to each shift twenty-four (24) hours per day. In Ocean City this could be met with a minimum of one specialized person for each shift. Additional personnel required during summer periods could then be drawn from other areas (patrol and summer staff).

Findings

- Staffing of the communications system by appropriately and adequately trained personnel is sporadic at best.
- A formalized training program for communications procedures and techniques for both year 'round and seasonal personnel is non-existent.
- Policy and procedures for communications are not documented.

Recommendations

- Development of a communications unit within the police department to provide a minimum of one person on each shift year around. This unit should answer directly to the Chief of Police.

- Develop and implement a training program for all personnel of the department on communication procedures. This should be a minimum of four (4) hours for field personnel and three (3) days for desk personnel.

- Documentation in the form of a Standard Operating Procedures/Policy Manual specifically dealing with the communication function.

END