

# Memo

**To:** Portsmouth Police Department Professional Standards Unit  
**From:** Officer James Conrad  
**Date:** 1/17/06  
**Subject:** Formal complaint of City Policy/Police General Order Violations

This memo is a formal complaint relating to several incidents that have taken place over the past 5 weeks. I am filing this complaint because I feel that several employee's of the Portsmouth Police Department have been involved in behavior that is inappropriate and in violation of both City of Portsmouth Policies and Portsmouth Police Department General Orders.

Earlier this year I was ask by Sgt Nash to assist him on the MDT Project. My background is unique in that I spent the previous 7 years prior to coming to Portsmouth as a 911/Police Dispatcher for the City of Virginia Beach. I also have extensive computer hardware/software skills and skills involving electronic equipment. I assisted Sgt Nash in resolving some hardware interfacing issues involving the new MDT installations in the police vehicles. As part of the project I was issued one of the new MDT's for use in the design of a custom hardware cable/connection.

After the new MDT data network became operational late last year I was one of the first people to use a live MDT for testing the software, NCIC/VCIN connectivity and the general operations of the network. Their were several incidents in late November or early December where the 911 Communications unit dispatched calls for service with what I considered insufficient information or incorrect information (in my opinion as an experienced Police Dispatcher). Some of these incidents involved notes from messages that I read on the MDT and some involved voice communications. The current adversarial relationship is unnecessary and counter productive between Uniform Patrol units and dispatchers. There are issues on both sides. I have been the target of complaints made by dispatch to my Supervisors on several occasions. Some were warranted but others were attempts to "cut me off at the pass" so to speak, so a valid complaint of mine is heard by my supervisor after they have already complained on me. Normally I would not care but the situation is making a bad situation worse. The Police Supervisors are reluctant to complain or followup on one of my complaints because they are unfamiliar with dispatch procedures and have never been actively involved in the operation of a 911/Police Dispatch Center. I can not fault them for their reluctance but the lack of acting on some of these issues put forward not just by myself but by other officers does a disservice to us as Officers and the City of Portsmouth in General. There is a multitude of officer safety and liability concerns that are overlooked when a complaint is not followed up on. After speaking Sgt Earl about one of these

incidents he suggested that I start documenting the incidents. I decided to do that and then use the information to forward a memo up the chain of command to try and get some of the issues identified to be resolved. My intention was to identify issues, attempt to get them resolved making for a more efficient dispatch system removing potential liability/Officer Safety issues.

I made it no secret that I was documenting incidents that I perceived as issues. It appears that the 911 Center management may have been made aware of what I was doing sometime in early December. During the time that the MDT's were brought online late last year we started to use them for actual "calls for service" dispatch as they were designed and the Police General Order OPR-09 titled "Mobile Data Terminals" directed. At first there was no major issues with the use of the MDT's. Sometime several weeks into the testing phase Sgt Burke directed me to violate that Policy. He directed that everything I did be done over the air by voice radio and also by MDT. This is in direct violation of OPR-09; Listed under Officer Procedures Section 5 and Section 7. His justification was that the system was just in a test phase so everything needed to be duplicated by voice. Since I had the capability of monitoring the CAD screen on the MDT I was able to verify that the MDT messages sent were received at both ends of the system (MDT end and the CAD end) and that the system was performing properly making the voice communications redundant and needless. I agree that high priority/high threat calls should be voice dispatched so units without MDT's hear the call go out and the location. It makes no sense to do this for admin type messages such as fueling messages or when clearing the calls since there is no "Officer Safety" issue involved with those procedures. Sgt Burke approached me several times over a weeks period stating that he had received complaints from dispatch that I was not going over the radio with voice at all times. During this same time period both Sgt Burke and Officer Baker (also issued an MDT) were doing just what Sgt Burke had directed that I not do. It was brought to my attention by Dispatcher Watson that Dispatch Supervisor Williams was only making complaints against me when others were doing the same thing. I find that situation unacceptable and in violation of city policy as it can only be construed as harassment.

In the middle of December my MDT access was terminated without any explanation. It appears that Sgt Burke deleted my Badge Profiles from CAD MDT files leaving me unable to login to CAD via the "Enroute Mobile" MDT application. I was told that this was on the direction of Capt Shelton. I was told that there is a formal complaint coming from the communications center but neither myself nor my Sargent (Sgt Butler) has been provided any details as to the exact incident, nature or allegations as of the date of the writing of this document. I still had the MDT after access was terminated via "Enroute Mobile" in mid-December. I still could use the MDT to pull up a remote CAD screen and see unit status, message notes etc. I continued to document incidents using the MDT without the use of the actual MDT application "Enroute Mobile".

Later in December I was doing some personal research at home on the internet involving the City Budget and the E911 Tax that is collected via the telephone company and provided to localities as revenue. As part of that research I initiated a FOIA request to the City of Portsmouth Finance Office making a request for some financial documents involving those same items. The request was received by the City Attorney's office in the first week of January. On Friday of that week Dispatcher Watson was called into Captain Shelton's Office for a meeting. During the course of

this meeting Captain Shelton made several veiled threats to Dispatcher Watson in reference to me. Dispatcher Watson paraphrased the statements made by Captain Shelton as follows; "Conrad got lucky this week, I was not put into another assignment. If I had he would be at the top of my list", "Tell Conrad he doesn't know who he's messing with". I have never met Captain Shelton nor had any contact with him of any kind. Since any issues Captain Shelton has with me should be between him and my Chain of Command and has nothing to do with Dispatcher Watson nor is it any of her business I find these remarks made by Captain Shelton to be inappropriate and of a threatening manner. It is suspect that these remarks are made within several days of the City receiving a FOIA request that includes documents from the E911 Center. I am within my right as a citizen of the Commonwealth to institute FOIA requests and having Captain Shelton make such comments has an appearance of threatened retribution against me for exercising my rights under the law.

During the second week of January Sgt Butler was directed by Capt Shelton to seize my MDT without explanation. The MDT was turned over to Sgt Butler as directed. I suspect that my continued documentation of issues was raising concerns someplace but I have no proof and it is mere conjecture on my part.

I am requesting that the Professional Standards Unit investigate the policy violations and the implied threats perpetuated and take appropriate action against those involved.

Very Respectfully,

Officer James Conrad,  
Uniform Patrol, Second Platoon  
Portsmouth Police Department