Mobile Digital Computer Use

420.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE
The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper access, use and application of the Mobile Digital Computer MDC system in order to ensure appropriate access to confidential records from local, state and national law enforcement databases, and to ensure effective electronic communications between department members and METCAD.

420.2 POLICY
Urbana Police Department members using the MDT shall comply with all appropriate federal and state rules and regulations and shall use the MDT in a professional manner, in accordance with this policy.

420.3 RESTRICTED ACCESS AND USE
MDT use is subject to the Information Technology Use and Protected Information policies.

Members shall not access the MDT system if they have not received prior authorization and the required training. Members shall immediately report unauthorized access or use of the MDT by another member to their supervisors or Shift Supervisors.

Use of the MDT system to access law enforcement databases or transmit messages is restricted to official activities, business-related tasks and communications that are directly related to the business, administration or practices of the Department. In the event that a member has questions about sending a particular message or accessing a particular database, the member should seek prior approval from his/her supervisor.

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing or any other inappropriate messages on the MDT system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message or access a law enforcement database under another member's name or to use the password of another member to log in to the MDT system unless directed to do so by a supervisor. Members are required to log off the MDT or secure the MDT when it is unattended. This added security measure will minimize the potential for unauthorized access or misuse.

420.3.1 USE WHILE DRIVING
Use of the MDT by the vehicle operator should generally be limited to times when the vehicle is stopped. When the vehicle is in motion, the operator should only attempt to read messages that are likely to contain information that is required for immediate enforcement, investigative or safety needs.

Short transmissions, such as a license plate check, are permitted if it reasonably appears that it can be done safely. In no case shall an operator attempt to send or review lengthy messages while the vehicle is in motion.

420.3.2 DISPATCH FUNCTIONS AND STATUS CHANGES
The MDC system will not replace the dispatch function and routine calls will not be dispatched via the MDC. Some sensitive information may be sent via the MDC if it would enhance officer/citizen safety. All dispatched information sent via MDC shall be acknowledged on the radio.

Shift Supervisors shall be notified when calls are made via the MDC.

All traffic stops and unit status checks shall continue to be handled by radio.

All hits received via an MDC shall be verified by METCAD.

420.3.3 EMERGENCY ACTIVATION ON MDC
Officers will depress the EMERGENCY button only if in dire need of assistance and unable to use the radio or believes it is necessary for a justifiable reason.

420.4 OPERATION
Routine LEADS inquiries and routine car to car traffic shall be made by MDC whenever possible. Officers should routinely check their e-mail each shift.

Those using MDC's shall keep them clean and avoid spilling liquid or food into them.

Officers are required to completely turn off MDC's at the end of their shift so as not to drain the squad car batteries. Officers should allow the "master power" switch to the docking stations to remain "on" so that MDC's can fully charge while squad cars are not in use.

Officers can use the MDC to change duty status, but the officer is still required to clear all calls over the radio.

420.5 TRAINING
Employees shall not use MDC's until properly trained and having been signed onto the system by the IWIN Manager. Field Training Officers shall instruct recruits on the use of the MDC.

420.6 DOCUMENTATION OF ACTIVITY
Except as otherwise directed by the Shift Supervisor or other department-established protocol, all calls for service assigned by a dispatcher should be communicated by voice over the police radio and electronically via the MDT unless security or confidentiality prevents such broadcasting.

MDT and voice transmissions are used to document the member's daily activity. To ensure accuracy:

(a) All contacts or activity shall be documented at the time of the contact.

(b) Whenever the activity or contact is initiated by voice, it should be documented by a dispatcher.

(c) Whenever the activity or contact is not initiated by voice, the member shall document it via the MDT.

420.6.1   STATUS CHANGES

All changes in status (e.g., arrival at scene, meal periods, in service) will be transmitted over the police radio or through the MDT system.

Members responding to in-progress calls should advise changes in status over the radio to assist other members responding to the same incident. Other changes in status can be made on the MDT when the vehicle is not in motion.

420.7   EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

420.7.1   MALFUNCTIONING

Whenever possible, members will not use vehicles with malfunctioning MDTs. Whenever members must drive a vehicle in which the MDT is not working, they shall notify METCAD. It shall be the responsibility of the dispatcher to document all information that will then be transmitted verbally over the police radio.