Department Voicemail and Email

218.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure establishes guidelines for the use and management of department phone voicemail and email communication. The Department recognizes the importance of customer service and affirms that the public must have reliable ways to leave messages for department personnel.

The purpose of this SOP is to ensure that all department members remain accessible and responsive to the community we serve. It also provides updated guidance following the transition from a centralized voicemail system to the upgraded Cloud-Based Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone and mobile phone systems.

218.2 VOICEMAIL

When a department member is issued a Zoom VoIP telephone line and/or a department mobile phone, it is their responsibility to promptly set up the voicemail feature so that callers may leave messages.

After a voicemail has been addressed, it should be deleted unless there is a specific reason to retain it temporarily. Failure to clear voicemails may result in the system reaching its storage capacity, preventing new messages from being received. Each member is responsible for ensuring their voicemail remains functional and accessible.

Currently, the department's cellular service provider is Verizon. Verizon's voicemail system allows a maximum of 20 voice messages, each with a duration of up to three minutes. Once this limit is reached, no additional voice messages can be received until storage space is cleared.

Zoom VoIP phone system does not have a storage limit but, imposes a maximum voicemail length of five minutes per message.

218.3 VOICEMAIL GREETINGS

When a department member is issued a Zoom VoIP telephone line or department mobile phone, they should set up their voicemail with the following standard greeting:

"Hello, you have reached [Title and Name] with the San Mateo Police Department. I am unable to take your call at the moment and will return your call as soon as possible. Please leave your name, phone number, and a case or incident number you are calling about if available.

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If this is an emergency, please hang up and dial 911. Please note that I work a [schedule, e.g., rotating 4 on/4 off] schedule. If you are calling on one of my scheduled days off, I will return your call on my first day back at work. For urgent matters, please contact Police Communications at (650) 522-7700. Thank you."

If a department member has a specific operational need for an alternative voicemail greeting (e.g., related to assignment, specialized duties, or case work), the request must be submitted for review. Approval will be granted on a case-by-case basis by a lieutenant or manager.

218.4 ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS EXPECTATIONS

Department members should at a minimum check all voicemails and emails at the start and end of each shift. All communications received during scheduled days off must be addressed no later than the member's first day back at work. At minimum, the response should acknowledge receipt of the message and confirm that the concern is being addressed.

218.5 BUSINESS CARDS

With the department's transition to a Cloud-Based VoIP phone system and mobile phones, some business cards may still display the former centralized voicemail number.

Until you need to order more business cards, department members should manually update any cards distributed by crossing out the outdated voicemail number and clearly writing their department-issued mobile phone number. This ensures that members of the public and partner agencies have accurate contact information.

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