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Signed

Steven R. Cole
28th April 2017

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Any communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:-
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,
HOME OFFICE,
and the following number quoted:-
H.O. 69/49
P.1.

HOME OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
S.W.1.
5th April, 1949.

Sir,

HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR NO. 69/1949

Police Wireless: "Walkie-talkies"

I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that arrangements have been made whereby portable "walkie-talkie" wireless sets will be available for the use of police forces. The sets, which consist of battery-operated portable transmitters and receivers combined in one case and worn in the manner of a ruck-sack supported by shoulder-harness, operate on very high frequencies within the frequency-bands allocated for police purposes, and have a working range varying from one to several miles according to the character of the location in which they are used.

These sets are particularly useful for the control of traffic and pedestrians at sporting and similar events, where large concentrations of vehicles and persons are likely to interfere with the flow of normal traffic. In conjunction with a central control station (which may be a walkie-talkie set) they enable a controlling officer to be kept advised of traffic conditions over a wide radius, and to dispose of his available forces to the best advantage. Use of the sets, e.g. in connection with searches for crashed aircraft, missing persons, escaped prisoners, etc., enables search parties to be kept in contact, re-directed, or called off, as circumstances may dictate.

Transmission and reception is carried out on a single frequency, and one frequency has been allocated to sets working in the northern half of the country and another for the southern half. It is impracticable for the sets to be issued to work on other frequencies, as for example the frequency of any locally-operated police wireless scheme, and therefore where the sets are required to be used in combination with such a local scheme, it will be necessary for the control station of the walkie-talkies to be associated with a station (fixed or mobile) of the normal scheme. Where a force wishing to make use of walkie-talkies has not yet been equipped with a normal wireless scheme, it will be possible for arrangements to be made, on adequate notice being given to the Home Office Regional Wireless Engineer, for the provision on loan of very high frequency apparatus of normal type to supplement the walkie-talkie sets, to provide a means of relaying from central control to a distant point.

Applications for the loan of walkie-talkie sets should be addressed to the appropriate Regional Wireless Engineer, as much notice as possible being given in advance of requirements. Where events such as race-meetings, agricultural shows, etc., are concerned, it would be advisable to send with the application a rough sketch-plan of the area to be dealt with, indicating the points at which it is proposed to post the walkie-talkies and to have the central control station, so that the Regional Wireless Engineer may be in a position to advise as to the best method of achieving the desired results.

The charge to be made for the hire of walkie-talkie equipment is 10/- per day per set, with a minimum charge of £1 per set. It will be the responsibility of the police force concerned to collect the sets from the Regional Depot when required, and to return them to the Depot after use; and the charge will be based on the rate of 10/- for each 24 hours or part of 24 hours, from the time of collection to the time of return.

/Where

The Clerk of the Police Authority.
The Chief Constable.

Where fixed or mobile sets of normal type have to be lent by the Regional Depot to supplement the walkie-talkie sets, the charge will be £1 per day per two-way set, to include temporary installation in a vehicle or building and subsequent dismantling. In this case the daily rate will be charged for the same period as for the associated walkie-talkie sets, and not for the time from installation to dismantling, since these operations must be carried out at the convenience of the Regional Depot staffs.

The extent of the demand for the loan of walkie-talkie equipment cannot be estimated and until experience has been gained it would be uneconomic to maintain a large number of sets on hand. For the time being, therefore, the number of sets available at any Regional Depot will be very limited. If demands from more than one force are received in respect of the same period, every effort will be made to meet such demands by borrowing sets from another Regional Depot. Occasions may, however, arise when sets will not be available when required by more than one force at the same time: in such cases priority of supply will be given where the sets are required in connection with the investigation of crime or the saving of life.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

S. J. Kavanagh

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M280/49