



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Maritime
Administration

MANUAL OF ORDERS

MARITIME ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

REVOKES

MAO 800-5, dtd.
6-16-75

NO.

800-5

EFFECTIVE DATE

August 9, 1985

SUBJECT

FEDERAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (FTS) PRECEDENCE SYSTEM

Section 1. Purpose:

This order implements the Federal Telecommunications System (FTS) Precedence System. The purpose of this system is to provide a readiness capability, which can expeditiously handle messages and calls transmitted over Government and public communications facilities in all types of situations in times of peace or national emergencies.

Section 2. Procedures and Responsibilities:

Title 41 CFR 201-41.009 (copy attached) describes the precedence system, its applicability, and the procedures and responsibilities governing its use.

Section 3. System Utilization:

The following officials shall be responsible for ensuring that all personnel under their jurisdiction are fully aware of the purpose of the FTS Precedence System, and that the assignment of precedence designators is strictly in accordance with the criteria contained in 41 CFR 201-41.009:

Associate Administrators
Office Directors
Region Directors
Superintendent, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Reserve Fleet Superintendents
Foreign Maritime Representatives

Earnest Hawkins
EARNEST HAWKINS
Associate Administrator
for Administration

41 CFR Chapter 201 - Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR)

§ 201-41.009 FTS Precedence System.

§ 201-41.009-1 General.

This section provides for the establishment of an FTS Precedence System for use in all forms of voice and record communication services provided by GSA on FTS networks.

§ 201-41.009-2 Categories of precedence.

(a) *Flash.* Telephone calls and messages designated "Flash" take precedence over and preempt all other categories and will be handled as fast as possible. Flash precedence is reserved for telephone calls and messages pertaining to command and control of military forces essential to defense retaliation; critical intelligence essential to national survival; conduct of diplomatic negotiations critical to the arresting or limiting of hostilities; dissemination of critical civil alert information essential to national survival; continuity of Federal Government functions essential to national survival; fulfillment of critical U.S. internal security; and Presidential Action Notices essential to national survival during attack or preattack condition.

(b) *Immediate.* Telephone calls and messages designated "Immediate" take precedence over and preempt calls and messages designated "Priority" or "Routine." Immediate precedence is reserved generally for calls and messages pertaining to situations which gravely affect the security of national allied forces; reconstitution of forces in a postattack period; intelligence essential to national security; conduct of diplomatic negotiations to reduce or limit the threat of war; implementation of Federal Government actions essential to national survival; situations which gravely affect the internal security of the United States; civil defense actions concerning direction of the population and its survival; disasters or events of extensive seriousness having an immediate and detrimental effect on the welfare of the population; and vital information having an immediate effect on aircraft, spacecraft, or missile operations.

(c) *Priority.* Telephone calls and messages designated "Priority" take precedence over and preempt calls and

messages designated "Routine." Priority precedence is reserved generally for calls and messages concerning information essential to the conduct of Government operations. Such information includes important intelligence information; important diplomatic information; important information concerning the launch, operation, or recovery of spacecraft missiles or movement of naval, air, or ground forces; and information concerning coordination among Government agencies about emergency preparedness functions; major civilian aircraft accidents; maintenance of the health, safety, and welfare of the population; critical public utility services; distribution of essential food and supplies critical to health; and continuity of critical Government functions.

(d) *Routine.* Normal communications which require rapid transmission but do not require preferential handling are considered "Routine." All calls and messages not specifically designated otherwise are considered Routine.

§ 201-41.009-3 Application and use.

Careful selection and assignment of precedence by the system user is of the utmost importance since calls and messages will be handled solely by the precedence designation given to FTS operating personnel.

(a) *Telephone calls.* Precedence telephone calls are handled only by FTS operators. Automatic preemption is not available on the FTS intercity voice network. FTS operators will preempt calls only when necessary to make facilities available for a higher precedence call. FTS operators will provide assistance in handling precedence calls and will require the originator's name, agency identification number, and telephone number being called. FTS users when requested by the operator to terminate a conversation shall do so immediately. Precedence calls will be ticketed and a record of all such calls will be maintained by GSA.

(b) *Messages.* Precedence messages shall be designated by the originator. This precedence is indicated in the heading of the messages by a prosign (letter). Flash messages shall be

designated by the prosign "Z"; Immediate messages by the prosign "O"; and Priority by the prosign "P" SF 14 provides a heading space for precedence and should be used by agencies for this purpose.

§ 201-41.009-4 Agency responsibility.

The head of each agency is responsible for designating personnel authorized to use the FTS Precedence System and shall ensure that authorized users adhere to the definitions and instructions contained herein. FTS Precedence System will be in effect on a day-to-day basis, and, therefore, it is essential that calls meet the criteria outlined. Calls and messages shall not be assigned a precedence higher than that described by the criteria.