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City's police radio system knocked out for two hours after device failure

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The city's police radio system went silent for two hours early yesterday after a piece of communications equipment apparently failed.

Police Chief Inspector Michael Feeney said the digital-equipment device, which is part of Verizon's telecommunications system, "went out" about 1:15 a.m. and knocked out eight of the city's 10 radio towers.

On the street, that translated to dead air for cops in Northeast Philadelphia and portions of South Philadelphia, Feeney said.

Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and other officials were summoned to Police Headquarters while the system remained quiet.

Verizon technicians identified the problem and had the system up and running again by 3:15 a.m., but it briefly went down again two hours later, Feeney said.

FOP vice president John McGrody said officers reported radio problems across the city hours after the glitch was supposedly fixed.

Feeney said patrol cops will ride in pairs until Verizon provides a detailed explanation of the failure, which also affected cell-phone signals in some areas.

He noted that yesterday's failure was not caused by the often-maligned Motorola digital radio system, which city officials recently agreed to upgrade for \$34 million.

"We don't care whose fault it is," McGrody said. "We just want it fixed, so our officers and our community can be safe. *

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