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## Police Radio Blackout Hits Charlotte For 2nd Time In 1 Week



Posted: 12:18 pm EST November 8, 2010 Updated: 6:10 pm EST November 8, 2010

**CHARLOTTE, N.C.** -- For the second time in a week, all police radios in Charlotte fell silent for nearly an hour.

"What happened today, we just don't know," said Chuck Robinson, the director of Charlotte's Business Support Systems, the agency that oversees radio communications.

Police said they had to roll with the punches in order to make sure response times didn't suffer. More than 100 officers on patrol Monday morning were ordered back to their division to make sure they were paired with an officer that had a working laptop in his car. With no radio, the vehicle laptops became the only way to communicate.

"That was kind of the worst case scenario for our agency," said Capt. Chuck Adkins. "We had 70 911 calls that came in from the time we had a radio disruption."

Police said response time was not affected by the outage.

Robinson said the outage technically lasted eight minutes, but Adkins said because the police department had to reboot its radio system, the equipment was ultimately affected for about an hour.

Business Support Systems runs a weekly test on the radios, which takes the radios off regular power and put them temporarily on batteries and a back-up generators. Last Monday morning, the generator failed. This Monday morning, there was a problem with the batteries.

"The first one we understand what happened and why it happened. We thought we had all the fixes in place to make sure it didn't happen again," Robinson said. "This was one we were really blown away. It's a huge issue for us, and our staff takes that responsibility extremely seriously."

Robinson admitted that even know he knows what happened, he can't pinpoint why it happened. And because of that, he said the same problem could happen again during the next weekly test.

For the time being, he said, the test won't be run on Monday mornings. Instead, it will be done overnight or during the weekend, when it's less busy. He said he didn't know if the change would be permanent.

CMPD said they're working on a plan with BSS to maintain basic radio contact even if the system fails. It's not in place yet, and they said they're not sure when it will be up and running.

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