

*Are You Just A
Dispatcher?*

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...before we get started

- Please set wireless telephones & pagers to “vibrate”
- If you gotta go, you gotta go....
- Don't be afraid to ask questions....
- Don't be afraid to make comments....
- Let's make the most of our time together....

....all about me

- Began as a volunteer Firefighter in Chesterfield Co. in 1984
- EMT & Dispatcher in City of Richmond
- 13 years communications with VDEM
- Virginia Office of EMS Communications Coordinator since 2002
- Volunteer Firefighter/EMT for Hanover Co. Fire/EMS

Are You Just A Dispatcher?

What does “Just a dispatcher”
mean to you?

Questions To Discuss

Who do you work for?

Stereotypes...justified?

Where do you hang your dirty laundry?

Who's your friend?

Can you make a difference?

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if.....

You have perfected a comeback to the
comment, **“I pay your salary!”**

with **“I pay taxes, too”**

Who do you work for?

Police Department

Sheriff's Office

Fire Department

EMS Division/Department

Public Safety Communications
Division/Department

Who works for you?

Police Department

Sheriff's Office

Fire Department

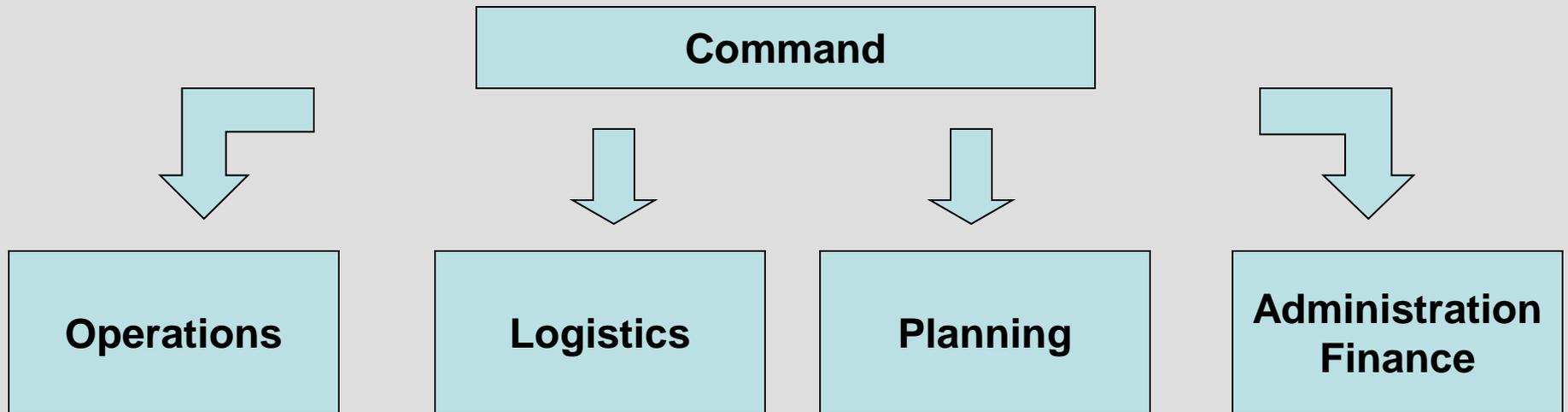
EMS Division/Department

...and all local Italian, Chinese,
Mexican and any other restaurant
that delivers to the center

Looking at the BIG picture

...what role does communications,
9-1-1 and the dispatcher play in the
Public Safety System?

Incident Command System



Where is Communications?

Logistics

Lo.gis.tics / loh-jis-tiks, luh-]

–*noun (used with a singular or plural verb)* 1.the branch of military science and operations dealing with the procurement, supply, and maintenance of equipment, with the movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel, with the provision of facilities and services, and with related matters. 2.the planning, implementation, and coordination of the details of a business or other operation.

[Origin: 1875–80; < F *logistique* quartermaster's work, equiv. to *log(er)* to [lodge](#), be quartered (said of troops) + *-istique* [-istic](#); see [-ics](#)]

Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.0.1)

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Logistics

Getting the
Right Resource

To the
Right Place

At the
Right Time

It's not your job to arrest people

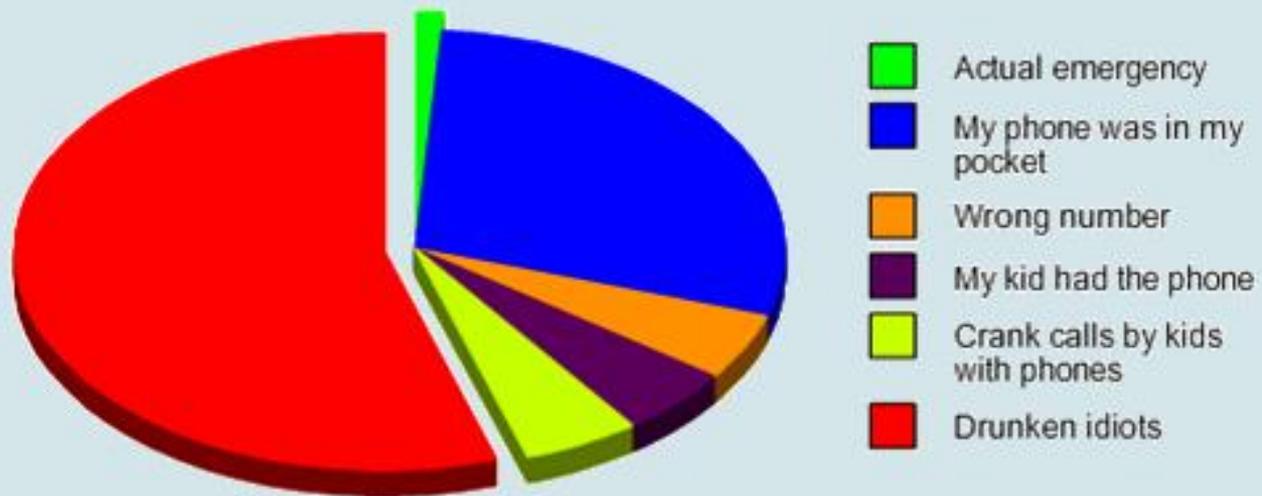
It's not your job to fight fire

It's not your job to treat injured people

THIS IS YOUR JOB

It's your job to make sure those who need help get the help they need, to determine which resource is to respond to which request and keep track of all emergency services resources on every emergency response within the area you have responsibility for and determine if and when additional resources will be called while keeping a real time log of all activities going on at any given time.

Types of 911 calls



Whose radio is it anyway?

NET CONTROL ~ A radio station that performs communications network control functions, such as controlling radio traffic and enforcing operational discipline.

(this is you....)

Things to remember....

Size matters – metaphorically speaking, you have the biggest stick.

Take charge – everyone needs to go through you.

Keep control – stay within standard operational procedure and protocol.

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if.....

You can talk on the phone, listen to the radio and type requests into the computer at the same time without missing anything then resume a conversation with coworkers from four hours earlier, in mid-sentence, and everyone remembers what you were talking about.

After all is said and done...

Keep in mind, who you really work for are the citizens in your area who depend on you 24/7/365 to be there and do the best you can do to give them with the highest level of professionalism you can provide.

Are you a stereotype?



You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You've met, dated, married and divorced a law enforcement officer, firefighter or EMS provider....

more than once.

Labeling Theory

“...People come to define themselves according to how others perceive them, this is the Looking Glass Self.”

Charles Horton Cooley, Sociologist, 1864~1929

(similar to the Societal Reaction Theory
developed by Sociologist Howard Becker)

Labeling Theory

Another way to phrase this...

“You are what people think you are”

Stereotypes about Dispatchers

Stupid?

Lazy?

Incompetent?

“Those who can, do...those who can't,
dispatch”

Stereotypes about Dispatchers

Other stereotypes you've heard and experienced?

Is there any truth to them?

What can you do or have you done to dispel them?

Respect is earned

The Basic Principle For Dispatchers:

Assume all field personnel are idiots until their actions prove your assumption.

The Basic Principle For Field Personnel:

Assume all dispatchers are idiots until their actions prove your assumption.

One Word

PROFESSIONAL

Be Professional

Know your equipment

Know your protocols/procedures

Know your resources

Hone your skills

Be informed

Act Professionally

What you say is important

How you say it is important

Interaction with the public

Interaction with co-workers

Look Professional

Uniform Policy

Dress Code

Does it matter?



Some you just won't change

“...well, they can be there, but I don't know what they'll say. How hard could it have been to make a few phone calls?”

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You've learned to live with knowing the equipment that you depend on to do your job and protect others was purchased at the lowest bid possible.

*Where do you hang
your dirty laundry?*



Gossip in the workplace

UN-Professional

Distracting

Erodes Trust



Gossip in the workplace

Be Observant.

See how people relate and learn the “unofficial” roles certain individuals in your center have adopted. If you notice one person who consistently talks about other staff or field personnel, take the necessary actions to have as little non-work related conversations with that person as possible.

Gossip in the workplace

Stay Busy.

Gossipmongers want attention. If you're staying busy with your work, you can't be available to appreciate their latest tales.

Gossip in the workplace

Don't Participate.

If there is gossip at your center, let it stop with you. If someone passes a "juicy story" on to you, don't pass it any further. Take personal responsibility to act with integrity.

Gossip in the workplace

Turn It Around

Say something positive. It isn't nearly as much fun to spread negative news if it's spoiled by mentioning something positive about the person or department being attacked.

Gossip in the workplace

Keep Your Private Life Private.

Be careful with whom you trust personal information. Remember, if they are gossiping about others, they **will** gossip about you. Don't give them ammunition.

Gossip in the workplace

Choose your friends wisely.

You spend a good deal of time at work so it's natural for friendships to develop. Share information sparingly until you are sure that you have built up a level of trust.

Gossip in the workplace

Behave appropriately at work.

Remember that work is not the place to share all types of information.

Gossip in the workplace

Be Direct.

If you confront that person, privately and confidently tell him or her such behavior is making you uncomfortable, it's likely to stop.

Gossip in the workplace

Don't Be Afraid To Go To A Superior.

Gossip wastes time, hurts morale and undermines trust. An agency interested in a healthy work environment will need to correct this type of situation.

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You find humor in other people's misery and you're only happy if you have something to complain about.

Who's your friend?



You aren't alone....

You have friends!

“The key is not having all the answers, but knowing where to get them.”

Who's your friend?

The Media



*There is nothing wrong with
shameless self promotion*

Work with your agencies public
information office to spread the word....

New employees

New equipment

Education programs

Yet more shameless self promotion

Exemplary employee performance

National Public Safety

TeleCommunicators Week

Other ideas?

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You read newspaper accounts of a major incident that occurred during your shift and can point out all the incorrect information

...and then laugh about it.



What REALLY sells newspapers?

Gathered from DISPATCH Monthly
Newshound

Two Philadelphia (Penn.) police dispatchers have been arrested and charged with trying to sell vehicle registration information to someone they believed was a drug dealer.

What REALLY sells newspapers?

The Delaware River (NJ) Port Authority has settled a lawsuit with the estate of a woman who was kidnapped and murdered at a train station in 2001. A passerby called dialed 911, but claim a Camden dispatcher, did not dispatch officers to the incident.

A Gloucester County (NJ) 911 police dispatcher has been charged with official misconduct for allegedly altering CAD records related to a domestic disturbance.

What REALLY sells newspapers?

PITTSBURGH – The mother of a man charged with killing three Pittsburgh police officers told a 911 dispatcher he had weapons, but the dispatcher didn't relay that information to officers, the official in charge of county dispatchers says. The dispatcher should have asked more questions about the weapons, but didn't, and certainly should have told officers so they could take necessary precautions, Allegheny County Chief of Emergency Services Robert Full told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You're aware of the real potential for being "discovered" when the news media arrives to cover department screw-ups.

Who's your friend?

Elected Officials



Share the spotlight!

Make sure you develop and maintain a good relationship with the elected officials in your area. Invite them to functions, public outreach and education programs or any other event that is important to your agency. Make sure there is room for them in photographs. They will never turn down an opportunity to let everyone know how they support the important work you do.

Something to remember...

If you are a line dispatcher, it may not be your place to have direct contact with the press or elected officials. Don't overstep your authority or "exceed your pay scale". Talk to those who are responsible for these contacts and see what they are doing.

Who's your friend?

Association of Public Safety
Communications Officials



What is APCO?

A member driven association of communications professionals that provides leadership; influences public safety communications decisions of government and industry; promotes professional development; and, fosters the development and use of technology for the benefit of the public.

www.apcointl.org

www.virginia-apco.org

National Emergency Number Association

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) mission is to foster the technological advancement, availability and implementation of a universal emergency telephone number system (9-1-1). In carrying out its mission, NENA promotes research, planning, training and education. The protection of human life, the preservation of property, and the maintenance of general community security are among NENA's objectives.

www.nena.org

Private Companies and Training

PowerPhone, Inc.

www.powerphone.com

National Academies Of Emergency Dispatch,

www.emergencydispatch.org

National Emergency Communications Institute,

www.neci911.com

Commonwealth of Virginia
Resources

Virginia Information
Technologies Agency,
Public Safety Communications
Division

www.911.virginia.gov

Commonwealth of Virginia
Resources

Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice
Services

www.dcjs.virginia.gov

Commonwealth of Virginia
Resources

Commonwealth Interoperability
Coordinators Office

www.interoperability.publicsafety.virginia.gov

Commonwealth of Virginia
Resources

Virginia Dept. Of Fire Programs

www.vafire.com

Commonwealth of Virginia
Resources

Virginia Office of Emergency Medical
Services

www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems

Anyone else?

What other resources are out there to help you get assistance and the answers you need to be the best and deliver the best?

You're a 9-1-1 Dispatcher if...

You refuse to allow anyone to say “have a quiet shift” and believe the statement, “It sure is quiet!” will bring down the wrath of the 9-1-1 gods upon you.

Can you make a difference?

What steps can you take to ensure the communications branch of public safety is properly represented in your area?

(this is the part where YOU discuss!)

Some thoughts....

Remember who you work for

Be PROFESSIONAL

Never miss an opportunity to shut up

You CAN'T do it alone

You are your own best friend

And finally....

If you can do everything discussed today with the confidence and professionalism required, you can proudly say

“I’m just a dispatcher”

Questions or Comments?

Thanks for your time and attention

Ken Crumpler

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Virginia Office of Emergency Medical
Services