



Santa Cruz Consolidated Emergency Communications Center

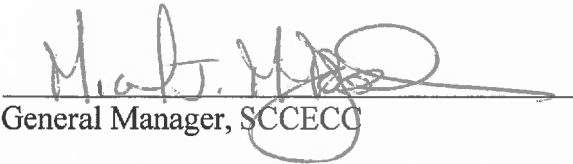
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9-1-1 FIRE
POLICE
MEDICAL

COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS MISCELLANEOUS POLICY/PROCEDURE

Policy No.: 7450
Date Issued: September 27, 1999
Date Revised:

APPROVED: 
General Manager, SCCECC

SUBJECT: DISPATCHER ASSISTANTS

The purpose of this policy is to explain the role of the Dispatcher Assistants in Communications Center operations. To ensure the smooth operation of the Communications Center, it is critical that all Operations personnel -- dispatchers, assistants and supervisors -- understand the Dispatcher Assistants' role.

Dispatcher Assistants support the Dispatchers by providing routine telephone, clerical, data entry and other technical assistance thus enabling the Dispatchers to provide a higher level of service as they carry out their radio, telephone and emergency 911 operational duties in dispatching public safety personnel and equipment.

By design, this explanation is a policy statement and not an operational procedure. As a policy it will be used to influence and determine decisions and actions while taking into consideration all other factors that affect the flow of work and/or the assignment of duties within the Communications Center.

Telephone Responsibilities for 7-Digit Public Numbers

Dispatcher Assistants do not answer 911 or Operator Assist phone lines. Dispatcher Assistants answer 7-digit phone lines labeled as public numbers for the Law Enforcement User Agencies. Given that Dispatcher Assistants are answering 7-digit phone lines, a caller has already indicated (by not dialing 911) that s/he expects a less-than-911 response.

The most important characteristic of a Dispatcher Assistant is his/her ability to accurately and quickly determine if any given call should be transferred to a Dispatcher. The speed with which

Dispatcher Assistants process phone calls will improve with time and experience. Two to three weeks after the completion of training, Dispatcher Assistants are expected to multitask the 7-digit phone lines.

Dispatcher Assistants will not process first priority (red) incidents; first priority incidents will be quickly transferred to a Dispatcher. First priority incidents are the highest priority calls and are those in which the physical well-being of a person is in jeopardy. Examples include, but are not limited to: medicals; injury traffic accidents; suicide attempts; robberies; robbery alarms; crimes involving weapons; fights; burglaries to occupied dwellings; domestic disputes; prowlers; large scale disasters; fires; violent 5150's; etc.

Dispatcher Assistants will process all third priority (green) incidents. These calls for service involve activities where the time element dictates that no person or property is in jeopardy, are informational in nature, or are "public nuisance" type calls. Examples include, but are not limited to: loud parties; loud music; cold reports; barking dogs; parking violations; subjects loitering, etc.

Dispatcher Assistants will handle some second priority (yellow) calls. These calls are in-progress or just occurred calls involving activity where the threat involves property or nonviolent crimes. These types of calls must be carefully evaluated to ensure accurately that no person is in immediate danger. If a person is in imminent danger, the Assistant will immediately transfer the call to a Dispatcher. Dispatcher Assistants will handle as many second priority calls as they can. It is impossible to specify, by type, exactly which second priority incidents Dispatcher Assistants will or will not handle as each incident will present different circumstances determining if the call should be handled by a Dispatcher or an Assistant. Assistants should not hesitate to transfer a second priority call to a Dispatcher if they are not sure how best to handle the call. Dispatcher Assistants' proficiency in second priority calls will increase and with time and experience Assistants should be transferring less second priority calls to Dispatchers. Dispatchers, knowing that Assistants are only transferring the calls they are unsure of, will handle the transferred calls without complaint. Supervisors and Dispatchers will be supportive and encourage Dispatcher Assistants to handle as many second priority calls as possible as the end result is less lower priority phone calls for the Dispatchers enabling them to provide a higher level of service on higher priority phone calls and to field personnel

Telephone Responsibilities for Field Personnel and Allied Agency Numbers

Dispatcher Assistants will answer 7-digit phone lines designated for field personnel, User Agency and Allied Agency use. Many times, a Dispatcher Assistant can easily provide the information and/or service requested on these lines (i.e., generating a case number, looking up incident times, running a license plate, putting a unit on duty, etc.). If an Assistant cannot provide the information or service, s/he will ask a Dispatcher for help or pass the call to a Dispatcher. Again, given time and experience, Dispatcher Assistants will handle more of these types of calls without assistance from a Dispatcher.

Other Responsibilities

While Dispatcher Assistants are trained to use the various computers and databases within the Communications Center, they will not “back up” primary radio dispatchers by responding to requests generated over the radio channels. Assistants will support the primary radio dispatchers by making outbound calls, when requested (i.e., confirming warrants, calling for a tow truck, initiating pages, etc.). Assistants will not monitor radio channels to ascertain when an outbound call needs to be made. It is the Dispatcher’s responsibility to relay the necessary information to an Assistant.

As with all roles and responsibilities within the Communications Center operation, circumstances and individual abilities fluctuate. Common sense must prevail when organizing the flow of work through the center and, ultimately, the Dispatcher Assistants should provide as much assistance as possible to the Dispatchers as they carry out their duties in dispatching public safety personnel and equipment.