

Idaho Emergency Communications Commission



Idaho

Emergency

Communications

Commission

Entry Level Emergency Communications Training Manual

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“The Mission of the PSAP Standards Committee is to promote professional development and standardization of public safety communications in the state of Idaho.”

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Introduction:

Congratulations on choosing an exciting and rewarding career in public safety telecommunications. Public safety communications is more than simply answering a phone and dispatching units. As an emergency dispatcher you will have unique and rewarding opportunities to make a positive impact on people's lives. You will find over time that these opportunities come in multiple forms, from the routine non-emergency calls to high priority life and death emergencies. Whatever the case, each and every time you speak to a citizen on the phone or a responder on the radio, you will have the opportunity to make a positive impact.

With these rewarding opportunities will come some challenges along the way. Public safety communications is the hub of all public safety. Communications centers provide a vital link between citizens and responders. Dispatchers who work in these communications centers are truly the first responders, and in most cases doing your job well will have a large impact on the resolution of an incident. The profession of emergency telecommunications takes commitment, dedication, a desire to help people, and training. To start this training we will look at the main roles of a Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST), Professionalism, and Ethics and Values. Understanding these roles will provide you an overview of the position, and set the foundation for which you can build more knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Roles of the Public Safety Telecommunicator:

Public safety telecommunicators play many roles within an organization. Some of the roles may be defined within job descriptions or policy and procedure. Other roles will not be strictly defined and more importantly will arise from a situation you are currently facing. That being said, it is extremely important to be flexible and ready to jump in and play any role that is needed. There are a few major roles that are common throughout most communication centers. It is these roles that we will focus on in this text. Understanding these roles will make learning the rest of your position easier. As you read this section always keep in mind that these are basic roles that are commonly found and over time new roles will emerge and require you to take those on as well.

Communication:

Simply looking at the title of Public Safety Telecommunicator or Communications Center indicates the important role of communication in this position. Not only communication, but also effective communication, is the core of every function of a telecommunicator. The rest of your training and this text will break down communication in the various specific tasks such as call taking and dispatching. As an introduction it is important to realize the impact communication has on the various people you will be assisting in your duties. First and foremost, your duties will involve communicating with the public. As an emergency telecommunicator you will be pivotal in the successful resolution of the incident. In addition, your ability to communicate effectively with the public will have a positive impact on the individual calling. Generally speaking, citizens do not call communication centers to say hi or report that they are having a good day. Conversely, they are calling because they have a problem they consider serious and it has exceeded their ability to handle the situation. Essentially they need help and

you are the one that can facilitate that help. You will need to be able to obtain critical information and provide instructions and direction to the caller in an efficient, professional, and courteous manner. The next important piece of communication comes in the form of communicating with members of your agency. Communications centers are the hub of information for the agency or agencies that you dispatch for. Members of the agency regularly rely on the communications center for information on past or present calls, NCIC, ILETS, or local warrant information, as well as information on other resources in the jurisdiction or state. The other members of the agency are in fact internal customers and should be treated as such. Divisions within a public safety agency work under a symbiotic relationship in that each division depends on each other to essentially survive. The internal customers should be treated with the same efficiency, professionalism, and courteous manner as the external customers. Finally, under the communication realm you will be tasked with communicating with other agencies and entities. In these cases you will be the voice and main representative for your agency. In some cases you will be the customer, and others you will be assisting the other agency with information or other assistance. In any case you will be setting the reputation for your agency. The same professionalism and courtesy should be displayed to these agencies as with your other customers.

Professionalism:

The words “professional” and “professionalism” can mean different things to different people. Webster’s Dictionary defines professional as “characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession” and “exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the work place”. Within public safety there are certain characteristics that define professionalism and in all actuality define the profession of public safety communications.

At the forefront of these characteristics is honesty and integrity. These traits are not unique to public safety, however they do perhaps take on more or a different meaning. Citizens need to be able to trust their public safety agencies and the individuals who deliver these services. As you were going through your hiring process you most likely went through a background investigation and a polygraph examination. Public safety agencies have set high standards for honesty and integrity and those two pieces of the hiring process are a direct result of these standards. In this day and age of community policing and other initiatives, public safety agencies rely heavily on the cooperation of the citizens they serve. This relationship is built on trust and through the fact that citizens hold public safety employees to a higher standard. As a result the professionals in these agencies should also hold themselves to the same standard. Without honesty and integrity this trust cannot be built and the standard cannot be met.

Successful public safety telecommunicators share certain attributes that set them apart from the rest. Some of the more recognizable of the attributes are:

- They have respect for themselves and for their profession. Successful public safety telecommunicators have a genuine interest in serving the needs of the public, responders, and their agency, as well as consistently display a positive attitude.
- They demonstrate professionalism in the performance of their job. Successful public safety telecommunicators remain focused on their job and on providing the highest levels of customer service possible.

- They possess a strong desire to learn and continuously improve themselves, their job performance, and their profession.
- They project a professional image in their actions and appearance.

Ethics and Values:

Ethics and values are also an integral part of the public safety community, and in reality go hand in hand with honesty and integrity. The terms “ethics” and “values” are two others that tend to take on different meanings to different people. Webster’s Dictionary defines ethics as “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad with moral duty and obligation” and “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group”. Essentially, ethics deals with right and wrong. Many employers and national associations have adopted a professional code of conduct or code of ethics. In fact, the Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy (POST) has adopted the following *Telecommunicator’s Code of Ethics*:

- As a telecommunicator I regard myself as a member of an important and honorable profession.
- I will recognize the positive relationship between good physical and mental conditioning and the performance of my job.
- I will perform my duty with efficiency to the best of my ability.
- My conduct and performance of my duties will be accomplished in an honest manner, contributory to my fellow workers, and observant of the laws of the city, state and country.
- I will not, in the performance of my duty, work for unethical advantage of profit.
- I will recognize at all times in my duty that I am a public safety employee, and that ultimately I am responsible to the public.
- I will give the most efficient and impartial service of which I am capable at all times.
- I understand the importance of courtesy and will maintain it as my reference point in all my duties.
- I will regard my fellow telecommunicators with the same standards as I maintain myself.
- I share a reciprocal affinity and obligation with my fellow telecommunicators, my administration, and my agency.
- I will accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will strive for those values, which will reflect honor on my fellow telecommunicators, my agency, and myself.

Often, officers or other law enforcement professionals have their certifications revoked as a result of unethical behavior. Ethics are huge in public safety. As a public safety telecommunicator you will have access to a wealth of confidential information. Some of this information includes criminal activity, medical history, driving records, and other law enforcement activity. Discussing any of this information outside of the public safety arena is a breach of confidentiality, an example of unethical behavior, and can be a violation of law.

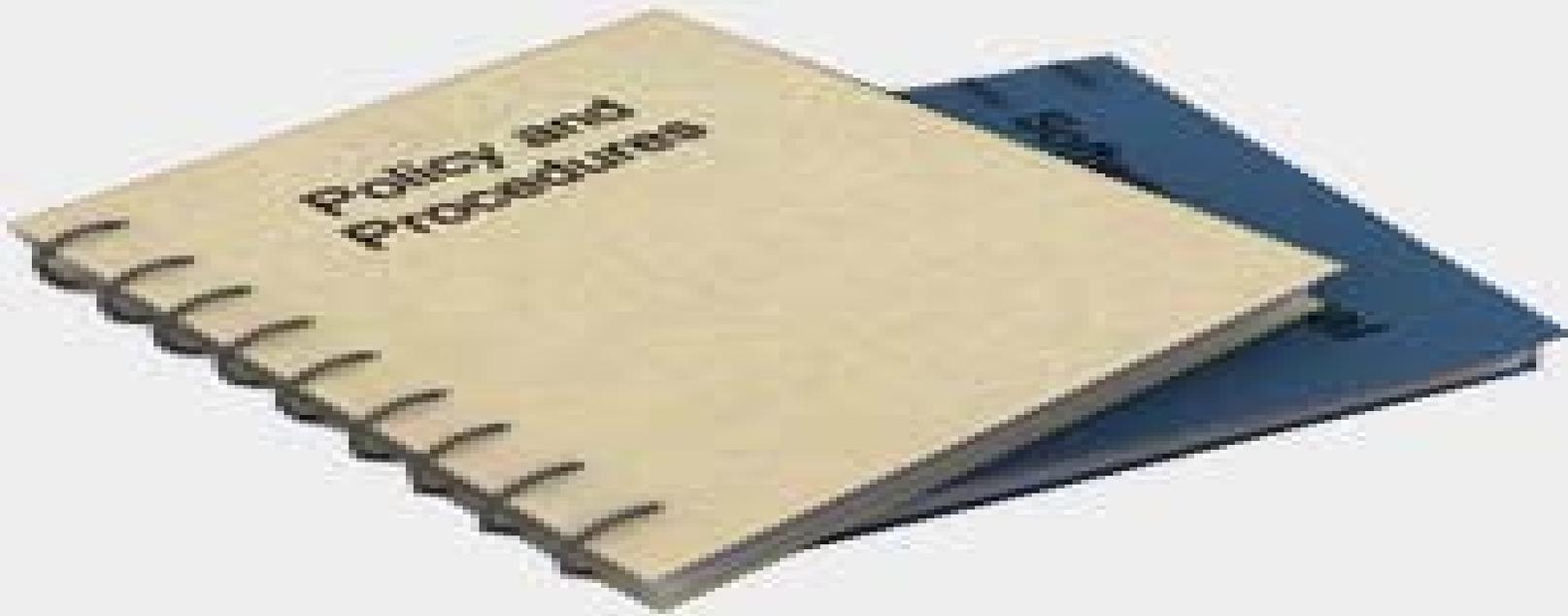
Separate, but equal to ethics, are values. Webster’s Dictionary defines values as “something, as a principle or quality, intrinsically valuable or desirable”. Basically, values are things in life and work that are important to us. Each of us has these values in mind, whether we immediately realize them or not. These values shape how we perform our jobs and live our lives. Essentially, values guide us through life. As with ethics, many organizations have established a

set of values that are important to the agency as a whole. These values tend to center around the importance of public safety and enforcing the law. It is important to realize that not everyone will have the exact same set of values. There are, however, some values that should be common to people in the public safety profession. To be successful as a public safety telecommunicator you will need to value the ability to help people, to learn to be the best at your position, and to make your agency and communication center the best that it can be. Values that are not in line with the organization or the profession can lead to dissatisfaction and burn out.

Conclusion:

Being a public safety telecommunicator is a rewarding and challenging career. In this position you will be the source of information for the public as well as law enforcement, fire, and EMS responders. Public safety starts with the communications center and the telecommunicator is the vital link between all parties involved. As indicated in the job title, communication is a large part of the position. As a public safety telecommunicator you will be communicating with the public, responders, and other agencies. Although each one of these customer sets will have different needs, the common theme amongst all of them is that you will need to communicate with professionalism, courtesy, and respect.

Ethics and values are the heart and soul of public safety. These are things that guide how we do our jobs, and hold us accountable for the high standards that are set by the community. Honesty and integrity are an integral part of ethics and values. As a public safety telecommunicator you will have access to confidential information and knowledge of events and incidents that the general public does not, or should not, know about. Ethical behavior is demanded in public safety and your values have to be in line with the position. Public safety telecommunicators are in existence to help people. Keeping that simple fact in the front of your mind will help to guide you through your day-to-day activities.



CHAPTER TWO: POLICY/PROCEDURE

Chapter Two: Policy and Procedure:

Within any organization there must be rules and regulations that govern the overall and day-to-day operations. Within public safety these documents are most commonly referred to as policies and procedures. The policy and procedure documents are found in many different forms depending on the agency. In many cases these documents are formal manuals that are printed and bound. In other cases, a policy and/or procedure may be found in the form of a memo. Whatever the case, policy and procedure are essentially the laws that govern an organization and its personnel.

Policy vs. Procedure:

Many times you will hear the terms policy and procedure used interchangeably as if they were the same thing. In some cases they act in the same capacity. However, generally speaking policy and procedure are two entirely different things with very different intentions.

Policy:

Policies are designed as general rules and regulations. Policy manuals typically deal with things such as organizational structure and responsibility. In addition, these manuals typically outline personnel rules regarding evaluations, leave, time keeping, drug use and testing, uniform or personal appearance standards, conflict resolution, and other general rules. Policy manuals are usually in place for an entire organization and do not dictate rules that are specific to a certain division such as dispatch. Policy manuals are more of a general document that apply to every employee, regardless of division or rank.

Procedure:

Procedures are more specific, and relate more to a certain division. A procedure will actually provide specific steps on how to complete a certain task. For example, a procedure on an armed robbery call might outline what questions to ask, the priority the call should be, how many officers to send, and any other notifications to make. These are all procedures that would be specific to the communication center and possibly patrol, but would not have any impact on administrative personnel. Procedures essentially take policy and narrow it down to more specific areas.

Policy and Procedure Combined:

There are cases where policies and procedures are combined. Some communication centers are private organizations or separate government entities from police, fire or EMS. In these cases the policy and procedure may be combined or a policy may act as a procedure. This would typically occur in an organization like a private dispatch center that only has one division and the policies and procedures can be simplified into one document.

Unwritten Policy:

Over time, in your career as a public safety telecommunicator, you might run across some “unwritten policies”. These unwritten policies tend to arise out of dispatcher actions. At some point, an employee started to perform a certain way and over time it became common practice and thought of as policy. The policy and/or procedure manual may not have been updated with

this information. These situations are a slippery slope for communication center personnel. Often these things become common practice and can be difficult to understand. As with any profession, there are some liability concerns for public safety telecommunicators. Most of these concerns are addressed in a later chapter. However, as we discuss policy and procedure it is important for you to understand that following policy and procedure is what affords you the most protection from these liability concerns. If there is ever a question about policy or procedure, or a discrepancy between the written policy and the unwritten one, you will need to take this up with your immediate supervisor. The quicker you get these things cleared up, the better it is for the entire organization.

Purpose:

Regardless of whether policy and procedure is separate or combined, they are in place to regulate employee actions and protect the agency and its employees. Within public safety there are many liability concerns that agencies have to address. Policy and procedure is one of the most effective ways an agency can accomplish this. Policies on sexual harassment can protect an agency from a potential lawsuit by an employee, while a procedure on emergency response can protect an employee from a lawsuit by a citizen.

Conclusion:

Policy and procedure are the “laws” that govern an agency and its personnel. These documents will dictate the overall and day-to-day operations of your agency. Policies and procedures vary from one agency to the next, so it will be an important part of your learning to become familiar with the policies and procedures of your agency. Ultimately, the agency is responsible for publishing and providing employees with the documents and it is your responsibility as the employee to know and follow these regulations. The policies of your agency will provide you with general rules that affect your position, while procedures will help you learn your position by providing more specific steps to take. Be careful with the “unwritten policies” that you might find in your agency. These can sometimes be confusing, so you should address these issues with your immediate supervisor as they arise.



CHAPTER THREE: TELEPHONE TECHNOLOGY

Chapter Three: Telephone Technology:

Telephone technology has been improving rapidly over the last 10 to 20 years. From the older model of residential and cellular phone, to IP based phone systems, GPS capable cell phones and satellite phone systems, this enhanced technology has been of great benefit to emergency communication centers. While these improvements in technology have been a benefit, it has also become necessary for emergency telecommunicators to become more versed in a technical side of the operation. Understanding this technical side has provided dispatchers with the opportunity to become more proficient at their respective positions.

Terminology:

There are numerous terms for the improved technology that communication centers now use in the day-to-day functions of processing calls. Some of this terminology deals directly with functions that the dispatchers use, and others deal more with a technical side of how calls are routed and received. In either case, it is important for you as an emergency telecommunicator to understand both sides.

ANI (Automatic Number Identification):

ANI stands for Automatic Number Identification. You can think of this as a simplified version of caller ID. Anytime that you place a call from your phone the phone company has the ability to recognize your phone number as well as the number you are calling. Obviously this is necessary for the phone company to complete their billing functions. With ANI, the phone company essentially packages that data and sends the number on to the emergency communication center. When the call is received by the communication center phone system it receives the ANI information and then is displayed to the call taker. This is especially helpful in situations of a 9-1-1 hang up where the call taker will need to call the person back to ensure no emergency exists. In the past this information was only available on 9-1-1 lines. However, with the improved technology many agencies now get this ANI information on all phone calls received regardless of whether it is 9-1-1 or non-emergency.

ALI (Automatic Location Identification):

ALI stands for Automatic Location Identification, and works in conjunction with the ANI data. ALI allows the callers name, address, and other location information to be displayed on the call taker's screen. This has made even greater improvement to the call taking process by allowing call takers to confirm addresses and send assistance even in 9-1-1 hang up cases where no one can be reached. This is a somewhat complicated process that involves the caller, the phone company, the communication center, and a separate company that maintains address information for the phone company. In addition, this requires a network of switches and computers to send and receive all of the information. The process starts with a caller picking up the phone and calling 9-1-1. The phone company processes the call, electronically sending the ANI data along with the phone call. The communication center phone equipment and computers receive the phone call and does what is known as an "ALI dip". This is because at the time that the communication center phone equipment receives the call it does two things. First the call is routed to the consoles on the dispatch floor displaying the ANI information. At the same time that the call is being sent to the console, the phone system "dips" into the address database to retrieve the ALI information. This seems like a long drawn out process, however this happens

usually in less than a second. Because of this “ALI dip” you might notice a very slight delay between answering the phone and seeing the ALI information on your phone screen. Typically ALI information is only received on 9-1-1 calls. However some phone systems may be set up to display both ANI and ALI information on all calls received in the center. The introduction of ALI information for communications centers has been huge. This allows emergency call takers to locate individuals who may not know their address, or in cases where you have an open 9-1-1 line.

Call Routing:

Call routing is the process that the phone companies use to ensure that calls get routed to the correct **PSAP** (Public Safety Answering Point). Call routing is a collaborative effort between the phone companies and public safety agencies to create and maintain master maps that match phone numbers, addresses, and cross streets to the corresponding PSAP. This set of master maps is commonly referred to as **MSAG** (Master Street Address Guide). When a caller dials 9-1-1, the network hub uses the MSAG information to route the call to the proper answering point. All of this work is taking place behind the scenes through computers and computer switches. Most citizens and even some public safety employees do not understand this orchestrated process to make sure that a 9-1-1 call reaches the proper place.

ESN (Emergency Service Number):

ESN stands for emergency service number and is a “unique combination of emergency service agencies (Law Enforcement, Fire, and Emergency Medical Service) designated to serve a specific range of addresses within a particular geographical area” for the purposes of routing an E911 call. The ESN represents a seven digit number by which the tandem office routes the call to the proper PSAP. Communication centers with ALI capabilities will receive ESN information which includes which police, fire, and medical agency serves the telephone number dialing 9-1-1.

PBX (Private Branch Exchange):

PBX stands for Private Branch Exchange and is a telephone exchange that serves a particular business or office. This is opposed to a telephone exchange that a common carrier or telephone company operates for many businesses or for the general public. The PBX will show one number coming from a building that branches out to multiple extensions with the building.

Selective Routing:

Selective routing is the capability to route a call to the particular PSAP serving the address associated with the telephone number making the 9-1-1 call. Selective routing is achieved by building telephone numbers and ESN translations in the tandem central office. These translations are driven by the E911 database which assigns the ESN to each telephone number based on the customer’s address.

Basic and Enhanced 9-1-1:

As the technology with telephone systems have improved, so has our capability within the emergency communication center. 9-1-1 is now broken into Basic 9-1-1 and Enhanced or E911. While much of the process is the same between the two different 9-1-1 calls, E911 provides much more information to the emergency telecommunicator. As of 2006,

approximately 7% of 9-1-1 services were still basic 9-1-1. For this reason it is important to understand both Basic and Enhanced 9-1-1.

Basic 9-1-1:

Basic 9-1-1 is essentially just as it sounds, a basic phone call from someone needing help to the emergency communication center. With Basic 9-1-1, a person dials the emergency number, the phone company recognizes the number the person is calling from and routes the call to a dedicated 9-1-1 switch. This switch then sends the call to the designated PSAP for that particular area. The emergency telecommunicator taking the call then has to ask what the emergency is, the location of the incident, and a callback number for the person calling. With Basic 9-1-1, essentially no information is displayed to the call taker, meaning that the call taker does not automatically have the caller's name, address, or phone number. Figure 3.1 illustrates the route that a Basic 9-1-1 call takes to reach the communications center.

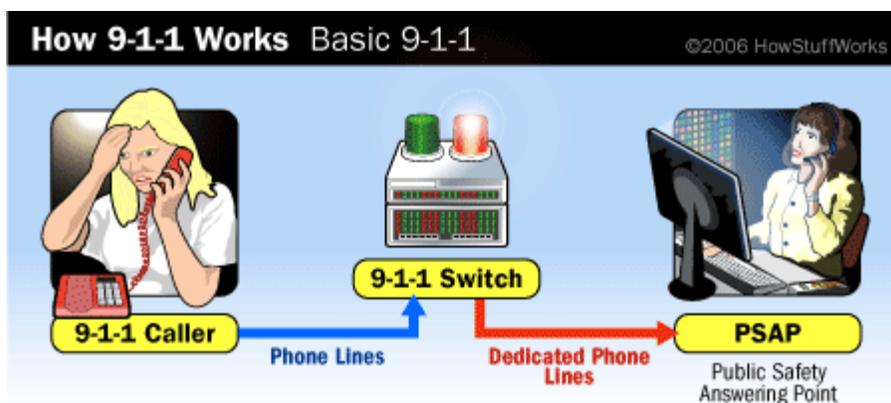


Figure 3.1

Enhanced 9-1-1:

Enhanced or E911 works similar to Basic 9-1-1 with some enhancements for the emergency telecommunicator. There is more technology involved with E911 which makes the process smoother and provides much more information to the emergency communication center. With E911, a person dials the emergency number, the phone company recognizes the number from which the person is calling (ANI) and routes the call to the dedicated 9-1-1 switch. The network uses the number that the call is originating from to get the address (ALI) information and to determine the proper PSAP destination from MSAG data. In most cases, this all takes a little over 1 second to process. The phone call now carries the phone number and address along with the voice data to the PSAP. Once at the PSAP, this information is displayed on the call taker's screen, and some systems will transfer this information automatically to the CAD system. Should it become necessary to transfer the 9-1-1 call, many PSAPs can transfer that call with the accompanying data to another PSAP. Figure 3.2 illustrates the route that an E911 call takes to reach the communications center.

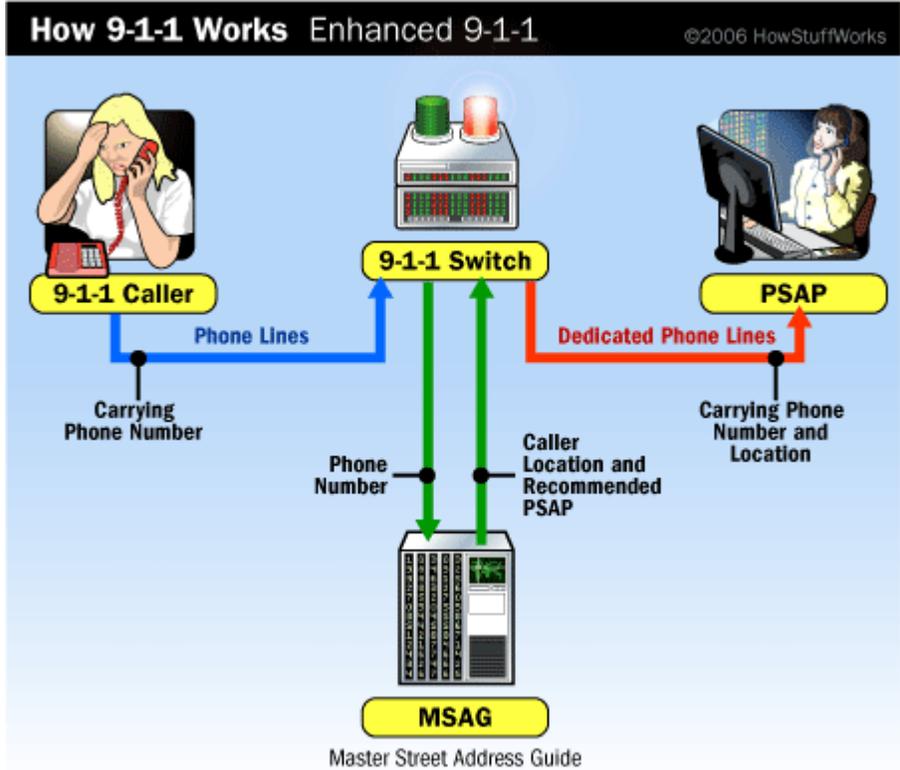


Figure 3.2

Wireless Calls:

As of 2006, public safety agencies report that wireless calls account for 30% to 50% of the 9-1-1 calls they receive. Until recently, when someone called 9-1-1 from a cell phone, no information appeared on the call taker’s screen even with an E911 system. In addition, the call was not always routed to the nearest PSAP. Local 9-1-1 systems have been implementing changes to 9-1-1 to allow for greater wireless compatibility. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has defined the upgrades in two phases known as Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I:

With Phase I wireless calls the call taker can see the phone number the 9-1-1 call is coming from as well as the location of the cell tower that the phone is hitting on. With Phase I, wireless 9-1-1 calls are routed to the PSAP closest to the tower that the phone is hitting on. Phase I technology has a 6 to 30 mile radius in terms of being able to locate the caller. This makes it extremely difficult to locate a wireless caller if they do not know their location. As of 2006, 83.6% of PSAPS had implemented all or part of Phase I technology.

Phase II:

Phase II technology provides more accurate location information to the call taker. With Phase II wireless calls, the call taker can see the phone number of the caller and the location accuracy is much better. Phase II technology has a location accuracy of 50 to 300 meters depending on the type of technology being used (i.e. GPS). Once a Phase II call is placed, it is

routed to the PSAP closest to the location or to the cell tower that the call is hitting on. As of 2006, 65.2% of PSAPs had implemented all or part of Phase II.

Wireless Local Number Portability (LNP):

In the past when a customer changed from one cell phone service provider to another, he or she was also required to change his or her phone number. Wireless Local Number Portability, or LNP, is the ability for a consumer to change service providers within the same local area and keep the same phone number. Porting these numbers from one carrier to another, however, is not instantaneous. During the time that the number is being ported from the old carrier to the new one, there may be a period of “mixed service”. What this means for the communications center is that during this period the number displayed may not be correct. When E911 service is being used, the number displayed may not be the correct number and could affect the call taker’s ability to call the person back should they be disconnected.

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP):

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) is becoming increasingly popular. VOIP is a method for taking analog audio signals, like the kind you hear when you talk on the phone, and turning them into digital data packets that can be transmitted over the internet. Essentially, a person using VOIP service is making a phone call using the same service as their high-speed internet connection. For consumers this is proving to be a valuable, less expensive alternative to traditional phone service. Additionally, consumers can pick up and take their “phone service” with them anywhere that they have a high-speed internet connection. The down side to VOIP is the way that it sometimes interacts with 9-1-1. VOIP calls do not take the same route or access the same databases that a traditional phone call would. This means that VOIP calls are not routed through switches to the appropriate PSAP in the same way. If a person moves from one state to the next and fails to update their address with the VOIP provider, then their 9-1-1 calls would go back to the PSAP in the jurisdiction that they lived previously.



CHAPTER FOUR: TTY / TDD

Chapter Four: Teletypewriter (TTY):

TTY stands for Teletypewriter and is a device that is used in conjunction with a telephone to communicate with persons who are deaf, hearing or speech impaired, by typing and reading text. To communicate by TTY, a person types his or her conversation, which is read on a TTY display by the person who receives the call. Both parties must have a TTY device to communicate. When typing on a TTY, each letter is transmitted by an electronic code. This code is sent from the TTY on the sending end of the call, through the telephone line in the form of tones to the TTY on the receiving end of the call. This process works the same way as voice communication between two parties. The receiving TTY transforms the tones back into letters and displays those letters on a display screen. People who are conversing with TTY devices cannot type to each other at the same time. They must take turns sending messages back and forth.

Terminology:

There are many terms associated with the use of a TTY device. It is important for you as a public safety telecommunicator to know and understand these terms. Knowledge of these terms will make it easier for you to receive and process calls for service over a TTY device.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The Americans with Disabilities Act or, **ADA**, was passed into law in 1990 and took effect in 1992. The ADA is a comprehensive act that covers many topics associated with people with disabilities. Specifically for this purpose the ADA requires that all PSAPs provide direct, equal access to their services for people with disabilities who use a TTY device. Direct access means that PSAPs can directly receive TTY calls without relying on an outside relay service or any third-party service. PSAPs must have systems that allow dispatchers to handle TTY calls as properly, promptly, and reliably as voice calls.

American Sign Language (ASL):

American Sign Language, or **ASL**, is a visual language with no written format used by people with communication disabilities. ASL is structured differently than the traditional English language. In general, thoughts are formulated first by time if necessary, then the main thought followed by descriptive words. ASL does not include any verb tenses or connecting words. Another form of ASL is ASL Gloss. This is basically a method used to communicate through a TTY device and uses English words to translate concepts. ASL Gloss is structured so that the main thought is typed first with the descriptive words following. It is crucial when using ASL Gloss to use simple words and phrases so that you do not confuse the caller. With ASL Gloss the crucial visual elements of ASL are lost so this makes communication more difficult for the caller.

American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII):

The American Standard Code for Information Interchange, or **ASCII**, is a “standard that defines the code for a character set to be used for information interchange between equipment of different manufacturers and is standard for data communications over telephone lines”. This is simply a code that all TTY devices are programmed with so that the devices can communicate

with each other. This standard sets the code that each device will use to transform letters keyed on a TTY device into electronic code to pass through the telephone lines.

Baudot Code:

Baudot Code is “a five-bit encoding scheme developed for Telex transmission that represents text, numerals, punctuation, and control signals. It is the standard transmission signaling scheme used by TTY devices”. Similar to the tone you hear when sending a fax, this code is the signal used by TTY devices so that two devices can sync and begin communicating.

Communications Impaired:

Communications Impaired is a term used to describe “a person who is deaf, hearing impaired, or speech impaired that requires use of assistive telecommunications technology”.

Direct Connect:

Direct Connect “is a method of connecting a TTY directly into the phone line”. This means that a person using a TTY device has their device plugged in to a phone jack and can then dial directly from the keyboard of the TTY device and use auto-answer features.

Hearing Carry Over (HCO):

Hearing Carry Over or **HCO** is “a method which utilizes both voice and text communications on the same call, allowing a person who is speech impaired to listen to the other party’s conversation and responding by typing via a TTY or other means of text communications”. People with speech impairments who are not deaf or hard of hearing often prefer HCO. HCO allows them to type their words on a TTY to call takers, but hear the call taker’s spoken responses through their handset. HCO can be accomplished using standard TTY equipment or through a relay service.

Voice Carry Over (VCO):

Voice Carry Over or **VCO** is “a method which utilizes both voice and text communications on the same call, allowing a person who is hearing impaired to speak directly to the other party and receive response via a TTY or other means of text communications”. VCO is generally used by people who have some or total hearing loss, however still have the ability to speak to communicate through a combination of voice communication and TTY. The caller will speak directly into their handset while the call taker will type his or her reply back to the caller. VCO can be accomplished using standard TTY equipment or through a relay service.

Recognizing TTY Calls:

The ADA requires that PSAPs use effective procedures for recognizing and responding to TTY calls. With this all call takers must be able to recognize and handle TTY calls properly. TTY calls can present themselves in 3 different ways: Recorded Announcement, Audible Tone, or Silence on the Line.

Some TTY calls will emit a recorded spoken announcement to the call taker that a TTY call is being placed. This will alert the call taker to the fact that he or she will need to begin the TTY procedures for their specific agency.

Another way that TTY calls can present themselves is through the use of audible tones. When the call taker answers the phone he or she will hear a set of tones similar to that of a fax

machine. This again will alert the call taker of the TTY call and he or she can begin the TTY procedures for their specific agency.

The final way a TTY call can present is in the form of silence on the line. This is perhaps the most dangerous for call takers as they are often thought of as a 9-1-1 hang up or a child playing on the phone. As a call taker it is important to treat any open line call as though it were a TTY call until proven otherwise. The reason why some TTY calls present as an open line is due to the fact that some equipment on the caller's end does not recognize that the call has been answered until the call taker sends a TTY response through tones or a message.

Guidelines for Handling TTY Calls:

As previously mentioned, a call taker should assume that any open line call is a TTY call until proven otherwise. While each agency should have specific policies or procedures for handling these types of calls, the following are some general guidelines for handling these types of calls: When you answer a phone and there is no response on the other end, verbally identify yourself and/or your agency and ask a direct question such as, "where is your emergency?" If you do not get a response from the caller you should attempt to verbally identify yourself again and again ask a direct question. If you still do not get a response you should use your TTY to see if the call is a hearing impaired call. If you still do not get a response you should follow your agency's procedures for handling silent calls. If you do get a response from the TTY you should begin your call questioning using the TTY device.

General Etiquette:

Most calls from the communication impaired will come from a relay service, which will be discussed later. In fact, many people will go their whole career without taking an actual TTY call. It is because of this reason that some call takers may panic if, or when, they receive a TTY call. Do not be nervous when handling these calls, simply remember your training and handle it as you would any other call. Keep your questions direct and simple, and take cue from the caller on whether to use standard/simplified English or ASL Gloss. As the caller sends a message or answers your question you will be able to determine which method to use. You will want to allow the caller to respond to questions one at a time. This is because the caller's screen will get full and words will start to scroll off of the screen. Avoid using public safety terminology, complex sentence structures, and uncommon vocabulary. Again, keep your questions and responses short, simple and to the point.

Standard Abbreviations and Text:

The following is a list of standard abbreviations and text used for TTY calls. This terminology is commonly accepted as standard for PSAPs and citizens that use a TTY device. Understanding and using these will be important to the successful processing of a TTY call.

- GA** – Stands for "Go Ahead". This is used to indicate that you are through with your comment and would like for the other party to respond. You will need to end each transmission with this abbreviation. Example: Sheriff's Office how can I help you q ga
- Q or QQ** – Stands for "Question". This is used to indicate to the other person that you are asking a question and want a response. This again will be followed by ga for go ahead. Example: Your address please q ga. In this example you are ending with q then ga letting

the caller know that you are asking a question and are ending with ga letting them know that is the end of your question.

GASK – Stands for “Go Ahead Stop Keying”/ This is used to indicate that you have completed the conversation and are preparing to disconnect. Example: The ambulance is there now gask.

SKSK – Stands for “Stop Keying Stop Keying”. This is used to indicate that you are through with your conversation and are hanging up now. This officially concludes a TTY call and should be typed by both parties involved. Example: Officers are there now sksk

XXXX – Stands for “Error”. This is used to indicate that you have made a typing error and that the following is the corrected word or phrase. When communicating using a TTY device it is not necessary to backspace or delete information out. Simply use XXXX. Example: What is your phone nyxxxxnumber q ga

In general, TTY communications are significantly slower than voice communications due to the special equipment needed and the need to type the words rather than speak them. In addition, as previously mentioned, only one person can type at one time. Each person will have to finish his or her statement before the other can respond. It is also important to understand that if you receive a sentence ending with ga, it is not permissible to hang up. At this point the caller is expecting a reply. The TTY conversation does not end until each party has typed “sksk”.

In addition to the above text, the following abbreviations are commonly expected as standard. Use of the abbreviations will speed up the conversation and will be understood by the communications impaired caller.

ASAP – As Soon As Possible

CD or **CLD** – Could

HD or **HLD** – Hold Please

MSG – Message

NBR or **NU** – Number

PLS – Please

R – Are

TMW - Tomorrow

TTY - Teletypewriter

U - You

UR - Your

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS):

Many of the calls you receive from communications impaired callers will come via a **telecommunications relay service**. These relay services are provided by individual states as required by Title IV of the Americans With Disabilities Act, and are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Relay services involve a communications assistant who uses a standard telephone along with a TTY device to assist communications impaired callers. The communications assistant will type the voice communications of one caller using a TTY device to the communications impaired. The assistant will then read a TTY user’s typed communication to a voice telephone user.

When processing a call using a relay service the public safety telecommunicator will speak to the relay operator in the 1st person as if he or she is talking directly to the caller. The relay operator will type the call taker’s message to the caller and then relay the caller’s response back verbally.

Testing Requirements:

The Department of Justice (DOJ) requires that PSAPs regularly test their TTY equipment and call takers. These tests should test to ensure that all equipment is working properly and that

all call takers are able to process these types of calls. PSAPs must establish, implement, and document all testing procedures and must routinely conduct TTY test calls to each call taking position. PSAPs are additionally required to maintain documentation of all of these tests. The documentation should include:

- Date and time of each test call
- Identification of the call taker and the call taking position
- Whether each call was silent or transmitted tones
- Whether the caller received a TTY response as well as the content
- The time elapsed and number of rings from the initiation of the TTY call until the call taker responded by TTY
- Whether the call was processed according to the PSAP's standard operating procedures.

TTY Do's and Don'ts:

The following are some general reminders to help you when taking TTY calls:

Do:

- Make sure your TTY is charged or plugged in before making or receiving a call
- Make sure the phone is placed properly in the cradle
- Check the signal light when making a call
- Identify yourself at the earliest opportunity
- Use 'ga' to end your message
- Use "sk" to end the conversation
- Ask the other person to repeat if the message is garbled or you can't read it
- Spell out numbers if necessary to avoid confusion
- Indicate if there are other people watching the conversation

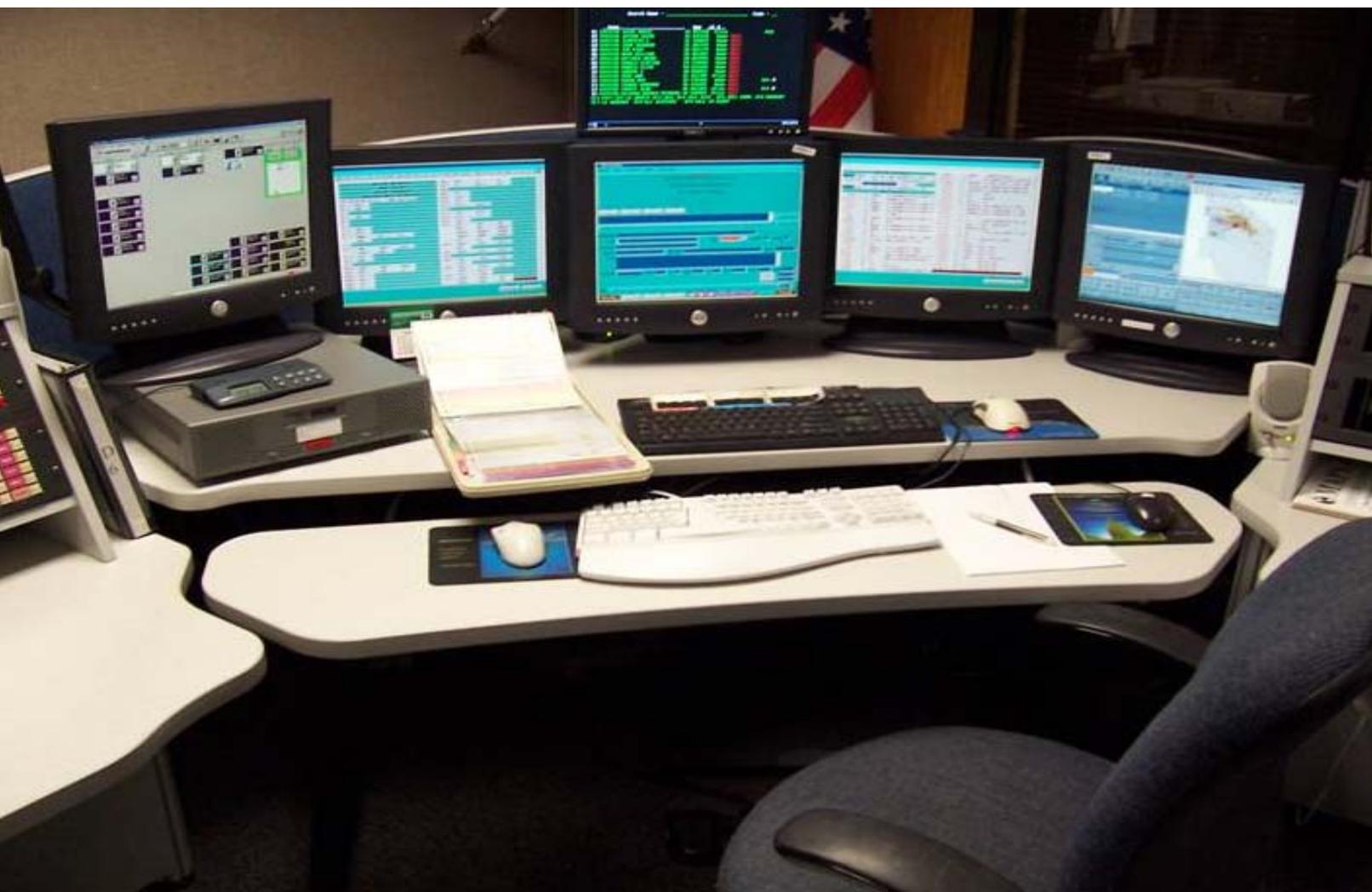
Don't:

- Worry about misspellings if the meaning is clear in context
- Worry about punctuation
- Save the hard copy of the conversation without permission
- Eavesdrop or allow eavesdropping

Training:

Using TTY to process calls should be part of a PSAPs training program. There are a number of different TTY equipment options and capabilities that PSAPs can use. Some agencies have their TTY as part of a computer phone system and use a stand-alone terminal as a back-up. Other have a phone system that is not computer based but still has the TTY built in, while others use strictly a stand-alone system. Whatever the case may be, each PSAP must train their call takers to be able to perform the following tasks as related to TTY:

- Effectively recognize and process TTY calls
- Use TTY equipment correctly
- Effectively communicate with individuals who are communications impaired
- Know the accepted abbreviations that are frequently used.



***CHAPTER FIVE:
COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH
& RELATED TECHNOLOGIES***

Chapter Five: CAD and Related Technologies:

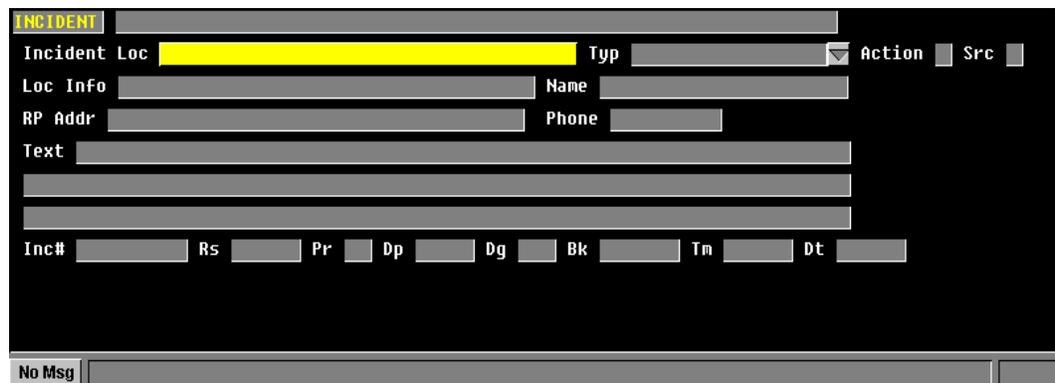
The introduction of new technology has greatly improved dispatcher accuracy and speed. This technology helps with coordination of resources, tracking resources, processing calls for service, as well as communication and information sharing. These technologies, and specifically the systems used, vary from one agency to another. The following is some general information to help you understand what these do and how they help in performing your job as a dispatcher.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD):

Computer Aided Dispatch, or **CAD**, systems are a great technological tool for dispatchers. Although the actual systems used and the capabilities of these systems vary from one agency to the next, there are some very common tasks that CAD systems help the dispatcher perform.

Call Taking:

Most CAD systems have a function to allow call takers to enter calls electronically. These systems generally have a preformatted screen with fields for address, caller name, caller phone number, and a field to enter details of the call. Once entered most CAD systems will automatically assign an incident number and priority and send the call to a dispatcher to be sent to responders. Figure 5.1 shows an example of a call taking screen from a CAD system. Keep in mind that this is just an example of one CAD system. The system that your agency uses may look much different than this one.



The screenshot shows a call taking interface with the following fields and controls:

- INCIDENT** (highlighted in yellow)
- Incident Loc: [Redacted]
- Typ: [Dropdown menu]
- Action: [Checkbox]
- Src: [Checkbox]
- Loc Info: [Text field]
- Name: [Text field]
- RP Addr: [Text field]
- Phone: [Text field]
- Text: [Text area]
- Inc#: [Text field]
- Rs: [Text field]
- Pr: [Text field]
- Dp: [Text field]
- Dg: [Text field]
- Bk: [Text field]
- Tn: [Text field]
- Dt: [Text field]
- No Msg: [Text field]

Figure 5.1

Dispatching:

Once a call taker has entered a call, the CAD system automatically assigns a pre-determined priority and routes the call to a dispatch position to be sent to field responders. The information displayed to the dispatcher will vary depending on the CAD system being used. Generally, most CAD systems will display the call type, location of the incident, the details of the call, and will make unit suggestions on who should be dispatched.

Unit Status:

Most CAD systems also include a unit status function that allows the dispatcher to keep track of field units. This information is generally displayed on a status monitor and will show the unit designator, location and a timer. With the timer the dispatcher can then know when to do a security check on the field units. Keeping track of units in the field is an important part of the dispatcher position and the use of a CAD system is a tremendous asset in this function. Figure 5.2 shows an example of a status monitor in a CAD system. As with the previous CAD functions this is just one example of a CAD system, and the actual system you will be using may look very different than this one.

The screenshot shows a 'Status Monitor' window with a blue title bar. It contains several tables of data. The top table lists 'SPEC' (unit type), 'type', and 'location' for various units. Below this is a 'WAITING' table with columns for 'type', 'grp', 'time', and 'location'. The bottom section shows a list of 'UNIT' with columns for 'time', 'type', and 'location'. To the right of these tables is a scrollable list of call logs, each with a unit ID, a call number, and a description of the call.

SPEC	type	location
ADND	AD17	BSUSUB
K78	K985	L82
HRT9	H42	H52
SJAIL2	SJAIL	SOREC
U34	742	752
770	906	930
988	982	983
985	1250	1252
1255	1256	1850
1910	1915	2000
2746	2747	4110
4212	4219	4214
4828	4891	5818
8153	8154	8191
9441		9423

WAITING	type	grp	time	location
BP178	ILLPK	BB	44	456 N KIMBALL PL
BP188	LFP	BB	38	7501 W ALTHEA CT
BP207	THEFTR	BU	11	4414 S GERELER LN
BP288	THEFTR	BRT	89	18878 W GRANBER A
BP211	BURGR	BRT	86	3350 N AMERICANA
BP213	STOLPLT	BB	85	2401 S OWVHEE ST

UNIT	time	type	location
> AD7	*6	19	
> C08	*1	LOGON	ROLL CALL
> C09	*37	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
> D85	*3	LOGON	ROLL CALL
> D98	*70	RAPE	ST LUKES WEST
> E83	*3	LOGON	ROLL CALL
> E84	*2	TS	HVV 44 NO LINDER
> GC1	*6	6	ADMIN
> K2	*26	SUP	752 W OGDON ST ,WIN

<> K88	*12	TS	W TERRIT CTS WILLIS AU
<> K98	*4	MEET	200 W FRONT ST ,BOI -- C
<> K915	*97	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> L85	*2	DP	800 S LUCKY PEAK DAM RD
<> MET1	*2	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> MET29	*98	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> R46	*56	LOGON	ROLL CALL
<> R61	*2	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> R05	*16	1857R	LL
<> S43	*8	DBATTR	888 N COLE RD ,BOI
<> S69	*2	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> S64	*10	RPTS	7200 W BARRISTER DR ,BOI
<> S91	*1	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> S93	*9	CIVIL	6322 W RUSSETT ST ,BOI
<> ST2	*67	6	ISP
<> ST5	*98	SHOTFIR	2138 N MIDDLEFIELD RD ,B
<> STR2	*16	AV	W SUNBEAM ST/S WILLIS AU
<> STR3	*7	EQUIP	1121 E STATE ST ,EAG
<> T121	*29	THEFTR	WILLOW SUB
<> T185	*16	THEFTR	739 E PARKCENTER BL ,BOI
<> U18	*4	MEET	7200 W BARRISTER DR ,BOI
<> 740	*18	19	619
<> 741	*19	BATTJ	212 W 40TH
<> 778	*76	FU	19
<> 932	*42	DOMPHYS	HALL
<> 933	*12	FNDBIKE	1850 E FAIRVIEW AV ,MER
<> 934	*16	RAPE	ST LUKES WEST
<> 939	*20	RAPE	ST LUKES WEST
<> 946	*2	COURT	200 W FRONT ST ,BOI
<> 956	*9	ANIMAL	1850 E BOWSTRING ST ,MER
<> 981	*2	COURT	200 W FRONT ST ,BOI
<> 991	*8	FNDBIKE	314 W CHERRY LN #7 ,HER
<> 1000	*94	SHOTFIR	COMMAND POST COURTNEY/HI
<> 1001	*43	SHOTFIR	COMMAND POST COURTNEY/HI

Figure 5.2

Geography (GEO) Files and Response Lists:

Another function of many CAD systems are the Geography (GEO) files and response lists. The GEO file generally contains streets, intersections, and addresses that are valid for the agency's jurisdiction. These files are extremely important to any CAD function as they provide the basis for being able to enter a call for service, as well as unit recommendations and being able to verify locations. Along the same lines as the GEO files, response lists are also a large part of many CAD systems. These response lists provide unit recommendation for calls based on the type and number of equipment/personnel needed and location information contained in the GEO files. These two pieces of a CAD system often work together to make sure the entire system functions properly.

Mobile Data Systems:

Mobile Data Systems, or MDTs, are becoming more and more mainstream in public safety. These systems, usually called MDTs or MDCs, are generally in the form of a laptop computer mounted in a responder's vehicle. The capabilities of these systems vary from one agency to the next and can range anywhere from running basic queries, messaging, to essentially having a fully functional CAD system. Many agencies are using MDTs to dispatch officers. This means that when a dispatcher sends a responder on a call the dispatcher can send the call information to the responder's computer in addition to verbalizing the information over a radio. Many MDT systems have the capability for officers to change their status and run all ILETS/NCIC queries from in their vehicle. In addition, some MDT systems now have mapping

features that are tied into the CAD system and offer things from vehicle location (discussed in the next section) to automatic routing. These systems have greatly increased responder capability and have improved communication between dispatch and field units. Figure 5.3 shows an example of an MDT in a patrol vehicle.



Figure 5.3

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL):

One of the newer technologies now being used in public safety is **Automatic Vehicle Location** or **AVL**. AVL systems use a GPS transmitter mounted in the vehicle and broadcast that information to the dispatch center. AVL allows for a unit's location to be shown on a map in the communications center and can often work in conjunction with the CAD system to recommend the closest unit to a call. This is a benefit for dispatchers to be able to quickly note the closest units to a call and dispatch them. These systems are also a great benefit to the citizens in that it can assist in making for a faster response by emergency responders.

Mapping Systems:

Many agencies are now using some version of a computerized map to assist their dispatchers. As with any other technology, the capabilities of these mapping systems vary from one agency to the next. Generally, computer based maps will show all addresses, streets, and intersections in the agency's jurisdiction. Some of these maps also include things such as parks, golf courses, canals, and other large areas within the jurisdiction. In addition, many of these maps will work with the CAD and phone systems to automatically display a caller's location on the map when they call 9-1-1. The newer maps work in conjunction with CAD and AVL to provide the dispatcher with unit locations and the locations of active incidents within the agency's jurisdiction. These type of maps are valuable resources to dispatchers when it comes to dispatching units, finding locations, identifying jurisdictional boundaries, and even giving callers directions.

Logging Recorders:

The use of recorders within communications centers is becoming more important everyday. These recording systems generally log and record all phone calls and radio transmissions coming into or going out of the dispatch center. In the law enforcement world, tapes or CDs of these phone calls or radio transmissions are often subpoenaed for use during criminal cases. These recording systems also provide a valuable resource for dispatchers and agencies. In the case of dispatchers many of these systems offer an immediate playback so if the call taker or dispatcher missed something they can replay the last call or radio transmission to see what they missed. Recording systems also prove to be a valuable training tool. Agencies can make tapes or CDs of calls to use for training, allowing new dispatchers to listen to and practice entering real calls.

ILETS, NLETS, and NCIC:

One of the most valuable investigative and information gathering tools available to the communications center is the **Idaho Law Enforcement Telecommunications System** or **ILETS** terminal. ILETS is a joint venture between the Idaho Criminal Information Bureau (CIB) and the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). ILETS allows criminal justice agencies within the State of Idaho access to various information files within the state. Through this system, access is also allowed to nation-wide information, information from other states, INTERPOL and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The system also allows for message communication between nearly all criminal justice agencies in the nation.

The ILETS data terminal connects the agency's communications center with the ILETS mainframe at CIB in Boise. The ILETS mainframe acts as a master computer, which routes your inquiry message or inquiry response to and from the appropriate Idaho file, national file, or the information center in another state. Although the system is comprised of a number of sub-systems, there are two fundamental networks that you need to understand. ILETS is the primary link between the operator and file systems such as the Idaho Department of Motor Vehicle Registration and Driver's license Files, Idaho criminal history files, etc. The second network is the **National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Network** or **NLETS**. The NLETS system is the state-to-state link between individual state systems, the FBI criminal records, and NCIC records. The **National Crime Information Center** or **NCIC** is the nationwide repository of information on stolen vehicles, missing persons, wanted persons, and other criminal information.

The State of Idaho CIB is the agency responsible for contracting with the United States Department of Justice. Each individual agency acting as an end user is contracted under a user agreement with the State of Idaho and is responsible for operating the system within the published rules and regulations established by the CIB and the user's agreement. A designated person within each agency is assigned as the Terminal Agency Control or TAC officer. The TAC officer is assigned the responsibility of ensuring that operation of the ILETS/NLETS system by the agency is in compliance with the guidelines of the user agreement.

There are fundamental differences between the ILETS and NLETS systems. Essentially, any time an inquiry or message is transmitted by an agency terminal, it goes to CIB and the ILETS system. That system then determines whether the message or inquiry is destined for an ILETS file, an NLETS file, or is to be routed via NLETS to another state. The systems are totally integrated and appear to the user as a single system. It is essential, however, to understand the systems so that they may be properly utilized to derive the greatest benefit from their use.

NCIC/ILETS Reference Manuals:

There are several resource manuals that the operator must be familiar with. The operator must know and understand these manuals and how to utilize them to ensure that entries and inquiries are done in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth. The manuals will also be utilized to complete the basic and advanced ILETS tests.

The NCIC Operator's Manual is the primary resource for information concerning the operation of the NLETS/NCIC system. Procedures for making the inquiries and/or entries into the various NLETS systems are spelled out in its contents. The manual explains in detail the particular fields of various automated inquiry or entry masks on the terminal as well as information on security and documentation issues that apply to each operator.

The ILETS manual contains operating procedures and guidelines of the Idaho records systems supported by the terminal. The manual also contains information regarding security and retention issues that the operator must understand and follow.

The NCIC Code Manual is an index of particular codes required to properly complete NCIC/ILETS entries and to understand cryptic data from terminal responses. The Code Manual contains computer codes for such things as Make, Type, Action and Caliber codes for guns, vehicles, and personal descriptor codes for wanted or missing persons. Exact codes must be used in order to ensure accurate entries and interpretations.

ILETS/NCIC Certification:

Each user of the ILETS system is required to complete the ILETS Inquiry and Entry tests within the first six months of hire. Certification for users expires every two years and recertification can be accomplished by retaking the test or by attending the ILETS Inquiry and Entry class or recertification class.

Confidentiality and System Security:

Each ILETS/NCIC user shall sign a confidentiality agreement to be retained on file with his or her agency. Information received from the ILETS/NCIC system is for official law enforcement purposes only and for those agencies whose primary function is that of law enforcement. Release of any of this information by a user of the system to non-law enforcement personnel is strictly prohibited.

Any computer housing ILETS/NCIC must be located in a secure area that unauthorized personnel do not have access to. Additionally, the computer must never be left unattended while anyone is logged-on to the ILETS/NCIC system. Any time the user must leave the ILETS/NCIC computer, even for a moment, the user must log-off or lock the computer. If an unauthorized person gains access to the ILETS/NCIC system while you are logged-on, then you will be legally responsible.

Passwords:

Each user of the ILETS/NCIC system must have a unique password. The password must be a minimum of eight characters and should contain three of the following: upper and lower case letters, alphanumeric characters, and special characters. Each password is valid for a period of ninety days at which time the user will have to create a new password. No person shall have access to another person's password and users should not provide their password to anyone. Exceptions to this rule exist for the TAC, Supervisor, or IT personnel and should be used only

for corrective purposes. Once the correction is made the user should then immediately change his or her password.

Identifiers:

Each NCIC terminal has a nine-digit ORI. The first two characters are the state identifier. Jurisdictions in the State of Idaho also have a four-character identifier that can be used in state only. By using the four-character identifier, the message goes directly to the other terminal instead of being routed through NLETS. Each state also has a two-character identifier allowing messages to be sent statewide. When sending a statewide message in Idaho, you must use the code APB.

Region identifiers are two-digit codes that may be used in place of the two-digit state identifiers when inquiries are made over a multiple state region. These region codes will direct the inquiry to the State Control System of each state listed in that particular region. Multiple replies will then be received for a single inquiry. This is beneficial for example, when an operator is trying to locate a match to a vehicle registration when the numbers are known but the license state is not.

Many of the ILETS inquiry masks have several state fields. This is so that more than one State Control System may be queried at once without the need to follow boundaries of a particular region code. In such cases, simply enter the two-digit state identifier of each state to be queried.

ILETS/NCIC System Inquiries:

Many of the transactions made will be through ILETS, NLETS, or a combination of the two. This section will discuss many of the basic inquiries that will be made utilizing formats or masks that are preprogrammed into the terminal. All of these are ILETS functions but may actually retrieve information through NLETS depending upon the nature of the inquiry.

The Vehicle Registration/Title Files request is used to retrieve vehicle registration and title information from the Idaho Department of Motor Vehicles (**DMV**) or from the DMV files of other states and is accomplished through an **RQ** mask. A registration check can be sent using a license plate or a Vehicle Identification Number (**VIN**). If the state is not indicated the terminal will assume Idaho DMV is the destination of the query. License Type (**LIT**) and License Year (**LIY**) are required for queries outside of Idaho. In addition to DMV, Registration files automatically check ILETS/NCIC wanted and stolen files. The following are examples of the RQ mask and registration returns.

Figure 5.4 is an example of an **RQ** mask.

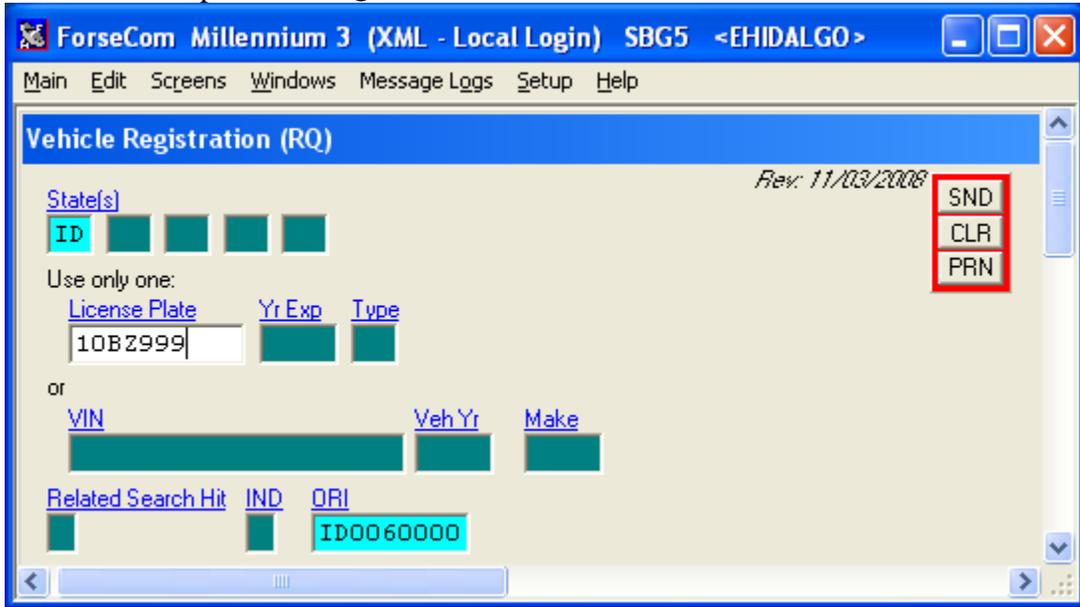


Figure 5.4

Figure 5.5 is an example of a test registration checked by plate number and not stolen or wanted:

```

TXT: LIC/10BZ999
MAY BE THE SAME AS:
VIN/1FACP52U1P6207143.
VCQW/HI-PL. VYR/1993. VMA/YUGO. VMO/XXX. VST/2D. DSC/TURBO.

LIC/10BZ999. LIT/PC. STICKER/0802999999. EXP DATE/02-2008.
REG TO/ LY/2008.
PUBLIC, CARL
TEST, BOYWHATA
ILETS TEST REG
123 WHATCHMACALLIT ST
YELLOW PINE ID 83677. <<PRIVACY FLAG>>
SEARCH BY VIN FOR OWNER/LIENHOLDER DATA
#####

```

Figure 5.5

Figure 5.6 is an example of a test registration checked by VIN:

```

TXT: VIN/1FACP52U1PG207143
MAY BE THE SAME AS:                -- MULTIPLE MATCHES -
-
VIN/1FACP52U1PG207143.
VCD/WHI-PL.  VYR/1993.  VMA/YUGO.  VMO/XXX.  VST/2D.
DSC/TURBO.

LIC/10BZ999.  LIT/PC.  STICKER/0802999999.  EXP DATE/02-
2008.
REG TO/                                LIY/2008.
PUBLIC, CARL
TEST, BOY WHATA
ILET5 TEST REG
123 WHATCHMACALLIT ST
YELLOW PINE          ID 83677.          <<PRIVACY
FLAG>>

MATCH REG.
TITLED OWNER/
PUBLIC, CARL
TEST, BOY WHATA

BANK
123 WHATCHMACALLIT ST
BOISE                ID 83707.

TITLE # DOES NOT
TITLE/93354821.
ISSUED/02-04-2000.
LIEN HOLDER/
FIRST LAST NATIONAL
PO BOX 456
CASH, ID 80000.

```

Figure 5.6

Figure 5.7 is an example of a return showing a vehicle is stolen:

```

WARNING - THE FOLLOWING STOLEN VEHICLE RECORD CONTAINS EXPIRED
LICENSE PLATE
DATA. USE CAUTION, CONTACT ENTERING AGENCY TO CONFIRM STATUS.
MKE/STOLEN VEHICLE
ORI/GA1070000 LIC/TEST LIS/GA LIY/2007 LIT/TK
VIN/1G1ND52JXY6176696 VYR/2000
VMA/CHEVY VMO/MAL VST/4D VCD/SIL DOT/20071212
OCA/TEST ONLY
MIS/THIS IS A GCIC TEST ENTRY - CMM
NIC/V701304616 DTE/20071212 0853 EST
ORI IS NEWTON CO SO COVINGTON 678 625-1400
IMMED CONFIRM RECORD WITH ORI

```

Figure 5.7

If a stolen vehicle has been located, that information should be relayed prior to the registration information. Always determine if the officer is clear to copy prior to relaying the stolen vehicle information. By asking this question of the officer it allows him or her the opportunity to move out of hearing range of the suspect. Once the officer confirms they are clear to copy; advise that you have a hit on a possible stolen vehicle, provide the vehicle description, and advise the officer to stand by for confirmation.

Registration checks can be made by name through Idaho DMV using an **RNQ** mask. A state code must be used for this query although not all states participate in alpha file checks. To use this feature type in the last name, first name or first initial and press enter. Remember that when dealing with this database, the more information entered in the query, the narrower the search becomes. For example; if an inquiry is made about DOE, J, a response may return indicating numerous matches such as DOE, JACK, DOE, JAMES, or DOE, JOHN. Whereas if

more detail is provided, such as DOE, JOHN, a response may still provide multiple matches but will only respond with those bearing DOE, JOHN in the name string. Searching by the first initial would be beneficial when the spelling of the first name is not known. If any matching files are present in the Idaho DMV database, a printout will return listing license numbers, name of registered owner, address, city, and make, type, and year of the vehicle. If the appropriate vehicle is listed on the printout and complete registration information is needed, an RQ transaction must be done with the license plate number. Some out of state records can be accessed this way; all others must be requested utilizing an **AM** message.

The Driver's License check is used to obtain detailed driver's license information from the Idaho DMV or the DMV files from other states and is accomplished by using a **DQ** mask. A driver's check can be sent through Idaho or multiple destinations by using the name of the subject, last name, first name, middle initial and date of birth (**DOB**). If the state is not indicated the terminal will assume Idaho DMV as the destination of the query. If an operator license number is entered the query will only search by Operator License Number (**OLN**) and will ignore any further data entered. Some states respond to a DQ query only by an OLN while some states will respond only to a name and date of birth search. If no record is found by name and DOB, then repeat the search using the OLN. In addition to the DMV files, driver's license checks run by name and DOB will also query the following files: ILETS/NCIC, Missing and Wanted, Sex Offender, Concealed Weapon Permit, Civil protection and No Contact Order files.

Figure 5.8 is an example of a **DQ** mask.

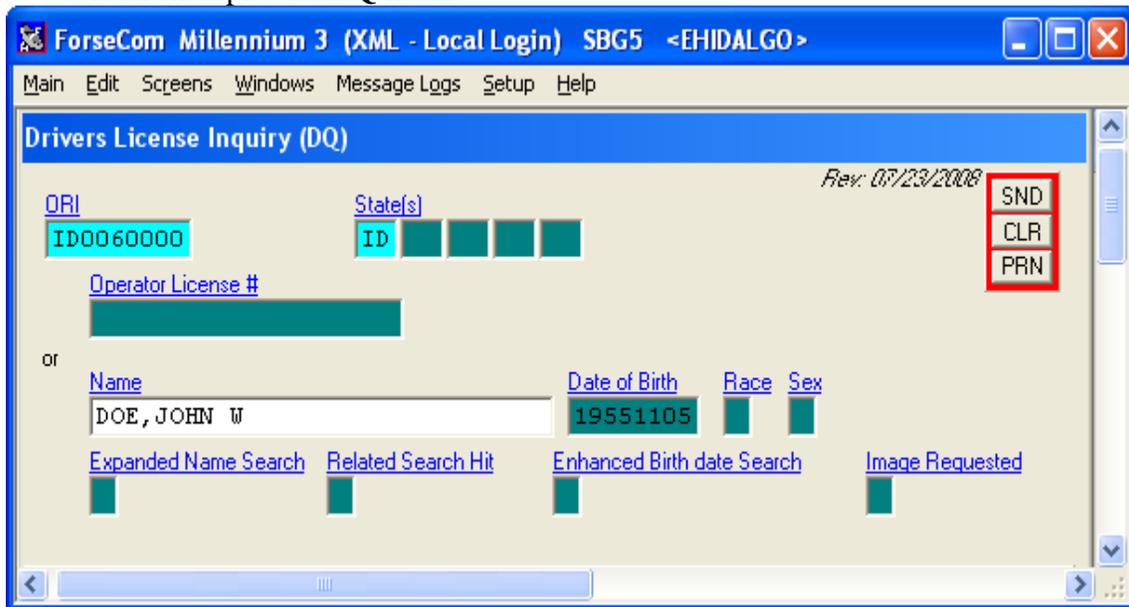


Figure 5.8

Figure 5.9 is an example of a test driver's license check return. Information to be relayed to officers is highlighted.

```

OLN/TS100073A.                                PRIVACY FLAG.
NAM/DOE, JOHN WAYNE.                          ** OPR STATUS/VALID.
RES/                                            ** CDL STATUS/NOT LICENSED.
  3311 W STATE                                CLASS/D. ** EXP/11-05-2011.
BOISE ID 83720.                                OLT/DRIVER LICENSE.
  MAIL/
PO BOX 7129
BOISE ID 83707.

SEX/M.    HA/BRO. EYE/BRO. DOB/11-05-1955.    ORGAN DONOR
HGT/600. WGT/175. ISS/06-05-2007. REC/450963120002. CNTY/MVB.

AKA OLN/910991001.                            AKA OLS/ID.
END OF RECORD

```

Figure 5.9

Out of state driver's license checks must include the state as well as the race and sex of the subject being queried. All other state files return in various different forms and extra time must be taken to locate the necessary information. When relaying driver's license information provide the following: last name, status, expiration, and pertinent priors as applicable by department policy. If the driving status is suspended or invalid, provide the last name, status, reason for the suspension and the dates.

Figure 5.10 is an example of a driver's license return on a suspended driver.

```

MAY BE THE SAME AS: PAGE 01 FOR OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION PURPOSES
ONLY
OLN/TS100007C.                                PRIVACY FLAG.
NAM/PUBLIC, CARL                               ** OPR STATUS/SUSPENDED.
RES/                                            ** CDL STATUS/NOT LICENSED.
  3311 W STATE ST                             CLASS/D. ** EXP/03-15-2005.
BOISE ID 83707.                                OLT/DRIVER LICENSE.
  MAIL/
PO BOX 7129
BOISE ID 83707.

SEX/M.    HA/BRO. EYE/BLU. DOB/05-24-1956.
HGT/509. WGT/150. ISS/12-21-2001. REC/450953550002. CNTY/MVB.

C SUS/04-28-1995. UNTL/07-27-1995. INFRACTIONS. REIN FULL 12-22-1995. OP
SU SP/05-28-1996. UNTL/08-28-1996. INFRACTIONS. REIN FULL 08-28-1999. OP
SU SP/08-28-1996. UNTL/99-99-9999. NRVC.      OP
SU SP/09-15-1996. UNTL/10-14-1996. POINTS/MAND. REIN FULL 11-29-1996. OP
SU SP/04-21-1997. UNTL/10-17-1997. DUI.      FULL SR 22. 10-17-2000. OP
SU SP/03-14-2000. UNTL/09-10-2000. VOL SURREND. REIN FULL 09-10-2000. OP
SU SP/03-15-2000. UNTL/03-31-2003. VOL SURREND. REIN FULL 03-31-2003. OP
SU SP/11-01-2000. UNTL/12-01-2000. VIOL<17. REIN FULL 12-01-2003. OP
CANC/11-11-2000. UNTL/03-15-2001. *VIOL SIP. REIN FULL 03-15-2001. OP
CITN/06-17-2008C. 05-12-2008A. TURN-WR LANE. WA WASHINGTON.
CITN/10-20-2008C. 09-28-2008A. BASIC RULE.  CTY. IDAHO FALLS.
ORD DEGREE/INFR.
CITN/10-20-2008C. 07-07-2008A. DWP SUSPEND.  CTY. BOISE.
ORD DEGREE/MISD.
***** PENDING ACTION *****
SU SP/10-12-2010. UNTL/01-08-2011. INFRACTIONS.  OP
END OF RECORD

```

Figure 5.10

Figure 5.11 is an example of an NCIC warrant hit.

```
***MESSAGE KEY QWF SEARCHES WANTED PERSON FILE FELONY RECORDS
REGARDLESS OF
EXTRADITION. ALL OTHER NCIC PERSONS FILES ARE SEARCHED WITHOUT
LIMITATIONS.***
WARNING - THE SUBJECT IDENTIFIED IN THIS RECORD NICW/194891588 IS
KNOWN TO USE THE FOLLOWING STOLEN OR FALSE (S/F) IDENTIFICATION
DOCUMENTS. USE CAUTION IN VERIFYING THE IDENTITY OF THIS PERSON.
S/F NAM/PUBLIC,JOHN Q
S/F DOB/19860101
MKE/WANTED PERSON - CAUTION
VIOLENT TENDENCIES
3 - EXTRADITION - SURROUNDING STATES ONLY
ORVNJNYPOAD00 NAM/PUBLIC,CARL C SEX/M RAC/W POB/US DOB/19560524
HGT/509 WGT/150 EYE/HAZ HAIR/BLK SKN/FAR
SMT/SC R HND
OLN/434262613 OLS/NY OLY/1992
OFF/ASSAULT
DOM/20080809 OCA/08PA0TEST
MIS/SUBJ KNOWN TO ASSAULT POLICE THIS IS A TEST RECORD ONLY DO NOT
LOCATE OR
MIS/CANCEL RECORD
DNA/N
ADD/01 - RESIDENCE (LAST KNOWN) DDA/19920524
SNU/1234 SNA/TEST RECORD ST
CTY/TEST RECORD TOWN STA/NY ZIP/12513
COU/COLUMBIA
ORI IS NY AND NJ PORT AUTHORITY JERSEY CITY 201 239-3500
NICW/194891588 DTE/20080809 2053 EDT
IMMED CONFIRM WARRANT AND EXTRADITION WITH ORI
```

Figure 5.11

If a warrant has been located that information should be relayed prior to the driver's information, as well as any caution information on the suspect. Always determine if the officer is clear to copy prior to relaying the warrant information. By asking if the officer is clear to copy it allows them the opportunity to move out of hearing range of the suspect. Once it has been determined that the officer is clear to copy, advise that you have a possible warrant hit. Then relay the suspect information and advise the officer to stand by for confirmation. If you are unsure if the hit is the same subject you ran the query on, compare the name, aka names, date of birth, OLN or SSN, and physical description. In this case you would advise the officer you have a possible hit. If the officer determines it is the same subject, advise the officer to stand by for confirmation.

Similar to registration checks, driver's license checks by name can be done using the **DNQ** mask. This query will check Idaho DMV driver's license files by name only. As with the **RNQ**, the more information provided, the more narrow the search field becomes. Although you can receive a response by last name and first initial, you should narrow your number of responses by filling in as much of the proper name as you can. **DNQ** can be used for out of state queries but only some states participate. For states not participating in **DNQ**, driver's information can be obtained from a state's DMV files by using an **AM** message.

A driver's license photo and signature block can be obtained through the State of Idaho using a **DPQ** query. There are many fields available in this query, however the best option is to use the **OLN**.

Idaho displays driving histories on all **DQ** requests. However, Idaho and other state driving histories can be obtained by using a **KQ** query. All of these queries require the requesting officer's name, as well as the purpose code. Purpose codes are **C** for Criminal or **J** for

Criminal Justice Employment. Not all states participate in this program and for those states that do not an AM message must be used.

Anytime you receive a hit on a wanted person or something that is stolen, the hit will need to be confirmed. This confirmation is accomplished using either the **YQ** or **YR** mask. The YQ and YR masks are utilized to request confirmation of an IHOT or NCIC hit and to also send confirmation to another agency that received a hit. If an IHOT or NCIC hit is received, you will confirm this using the YQ mask. To accomplish this you will need to fill in the blank fields with information from the warrant hit. If the ORI is within Idaho, the four-character ORI identifier for in-state agencies may be used. If the hit is an NCIC file originating out of state, use the full nine-character identifier. If a YQ is being used to confirm an IHOT entry, enter the warrant number in the OCA field. There will not be a NIC number on an IHOT hit, so you will need to use the SIC number instead. If a response to an NCIC confirmation request is not received after ten minutes have passed, and the request was **U** for urgent, you will need to resend a YQ message and place an "**X**" in the 2nd request field. If a response is still not received, resend the request but route it to ILETS control by typing ILET in the destination CTO field. This will prompt ILETS control to follow up on your request with the originating agency. An urgent request may only be sent when an officer is actually checked out with the subject or property in question. A routine request shall be used for all other queries. Once persons or property are taken into custody based on a confirmed hit, immediately place a locate on the record.

If another agency receives a hit on an NCIC or IHOT file entered by your agency, they will send a YQ request for confirmation. The operator shall respond by sending a **YR**. After having checked the appropriate warrant or NCIC entry file and confirming that the entry is valid and that the requesting agency is within the extradition limit boundaries, fill in the blank field with data from the warrant or entry and use the ORI information from the initial request. Upon entering the completed YR mask, a message will be sent to the inquiring ORI. It is mandatory to utilize a YQ and YR on all warrant confirmations. Warrants may be confirmed over the telephone but must be followed up with necessary masks.

Another function of the ILETS/NCIC system is the ability to run criminal histories. This is accomplished by using the Criminal History Record Inquiry or **CHRI**. This system provides for a standardized and highly efficient method for ILETS users to obtain criminal histories and related information from out of state and in state criminal justice agencies. To achieve the greatest benefit and efficiency from the system, there are various inquiry modes which, when used in the proper order, will allow access to all possible sources of information. All requests into the CHRI system must contain the following information: agency, the requesting officer's first initial and last name, and a request explanation. The following are valid explanation codes:

Arrest – AR	Probation/Parole – PP
DA/Court – DA	Traffic Stop – TS
Drug Investigation – DI	Training - TR
Employment – EM	Other – Explain: Burglary, Theft, Etc...
Gun Permit – GP	Record Completeness – NCO/PCO
Jail – JL	

To determine if a subject has a criminal record in the Interstate Identification Index (**III**) the **QH** query is used. The QH inquiry is an identity search only. The query searches the III files for all possible matches. Multiple close matches may be received. The response will provide any known FBI or State Identification (**SID**) numbers associated with that subject. The operator must

cross-check the responses and determine which one is a true match to the subject that has been inquired upon. The operator can resend the information with a **QR** function using the FBI or the SID numbers from that state. A negative response to a QH message will indicate “No identifiable record”.

Figure 5.12 is an example of the QH mask.

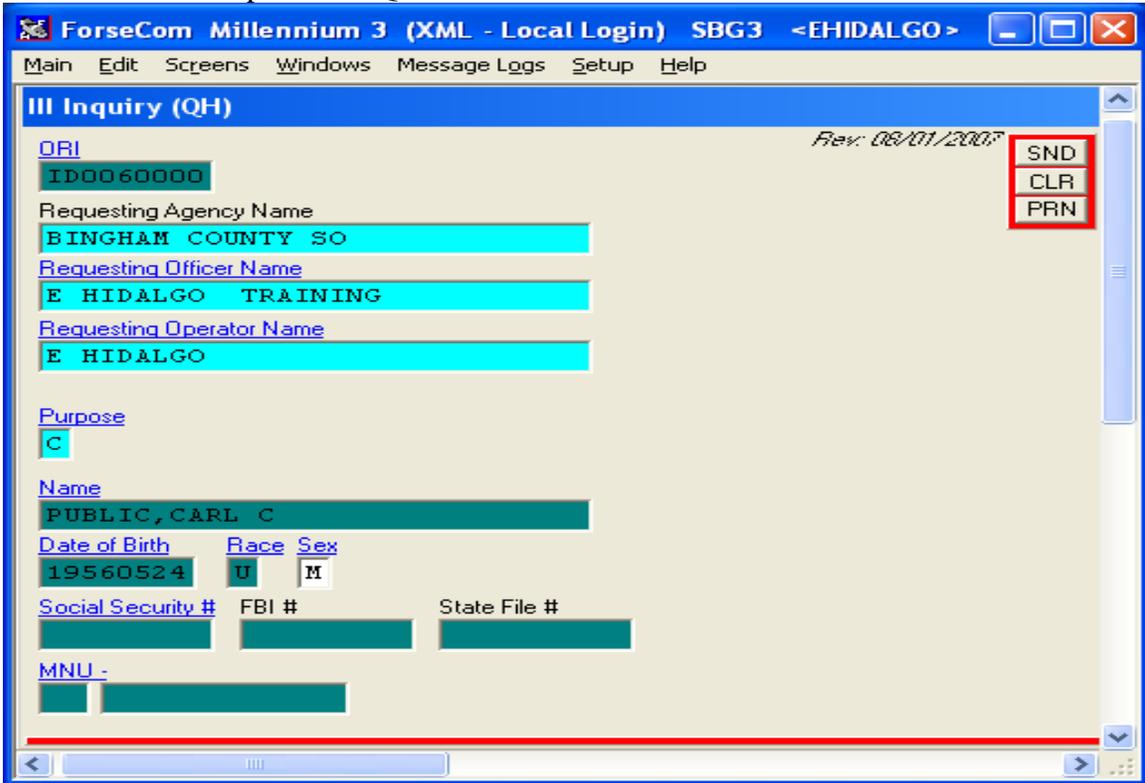


Figure 5.12

Figure 5.13 is an example of a positive QH response.

```
THIS NCIC INTERSTATE IDENTIFICATION INDEX RESPONSE IS THE RESULT OF
YOUR
INQUIRY ON NAM/PUBLIC, CARL C SEX/M RAC/U DOB/19560524 PUR/C
NAME                               FBI NO.          INQUIRY DATE
PUBLIC, CARL C                     9003300         2009/01/06

SEX RACE BIRTH DATE  HEIGHT WEIGHT EYES HAIR PHOTO
M   W   1956/05/24   509    153   HAZ  BLN  N

BIRTH PLACE
FLORIDA

FINGERPRINT CLASS
CI PO 12 17 13
16 11 12 13 14

ALIAS NAMES
PUBLIC, CARL

SCARS-MARKS-
TATTOOS          SOCIAL SECURITY
SC R ARM         099-99-9991
TAT LF ARM       456-42-1355

IDENTIFICATION DATA UPDATED 2008/11/05

THE CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD IS MAINTAINED AND AVAILABLE FROM THE
FOLLOWING:
FLORIDA          - STATE ID/FL01777559
IDAHO            - STATE ID/ID00500028
TEXAS           - STATE ID/TX03077227

THE RECORD(S) CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE INTERSTATE IDENTIFICATION
INDEX BY USING THE APPROPRIATE NCIC TRANSACTION.
```

Figure 5.13

The ILETs/NCIC system also has the capability of retrieving a full record from the Interstate Identification Index (III) using a Full Record Query or **QR**. The purpose of the QR query is to locate and obtain a particular criminal history record from the III. To make a QR query the operator must include the FBI or SID number obtained from the QH response relating to the person of interest. A positive response will advise the agency or file system that is going to provide the file information. Refer to the NCIC operating manual for detailed information regarding the QR inquiry. Figure 5.18 is an example of the QR mask.

Figure 5.14 is an example of the QR mask.

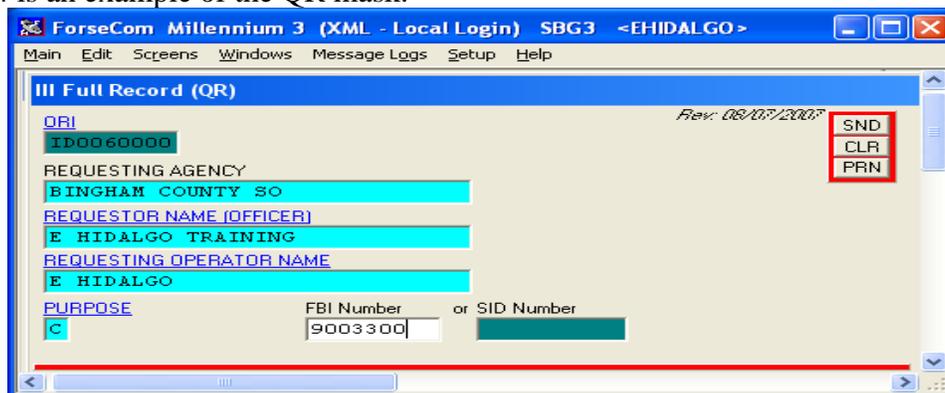


Figure 5.14

Figure 5.15 is an example of an initial positive QR response.

```
THIS INTERSTATE IDENTIFICATION INDEX RESPONSE IS THE RESULT OF
YOUR
RECORD REQUEST FOR FBI/9003300. INDIVIDUAL'S RECORD WILL BE
COMPLETE WHEN ALL RESPONSES ARE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING
SOURCES:
FLORIDA      - STATE ID/FL01777559
TEXAS        - STATE ID/TX03077227

AN ADDITIONAL RECORD MAY BE OBTAINED FROM FILES WITHIN YOUR
STATE.
END
```

Figure 5.15

In those instances where identity and matching records cannot be confirmed or located through the QH or QR format queries an **IQ** can be used. The IQ stands for Identity Search Query and is utilized much like the QH query in that it is an identity search. Inquiry is made through the State Information depository or the State Information Center of another state. The operator may inquire up to five different states at a time. The IQ query will retrieve a criminal history, but the identity portion of any criminal history record presently in that state's system must be queried using the FQ inquiry.

Figure 5.16 is an example of an IQ mask.

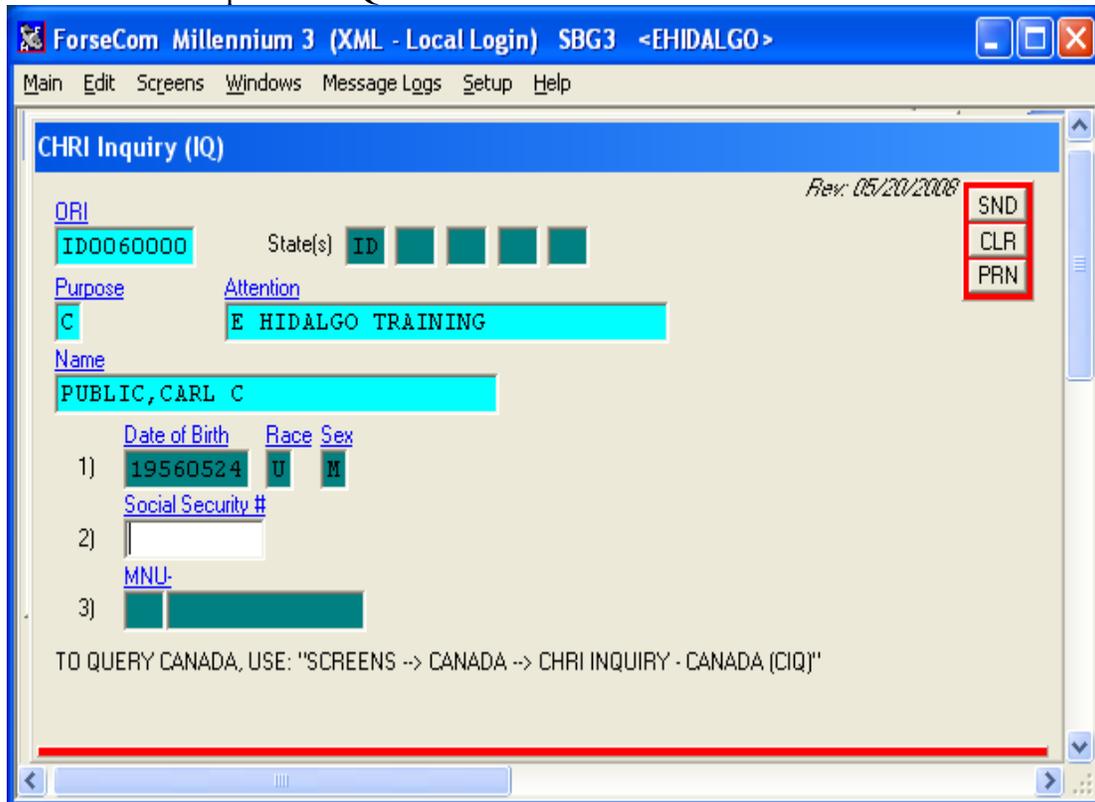


Figure 5.16

Figure 5.17 is an example of a positive IQ response.

```
THE FOLLOWING IS IN RESPONSE TO YOUR INQUIRY ON
NAM/PUBLIC,CARL C
.DOB/19560524.SEX/M.SOC/

*** THE ABOVE NAMED SUBJECT MAY BE THE SAME AS ***
*** OUR IDAHO CRIMINAL HISTORY ON ***

      NAME                DOB      RAC SEX
SID
->PUBLIC,CARL C          05-24-1956  W   M
ID00500028

*** FOR A COMPLETE CRIMINAL HISTORY, DO A ***
*** CORRESPONDING FQ TRANSACTION. ***

NOTICE -- THE RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST FOR A CRIMINAL
HISTORY RECORD CHECK IS BASED ON A REVIEW OF THE STATE
OF IDAHO'S DATA BASE ONLY. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE
POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF A RECORD IN A LOCAL AGENCY,
(SHERIFF'S OFFICE OR POLICE DEPARTMENT), A STATE OTHER
THAN IDAHO OR THE FBI IDENTIFICATION DIVISION FILES.
```

Figure 5.17

After identity of a subject has been obtained along with the proper SID numbers from responses to an IQ request, the operator may utilize the **FQ** format to query a particular state information system. The FQ query requests that particular state to transmit a complete criminal history on the subject that has been identified as belonging to that particular SID number. A reply may be received indicating that the SID number has matched to a non-automated file. In such cases the state system must locate the record off line and forward it at a later time. The response message will indicate if this is the case. Refer to the ILETS Manual for more detailed information regarding the FQ and other CHRI operations.

Figure 5.18 is an example of the FQ mask.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "ForseCom Millennium 3 (XML - Local Login) SBG3 <EHIDALGO>". The main content area is titled "CHRI Full Record (FQ)". It contains several input fields and labels:

- ORI**: ID0060000
- State**: ID
- Purpose**: C
- Attention**: E HIDALGO TRAINING
- SID**: ID00500028
- Department Name**: [Redacted]
- Building identification**: [Redacted]
- Address**: [Redacted]
- City and State**: [Redacted]
- Zip Code**: [Redacted]
- Image Requested (Y, N or blank)**: [Redacted]

On the right side, there is a small table with three rows: SND, CLR, and PRN. A date stamp "Rev: 03/06/2008" is located in the upper right corner of the form area.

Figure 5.18

Figure 5.19 is an example of a positive FQ return.

```

TXT: PUR/C.ATN/E HIDALGO TRAINING
SID/ID00500028

- IDAHO CRIMINAL HISTORY -

THE SUBJECT OF THIS CRIMINAL RECORD INQUIRY HAS BEEN
CONVICTED OF A FELONY CRIME AS DEFINED BY IDAHO CODE 18-
111 AND 18-111A.

INDIVIDUAL MAY BE PROHIBITED FROM POSSESSING OR ACQUIRING
FIREARM OR AMMUNITION PURSUANT TO FEDERAL GUN CONTROL
ACT OF 1968 AND IDAHO CODE 18-310.

NAME                               SOC           STATE ID
FBI NO
PUBLIC,CARL C                       123432123 00500028
9003300

RACE      SEX      DOB      HEIGHT  WEIGHT
EYES      HAIR     SKIN
W         M         05-24-1956  509     153
HAZ      BLN     FAR
COB POB
MULTI-ST
US NAMPA ID                       Y         Y

EXTENDED INFORMATION
IXDT TYPE  NUMBER
OLN/OLS/OLY  JB123456I
SMT          TAT R SHLD
/ID/

ALIAS NAMES
AKA      DOB      RACE  SEX
PUBLIC,CARL Q  05-09-1953  W     M
PULIC,C CARL  05-24-1956  W     M
PUBLIC,CARL Q  05-09-1953  W     M

ARRESTS AND DISPOSITIONS
ARREST DATE: 02-02-2004 ORI: ID0010000 AGENCY: ADA
COUNTY SO
CASE:
CHARGE: (M) DOMESTIC BATTERY / ASSAULT COUNTS:
1
CHARGE: (M) FTA/CONTEMPT OF COURT COUNTS:
1
CHARGE: (M) FTA/CONTEMPT OF COURT COUNTS:
1
COURT: ID001015J CASE: DATE:
CHARGE: (M) DOMESTIC BATTERY / ASSAULT COUNTS:
1
DISP/SENT: JAIL-2 M. JAIL SUSPENDED-1 M. PROBATION-5
Y.

```

Figure 5.19

Criminal histories must be checked using all AKA names and dates of birth. Check IQ records for the state of birth, the state of social security number was issued from, and any prior states listed on the driver's license check. Always check IQ records out of Idaho. Criminal histories must be checked using the appropriate requesting agency name as well as the requesting officer name with the reason for the query. The requesting agency is the agency in which the officer/personnel running the query is employed by. For the requesting officer use the officer's first initial and last name followed by the reason for the query using one of the explanation codes discussed previously in the section.

In addition to the criminal justice information systems already discussed, the ILETs and NLETs systems also provide various on-line service files which are of benefit to the public safety service provider.

The first of these files is the ORION File Query. The ORION file is an automated identification index of all ILETS/NLETS terminal agencies and those non-terminal agencies listed as being supported by a terminal agency. The ORION file is accessed by using the Terminal Query or **TQ** mask. If the ORI for an agency is known, simply enter the ORI and a listing will be received with the agency name, address, telephone number, fax number and Chief Executive of that agency. Additionally, a search may be made by location and type by entering the state, city or county, and the type of agency i.e. PD, SO, etc.

The second file is the Weather Service File Query. The weather service query allows the operator to recall and print out any of six of the latest weather bulletins entered into the ILETS system or the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather stations and/or the KBOI weather service link to Boise. This file is accessed by using the **WI** mask. When using the WI mask you can place an "X" in the field marked "DIRECTORY" to receive a menu of the latest reports. Then you can select the desired weather report and type its file name in the spaces. Enter the mask again and a weather report will be received. This information is generally not that up to date and it would be better to check with the National Weather Service.

The third file is the NLETS Hazardous Material Inquiry. This file is accessed by using the **MQ** mask and is a simple single field mask. The MQ mask will access an on line assistance file that contains precautionary information listing, responder guidance and generic hazards associated with particular groups of hazardous materials. The system operates on the same principle as the Department of Transportation Haz-Mat Guidebook. By entering the placard number, a listing will be received of precautions, known hazards, evacuation criteria, and other data pertinent to the material being queried.

The Wanted/Missing Person inquiry is used to make a check of the NCIC wanted or missing person files and is accomplished by using the **QW** mask. Refer to the NCIC Operators Manual for a description of search parameters. A key point to remember is that if a QW inquiry is made using name, DOB, SSN, FBI number, etc., the numeric data strings are what is used to search. For example, an FBI number included in the entry will ignore the name search and will search by that number alone. Usually checks will be made using name, DOB, race as unknown, and sex only. A driver's check or DQ will check this file as well as the Idaho file.

The Wanted/Stolen Vehicle Inquiry conducts a search of the NCIC vehicle files for any entered stolen or wanted vehicles matching the search criteria entered and is accomplished using the **QV** mask. NCIC checks of vehicle files are automatically done in conjunction with registration checks. Vehicle wanted checks should be run with an RQ mask. A brief description will be provided to the officer, from the registration, to ensure the license plates are not fictitious. Vehicles used in, or associated with the commission of a crime are often entered into this file in addition to stolen vehicles.

Firearms, silencers, certain firearm parts, and explosive or destructive devices that have been reported stolen or are recovered without stolen reports may be entered into the NCIC gun files. A search of this file can be accomplished by using the Stolen Gun Inquiry or **QG** mask for Query Gun. It is essential that you become familiar with the applicable section of the NCIC operator and code manuals for detailed information about entry and inquiry into these files. Serial number is the only mandatory field for a gun query. Caution must be used in that multiple firearms have the same serial numbers. If a hit is received you must carefully check the make and type to ensure that they are a match.

Figure 5.20 is an example of the QG mask.

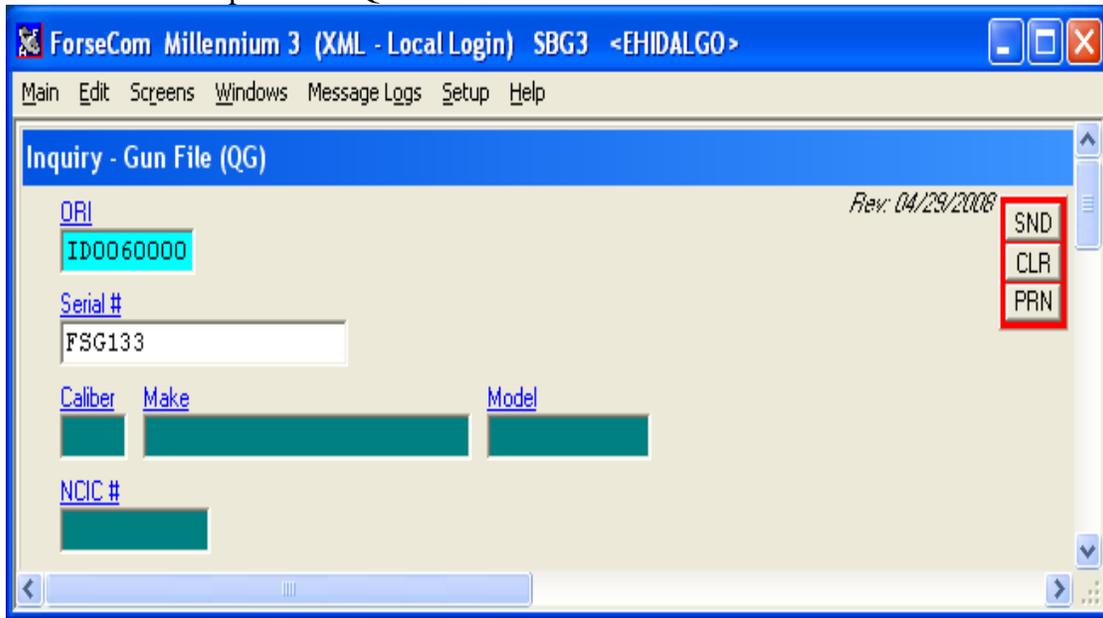


Figure 5.20

Figure 5.21 is an example of a hit return on a stolen gun.

```

MKE/STOLEN GUN
ORI /I D0060000 SER/FSG133 MAK/GLC CAL/45
TYP/PI DOT/20071026
OCA/0707253
VLD/20080726 VLN/BI SHARAT NOA/N
NIC/G501731611 DTE/20071126 1554 EST
ORI IS BINGHAM CO SO BLACKFOOT 208 785-1234
    
```

Figure 5.21

Article files generally contain items or equipment that, for various reasons, do not fit into the criteria for the other specific NCIC files. Accessing this file can be accomplished using the Stolen Article Inquiry or **QA** mask for Query Article. Electronic equipment, machinery that is a non-vehicle, and power tools are a few examples of the items that can be located within the article files. Specific type codes must be used on all inquiries.

Figure 5.22 is an example of the QA mask.

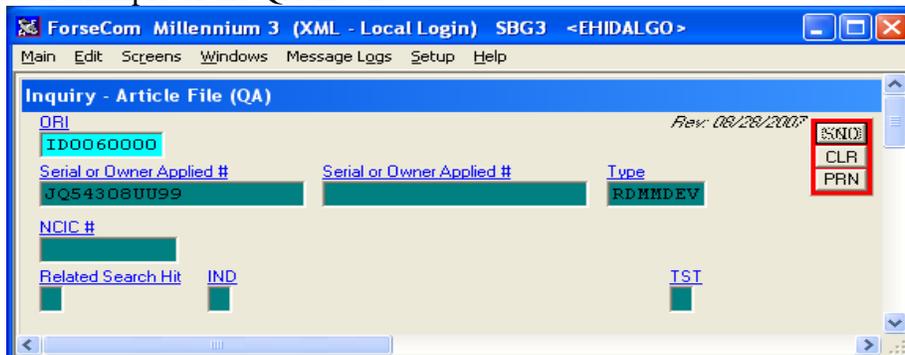


Figure 5.22

Figure 5.23 is an example of a hit return on a stolen article.

```
MKE/STOLEN ARTICLE
ORI /ID0060200 TYP/RDMMDEV SER/JQ54308UU99 BRA/APPLE
DOT/20080306
OCA/081359
MIS/IPOD IS A 30 GIG THAT HAD THE SCHOOL SHIELD FROM HARRY
POTTER ON THE BACK
NIC/A246093444 DTE/20080306 1620 EST
ORI IS BLACKFOOT PD 208 785-1235
IMMED CONFIRM RECORD WITH ORI
```

Figure 5.23

Stolen boat inquiries are very similar to stolen vehicle inquiries and can be accomplished using the Stolen Boat Inquiry or **QB** mask for Query Boat. The difference is that a boat utilizes a hull number (**BHN**) rather than a VIN. The boat file may be queried by using the registration number, the BHN, or the NIC number for a particular stolen entry file if known. When checking a boat registration, the stolen files are checked.

Figure 5.24 is an example of the QB mask.

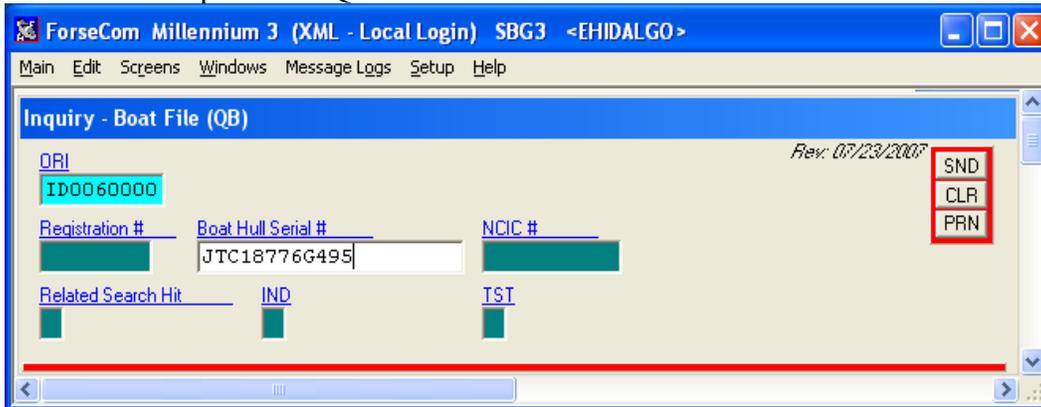


Figure 5.24

Figure 5.25 is an example of a hit return on a stolen boat.

```
WARNING - THE FOLLOWING RECORD CONTAINS EXPIRED REGISTRATION
DATA. USE CAUTION, CONTACT ENTERING AGENCY TO CONFIRM STATUS.
MKE/STOLEN BOAT
ORI /ID0060200 REG/ID9336AL RES/ID REY/2008 HUL/OT
BHN/JTC18776G495 BYR/1995 PRO/IN BMA/JTC BTY/YYY BLE/21
BCO/WHI/BLU DOT/20081010
OCA/CR087128
MIS/BOAT IS ON A BLACK 95 META TRAILER
NIC/B380135944 DTE/20081013 1508 EDT
ORI IS BLACKFOOT PD 208 785-1235
IMMED CONFIRM RECORD WITH ORI
```

Figure 5.25

The Aircraft Registration and Tracking inquiry allows the operator to locate registered and titled owner information on aircraft and can be accomplished using the **GQ** mask. A query may be made by registration or tail number, by owner name or aircraft serial number. The operator may also indicate if the aircraft was sighted at the time of inquiry. This will enter sighting information into the automated aircraft tracking system.

Canadian Interface:

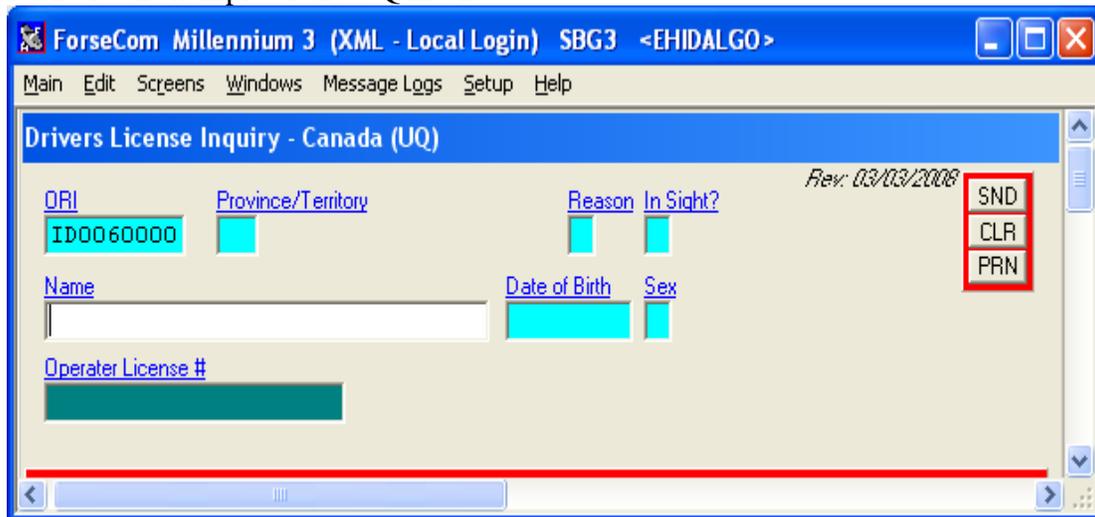
NLETS supports a computer-to-computer interface to Canada for the purpose of exchanging criminal justice and criminal justice related information. Through this interface, a variety of information is available. It is important to understand that Canadian information will be provided from several sources. The Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC), a system somewhat similar to the FBI/NCIC, provides hot file and department of motor vehicle information for several provinces and two territories that do not maintain their own.

Every fixed format hot file inquiry must have a reason code, which indicates the general purpose for the request. In addition, every fixed format hot file inquiry must indicate whether the subject of the message is present or in sight of the person making the request for the inquiry. The following is a list of valid reason codes:

N	Narcotics
F	Fraud
V	Violent Crimes (Includes: Robbery, Murder, Rape, Bombing, etc.)
T	Traffic Violation
S	Theft
H	Humanitarian

Requests to Canada for driver's license information must include the Province or Territory, Name, DOB, Sex, Reason (RSN), and Person or Property in Sight (PPS). The OLN field is optional for Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario. For all other provinces and territories the OLN, as well as the five other fields are required. This inquiry will also result in a check of the person file located in CPIC.

Figure 5.26 is an example of the UQ mask.



The screenshot shows a window titled "ForseCom Millennium 3 (XML - Local Login) SBG3 <EHIDALGO>". The main menu includes "Main", "Edit", "Screens", "Windows", "Message Logs", "Setup", and "Help". The window content is titled "Drivers License Inquiry - Canada (UQ)" and includes a revision date "Rev: 03/03/2008". The form fields are as follows:

ORI	Province/Territory	Reason	In Sight?
ID0060000			
Name	Date of Birth	Sex	
Operator License #			

On the right side of the form, there are three buttons: SND, CLR, and PRN, which are highlighted with a red box.

Figure 5.26

The CPIC provides Person File information using a **WQ** mask. This will include a variety of records, some not normally available from the United States counterpart. Take no official action on any response from the Canadian Persons File without obtaining specific instructions from Washington D.C, INTERPOL. This information is provided for officer safety and is to be

used only in conjunction with other information the inquiring officer may have at his or her disposal at the time of the inquiry. The following are the different types of information available to United States users from the CPIC Persons File:

Wanted – this refers to a person who can be arrested and/or for whom a warrant has been issued. Only those persons wanted by Canada-wide and extraditable warrants are recorded in this file.

Charged – this refers to a person against whom legal proceedings have commenced in relation to a criminal code offense or an offense under a federal statute. This also refers to a person who is waiting final disposition, including any appeal, and for who a warrant to arrest is not in force for that offense.

Parolee – This refers to a person who has been convicted of a criminal offense and has been released on parole.

Probation – This refers to a person who has been convicted or found guilty of an offense and has been given a suspended sentence, conditional discharge, released on probation, has been placed on peace bond, recognizance or restraining order, or is a young offender who is in open custody.

Prohibited – This refers to a person against whom an Order of Prohibition is in effect with regard to liquor, firearms, vehicle driving, boat operation, hunting, or any other court or statute imposed prohibition. Individuals with revoked/suspended licenses will be returned as this type of record by CPIC. British Columbia, however, keeps their own status information and therefore on a WQ no status information will be provided for British Columbia licenses.

Refused – This category has been incorporated into the CPIC file to meet the requirements of the Firearms Legislation of the Criminal Code. It is used to record data on a person who has been refused the issuance of a Firearm Acquisition Certificate, Firearm Registration Certificate or had one revoked.

Observation – This category is used to record data on a person who is suspected of committing criminal offenses and sufficient evidence is not available to prosecute, known to be dangerous to self or others, involved in a serious criminal investigation and confidential information as to his or her whereabouts is required. Only observation records containing information about an individual that may pose a danger to an officer will be returned to the inquirer. There may be instances where a silent hit occurs in which the agency that entered the record will be notified that you inquired but you will still receive a no hit record. In some instances the agency may contact you in regard to this inquiry. In the event a person is reported as being under observation, take no action based on this information and do not divulge the existence of this information to any non-criminal justice personnel.

Missing – This refers to a person who has been reported missing, has been admitted/committed to a mental institution/hospital psychiatric ward and has left without permission or formal discharge (designated as an elope), or for whom a police agency has undertaken to assist in locating on compassionate grounds.

The CPIC provides Vehicle File information using a **VQ** mask. This will include a variety of records, some not normally available from their United States counterpart. Once it has been confirmed that it is the correct vehicle reported to be in question and the status of such vehicle, as reported by the CPIC system, is current and correct, it can be detained and/or

impounded pending specific instructions from Washington INTERPOL and/or the Canadian agency that entered the vehicle into the CPIC system. The locating agency should immediately contact Washington INTERPOL for further instructions regarding the vehicle. The Province or Territory, License Number or VIN, RSN, and PPS are mandatory fields for all inquiries.

Figure 5.27 is an example of the VQ mask.

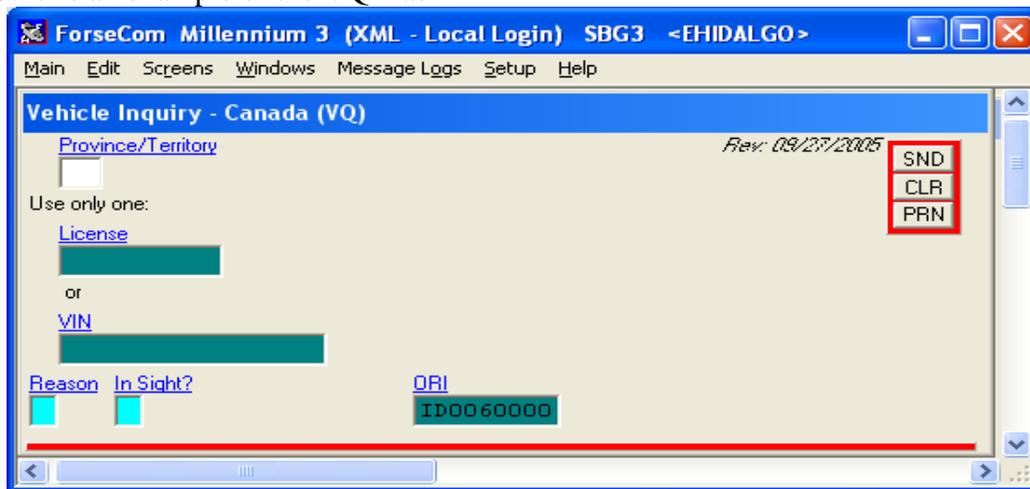


Figure 5.27

The following are the different types of information available to United States users from the CPIC Vehicle files:

Stolen – This refers to a vehicle which has been stolen, or taken from its rightful owner by the commission of a crime, (e.g. a vehicle purchased from a dealer under false pretenses).

Observation – A vehicle under observation is one, which is connected to activities and may or may not be related to a specific individual. In the event a vehicle is reported as being under observation, absolutely no action is to be taken by the inquiring officer.

Crime – Crime vehicles are known to be connected to the commission of a crime, (e.g. hit and run, murder, robbery, etc.) They are entered in the system by an agency wishing to examine the vehicle for possible evidence such as fingerprints, paint samples, blood stains, disguises, empty shells, etc.

Abandoned - This refers to a vehicle which comes into its possession through abandonment, seizure (including seizure by bailiff), or impounding by other means.

Pointer – This refers to a vehicle record whose function is only to point to a prime record in the system. For example, an individual wanted for a specific offense is entered into the system as a wanted person record. He is known to drive a particular vehicle. The vehicle's particulars are entered in the system, as a pointer record to point to the prime wanted person record should an inquiry be received concerning the vehicle only.



CHAPTER SIX: CALL TAKING

Chapter Six: Call Taking:

Call taking is an extremely important function within the dispatch center as call takers are the true first responders in an emergency situation. Call taking is a very dynamic position and no two phone calls will be exactly the same. This in itself makes call taking one of the more difficult positions to learn. The good news is that there are some basic techniques that will assist you in every call that you take. By following these techniques you can answer and process calls efficiently, accurately and with confidence.

Call Taking Techniques:

It has been stated that call taking is a very dynamic position in that no two phone calls will be exactly the same. This would lead one to believe that there are no techniques that can be applied across all phone calls. This could not be further from the truth. Although each of the phone calls you take will be different, there are many techniques that will assist you in processing phone calls effectively and efficiently while providing the highest levels of customer service.

Call Processing:

There are four (4) basic call processing techniques that will ensure calls are handled appropriately every time. **Answering Calls Promptly** is an important function of call taking. In many cases when someone places a call they hear more rings than the person on the receiving end. When someone has an emergency, is ill, or in fear, every ring seems like an eternity. Many people will swear the phone rang 10 times before someone answered, when in reality it may have only rang 3 or 4. By answering these calls promptly we can minimize the fear, frustration, and panic that the caller may be facing.

Every time that we answer a call it is crucial to **Provide the Proper Greeting**. Many agencies will have a policy on how each line should be answered. In general the greeting should let the caller know that they have indeed reached the right place. When someone calls with an emergency they need to know that they have reached a professional organization that will provide them with the assistance they need. If it is a 911 call the caller needs to know that they have reached 911. At the same time if it is a non-emergency or administrative call the caller needs to know who they have reached.

Providing the proper greeting falls right in line with being **Professional and Courteous**. Dispatching, and especially the call taking function, is very much a customer service position. The citizens are our main customer and deserve to be treated with respect, regardless of the situation. When someone calls for police, fire, or paramedics they expect to speak to a highly trained, skilled professional. When people call dispatch, especially with an emergency, they need a caring, courteous voice to help them through the situation. As a dispatcher, and more importantly a call taker, you are the voice for your entire agency or agencies that you dispatch for. Within the first few seconds of a call the caller will determine whether or not you are a professional and whether or not you care about their problem. Call takers have an excellent opportunity to project a positive image for the agency when taking calls.

Finally, it is important to **End Calls Positively and Politely**. As a call taker you should do your best to end calls on a positive note, leaving the caller with a feeling of satisfaction that you are going to do everything possible to get them help. When a caller disconnects there should be no doubt in his or her mind what is going to happen with their call. For instance will this be a

phone report or will an officer(s) respond to meet with the person. The result from this will be twofold. First, the caller will be less likely to call back wanting information on what is happening with the call. This can in turn cut down on the number of phone calls that the dispatch center receives. Second, the caller will have a positive outlook on the agency and feel satisfied in the service you provide.

Basic Information Gathering:

Although call taking is a dynamic position, there is certain information that is needed on basically every call you take. This information is known as the Five W's: **Where, What, When, Who, and Weapons**. These five questions are the basic essential information that you will need to obtain on every single call. The Five W's will provide you with the information responders need to safely and effectively respond to calls for service.

The first piece of information that needs to be obtained on every call is **Where**. This question is simply the location where the crime occurred or is occurring. When taking this information repeat the location back to the caller to confirm you have the correct location. An incorrect location can cause a costly delay in response time and can cause the loss of life and/or property. Once you repeat the location make sure the caller heard you and acknowledged that you have the correct location. Along with obtaining the address of where the situation is occurring, where is also going to include the exact location within the location. For example if a fight is occurring at a residence you are going to need the address of the residence and where exactly the fight is occurring at the residence (i.e. in the alley, in the front yard, inside the residence, etc...). The location where an incident is occurring is extremely important, in the event that you lose the caller before we can get any further information, we can at least still get units en-route to help them.

The next question is simply **What** is happening or has happened. This question will assist in determining what call type will be assigned to a call. This question will also determine who handles the call and how many people it will take to handle the situation. Also with this question you will want to begin to ascertain some of the officer safety information such as weapons. This question will assist in determining what crime if any has been committed.

As with the previous questions **When** is exactly what it sounds like. This question determines when the incident occurred or if it is occurring right now. In conjunction with what, when will assist in determining how a call will be handled. Naturally in-progress calls will have a higher priority than an incident that occurred two weeks ago. When determines the priority of the call, and in many cases the number of units to send.

Who determines the individuals involved and contact information for the person reporting the incident. Who can help officers understand what they are dealing with and how to approach the situation. When gathering who is involved it is important to get as much information as possible on all parties involved so that officers know what they are looking for. For instance if someone reports a fight getting the names and descriptions of the subjects involved will help officers as they respond. In the case of a battery that just occurred, many times the subject or subjects will be gone when officers arrive. However, if the call taker obtains an accurate description of the suspect(s) then they will be able to look for individuals matching that description while en-route to the call. Also if possible get the date of birth for subject(s) involved, this will allow you to run the subject(s) and get additional officer safety or warrant information.

The final question of **Weapons** is for officer or responder safety. It is extremely important, especially on in-progress or just-occurred crimes to find out if any weapons were involved. This question is where the call taker's role in officer safety comes into play. Officers need to know not only if a weapon is involved, but the type of weapon as well. If a suspect is armed with a high powered rifle the officers would need to approach differently than they would if the suspect was armed with a knife or even a handgun. The presence of weapons will also affect other responders as well. Generally speaking, paramedics and fire fighters will stage and wait for officers to secure the scene in volatile situations; this is especially true with incidents involving weapons.

Obtaining Descriptive Information:

Call takers are responsible for gaining as much vital information on calls as possible. Included in this information is the description of people, including their physical description and clothing, as well as vehicle descriptions that may be involved in an incident. You will essentially want to obtain the same information every time you are getting a person or vehicle description. Committing the following information to memory will make call taking a much easier task.

When obtaining descriptions of people, you will need to get their **Physical** and **Clothing** descriptions. A person's physical description is their race, sex, age, height, weight, hair and eye color, and any other distinguishes characteristics such as moustache, scars, marks or tattoos. As you obtain this description it is easy to remember by getting the most obvious to the least obvious information. Anytime you see someone what are the first two things you would generally notice? Most of the time, you will notice their race and sex first. From there you will notice their approximate age, height and weight. There are two main reasons for obtaining information in this order. First, it is easier for you to remember what questions to ask as well as easier for the caller to get you the information you need. Second, when the dispatcher relays this information to responders it is easier for them to remember and look for the individual. Obtaining a clothing description is equally as simple. For a clothing description you will want to work top to bottom and outside in. Again, this is the most to least obvious method. Start at the top and whether the person is wearing any kind of hat, then work your way down from the outside in. So you would want to start with color of a jacket if applicable, then to pants, and shoes.

There is also a simple method for remembering and obtaining **Vehicle** descriptions. To do this we use the acronym **CYMBALS**. The letters in this acronym stand for **Color, Year, Make, Body Style, Additional Information, License, and State**. This again is a most to least obvious method. When you see a vehicle the first thing you generally notice is the color. From there you move on to less obvious things. The reasons for this method are just like the reasons for obtaining people descriptions. Basically they are easy to remember and it is easier for responders to spot the vehicle.

It is important to remember that when you are getting a description of either a vehicle or person from a caller, they may not be able to provide all of the information, or they may only be able to give you approximates. For instance it is often difficult for people to estimate a person's age or weight or the year of a vehicle. In these cases you will need to get as much information as possible and in many cases an approximate age or vehicle year will suffice.

Handling Different Types of Callers:

You will receive calls from a wide range of people. Each caller is different, has different needs, and will require different assistance. The following section describes some of the different types of callers and strategies for handling these calls. It is important to remember that not every caller will fit into one of the categories and more importantly there will be some callers that do not fit into any category. In these situations you will need to survey the situation and possibly use a combination of these strategies to assist the caller.

Emotional or **Hysterical** callers are sometimes difficult to get information from. Fortunately, most callers do not fall in to this category. While many callers you speak with may be emotional, generally they can be calmed down long enough to get information out of them. In the event that you do receive a call from someone that is simply out-of-control, you will need to do your best to calm the person down. **Repetitive Persistence** will often help with these callers. Basically, repetitive persistence is asking the same question, using the same words, and the same tone over and over until you get an answer. This will help get control of the caller and bring them back to a level where you can communicate. Another way to help with these callers is to change the tone of your voice. In some situations lowering your tone and speaking in a nice calming voice will help to rein the caller in. This will sometimes have a soothing effect on the caller causing him or her to clam down. In other situations you may have to raise your tone to get the caller's attention. If you use this method you will want to be extremely careful not to yell at the caller or cause further frustration. With any of these methods you need to be prepared for when you have the caller under control and calmed down. You will want to keep the questions coming and minimize dead air over the phone so that it does not give the caller another chance to think about the situation and become hysterical again.

Child Callers are sometimes difficult to handle because there is often a communication barrier. Depending on age, the child caller may not be able to readily provide you with pertinent information. Your tone and rate of speech is extremely important when handling a child caller. With children you will need to slow your rate of speech down and use an even tone. Children are amazing and will be able to provide more information than anyone could possibly imagine if the information is solicited in the correct manner. You will need to do your best to get down to the child's level and not use words the child will not understand.

When speaking with **Elderly Callers** it is important to be patient, courteous and respectful. In most situations rate is more important than volume with these callers. When a caller is having a difficult time understanding, the natural tendency is to raise our voice. In many cases this actually makes the situation worse by distorting the sound. Maintain an even tone and slow down the rate of speech. Some elderly callers will have a difficult time remembering information such as their phone number or address when under stress. Be patient and help the caller work through remembering the information.

Non-English Speaking Callers present an interesting challenge for call takers. Many of these callers speak English, but it is broken and they speak very little of it. With callers who do know some English it is usually easier to slow down your rate of speech and work through the situation. When you have a caller that does not speak any English you will have to find some way to translate. Translators can come in the form of a friend or family member of the caller, or a formal service such as the Language Line. No matter which method is used, as the call taker you will have to make a concentrated effort to slow down your rate of speech. English does not translate all that well to many other languages. With that translators have to work to make sure the caller understands your questions and directions. There is a cultural aspect to handling callers

from other countries as well. In many other countries law enforcement works quite differently. Many of these callers may not have much trust in law enforcement or may not understand why you are asking certain questions. Take the time to explain as much as you can to the caller so that you can build trust and get the information you need.

Mentally Disturbed Callers also present an interesting challenge for call takers. Many of the situations that these callers report are comical and difficult to believe. Within most jurisdictions there are mentally disturbed callers that are “frequent flyers” or call repeatedly to report bogus situations. The difficult part of these callers is that you cannot assume that what the caller is reporting is false. Many of these callers have lucid moments where they may be reporting a true emergency. Failure to send assistance in these situations because the person constantly calls to report false situations could result in huge liability concerns for you and the agency. As a call taker you have to assume that what the caller is reporting is true and send the appropriate response. The exception would be that you might downgrade a response depending on the caller and your local policy. Be respectful when handling these calls and understand that although it may not be a real call, to the caller the situation may be very real.

Demanding “Social Status” Callers can sometime be quite painful. These are the callers that feel as though they are special due to being in a certain economic class. These callers will often explain that you work for them and they pay your salary and are usually upset because they are not getting as fast a response as they feel appropriate. The most important thing about handling these callers is to not let them lure you into an argument. Do not let their comments or personal bias interfere with your ability and duty to the position. Handle these callers as you would any other call. Be polite, courteous, and empathetic to their situation. In some situations you may have to let these callers vent a little.

Finally **Intoxicated Callers** present a whole new list of challenges for a call taker. People who are intoxicated can be belligerent, humorous, nonsensical or a combination of all. In many situations it will be difficult to get any information out of these callers due to the effects of the alcohol. In an emergency you will need to slow your rate of speech down and possibly change your tone to get and keep the caller’s attention. These callers will take a tremendous amount of patience in order to have a successful resolution for the call.

Call Classifications:

Within the field of Public Safety Telecommunications there are three basic call classifications. Generally calls will fall in to Police, Fire, or Medical situations. In some instances all three disciplines will need to respond. While much of the information and call taking techniques will be the same on all three types of calls, there are some subtle differences between all three.

Law Enforcement Calls:

Law enforcement calls are usually divided into three different categories, all dealing with time since the crime or crimes have been committed. These categories are In-Progress, Just Occurred, and Past event, or Cold calls. Generally speaking, in-progress and just occurred calls will be handled in the same manner and will need the same information to be obtained. When dealing with law enforcement calls, you will need to determine what type of call you are dealing with. This determination can generally be made within the first few seconds of the call. In addition, you will also need to know who or what type of caller you are dealing with. There are four (4) general categories of people that will report incidents.

First Party callers are generally the victim of a crime. These are individuals that are directly involved in the situation and can usually provide you with the most information and the greatest details of the incident. As previously mentioned, many of the first party callers you will encounter will be victims of a crime. With this in mind many of these callers may be hysterical or be experiencing high levels of anxiety. These callers may have just been through a very traumatic experience so you may have to employ many calming techniques to get the needed information.

Second Party callers are generally at the scene but are not victims of a crime. These callers will often be witnesses to the incident, but will not be directly involved. Due to the closeness that these callers have to the incident, they will often be able to provide a wealth of information and in great detail. These callers may also be quite upset due to the fact that they may have witnessed something traumatic and may be scared. Calming techniques may be necessary for these callers as well.

Third Party callers are usually not at the scene and do not have any direct involvement at all. These callers are generally people that have passed by an incident or were asked to call for help by someone else. These callers will usually not have much detail on the situation and can usually only provide basics, such as address and possibly time frame.

Finally, **Fourth Party** callers are usually just passing information along. These callers will usually be another agency that is passing along information they have received. Information received from these callers will usually be dependent on the type of caller they received the initial call from. For instance, if an agency received a call from a first or second party caller they may be able to provide a lot of details regarding the call. If they received the report from a third party caller, then they may not have much information to pass on. Typically, fourth party callers will be reporting things such as speeding or reckless vehicles that are traveling from one jurisdiction to another.

Time Delay:

As previously mentioned, when considering time for law enforcement calls there are three basic categories; **In-Progress**, **Just Occurred**, and **Delayed** or **Cold Calls**. There is very little distinction between in-progress and just occurred calls so the basic information and initial response is essentially the same.

In-Progress refers to a call where the crime or incident is occurring at the time the call is being placed. The only distinction between in-progress and **Just Occurred** is time. While each agency will set their own policies on what constitutes a just occurred call, generally this term refers to incidents that have occurred within the last ten (10) minutes. It is important to remember that this time frame is just a guideline. The time frame is usually set due to the possibility to catch a suspect or to stop a crime in progress possibly saving a human life or property. When taking an in-progress or just occurred call you will want to obtain the following information:

Address – This is where the incident is occurring or has occurred. Basically, this is the location where officers need to be sent. In addition to the physical address, you will need to obtain detailed location information such as whether it is a house or an apartment, business, park, and where at the location it is occurring such as in the alley, upstairs, downstairs, etc.

Telephone Number – This is simply the telephone number the caller is calling from. This will be important information to have in case the call gets disconnected or you need to call the caller back to get additional information.

What Happened/Is Happening – This is where you will have the caller describe what is happening or has happened. In this portion of the call you will get information on time delay as well as obtaining information on weapons and descriptions as discussed in the previous section. This is where the details of the call are established and what you will relay to officers responding so that they can have a clear picture of what they are responding to. Information you will need to obtain includes how many people are involved and any weapons that may be involved. Anything can be used as a weapon so you will want to have the caller give you as much detail as possible on the weapon. For example, if the caller advises a gun is involved you will need to determine if it is a handgun, shotgun, or rifle. If the caller advises a knife is involved get as much detail about the size and type of knife as possible.

Delayed or Cold Calls refer to past incidents. These are calls that generally occurred hours or days ago. It is important to remember however, that just because the incident occurred in the past, does not mean that it is not important. Place yourself in the position of the caller. Although these incidents may have occurred some time ago they are very important to the caller and can have a great emotional impact on him or her. A good rule of thumb is to “*Treat every call as if you were the one calling in*”. As with in-progress or just occurred calls there is certain information you will need to obtain:

Address – This is the address where the incident occurred. With cold calls the caller has often left the location where the crime occurred. This can be true of calls such as hit and run accidents or vehicle vandalism and certain types of theft. In many cases the incident will have occurred in one jurisdiction and the caller lives in another and has now returned home. Make sure you get the right address of where the crime occurred.

Telephone Number – This is simply the telephone number the caller is calling from. In some jurisdictions many cold report calls can be handled via telephone. Officers or civilian report takers will call the victim and take the report over the phone. It is critical to have the proper phone number so that the calling party can be contacted. You will also need to determine if the reporting party is the victim of the crime or simply reporting something they witnessed or observed.

What Happened – You will need to get a brief description of what occurred. The description will not need to be as detailed as the one you get with in-progress or just occurred calls. Essentially you will need a general description of what happened and the amount of time that has lapsed since the incident occurred.

Scene Safety:

Scene safety is a very important aspect to call taking. As a call taker you are responsible for gathering information that can be relayed to responders to keep them safe. This is where information on weapons, alcohol, or drugs will come into play. All emergency responders are counting on your ability to get this information from callers. As a call taker you are also responsible for helping to keep the citizens and reporting parties safe. There will be times when you will need to give callers instructions to keep themselves safe. These opportunities present themselves when someone is reporting a fight or perhaps a drunk driver they are following. In

these situations you will want to tell the caller to maintain a safe distance from the situation and to not put themselves in harms way. As a call taker you really set the scene for how this call will go. The better you are at your questioning and giving the caller instructions; the better the chance is for a successful outcome to the incident.

Fire Calls:

As with law enforcement calls, most of the key questions for fire are the same. You will need to verify the location, telephone number for the reporting party, name of the reporting party and if he or she is involved or simply passing by. With fire calls there is some additional information that you will need to obtain. The following are fire specific questions to ask callers:

Fire Type – You will need to ascertain from the caller exactly what is on fire. Is this a house, commercial building, vehicle, or is it a brush or other type of wild land fire. This question is important, as it will determine the number and type of apparatus you send to the call.

Victims – If the call is for a residential or commercial structure fire you will need to determine if everyone is out of the building or if there is anyone trapped. This may only be possible from a 1st or 2nd party caller. Regardless of the type of caller however, the question should be asked. If for some reason a person is trapped inside you will need to find out as much information as possible regarding the victim's location to relay to responders.

Fire Size – When you ask about the size of the fire you are generally just looking for an estimate. This is particularly important when taking reports of brush or wild land fires. The size of the fire can, and most often will, determine the number of personnel and equipment needed to control the fire. Many times callers will have a difficult time giving you the estimated size and will often wonder why you need this information. Make it easy for the caller and relate the fire to something common such as a football field or the size of a living room. This will help the caller give you the estimate you need.

Other Threats – You will need to determine if there are any other structures threatened by the fire being reported. This is very typical with vehicle fires. Many times vehicles are parked in a garage, carport, or next to a residence. Other fires that have the potential to threaten structures are dumpsters or brush fires. Additionally, structure fires will often threaten or spread to other nearby structures. Again, this information is used by responders to ensure that they have enough personnel and equipment headed to the scene.

Injuries – This question is separate from asking if someone is trapped. People often get injured trying to escape the fire or may be suffering from smoke inhalation. You will need to ask the caller if anyone is injured, and if so you will need to send medical personnel as well as fire.

Fire Cause – It is helpful to ask the caller if he or she knows how the fire started. This information will assist responders in attacking the fire, as well as to investigators.

The preceding are the basic questions that you will need to ask on fire calls. For the most part fire calls are pretty straightforward and do not change much. It is important to remember that many fire calls are 1st party caller, meaning the victim is calling in. These callers will often be panicked, upset, and/or grief stricken because they are watching their home or property being destroyed. The sense of time lapse for these callers is also skewed due to the emergency nature. What may be only a few minute response time can seem like an eternity to these callers. This

will often cause them to become upset at your questioning because they believe it is delaying response. Maintain a calm empathetic tone, and reassure the caller that you are getting them assistance.

Medical Calls:

Much of the information needed on medical calls is the same as for police and fire calls. You will need to get the address where the medical emergency is occurring, as well as a call back number for the reporting party. You will also need to determine scene safety information and whether or not law enforcement may be needed to assist. Your follow up questions will be slightly different than those for law enforcement and fire. Some agencies use a formal Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) program that will guide you through your questioning. If not, the following questions will need to be asked on medical calls:

Medical Problem – You will need to ask the caller what the medical problem is. At times the caller will begin giving you a long medical history. When, or if this, occurs you will need to ask the caller “what is the problem today”? This will focus the caller on the current situation and guide the rest of your questioning.

Conscious/Breathing – Ask the caller if the patient is conscious and breathing. This again will guide the rest of your questioning and will help determine the response level. This question may or may not need to be asked depending on the caller. If the caller is the patient you will not need to ask if he or she is conscious.

Medical calls are very time sensitive. When considering a medical condition, a matter of a few minutes can be the difference between life and death. There is not time to allow callers to ramble or give long drawn out medical histories. It is critical to identify the current medical situation, get units dispatched, and give any pre-arrival instructions, such as CPR. Medical calls are generally listed under 1 of 3 classifications. Those classifications are Medical Emergencies, Trauma, or Emergency Medical.

Medical Emergencies:

Medical emergencies are defined as “an injury or illness that is acute and could pose an immediate threat to a person’s life or long term health.” These are generally illnesses or pain not associated with a traumatic accident or some other life threatening condition. Examples of medical emergencies include:

- Abdominal Pain
- Back Pain
- Allergic Reaction
- Choking
- Headache
- Overdose
- Poisoning
- Unknown Medical Problems

As previously stated, many agencies use a formal EMD program that will guide your questioning and instructions for each of the specific issues. If a formal EMD program is not used, you will need to ask the questions listed in the previous section and gain as much information as possible regarding the current condition to relay to responders.

Trauma:

Trauma is defined as “any physical damage to the body caused by violence or accident or fracture”. These are generally injuries resulting from things like a traffic accident, fall or some other accident. Examples of trauma include:

- ❑ Burns
- ❑ Head Injuries
- ❑ Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVA)
- ❑ Industrial Accidents/Falls
- ❑ Drowning

Emergency Medical:

Emergency Medical calls are generally considered the most life threatening situations and require immediate assistance. In many cases these calls will require the call taker to give the caller instructions on how to help the patient while waiting on paramedics to respond. Examples of emergency medical calls include:

- ❑ CPR (Adult, Child, Infant)
- ❑ Obstructed Airway (Adult, Child, Infant)
- ❑ Child Birth
- ❑ Airway Control

With every medical call that comes in, the caller is looking for help and direction from the call taker. If a formal EMD program is used this direction is made much easier. If a formal EMD program is not used you will need to quickly gather all necessary information for a quick medical response.



CHAPTER SEVEN: RADIO TECHNOLOGY

Chapter Seven: Radio Technology:

A widespread radio system is one of the greatest technological tools public safety agencies and personnel have at their disposal. Radio systems allow for quick communication and dissemination of information. These systems allow dispatchers to quickly update responders of changes going on with an incident. Additionally, and one of the most important functions of a radio system, is that it is a lifeline for responders. Officers, Fire Fighters, and Paramedics can feel comfortable in the fact that should they get into trouble they can call dispatchers who will know their location and get them assistance. This would be very difficult without a radio system in place. This chapter will discuss different radio equipment, systems, and technology. Knowledge of this information will give you a better understanding of how radio systems work and how they benefit you as an emergency telecommunicator.

Radio Equipment:

There are many different components that make up a radio system. Each of these components work together to make sure that the system works efficiently. While each radio system's configuration will vary depending on agency, most systems will contain most or all of these components.

Transmitters, Receivers, and Antennas:

Dispatch radio systems vary widely in configuration, but all include a transmitter, a receiver, and an antenna. Most two-way radios consist of a transmitter and receiver housed in the same unit. A radio transmitter amplifies voice or data information input and transmits it through an antenna to any receiver capable of receiving the assigned frequency being used. A receiver captures the transmitted signal through the antenna and converts and amplifies the signal so it can be heard through a speaker or can be converted to a digital signal so that a computer can read and display the information. Radio systems can transmit an analog or digital signal. While some dispatch centers utilize conventional mobile radios hard-wired into a desktop console, others use computer-integrated systems for radio communications. All systems are attached to an antenna appropriate for the frequencies and transmit power. Some base station antenna systems are installed on site above the dispatch center, and others may be mounted remotely utilizing phone lines, hard wire connections, or microwave translators connecting the transmitter/receiver to the antenna. Mobile radio systems use a dedicated antenna attached to the vehicle. Handheld or portable radios have an antenna attached to the unit and are self-contained.

Repeaters:

Repeaters are typically very simple radios (transmitter/receiver/antenna) used to automatically receive radio communications, amplify them, and retransmit the signal. Most public safety communications radio frequencies are typically line of sight. That is, if a mountain or a building gets in the way, the signal is blocked. With a repeater installed, the signal can be amplified and retransmitted so there is no loss in communication due to terrain. Repeaters work in both directions, meaning that they repeat signals from field units to dispatch and from dispatch back to field units.

Portable Radios:

Portable radios are self-contained units used by responders that are positioned away from their mobile unit or base station. These radios have much lower transmit power than base or mobile units and are, at times, difficult to hear due to the location of the portable radio operator. Ambient noise near the portable radio can also be a problem.

Mobile Radios:

Mobile radios are typically installed in response vehicles such as a patrol car or fire truck. Mobile radios usually carry a much higher transmit power than portable radios. Mobile radios make for better communication as units are responding to calls or in the case of law enforcement, on routine patrol.

Radio Pagers:

Pagers are small compact receivers carried by responders that do not need to listen to common radio traffic. A single pager or group of pagers can be accessed as needed. A pager is typically configured and carried by the responder with the unit speaker turned off. When a signal is transmitted from the dispatch console, there is a frequency “tone” imbedded in the signal that opens the speaker on the respective pager. A number of pagers can be programmed to the same frequency and can be accessed individually by the imbedded tones.

Consoles and Control Equipment:

Radio consoles are used in dispatch centers for day-to-day radio communication. The console integrates radio channels into “banks” which typically correspond to each respective response agency. An example would be a Motorola CommandSTAR console. This console has eight separate banks, or groups of frequencies, with each bank representing law enforcement, fire, EMS, search and rescue, forest service/BLM, and miscellaneous. Each bank would have multiple frequencies for the respective agency’s local communication channels, repeaters, and possibly, tactical frequencies. The console is generally located in the dispatch center base station, although some emergency communications vehicles also have radio consoles to monitor and manage off site incidents and disasters.

Conventional and Trunked Radio Systems:

Dispatch radio communication systems are configured to meet the needs of each dispatch area or sector, and by jurisdiction. The type and configuration of radio systems are dictated by geography (terrain, multiple tall buildings, size of coverage area, etc.), agency resource compatibility, and budgetary concerns. The current trend is to move toward attaining inter-jurisdictional compatibility, which is driven mostly by federal grant funding to local and state agencies.

Conventional radios systems can be either Very High Frequency **VHF** or Ultra High Frequency **UHF** and can consist of simplex or duplex frequency radio systems. Simplex is the use of a single frequency to transmit and receive. Duplex utilizes one frequency to transmit and another frequency to receive. In addition, conventional and trunked systems can have various tone signals embedded into the transmit signal to key only certain radios or repeater systems for better area coverage.

Trunked radio systems differ from conventional radio systems in that a conventional radio system uses a dedicated channel (frequency) for each individual group of users, while

“trunking” radio systems use a pool of channels, which are available for many different groups of users. In essence, a trunked radio system is a packet switching computer network. User’s radios send data packets to a computer, operating on a dedicated frequency, called a **Control Channel**, to request communication on a specific talk group. The controller sends a digital signal to all radios monitoring that talk group, instructing the radios to automatically switch to the frequency indicated by the system to monitor the transmission. After the user is done speaking, the user’s radio returns to monitoring the control channel for additional transmissions.

This arrangement allows multiple groups of users to share a small set of actual radio frequencies without hearing each other’s conversations. Trunked systems primarily conserve limited radio frequencies and also provide other advanced features to users. For example, if police communications are configured in such a way that twelve conventional channels are required to permit citywide dispatch based on geographical patrol areas, during periods of slow dispatch activity much of that channel capacity is idle. In a trunked system, the police units in a given geographical area are not assigned a dedicated channel, but are members of a talk group intended to draw upon the common resources of a pool of channels.

Frequency:

Radio Frequency is the range or frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum between 10 khz to 300,000 mhz in which radio waves can be transmitted. This can also refer to a frequency used for a specific radio station or channel. Typically, dispatch centers and associated resources utilize 140-170 mhz for VHF or 800-900 mhz for UHF. Agencies in Idaho have moved or are moving to a 700 mhz system.

Radio Inoperability:

Radio failures can cause a multitude of critical problems for dispatch centers that do not have a backup or multiple systems in place. Even with redundant communication systems, catastrophic emergencies can cause local and widespread power outages that will leave a dispatch center without radio communication with emergency resources. Each facility/agency must implement a Communications Failure Procedure for all aspects of dispatch center communications. The range of protocols for communications failures can include utilizing something as simple as a handheld radio to fully integrated Command and Control Vehicles with full communication and dispatch capability.

The most common problems associated with dispatch center radio communications are a lack of knowledge of radio console controls and computerized communication systems. Pushing the wrong button at the wrong time can put your resources at risk and responder safety could be compromised. Be sure to learn how to operate your radio consoles and in house communication systems.

Radio Interoperability:

Interoperability refers to the need to communicate with multiple agencies within your dispatch jurisdiction. This concept can and is being extended to the ability to communicate with agencies in other jurisdictions as well. Many Idaho emergency communications centers dispatch for Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire, Search and Rescue resources as well as Law Enforcement. In these situations the need for compatible radio communication is paramount to successful interagency coordination. We also may need to coordinate with surrounding county agencies and multiple state and federal organizations. Each agency outside your own may utilize

different communication protocol and language, including multiple code systems. The world is starting to switch to a “clear speech” radio communication system and is moving away from 10-Codes.



CHAPTER EIGHT:
RADIO COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Chapter Eight: Radio Communication Techniques:

As a Dispatcher, you are expected to be the professional on the radio in that you are expected to know proper radio broadcasting procedures and all methods of information exchange. Maintaining control over the radio channel is important at all times, especially during emergency situations. When officers are in a high-risk situation, such as a pursuit, your calm demeanor and clear radio communication can help other responders stay calm and assist in a successful resolution.

Dispatching Techniques:

Policies and procedures on radio communications differ from one agency to another. However, there are some basic principles on radio communication that hold true across jurisdictional boundaries. This section will provide you with information on general radio procedures. It is important to understand that this information does not override your agencies policies or procedures.

Initiating Radio Traffic:

As previously mentioned, procedures for initiating radio traffic with responders will vary from one agency to another. These procedures should be used every time in the same manner so that responders readily recognize when they are being addressed versus when the radio traffic is for someone else. When initiating radio traffic, first key the radio, pause before speaking, and then talk (Key, Pause, Talk). This process will avoid cutting off the beginning of your transmission. This is necessary due to the fact that most radio systems have a slight delay from the time you key the mic to when the audio goes out. Failure to follow this process will often result in the first part of the transmission, such as the designator, being cut off. When this happens no one is sure who is being called. Similarly, when ending radio traffic, stop talking, pause before un-keying, and then release (Stop, Pause, Release). This process will avoid cutting off the end of your transmission. When speaking on the radio your communication should be clear, accurate, and concise. Preplan your transmissions, meaning think about what you are going to say before you say it. This will make your transmission clear and keep you from thinking out loud over the air. If, for some reason, you lose your train of thought in the middle of a transmission, un-key and then start again. This will help you avoid “Umms” and “Ahhs” that sound very unprofessional and take up unnecessary air time.

Generally, dispatch will initiate radio contact with a unit by stating the unit’s radio call number, or designator, followed by indicating the source of the transmission (dispatch). For example, if you wanted to call unit 1118 you would say: “1118, dispatch”. Some agencies will use a pre-alert to initiate radio contact when dispatching calls. This process advises responders of the type of incident prior to dispatching so that they know what to expect. For example, if you wanted to dispatch unit 1118 to a domestic you would say: “1118, Dispatch, Domestic”. The unit would then acknowledge your transmission so that you could continue the dispatch. Other agencies will simply use the unit’s designator to initiate radio communication. In this case the dispatcher would simply say “1118” and wait for the unit to respond. Whatever procedure your agency uses, make sure that you are loud enough to be heard and your transmissions are clear. In addition, you will want to avoid having anything in your mouth, such as gum, as it tends to make your transmission sound as if you are mumbling.

Alert Tones:

When dispatching Fire and/or EMS units, alert or pager tones are often used. This is usually a series of tones or beeps that catch the responder's attention to alert them to a call. In many cases these tones will be an automatic function and set off through the CAD system. Other areas may use tones that are a part of the radio console or a manual system. Some Fire and EMS units have their radios set to "page" and their radio will open up when their tones are set off. This feature eliminates any radio traffic that is not intended for them. Normally Law Enforcement units on duty will have their radio on at all times. For Law Enforcement, alert tones are usually to clear the air and direct officers attention to important or emergency traffic that is about to be broadcast. Tones used for Law Enforcement are generally part of the radio console or computer and are associated with a button that has to be pressed. You will need to learn and understand how to use the specific equipment at your agency.

Radio Demeanor and Attitude:

Dispatchers set the pace and tone on the radio. If the dispatcher is short or expresses any other negative emotions on the radio, the responders will begin to mirror those feelings. A professional, calm manner reinforces the same in those responding. All radio traffic should be professional and content should only deal with things that are work related. It is important to keep in mind that citizens, Commissioners, Sheriffs, Chiefs, and many others will often have radios and/or scanners and can hear your radio traffic. In addition, tapes of radio traffic are often subpoenaed for use in court. You will want to make sure that your radio communication is such that it would be acceptable to play in court or for public release. There will inevitably be times where a mistake is made over the air. In some of these situations a responder may point out the dispatcher error over the radio. Should this occur simply acknowledge the traffic, make the necessary correction and move on without comment. Do not engage in debate or offer long explanations of how the mistake was made or who is at fault. Always use an even, professional tone, leaving out emotion or attitude.

Message Length:

Generally, public safety radio channels are for emergencies and critical information. As such, all radio transmissions should use the minimum amount of words necessary to get the message across without losing vital information. Think before you broadcast a message, choosing and limiting your words so that they convey the message in the shortest amount of time possible without being cryptic. In many cases it is a delicate balance between minimizing transmission time and relaying all-important information. Preplanning your transmissions will help you keep your radio transmissions concise and to the point.

Rate of Speech:

In most cases, the rate of speech is equally or more important than the tone you use. When you talk to units over the radio you will need to use an appropriate rate that allows responders to write down information you are saying. Do not speak too fast or too slow. Some radio systems have a slight delay when keying the mic. In these situations speaking too fast will cause part of your transmission to be cut off and will make your overall message difficult to understand. In many cases your rate of speech will help to control the radio channel as well.

Radio channels will often get busy and overloaded with radio traffic. Slowing down your transmissions slightly can help to maintain control over the busy radio traffic.

Clear Speech and Ten-Code:

Although there is a large effort to move from ten-code or other coded radio transmissions, there are still many agencies that use these codes. Clear speech tends to make communication easier and everyone, regardless of agency, can communicate effectively. Whether or not your agency uses clear speech or ten-code, there should be a consistent, standardized format and terminology so that responders understand you and know what to expect. If your agency does use ten-code, it will be imperative for you to memorize these codes so that you do not have to think about them each time to decide which code to use. It is also important to remember that agencies use different ten-codes. With that in mind, using ten-codes when communicating with another agency may add confusion.

Broadcasting Alphanumeric Information:

Most agencies use a phonetic alphabet. The phonetic alphabet is a system of “words and names used to clarify the letter used (Example: A=Alpha or Adam, B=Bravo, Boy, or Baker)”. By using a phonetic alphabet letters such as d and b that are often mistaken for each other are clarified. As with ten-codes, agencies often use different phonetic alphabets. Generally, there are military phonetics, aviation phonetics, and law enforcement phonetics. Some agencies use the military phonetic alphabet while others use similar law enforcement phonetics. It will be important for you to memorize your agency’s phonetic alphabet so that it becomes second nature. There will also be a number of times when you will need to give back numbers or number and letter combinations. When you are giving responders a long set of numbers such as VIN, give the digits in sets of 3 or 4 similar to a social security number. Memorizing the phonetic alphabet will also be important in situations such as giving VIN information. Most VINs have a combination of letters and numbers so you will switch back and forth from numbers to the phonetic alphabet.

Broadcasting Time:

All radio transmissions need to be ended in such a way that everyone knows the air is now clear for their traffic. In most cases this will be accomplished by giving the time. This “time stamp” lets everyone know that you are done with your transmission and the air is clear. In addition, the time stamp also allows for radio recordings to match up with historical data from the CAD system. When giving the time you will want to use military time such as 1300 hours, 1400 hours, etc. When giving military time make sure that you follow the time with the word “hours” after any time that resembles a unit number or ten-code that is used. This will eliminate any confusion on the part of responders thinking that you may be calling them.

Acknowledging Radio Transmissions:

It is crucial to acknowledge units on the radio when they say something to you. If not acknowledged, responders will often think you are not listening or that there is a radio problem. As with other radio procedures, each agency will have their own policies on acknowledging radio traffic. There are, however, a couple of common methods to acknowledging radio traffic. One method is to repeat the unit number and then state the current time. Another common method would be to simply state the current time. You will need to read, understand and follow

your agency's policy for radio traffic. There will more than likely be times when you will be unable to understand a unit's radio traffic. This can be caused by radio problems, other noise in the area, or improper use of the radio. In any, case you will need to immediately ask the unit to repeat their traffic if you are unable to understand what they have said. Never be afraid to ask for clarification or for the unit to repeat information. Assuming or expecting to be able to retrieve the information from a call back recorder could cause mistakes such as not knowing the unit's location. Responder safety is of greater concern than being embarrassed or admitting you did not hear the radio traffic.

Echo Procedures:

Some agency policies require that you echo radio traffic you receive. In many cases fire agencies prefer to have their radio traffic echoed. When echoing units, the unit's traffic should be repeated quickly and concisely and concluded by stating the current time. Maintain an even tone of voice and document the information given. As with other radio procedures, make sure to follow your agency's policies regarding echoing radio traffic.

Responder Safety:

Responder safety is a large part of a dispatcher's job. For emergency responders, dispatch is the life line should they need help. When you are performing dispatching procedures, responder safety is of the highest priority. Any potential dangers such as weapons, alcohol or drugs, and past history, should be broadcast immediately. Responders, especially police officers, will use this information to determine how they will respond or approach the scene. Another crucial responder safety task is security checks. These checks should be made on a regular basis after units arrive on-scene to ensure their safety. The amount of time between checks is based on specific agency policy and many times will be based on particular call types. Follow policy and make sure that you are conducting security checks at the intervals required. If for some reason a unit does not respond to the security check you will need to dispatch a backup unit immediately.

Law Enforcement Specific Radio Traffic:

Law enforcement radio channels generally have more continuous traffic than fire or EMS channels. This is due to the fact that police officers are constantly checking out on self-initiated calls such as traffic stops or pedestrian contacts. Law enforcement also require driver's license or warrant checks, and will many times need dispatchers to stay on the phone with a caller to get updates until they arrive on-scene. Documentation is usually extremely important for law enforcement calls as well. In many cases, law enforcement calls will go to trial and the radio traffic, phone call, and CAD incident history will be subpoenaed for court. Documentation of what the caller is saying, as well as the officer's actions, will be extremely important.

Fire and EMS Specific Radio Traffic:

Generally, routine status checks are not required as often for Fire and EMS units as they are for Law Enforcement units. As previously mentioned, Fire and EMS channels are usually not as continuously busy as Law Enforcement channels. With Fire and EMS you will generally dispatch more units initially, especially on calls such as a structure fire. There will not however, usually be as many updates and the units will generally not need as much assistance from dispatch on calls as Law Enforcement. You will still want to monitor Fire and EMS channels during a major event as they will often need more units dispatched or utilities called. In some

cases it may be necessary to stage Fire and EMS units until the scene is deemed safe by Law Enforcement units. Whether or not to send Law Enforcement units to a Fire or EMS call is usually determined by agency policy and is generally only required in life or death emergencies or where there would be potential danger to the Fire and EMS responders. When this occurs, most agencies will have Fire and EMS units stage a safe distance away from the scene until it is safe.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC):

The **Federal Communications Commission**, or **FCC**, is a U.S. Government agency responsible for regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable. The FCC is the government agency that regulates all radio traffic and who also issues licenses for radio systems and frequencies. The FCC's jurisdiction covers all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and any other U.S. possessions. The FCC monitors radio frequencies and traffic for appropriate content. An agency and individual can be fined by the FCC for saying anything inappropriate or vulgar over the radio.



CHAPTER NINE:
NIMS / ICS

Chapter Nine: National Incident Management System:

The **National Incident Management System** or **NIMS** is the first ever standardized approach to incident management and response. This system was developed by the Department of Homeland Security at the request of the President and was released in March of 2004. NIMS establishes a uniform set of processes and procedures that emergency responders at all levels of government will use to conduct incident operations. This system integrates effective practices of emergency response into a comprehensive national framework for incident management.

NIMS enables responders at all levels to work together more effectively and efficiently to manage domestic incidents no matter what the cause, size, or complexity of an incident including catastrophic acts of terrorism and disasters. Federal agencies are also required to use the NIMS framework in domestic incident management and in support of state and local incident response and recovery activities. For more detailed information on NIMS go to: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/NIMS-90-web.pdf>.

Benefits:

There are many benefits for agencies at all levels of government including:

- Standardized organizational structures, processes and procedures
- Standards for planning, training, and exercises
- Personnel qualification standards
- Equipment acquisition and certification standards
- Interoperable communications processes, procedures, and systems
- Information management systems with a commonly accepted architecture
- Supporting technologies – voice and data communication systems, information systems, data display systems, and specialized technologies
- Publication management processes and activities

Incident Command System (ICS):

The **Incident Command System** or **ICS** is a standardized on-scene incident management concept designed specifically to allow responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any single incident or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

The ICS was developed in the early 1970's to manage rapidly moving wildfires and to address the following problems that were being experienced:

- Too many people reporting to one supervisor
- Different emergency response organizational structures
- Lack of reliable incident information
- Inadequate and incompatible communications
- Lack of structure for coordinated planning among agencies
- Unclear lines of authority
- Terminology differences among agencies, and unclear or unspecified incident objectives

ICS enables integrated communication and planning by establishing a manageable

Span of control. ICS divides an emergency response into five manageable functions essential for emergency operations. The five functional areas are; Incident Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/administration. Figure 9.1 illustrates a typical ICS structure:



INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM: COMMAND STAFF & GENERAL STAFF

Figure 9.1

This example is the general functional areas for ICS. It is important to remember that ICS is flexible as it can expand or contract as necessary to meet the needs of any size incident. Under each one of the four levels; Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Administration, there will be lower levels to handle the operation. The entire system is designed so that each part of the incident gets handled while maintaining optimal span of control.

It is important for emergency telecommunicators to understand ICS due to the fact that responding to emergencies of any size from single car accidents to large scale disasters, often requires cooperation among several agencies. In an emergency you and other personnel from your agency may be called upon to help with the response. Given the fact that there is a large movement toward using the ICS structure for emergency response, it is likely that you will function in an ICS environment. In fact, in many situations the dispatcher is technically the incident commander until units arrive on-scene. This is due to the fact that the dispatcher is receiving information and coordinating the response.

It is also important for the ICS to be established immediately in an incident. Initially the Incident Commander will be the senior first responder to arrive on scene. As additional responders arrive, command will be transferred on the basis of who has primary authority for overall control of the incident, usually the highest ranking officer on scene. As an incident grows, the Incident Commander may delegate authority for performing certain activities to others as required.

The ability to communicate within ICS is absolutely critical and using standard or common terminology is essential to ensuring efficient, clear communications. ICS requires the use of common terminology, that is, the use of plain English. Common terminology in communication is necessary to support mutual aid and the infusion of new responders coming to an incident so they will be able to communicate with one another.

No single agency or department can handle a large scale incident alone. Everyone must work together to manage the incident. The ICS organization has the capability to expand or contract to meet the needs of the incident, but all incidents, regardless of size or complexity, will have an Incident Commander. A basic ICS operating guideline is that the Incident Commander is responsible for on-scene management until command authority is transferred to another person, who then becomes the Incident Commander.



CHAPTER TEN: LIABILITY

Chapter Ten: Liability:

According to Webster's Dictionary, liability is defined as something for which one is liable; An obligation or debt. Black's Law Dictionary says that liability is, "Legally obligated; Responsible." After the colonists settled in America the system of laws developed from what they knew from their experience in Europe; **Sovereign Immunity**. Simply, "The King can do no wrong!" hence "The City, State, or Government can do no wrong!" This however is no longer the case. Liability is of important concern for anyone employed in the law enforcement profession including dispatch. The most important thing to remember when considering liability is to **Always Know and Follow Your Agency's Policies and Procedures**.

The Law:

There are three areas of law that affect the Law Enforcement community. The first area of concern is **Criminal Law**. This area of law has to do with the Penal Code, Judicial Administration, and Search and Seizure Law. Simply put, this has to do with criminal code. This is a liability concern only if you violate actual criminal law. The second area is **Administrative Law**. This area of law has to do with Federal and State Personnel law, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other laws dealing with the operation of government. This is an area of concern when dealing with hiring practices, training, and employee retention. The third area is **Civil Law**. This is the section of code that deals with civil liability and the filing of suits against the government and its employees. This is an area of concern for law enforcement and dispatch centers in that most suits filed against Law Enforcement, dispatch centers, and employees fall under Civil Law.

Within existing law there are three areas that can result in the filing of legal action for the recovery of damages against the government or its employees. **Title 42** of the **United States Code 1983** is a Federal Law that allows for lawsuits against a state, local, or federal government if those entities act to deprive an individual of a federally protected right. The code states: "If a government errs against an individual, that individual has the right to recover damages through a lawsuit." When the legal action is brought under this title it is filed in Federal Court. Dispatch is rarely affected by this title and there are rarely suits filed in this area against dispatchers.

Intentional Misconduct is the doing of a lawful act in an unlawful manner. Legal action for intentional misconduct can be brought in either Federal or State Court. Again dispatch is rarely affected by an intentional misconduct lawsuit as in most cases we do not intentionally perform illegally.

Negligence is the failure to do what should have been done. Actions for negligence are brought in State Courts. This is the area that dispatchers and dispatch centers are most likely to be sued under. Normally, to prove negligence, the following things are required: There has to be proof that there was a **Duty To Act**; there has to be proof that there was a **Breach** of that duty; finally there has to be **Causation**, or proof, that the breach of duty caused damage and there has to be proof of the damages. Other terms you may hear are **Misfeasance**; the doing of a proper or lawful act in a wrongful or injurious manner; **Malfeasance**; the doing of a wrongful or unlawful act; **Nonfeasance**; the failure to perform an act or duty that is otherwise required.

Idaho Code:

So, who will be named in a lawsuit? Defendants are often named under a “Deeper Pocket” theory. This means that everyone in the chain of command will be named including the agency and municipality. This is done because the individual will rarely have the financial resources to pay the award(s), if any. Rarely will an action seek personal liability against the individual in suits involving Dispatch.

Idaho Code is specific in its dealings with **Tort Claims** and suits filed against governmental agencies and their employees (Title 6, Chapter 9). The following are some definitions that will be important to remember when considering liability:

Tort	A wrongful act for which a civil liability will lie except for one involving breach of contract.
State	The State of Idaho or any office, department, agency, authority, commission, board, institution, hospital, college, university, or other instrumentality thereof.
Political Subdivision	Any county, city, municipal corporation, school district, irrigation district, taxing district, or any other political subdivision or public corporation.
Employee	An officer, employee, or servant of a governmental entity, including elected or appointed officials and persons acting on behalf of the governmental entity in any official capacity, temporarily or permanently in the service of any governmental entity, whether with or without compensation. Independent contractors are specifically excluded.

Legislative Intent of Title 6 Chapter 9:

“The legislature of the State of Idaho hereby finds and declares that exposure of public employees to claims and civil lawsuits for acts or omissions within the course and scope of their employment has a chilling effect upon the performance of their employment duties and is an obstacle to the discharge of public business. It is the declared intention of the State of Idaho to relieve public employees for all necessary legal fees and expenses and judgments arising from such claims and civil lawsuits unless the act or omission complained of includes malice or criminal intent. The legislature declares that the expenditure of public funds to this end is for a public purpose.” Cited in *Haeg v City of Pocatello*, 98 Idaho 315,563 P.2d 39 (1977).

Liability of Governmental Entities – Defense of Employees:

6-903(a) – Except as otherwise provided in this act, every governmental entity is subject to liability for money damages arising out of its negligence or otherwise wrongful act or omissions and those of its employees within the course and scope of their employment or duties. This applies in any case where the government, if a private person or corporation, would be liable under Idaho Code.

6-903(b) – A governmental entity shall provide a defense to its employees and be responsible for the payment of any judgment on any claim or civil lawsuit against an employee for money damages arising out of any act or omission within the course and scope of his

employment. This section specifically orders the entity to provide a defense for its employees for actions they took during their employment as long as those actions are directly related to their job and its performance. It also specifically directs the entity to pay any damages that may be awarded. In a later part of the section it clarifies that the liability insurance carrier is not relieved of its responsibility under its contract with the agency.

6-903(c) – The defense of its employee by the governmental entity shall be undertaken whether the claim and civil lawsuit is brought in Idaho district court under Idaho law or is brought in United States court under Federal Law. The governmental entity may refuse a defense or disavow and refuse to pay any judgment for its employee if it is determined that the act or omission of the employee was not within the course and scope of his employment or included malice or criminal intent.

6-903(e) – For the purpose of this act and not otherwise, it shall be a reputable presumption that any act or omission of any employee within the time and at the place of his employment is within the course and scope of his employment and without malice or criminal intent.

Exceptions to Governmental Liability:

6-904 – A governmental entity and its employees, while acting within the course and scope of their employment and without malice or criminal intent, shall not be liable for any claim which: Arises out of any act or omission of an employee or the governmental entity exercising ordinary care in reliance upon or the execution or performance of a statutory or regulatory function, whether or not the statute or regulation be valid, or based upon the exercise or performance or the failure to exercise or perform a discretionary function or duty on the part of the governmental entity or employee thereof, whether or not the discretion be abused. "Malice" within the definition of the Tort Claims Act means actual malice and requires a wrongful act without justification combined with ill will, and in an action where it was alleged the sheriff's deputies assaulted and battered plaintiff, the district court properly determined that the deputies had immunity under subsection (3) of this section, where the record before the court at the time the summary judgment was granted contained no evidence that the defendants acted with the requisite malice or criminal intent to circumvent the exceptions to liability contained in subsection (3) of this section.

Actions Against Law Enforcement Officers:

6-610 – This section of Idaho code provides that any person that files a lawsuit against any "law enforcement" must file a surety bond with the Court prior to commencement of the action. If the surety is not filed the court is directed by law to dismiss the suit. The bond must cover any attorney fees and judgments for the defendant.

Where Dispatch Centers Go Wrong:

There are liability concerns with any position not just public safety. Liability is more of a concern for public safety and dispatch centers due to the life and death nature of the calls they receive. The good news is that there are simple ways to protect yourself and the agency against these liability concerns. There are two main areas of concern for dispatchers and dispatch centers: **Hiring/Training** and **Standard Operating Procedures**.

Hiring and Training:

While it is not the line dispatcher who would appear to suffer under this area, each dispatcher does carry a responsibility as a trainer and mentor of new dispatchers. There are three areas of liability concern when it comes to hiring and training:

- A. **Negligent Hiring** – This is hiring a person that the hiring authority knows, or should have reasonably known, is not qualified for the position.
- B. **Negligent Retention** – This results when an individual is retained in a position even though they are not qualified and the authority responsible is aware of the unqualified state of the individual.
- C. **Failure to Train** – All personnel involved in the training process can be held liable if the individual is not trained according to standard.

While line dispatchers are not directly responsible for these areas, they can be held liable if it is found that they were aware of and did not report the problem. One of the first things an attorney involved in a lawsuit against a law enforcement agency looks at is the training files of the officers and employees involved. Each and everyone involved in the training process is likely to be named in a lawsuit. It is therefore essential that all training be completely documented and uniform.

Standard Operating Procedures:

Under Idaho code, an employee who is following the policies and procedures as set forth by the employer is immune from lawsuit, as long as they perform the job in a reasonably careful manner and are not negligent, and did not perform in a willful, wanton, or criminal manner. This essentially means that as long as you follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) developed by your agency, they and not you, are liable for any error in policy. It is the responsibility of the agency to provide you with policy and procedure. It is your responsibility to follow these policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the agency to provide you with a defense attorney and to pay any judgment against you if you have followed the policies of the department and the acts complained about are not malicious or done with criminal intent. Again, your best defense is to always follow agency policy and procedure.

Dispatcher Danger Zones:

As was previously mentioned, you are generally safe from liability concerns as long as you know, understand, and follow your agency's policies and procedures. In addition to following those things, there are a few other areas that represent danger zones for dispatchers. Being cognizant of these danger zones will assist you in protecting yourself and the agency from liability concerns.

- Failure to verify information, address, community, phone number
- Mistranslation or misinterpretation of the problem
- Failure to collect pertinent information such as history

- Omitting pertinent information when dispatching the call
- Failure to dispatch responders in a timely manner
- Incorrect call classification, such as priority level, causing a delay in dispatch
- No protocols or failure to follow protocols
- Attitude problems

TIPS:

- Do not give exact times to callers of when responders will arrive. This creates an expectation of service that you may not be able to meet
- Do not make promises that you cannot guarantee such as “Everything is Going to be All Right”
- Remember that phones and radios are recorded and are subject to subpoena in court at any time.



CHAPTER ELEVEN: STRESS MANAGEMENT

Chapter Eleven: Stress Management:

Stress is the body's natural reaction to an imbalance between the demands of the environment and the ability of the dispatcher to respond to those demands. Stress increases when the dispatcher has little control over his or her work. The things that cause stress in one person may not be a problem for someone else. Everyone is different and handles stress in different ways. Job experience and training helps to prepare dispatchers for the possible stress that may be encountered on the job. In addition, not all stress is bad. Many times, stress can be a positive thing. Stress can often act as a motivator and can help us perform at higher levels when the need arises. The key to effective stress management is to maintain a balance between good and bad stress. Every job has some level of stress. In dispatch most of the negative stress is situational and revolves around a particular incident. Ironically, it is these times that dispatchers generally perform at higher levels and are also the calls that dispatcher look most forward to. The bottom line is that stress is inevitable and you need to learn how to balance the positive with the negative and to know the signs if you are over-stressed. These signs include:

- Feelings of irritability
- Change in sleep patterns
- Change in weight or appetite
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Negative thinking
- Loss of interest in something you used to enjoy
- Restlessness

Some dispatchers may appear to thrive on stress, while others may suffer from repeated, prolonged or continuous job stress. Stress can affect your body in a number of different ways including the following:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| - Frequent Headaches | - Heart Disease |
| - Sleeplessness | - High Blood Pressure |
| - Loss of Appetite | - Stomach Problems |
| - Depression | - Herpes |
| - Short Temper | - Mental Illness |
| - Backache | - Stroke |
| - Weight Gain/Loss | - Skin Appearance |

Shift Work and Stress:

As a dispatcher, shift work is one of the biggest causes of stress. Shift work places a great deal of stress on the body and the mind. Shift work disrupts the 24 hour “Circadian” rhythm that regulates all body functions including patterns of brain wave activity, hormone production, cell regeneration, and other biological activities linked to this 24 hour cycle. Shift work can also disturb your sleeping patterns. Many dispatchers have difficulties maintaining sleep after working a night shift. Dispatchers working a night shift may suffer more fatigue than dispatchers on a day shift. Being overly tired makes it more difficult to concentrate which increases the possibility of errors.

Shift work can also interfere with the dispatcher’s family and social life. By working shift work you are not always able to participate in family activities or spend as much time with loved ones or friends. This can result in psychological harm to the dispatcher if not managed effectively. Shift workers may find that the quality of time that they spend with family and friends is unsatisfying because the worker’s fatigue prevents normal social activity. Shift work can also cause behavioral effects. In some dispatchers there is more use of alcohol, coffee, and tobacco. The stress of shift work can cause irritability, nervousness, and bad tempers, and may play a role in causing ulcers and heart disease.

Mental Stress:

Stress can arise due to various conflicts at work or at home. Stress and how a dispatcher handles it varies from person to person. If not managed properly, this stress can lead to impaired logical thinking and various mental illnesses. Realizing the sources of stress and changing the perception towards the situation is enough to successfully rectify the mental effects of stress. It is well known that unresolved emotional stress can translate into mental misery and then into physical illness. Uncontrolled mental stress can also induce people to become alcoholics, show signs of bulimia or anorexia, and lead to drug and nicotine dependency. Other common mental effects of stress are:

- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty making decisions
- Loss of self-confidence
- Irritability or frequent anger
- Insatiable cravings
- Unnecessary worry, uneasiness and anxiety
- Irrational fear
- Panic attacks
- Compelling emotions and mood swings

Physical Stress:

When you find an event stressful, your body undergoes a series of responses. These responses come in three stages. The first stage is **Mobilizing Energy**. In this stage your body releases adrenaline, your heart beats faster and you start to breathe more quickly. Both good and bad events can trigger this reaction. The second stage is **Consuming Energy Stores**. If you remain in the mobilizing energy stage for a period of time, your body begins to release stored sugars and fats. You will then feel driven, pressured, and tired. You may drink more coffee, smoke more, or drink more alcohol. You may also experience anxiety, negative thinking or memory loss, and you may catch a cold or get the flu more often than normal. The third stage is **Draining Energy Stores**. If you do not resolve your stress problem, your body's need for energy will become greater than its ability to provide it. At this stage, you may experience insomnia, errors in judgment and personality changes. You may also develop a serious illness such as heart disease or be at risk of mental illness.

Tips To Reduce Stress:

Knowing and understanding how stress occurs and what the effects are is not enough. You can recognize the symptoms and realize the signs all you want, however, if you do not understand how to reduce the stress the problem will not go away. There are many ways to reduce stress. Keep in mind however, that one method alone will probably not work. You will have to take some of the following suggestions together to effectively manage stress.

Exercise:

If you do not have an exercise routine, get one. Exercise has a number of positive benefits. In general, exercise improves blood flow to your brain, bringing additional sugars and oxygen that may be needed when you are thinking intensely. Exercise can cause the release of chemicals called endorphins into your bloodstream. These endorphins give you a feeling of happiness and positively affect your overall sense of well-being. Research has shown that physical exercise is the best tension reliever. It is a very important remedy for stress. Physically, exercise improves your cardiovascular functions by strengthening and enlarging the heart, causing greater elasticity of the blood vessels, increasing oxygen throughout your body. Exercise helps you think more clearly and positively, reduces muscle tension and helps you sleep.

Diet and Nutrition:

A balanced nutrition is essential to maintaining good health, but it can also affect your ability to cope with stress. When you are going through a period of stress, you need more of all nutrients, particularly B vitamins, which affect the nervous system, and calcium, which is needed to counteract the lactic acid your tense muscles produce. If you are lacking nutrients, your body will not be equipped to handle stress effectively. Try to eat a variety of foods to ensure that you consume all of the nutrients you need to stay healthy. These include vitamins, minerals, amino acids, essential fatty acids, and energy from carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Try to maintain a diet mostly of whole, unprocessed foods, Stay away from caffeine which causes nervousness and inhibits sleep.

Positive Attitude:

Maintaining a positive attitude helps to cope more easily with the daily challenges of work and life. This brings optimism into your life, and makes it easier to avoid worry and

negative thinking. If you adopt a positive attitude as a way of life, it will bring constructive changes to your life. This will in turn make coping with stress easier. With a positive attitude you see the bright side of life, become more optimistic, and expect the best to happen.

Take Breaks:

One stress reliever that we, as dispatchers, need to practice more is taking breaks. Sometimes it gets busy or you are working with low staffing making it difficult to take breaks. However, experts say taking breaks can improve health and make us more effective on the job. When you work for long periods of time, especially in front of a computer, dispatchers need to take short breaks a couple of times a day if you can. When you can, get up and take a walk around the halls of your department or if you have a break room go there to rest, read or watch television. Get your mind off the job for a couple of minutes. If you have taken a stressful call, take a walk or go to your break room and just get away for a couple of minutes, just to get your head back together. When you go back to work you will be more effective. If you are unable to leave your dispatch center, then stand up and stretch periodically, especially your muscles and joints.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing:

As a dispatcher you are going to experience events that are traumatic for you. You may not be physically on the scene of the incident but the things that you will hear on the phone and radios may be traumatic to you. You may feel intense fear and helplessness. You may find yourself feeling numb. Sometimes, you may not realize that you have been traumatized. You may be in shock or unaware of the impact of the event.

During the days or months following the incident you may find yourself re-experiencing the event in dreams, feelings, daydreams, and/or other conscious thoughts or trying to avoid any setting that may remind you of the trauma. You may feel detached from those around you. You may have difficulty sleeping or find yourself sleeping much more than usual. You may even have trouble concentrating.

First, recognize that you have been exposed to a traumatic event and that it is bound to affect you in some way. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to think or feel about the event, every one reacts differently to different situations. Any reaction you have is valid. Be accepting of your own feelings and the reactions of those around you.

Talking to others about the event can be very helpful. Don't feel over-responsible: Try to understand what your limitations were at the time of the event. People tend to feel that they should have reacted differently or done something to prevent or to lessen the impact of the incident. Be aware that in traumatic situations, most people react in the best way that they can based on their ability and their awareness at that exact moment in time. Sometimes the trauma has affected your co-workers, and they may not be able to help you or even listen to you. In fact, they may also need someone to talk to.

Some agencies have organized a department Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team or have access to one. They are trained people that are activated to respond to agencies where a traumatic incident has occurred. Their responsibility is to help prevent, or mitigate, the development of post-traumatic stress among emergency services professionals. They help people deal with their trauma by allowing the individual to talk about the incident when it happens without judgment or criticism. All interventions are strictly confidential. The only caveat to this is if the person doing the intervention determines that the person being helped is a

danger to themselves or to others. The emphasis is always to keep people safe and return them quickly to more normal levels of functioning.

There are different types of intervention depending on the situation, number of people involved and their proximity to the event. The optimum is a three-step approach that addresses the trauma at various stages of progressions. A defusing is done the day of the incident before the person(s) has a chance to sleep. That defusing is designed to assure the person/people involved that their feelings are normal, tells them what symptoms to watch for over the short term and to offer them a lifeline in the form of a telephone number where they can reach someone who they can talk to. A debriefing is normally done within 72 hours of the incident and gives the individual or group the opportunity to talk about their experience, how it has affected them, brainstorm coping mechanisms, identify individuals at risk, inform the individual or group about services available to them in their community. The final step is to follow up with them the day after the debriefing to ensure that they are safe and coping well, or to refer the individual for professional counseling.