

Communications Specialist Job Description

Revised: May 2011

Class Description FLSA: Non-Exempt

Reports To: Communications Supervisor

Purpose of the Job

- This position provides emergency and general service communication operations, including Police, Fire, EMS, and after hours-services and general information activity for appropriate agencies.
- Performs telecommunication assistance for the public via telecommunication devices which includes but is not limited to telephone, radio, TTY-Text Telephone., and written teletype.
- Receives emergency and non-emergency complaints from the public concerning crimes, public safety and medical emergencies, assigns priority response, maintains contact with specific units while relaying instructions and recording all pertinent information.
- Uses computers and computer systems (including hardware and software) to set up functions, enter data, or process information.
- Enters, transcribes, records, stores, and preserves information in written or electronic/magnetic form. Observes, receives, and otherwise obtains information from all relevant sources.
- Identifies information by categorizing, estimating, recognizing differences or similarities, and detecting changes in circumstances or events.
- Maintains appropriate records, computer databases, and written documents related to public safety operations.

Distinguishing characteristics of work performed

- Provides emergency 9-1-1 and general service communication operations and computer operation for the City of Bryan Police and Fire Departments, the Brazos County Sheriff's Office, Constable Offices, and Volunteer Fire Departments.
- Manipulates various types of communication equipment to receive and dispatch personnel and equipment to scenes of emergency meticulously questioning all callers to determine the nature, seriousness, and location of the emergency.
- Documents information either electronically, by computer or occasionally by hand. Prioritizes all data immediately, determines the kind and number of units needed, and establishes the location of the closest and most suitable units available.

Determines response requirements and relative priorities of situations, and dispatch units in accordance with established procedures.

- Operates telephone consoles to receive incoming calls for assistance and provides extensive pre-arrivals instructions, continuously providing updates on the patient's condition to medical personnel utilizing knowledge of required training of emergency medical techniques and in public safety response.
- Answers routine inquiries and refers calls not requiring dispatches to appropriate departments and agencies.
- Controls and coordinates other emergency and non-emergency service providers while monitoring multiple radio frequencies.
- Updates and retrieves information from teletype networks and computerized data systems regarding such things as missing persons, wanted persons, stolen property, vehicle registration, and stolen vehicles.
- Learns applicable material and maintains applicable certification.
- Maintains access to, and security of, highly sensitive materials.
- Maintains files of information relating to emergency calls such as personnel rosters, and emergency call-out and pager files.
- Monitors various radio frequencies to keep apprised of developing situations.
- Scans maps to determine whether a specific emergency is in the dispatch service area.
- Questions callers to determine their locations, and the nature of their problems to determine type of response needed.
- Reads and effectively interprets small-scale maps and information from a computer screen to determine locations and provide directions.
- Relays information and messages to and from emergency sites, to law enforcement agencies, and to all other individuals or groups requiring notification.
- Scans status charts and computer screens and contacts emergency response field units to determine emergency units available for dispatch.
- Performs other functions within areas of responsibility as delegated.

Minimum Education and Experience Required

- Must have a high school diploma or GED (if Home-Schooled, a minimum of 3 hours from an accredited college or university is required)
- Must be at least 18 years of age

Required Licenses, Registries and Certifications

- Basic Telecommunications Operator Certificate within one year of employment
- Valid State of Texas Driver License or State Identification Card
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Certification within one year of employment
- Emergency Medical Dispatch Certificate within one year of employment

Nature of Supervision

There is significant independent work in day-to-day operations. Work will be reviewed during and after the shift. Due to the nature of Public Safety work, the potential for error to result in injury or death to others is copious. Typically, supervisor intervention includes jurisdiction questions, data entry issues, procedural questions, computer equipment problems, and citizen complaints.

Knowledge and Abilities or Skill Proficiencies

Essential proficiencies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exercise independent judgment in prioritizing calls for service.
- Excellent customer service skills which includes but is not limited to: Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services.
- Aptitude to communicate and interrelate effectively with others, elicit collaboration of others, work independently, read, deduce, and understand rules and regulations, write clearly and comprehensively, establish and maintain sound working relationships.
- Ability to sense a potentially dangerous situation and to use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Ability and willingness to lead, take charge, and offer opinions and direction.
- Skills to communicate with others to assimilate and comprehend information in a manner consistent with the essential job functions.
- Ability to provide full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Ability to cope, maintain composure, keep emotions in check, control anger, avoid aggressive behavior, accept criticism, negotiate and resolve conflicts.
- Requires an honest and moral work ethic.
- Knowledge of computer functions upon completion of on-the-job training.
- Knowledge of the telecommunications equipment upon completion of on-the-job training.
- Skills in the use of word processing, electronic mail and other computer based means of ensuring effective internal communication of information upon completion of on-the-job training.
- Basic knowledge of the geography of Brazos County upon completion of on-the-job training.
- Demonstrate the aptitude to make sound decisions in a manner consistent with the essential job functions upon completion of on-the-job training.

- Ability to work rotating shift hours including nights, holidays and weekends with prompt and regular attendance.
- Ability to be in an “on-call” status periodically, i.e. subject to being called in to work to fill staffing shortages.
- Ability to respond to work during emergency/disaster situations as needed.
- Ability to travel to attend training or meetings.
- Ability to type at least 40 words per minute.
- Ability to work under extreme pressure in response to emergency situations.
- Ability to project an understandable and distinct speaking voice.
- Ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- Ability to shift back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information (multi-task).
- Ability to quickly and accurately receive and process auditory information in an environment that includes various background noises such as telephone ringing, multiple frequency radio traffic, and general conversation.
- Must have no uncorrectable hearing loss, in either ear, greater than those depicted below:

	500 Hz	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	3000 Hz
Better Ear	35 dB	30 dB	30 dB	40 dB
Worst Ear	35 dB	50 dB	50 dB	60 dB

Decision Making

Guidelines, written procedures, and past practices cover most of the situations addressed. Decisions are characteristically made with little input from direct supervision. Decisions made have a direct impact on co-workers, public safety personnel, and the public. The consequence of an error that would severely impact the wellbeing of others is potentially very high.

Equipment

- Frequent use of multi-line telephone system
- Frequent use of radio consoles
- Occasional use of hand-held walkie-talkie
- Frequent use of computers, copiers, printers, and other office equipment
- Constant use of ergonomically designed furniture

Public Contacts (Nature and Identity)

- Maintain contact with the general public via telephone and process requests for emergency and non-emergency assistance.
- Maintain contact with emergency service providers and their departments in order to coordinate activities, organize resources, and provide communications support in an effort to efficiently accomplish goals and objectives.

Internal Contacts (Nature and Identity)

- Exchange emergency and routine information with other Communications Specialists, Supervisors, and Administrative personnel to keep all employees apprised of situations that may or may not directly impact job duties.

Working Conditions (General)

- Work is typically performed indoors in a sitting position.
- Physical effort involves lifting and moving 10 pounds occasionally. Work also requires sitting for long periods of time, some standing, repetitive physical activity such as key entry and mental activities (e.g. checking data entries), some stooping and bending.
- Stress may result from manipulating many assignments simultaneously and for long periods without respite.
- Stress may result from performing in situations threatening the life of citizens and/or public safety personnel.