

not all of those effects are noticeable at the telecommunicator level. 9-1-1 authorities, in conjunction with their project managers, must ascertain what system changes will immediately affect the way calltakers, dispatchers and supervisors perform their duties. They also need to assess how the system changes will affect their ancillary staff, such as CAD administrators, GIS staff or technical support personnel. Because NG9-1-1 systems can be significantly complex, outside expertise may be necessary to help evaluate how each operations area may be affected. After a comprehensive evaluation has been completed, managers can address and prioritize training requirements, policy changes and staffing needs.

NG9-1-1 will provide comm centers with the ability to receive many forms of additional data and multimedia. It will also increase the potential for interoperability between other emergency services agencies and remote PSAPs. The long-term advantages of these advances in technology are tremendous, but most changes come with a price.

Avoiding information overload at the telecommunicator level will be especially challenging. It's not always technically feasible to bring new systems online in stages, but consideration should be given to gradually introducing

feature functionality whenever possible. Agencies will need time to assess the degree to which new features are affecting the quality of call handling and dispatch. Administrators must continually reevaluate operational policies during transition to ensure that their initial impact assessments were accurate.

What level of expertise will be required to manage the new systems after implementation? Many PSAPs don't have dedicated (in-house) technical support staff. It's not uncommon for telecommunicators, supervisors and managers to assume additional duties for monitoring and maintaining the "health" of such technical systems as CAD, GIS, computer telephony and recording. Some agencies rely on their municipality's information technology division for system support; others assign this responsibility to outside contractors. Regardless of the process in place today, careful consideration must be given to how system support will be provided post implementation.

NG9-1-1 systems will require network administration expertise that may not be currently available at each agency. Project managers need to assess the capability of each jurisdiction to maintain critical systems and networks and ensure the appropriate expertise will be available. It will be especially important

for PSAP managers to assess the level of training that has been provided to telecommunicators who have assumed technical support duties because of their aptitude or willingness to excel. The complexity of IP-based systems will challenge this ongoing practice, and plans should be made to ensure that the appropriate level of formal system training is provided to any individual who will be responsible for a critical system or database.

Transitioning to new technology can be overwhelming, even under the best of circumstances, and the need to employ a solid project management strategy early on cannot be overstated.

—**KATHY McMAHON**, APCO technical service manager, mcmahonk@apcointl.org

TRAINING

Training Standards in North Dakota

In our September article, "What Does Your State Require?," North Dakota was incorrectly listed as having no mandated training for public safety telecommunicators.

On Feb. 4, 2003, the North Dakota legislature passed NDCC 57-40 for Emergency Services Communication Systems (www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t57c406.pdf). The law became effective

HEALTH & FITNESS

Tips to 6-Pack Abs

Belly fat is by far the most common reason people exercise and try to lose weight. People hate how they look and feel when they're dealing with fat around their bellies, and many strive for "six-pack" abs. Getting rid of belly fat isn't something that can be done simply with crunches, though. You must work hard in several ways to burn off the fat and keep it off.

1. Consume a healthy, low fat diet. The two main causes of stomach fat are poor diet and lack of exercise. You can run a mile every day, but it won't make much difference if you're eating a pound of red meat that same evening. Your diet should consist mainly of fruits, vegetables and low fat proteins, such as chicken breast. Read food labels to find nutrition information, and stay away from oils, sweets and items high in fat.

2. Enjoy long walks or runs every day. Cardiovascular exercise is an absolute necessity when it comes to burning calories. You don't have to run miles every day to get rid of stomach fat. Walking to and from work, if possible, is a good way to integrate exercise into your daily life.

3. Swim a few times a week. Swimming works out your entire body, builds cardiovascular fitness and works muscles in the abdomen, where you're trying to lose fat.

4. Train upper, lower and oblique abdominal muscles. Only performing stomach crunches won't burn stomach fat. Combine stomach-crunch exercises with abdominal leg lowering and lying oblique exercises.

5. Improve your metabolism. Your metabolism is what causes your body to naturally burn fat. Exercising increases your metabolism, as does eating properly. Many experts recommend eating five small meals a day instead of three large meals.

6. Avoid eating before you go to bed. If you must, select protein sources only, such as cottage cheese, a sugar-free protein shake or skim milk. Eating late in the evening is believed to slow down your metabolism. A good rule of thumb is to avoid eating for three hours before you lie down for the night.

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PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/KEITH BURNS

on July 1, 2005, and established minimum training requirements for “9-1-1 dispatchers,” as well as the N.D. Emergency Services Communication System Advisory Committee.

Section 10 of the law states that 9-1-1 calls must be answered by a 9-1-1 dispatcher who has completed training through an APCO International Basic Telecommunicator course or equivalent, implying a minimum of 40 hours of basic training. The law does not designate the number of hours or topics that should be covered, allowing individual agencies to select their training programs and set standards for certification. According to Jill Breuer, immediate past president of APCO’s North Dakota Chapter and communications 9-1-1 manager for Richland County Communications, “Most everyone takes the 40-hour basic telecommunicator course offered by APCO.”

The law also requires agencies “to offer emergency medical dispatch instructions on all emergency medical calls. Pre-arrival instructions must be offered by a dispatcher who has completed an emergency medical dispatch course approved by the division of emergency health services. Pre-arrival medical instructions may be given through a mutual aid agreement.”

The N.D. Department of Health, Division of Emergency Medical Services manages emergency medical

dispatch (EMD) procedures for 9-1-1 dispatchers and EMD instructors. All 9-1-1 dispatchers must complete a 24-hour EMD course and pass its corresponding exam. The state offers its own EMD program with cards, but does not mandate agencies to use a specific program. EMD recertification is required every two years, and the policy states that a refresher course must be at least seven hours long and a minimum of two of those hours must be spent on “practical skills.”

Credentialing for EMD instructors involves a 40-hour basic telecommunications course, successful completion and certification through an EMD

TELL ME ABOUT IT!

The editors of *PSC* know everyone has a story to tell. Do you know a good dispatcher who deserves a little extra recognition? Is there an important communications event, anniversary or incident that needs to be reported on and shared? If you want to nominate someone to be profiled in our Telecommunicator Spotlight column or want us to know what’s important in your state or jurisdiction, tell us about it. Send an **e-mail to** psceditor@apcointl.org.

program, successful completion and certification as an EMS instructor or completion of the state’s Methods of Instruction course, and certification as a N.D. first responder. All programs and their equivalents are determined by the agency.

To fund the 9-1-1 system, the law established a \$1 fee for every landline, wireless and VoIP phone in the state. Although most agencies use these funds for infrastructure, such as new radios, phones or system upgrades, they can be used for training and related travel.

“North Dakota APCO tries to offer [training] and make sure that our conferences are reasonably priced,” says Breuer. “We have a scholarship for agencies/people to apply for to be able to attend a regional [or] national [conference] or the North Dakota 9-1-1 conference.”

—**NATASHA YETMAN**, associate editor

READ THE FULL ARTICLE at <http://psc.apcointl.org/2010/09/01/state-training-certification-survey>.

CORRECTIONS

Tait Key Management Facility

A photo in our November issue (p. 32, “2010 Hot Products”) was incorrectly identified as the Tait Key Management Facility. The photo actually depicted the Tait Key Fill Device. The image shown here is a screen capture of the Key Management Facility—and the photo that should have run with the article.

The editors regret the error. ||**PSC**||

