**Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for the 9-1-1 Telecommunicator**

**Section I – Introduction**

Society and communications are becoming increasingly more mobile and accessible. With that mobility, the ability to access 9-1-1 services at any time and in any place has become a constant, and the need for consistent minimum training for the 9-1-1 telecommunicator has been recognized by the 9-1-1 community. Developed by all members of the working group—which includes the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), Denise Amber Lee Foundation, International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED), National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA), National Emergency Number Association (NENA), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), PowerPhone, and industry professionals—the minimum training topics described in this document were agreed upon in principle with input from 9-1-1 professionals working within the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) environment throughout the U.S.

These recommended topics are suggested for inclusion in minimum training for those who aspire to the role of telecommunicator (call-taker and/or dispatcher) as defined by the authority having jurisdiction. It is important to note the basic telecommunicator training topics described herein provide minimum-level understanding. In order to field and manage emergency calls in a live environment, telecommunicators must receive supplemental training that will enable them to process the discipline specific emergency calls that are specific to their respective PSAP or Emergency Services Provider. We recognize that the authorities having jurisdiction will establish the qualifications for their PSAPs and telecommunicators at the state and/or local levels.

Classroom training is one of the key elements for providing the baseline level of knowledge for any profession. This document provides the elements of that baseline knowledge. Training regarding policies, procedures, and discipline-specific protocols, as well as on-the-job training and continuing education are vital and should be considered. The length of time devoted to each topic shall directly correlate to the needs and services rendered within each agency. It is understood that some agencies might not have direct involvement in every area (such as telematics, military operations or private security services); however, it is important that every telecommunicator be familiar with industry terms, technologies, and resources. The intent is that every telecommunicator will receive nationally recognized minimum training that will be the foundation for ongoing professional development.

Section II provides discussion regarding the broad training categories and a list of recommended training topics for each category. It is intended to provide general guidance regarding topics that might be included in the specific sections of the document. Similar to Section I, the training topics contained herein are not all-inclusive.

Appendix A provides a listing of the recommended training topics for ease of reference.

**Section II – Categorical Explanation and Recommended Training Topics**

**Roles and Responsibilities**:  Each telecommunicator should understand the roles and responsibilities of their position as it relates to the agency's stakeholders, citizens, and community served.  Stakeholders are not limited to the public, but also include response and ancillary agencies, as well as other PSAPs, that might be involved in the incident from inception to completion. The level of professionalism exemplified by the telecommunicator is a direct reflection upon the agency and the public safety industry.

| Recommended Training Topics – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES |
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- Introduction, Mission, Terminology
- Public Safety Team
- Ethics, Professionalism, Values, Personal Conduct, Image
- Policies, Procedures, Rules, Regulations
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Communities and Agencies Served
- Responder Safety

**Legal Concepts:**  The telecommunicator should be acutely aware that every action taken could be scrutinized within a court of law, as well as by the community served.  This section will highlight the rules and regulations—from local to federal and from PSAP to response agencies served—that govern telecommunicator performance. This might include concepts specific to law enforcement, fire/rescue, emergency medical services (EMS) and public safety communications.

| Recommended Training Topics – LEGAL CONCEPTS |
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- Liability, Confidentiality, Negligence, Duty
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Fire/Rescue Agencies
- EMS Agencies
- Public Safety Communications Agencies
- Documentation, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Recording, and Records Retention
- Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA)

**Interpersonal Communications**:  The techniques used by the telecommunicator could prove to be the difference between a favorable outcome and a disaster.  This section should focus heavily on the knowledge, skills, and abilities that every telecommunicator should have in their toolbox when assisting with a variety of incidents. It is not sufficient to train only on the skill sets needed for call taking and inquiry, such as listening, hearing, diction, and perception, but also might involve additional topics related to race, age, nationality, and speech and hearing impairments.

**Recommended Training Topics – INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Communications Techniques
- Information Processing, Communication Cycle
- Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Diversity/Demographics
- Non-Native-Language Callers
- Communication-Impaired callers

**Emergency Communications Technology**: Each PSAP within the U.S. faces a constantly changing landscape of communications technologies and advancements. It is important telecommunicators understand the terminology associated with call delivery, call processing, and dispatch infrastructure. Each subtopic is intended to be customized to meet the instructing agency's needs, with the understanding that the technology component serves as a building block for future learning environments. Topics might include: selective routing; wireline; wireless; text; multiline telephone system (MLTS) and/or private branch exchange (PBX) operations; Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP); and Class of Service, to name a few.

**Recommended Training Topics – EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

- Telephony Technologies
- Basic 9-1-1 and Enhanced 9-1-1
- Automatic Number Identification (ANI)/Automatic Location Identification (ALI)
- Wireless Phase I and Phase II
- Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)
- Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Teletypewriter (TTY)/Telephone Relay Service (TRS)
- Text to 9-1-1
- Telematics
- Computerized Mapping/Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Logging Recorders
- Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems
- Mobile Data Systems, Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Paging, Alarms, etc.
- Call Transfers, Alternate and Default Routing, etc.
- Mass Notification

**Call Processing:** This section covers many of the most essential skills that a telecommunicator needs to possess. The telecommunicator must be able to process a variety of incident types and sizes. The management of the call from delivery through categorization, prioritization, pre-arrival instructions, and dispatch of appropriate resources is the core of the telecommunicator position. Even when PSAPs are discipline specific (i.e., law enforcement only), the reality of multidiscipline incidents is evidence that telecommunicators need to have a working knowledge of other disciplines. The development of a local curriculum that includes all response disciplines is in the best interest of the responder and the public.

Topics might include: processing 9-1-1 hang-up and open-line calls, as well as TDD/TTY challenges; ascertaining proper information, location, and call nature or type; escalating incidents, such as domestic violence, active shooter, or suicidal subjects; specialty callers, such as children, elderly, and mentally or emotionally challenged persons; callers that are communications-impaired, such as individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities; and high-risk incidents, such as just-occurred or in-progress calls, crisis notifications, changing prioritization, AMBER alerts, etc.

PSAPs might divide the call-taking and dispatch portions of the telecommunicator position. However, every telecommunicator should have an understanding of how the incident information flows to the responder. For PSAPs with segregated call taking and dispatch, this might be an overview of common terminology and how to pass on information. Other PSAPs might have a need to instruct on all aspects of the telecommunicator function, including the dispatching of multiple-discipline response.

| Recommended Training Topics – CALL PROCESSING |
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- Call Receiving
- Interviewing/Interrogation Techniques
- Controlling the Call
- Managing High-Risk Calls
- Managing Specialty Calls
- Call Categorization/Prioritization
- Event Categorization
- Homeland Security/Terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Aircraft/Rail Incidents/Marine
- Hazardous Materials Incidents
- Missing/Exploited/Trafficked Persons
- Fire Service Overview
- Fire Service Call Processing
- Fire Service Dispatching
- EMS Overview
- EMS Call Processing

- EMS Call Dispatching
- Structured Call-Taking Protocols and Standards Overview
- Law Enforcement Overview
- Law Enforcement Call Processing
- Law Enforcement Dispatching
- Responder-Initiated Calls
- Special-Needs Callers

**Emergency Management**:  The telecommunicator plays a pivotal role in the management of emergency incidents, especially as the scope of an incident grows in complexity.  Having a minimum-level understanding of Incident Management and Incident Command Systems is necessary to help the telecommunicator more effectively serve small incident response to disaster-level events.  Additional training courses might include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Independent Study Courses IS-100 and IS-700, as well as a review of local Emergency Operations Plans.

**Recommended Training Topics – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**
- Introduction to Incident Command System (ICS)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities
- Disaster Preparedness
- Mutual-Aid/Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT)

**Radio Communications**:  With the majority of emergency calls coming from mobile devices, it is important to understand radio systems play a lead role in both call delivery and dispatch functions.  The telecommunicator should possess an understanding of the rules, regulations, abilities, and limitations of the local radio system and how this can affect the response.  Topics might include rate of speech, common terminology and language, and technical topics such as system types, channel acquisition, common malfunctions, and system coverage.

**Recommended Training Topics – RADIO COMMUNICATION**
- Radio Communication Techniques
- Radio Technology and Equipment
- Rationale for Radio Procedures and Protocols
- Radio Discipline
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules

**Stress Management**:  All members of the public safety family experience intense levels of stress.  As a telecommunicator begins to experience and deal with stressful incidents, it is important for them to understand the effects of stress on their job performance and social interactions.  A well-designed

stress-management program, accounting for both personal and organizational needs, results in a better quality of life for the telecommunicator and a higher level of service for the responder and citizen. Topics might include Employee Assistance Program (EAP), peer support, lifestyle changes, and formal critical incident stress debriefings.

| Recommended Training Topics - STRESS MANAGEMENT |
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- Definition, Causation, Identification
- Strategies for Dealing with Stress
- Management of Critical Incident Stress

**Quality Assurance**:  To ensure a training program is effectively meeting the needs of the telecommunicator and the organization, metrics should be put in place to measure the success of the program as a whole.  Items such as daily observation reports (DOR) and skills performance testing are beneficial in gauging progress and identifying areas of improvement needed. The same process should be applied to all telecommunicators to ensure that the organization is providing a uniformly high level of service to its customers.

| Recommended Training Topics – QUALITY ASSURANCE |
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- Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC)/Quality Improvement (QI)
- DOR/Skills Performance Testing/Performance Standards
- Identify Trends from QA to Address in Continuing Education/In-Service for QI

**On-The-Job Training (Agency-Specific Training):** While outside the scope of this project, any training curriculum should ensure adequate time for the review of agency or departmental policies and procedures.  The inclusion of a hands-on, supervised training experience is the practicum portion of a training program.  It provides the telecommunicator with the experience and confidence needed for the position, and allows the agency and/or the department to define any areas of improvement needed.

| Recommended Training Topics - ON-THE-JOB TRAINING |
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- Agency and Departmental Policies and Procedures
- Agency and Departmental Information Technologies Operations
- Interagency Networks and Databases
- Console Systems and Equipment
- Structure of Local Governance
- National Crime Information Center (NCIC)
- National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS)
- Governmental and Private Resources
- Media/Information Dissemination
- Geography/GIS

- Documentation, FOIA Requirements, Recording, and Records Retention

- Call-Tracing and Records-Retrieval Procedures

- Records Management Systems (RMS)

- Roles of Federal Government Resources

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## Appendix A – Recommended Training Topics

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Introduction, Mission, Terminology
- Public Safety Team
- Ethics, Professionalism, Values, Personal Conduct, Image
- Policies, Procedures, Rules, Regulations
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Communities and Agencies Served
- Responder Safety

### LEGAL CONCEPTS

- Liability/Confidentiality/Negligence/Duty
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Fire/Rescue Agencies
- EMS Agencies
- Public Safety Communications Agencies
- Documentation, FOIA Requirements,  Recording, and Records Retention
- HIPAA

### INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications Techniques
- Information Processing, Communication Cycle
- Problem Solving, Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Diversity/Demographics
- Non-Native-Language Callers
- Communications-Impaired Callers (individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities)

### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

- Telephony Technologies
- Basic 9-1-1 and Enhanced 9-1-1
- ANI/ALI
- Wireless Phase I and Phase II
- NG9-1-1
- Text to 911

- TDD/TTY/TRS
- Telematics
- Computerized Mapping/GIS
- Logging Recorders
- CAD Systems
- Mobile Data Systems, AVL, Paging, Alarms, etc.
- Call Transfers, Alternate and Default Routing, etc.
- Mass Notification

## CALL PROCESSING

- Call Receiving
- Interviewing/Interrogation Techniques
- Controlling the Call
- Managing High-Risk Calls
- Managing Specialty Calls
- Call Categorization/Prioritization
- Event Categorization
- Homeland Security/Terrorism/WMD
- Aircraft/Rail Incidents/Marine
- Hazardous Materials Incidents
- Missing/Exploited/Trafficked Persons
- Fire Service Overview
- Fire Service Call Processing
- Fire Service Dispatching
- EMS Overview
- EMS Call Processing
- EMS Call Dispatching
- Structured Call-Taking Protocols and Standards Overview
- Law Enforcement Overview
- Law Enforcement Call Processing
- Law Enforcement Dispatching
- Responder-Initiated Calls
- Special-Needs Callers

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Introduction to ICS
- NIMS
- Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities
- Disaster Preparedness
- Mutual-Aid/TERT

## RADIO COMMUNICATION

- Radio Communication Techniques (Rate of Speech, Common Language, etc.)
- Radio Technology (System Types, Coverage Area, Common Malfunctions, etc.)
- Procedures and Protocols
- Radio Discipline
- FCC Rules

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Definition, Causation, Identification
- Strategies for Dealing with Stress
- Management of Critical Incident Stress

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

- QA/QC/QI
- DOR/Skills Checklist/Performance Standards
- Identify Trends from QA to Address in Continuing Education/In-Service for QI

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

- Agency and Departmental Policies and Procedures
- Agency and Departmental Information Technologies Operations
- Interagency Networks and Databases
- Console Systems and Equipment
- Structure of Local Governance
- NCIC
- NLETS
- Governmental and Private Resources
- Media/Information Dissemination
- Geography/GIS
- Documentation, FOIA, Recording, and Records Retention
- Call-Tracing and Records-Retrieval Procedures

- RMS
- Roles of Federal Government Resources