

To the [Insert Governing Body Name],

I have recently been made aware of the potential for and incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in E9-1-1 Telecommunicators (study attached). At this time I wanted to make the [insert governing body name] aware and request direction in terms of possible courses of action.

As an adjunct that the information contained in the study, the Washington Chapter of APCO and NENA recently conducted a survey of Washington State communications centers taking E9-1-1 calls. Responses were received from 62% of agencies taking E9-1-1 calls, and included county, municipal, and federal agencies representing over 600 telecommunicators. Analysis of the results provided some interesting information:

- 69% of telecommunicators are between the ages of 26 and 45 years.
- 11% work as telecommunicators for 20 or more years.
- 63% of responding agencies stated that telecommunicators have left employment with that agency due to the stress of the job.
- 96.7% of responding agencies have had telecommunicators retire, leave service, or be terminated because they were unable to perform the functions of the job.
- The average age of those terminated in the past 10 years is 37 years.

[Directors may want to insert their own statistics in place of those in the survey – or create a comparison of their center vs. the survey.] The results indicate that the career life span for a telecommunicator is short relatively short, possibly due to the stresses of the job.

As we approach the age of Next Generation, and anticipate the receipt of text, photo, and video the technical expertise required to perform the functions of the job will increase immensely. In addition to that, the visualization of crime, medical, and fire scenes will add untold stress to the intricacies of an already detailed and technical position. It may become extremely difficult to recruit and retain staff.

In addition to the study and the survey, the Washington State Legislature has activated the Select Committee on Pension Policy, directing the Committee to evaluate the risk classifications of jobs that require a high degree of mental and physical risk. At this time I am requesting direction from the [insert governing body] in terms of contact with the SCPP in regard to evaluation of the telecommunicator position, given the recent information that has been brought forward.