

Reclassification of Public Safety Telecommunicators

The Problem:

Public safety telecommunicators provide lifesaving emergency medical instruction, deal with suicidal persons, assess scene safety for arriving responders, and have a critical role for a variety of emergencies. This is difficult work that often comes with high burnout rates and significant mental health impacts.

Unfortunately, the federal government currently classifies these professionals as administrative/clerical occupations. The [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\)](#) is a vast catalog of occupations, maintained by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), that is used by federal agencies for statistical purposes. The current version of the SOC categorizes public safety telecommunicators as “Office and Administrative Support Occupations,” which includes secretaries, office clerks, and taxicab dispatchers. This classification is inaccurate and a disservice to their lifesaving work. Public safety telecommunicators should be categorized as “Protective Service Occupations,” which includes law enforcement and fire, plus parking enforcement workers, playground monitors, and several other occupations that are arguably less “protective” than 9-1-1 professionals.

The Solution:

The 9-1-1 SAVES Act would correct the classification of public safety telecommunicators.

- The 9-1-1 SAVES Act is a bipartisan, zero cost bill that would direct the OMB to correct the federal classification of public safety telecommunicators.
 - o We’re expecting reintroduction of the bill soon and are seeking support from previous and new co-sponsors. In the last Congress, the bill was [HR 2351/S 1175](#).
- Under the SOC’s classification rules, occupations are supposed to be grouped base on the work performed. The work performed by public safety telecommunicators – such as coaching callers through CPR, dealing with active shooters – is inherently protective.
- Correcting the classification of public safety telecommunicators would make the SOC a more accurate and useful statistical resource.
- Correcting the SOC would have no direct impact on salaries or benefits, but would provide much-deserved recognition for 9-1-1 professionals.
- Reclassification has broad support from national organizations including APCO International (the world’s largest association of public safety communications professionals), the American Heart Association, and organizations representing the wireless ([CTIA](#)) and 9-1-1 ([iCERT](#)) industries.