

# **Tribute to Dispatchers**

**Composed by  
Police Chief Thomas Wagoner,  
Loveland, Colorado**

**Police Department**

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***Narrated by***

***Steve Souder***

***Fairfax County, Virginia***

***Department of Public Safety Communications***

**Someone once asked me if I thought that the job of receiving emergency 9-1-1 calls was a profession. I said, “Yes ! and so is dispatching Law Enforcement, Fire-Rescue and EMS units to those calls”.**

**I have found in my public safety career that dispatchers are the most unsung heroes in public safety.**

**They miss the excitement of riding in a speeding car, with lights flashing and sirens wailing and they can only imagine flames and dense smoke coming from a burning building.**

**Nor do they get to see the joy on the face of worried parents as their child begins to breathe on its own, after giving CPR instructions by EMD.**

**Dispatchers sit in darkened rooms, looking at multiple computer screens and talking to voices from faces they never see, about incidents that often they never know the outcome of. It's like reading many books, but never finishing any.**

**Dispatchers communicate with terrified victims, angry informants, suicidal citizens and grouchy officers. They are the calming influence to all of them; the quite, competent voices in the night, that provide the pillars to the bridges of sanity and safety.**

**They are expected to gather information from highly agitated people who can't remember where they live, what their name is or what they just saw. And then they calmly provide that information to officers, fire fighters and medics without error, the first time, every time.**

**Dispatchers are expected to do many things at once and do all of them well. While questioning a frantic caller, they must type information into a computer, alert another dispatcher, put another caller on hold, listen to an officer request a check on a license plate in a traffic stop or a fire fighter request that a hose line be charged. To miss the plate number or call for water would raise the ire of the officer or fire fighter and endanger them; the officer and firefighter will never know what a dispatcher goes through.**

**Dispatchers have two constant companions.....other dispatchers and stress. They depend on one and try to ignore the other. They are chastised by upset callers, taken for granted by the public and criticized by units whose safety they hold in their hands. The rewards they get are infrequent, except for the satisfaction they feel at the end of a shift, having done what they are expected to do.....BE PROFESSIONAL.**

**Dispatchers come in many shapes and sizes, all races, both sexes and all ages. They are blondes, brunettes and redheads. They are quite and outgoing, single and married, plain, beautiful or handsome. No two are alike and yet all are the same.....DEDICATED.**

**They are people hired in a difficult hiring process, to do an impossible job. They are as different as snowflakes, but they have one thing in common, they care about people and enjoy being the lifeline of society; that steady voice in a storm that knows how to handle every**

emergency and does it with style, grace and uncompromising competence.

Dispatchers play many roles: therapist, lawyer, teacher, weather forecaster, guidance counselor, psychologist, minister, secretary, supervisor, politician and news reporter. Few people must jump through the emotional hoops on the trip through day at work, as they handle the joy of one callers noisy birthday party, to the fear of another callers burglary in progress, to another callers fire in a bedroom and next to an angry neighbor whose driveway is blocked by a parked car.....followed by a person who's attempted suicide, then to the report of elderly person that's been struck by a car; all in a two minute time frame. What a Job ! This emotional roller coaster comes to a stop after an 8, 10 or 12 hour shift, then they will walk to their car, with steady feet and no queasiness in their stomach, because they are.....DISPATCHERS.

If dispatchers hold their emotions in there called indifferent, if they talk about it there're called a whiner. If it bothers them it adds more stress, if it doesn't bother them they question themselves and wonder why.

Dispatchers are expected to have:

- The compassion of *Mother Teresa*
- The wisdom of *Solomon*
- The interviewing skills of *Oprah Winfrey*
- The gentleness of *Florence Nightingale*
- The patience of *Job*
- The looks of *Faith Hill* or *George Clooney*
- The voice of *Barbara Streisand*
- The knowledge of *Einstein*
- The answers of *Ann Landers*
- The humor of *Jay Leno*
- The investigative skills of *Sergeant Joe Friday*
- The faith of *Billy Graham*

- The energy of *James Brown*
- And the endurance of the *Ever-Ready Bunny*

Is it any wonder that so many drop out while in training?

It is a very special and talented person who can do this job and do it well. And it is only fitting and proper that we take time today/this week to honor you for the job that each of you do. The recognition is well deserved if insufficient.....but it is sincere. It takes person with very unique skills to be a dispatcher. I admire you and thank you for the noble if thankless job you do. You are truly heroes in a very special way and we are appreciative and proud to know you, to work with you and to salute and recognize you.

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