Model Statute for the Regulation of Recommended Minimum Training Guidelines for Telecommunicators

Justification

There needs to be consistency in the basic level of training provided to *telecommunicators* (call-takers and/or dispatchers). With more than 250 million 9-1-1 calls placed each year, the sheer volume indicates the importance of ensuring that all callers, in whatever locale or calling environment, receive a standard level of care from the individual answering that 9-1-1 call. Indeed, 70 percent to 80 percent of those calling 9-1-1 are doing so from a wireless device, and may be crossing Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) boundaries.

There must be agreed-upon common elements that ensure the person who answers a 9-1-1 call has met baseline core competencies, and that the public will receive consistency of expertise and professionalism when communicating with a PSAP or 9-1-1 communications center. All states have licensing requirements for other public service industry personnel, and 9-1-1 should be no different. *Telecommunicators* play a key role in public safety; therefore, a need exists to develop recommended minimum training guidelines and provide the funding necessary to ensure that training takes place.

Objectives
- Establish nationally recognized, recommended minimum training for our nation's *telecommunicators* that will be the foundation for ongoing professional development
- Ensure that legislation establishes the requirements for such training and a funding mechanism

Mission
To ensure our nation's *telecommunicators* receive a minimum threshold of training that covers core competencies associated with the importance of the job.

Essential Areas and Elements for Safe, Efficient and Effective Government Control
This Model Legislation Package contains the provisions needed to regulate the recommended minimum training guidelines for *telecommunicators*. This document contains the areas and elements that are deemed essential to ensuring uniform minimum training guidelines for *telecommunicators*.

The basic enabling legislation areas are:
- Purpose
- Authority and Responsibility
- Recognition
- Definitions
- Funding

Within the area of **Authority and Responsibility** lie the following elements requiring regulation:
1. Certification of telecommunicators
2. Training topics for telecommunicators
3. Prevention of misrepresentation

4. Revocation and suspension of certification
5. Continuing education requirements for certified public safety telecommunicators

Within the area of **Recognition** lies the element of recommended training topics.

Within the area of **Definitions,** the following should be addressed within legislation:
By definition, a *telecommunicator* is a person employed by a PSAP and/or an Emergency Services Provider (ESP) who—after receiving supplemental training that will enable them to process emergency calls specific to their respective PSAP or ESP—is qualified to handle emergency calls and/or provide for the appropriate emergency response in a live environment. Basic telecommunicator training by itself does not qualify one to take calls in a live environment, but it does provide a baseline level of knowledge.

Within the area of **Funding,** authorized sources of funding for the training and certification of public safety telecommunicators must be identified and should be addressed within legislation, i.e., state 9-1-1 funds, 9-1-1 surcharges on phone bills, etc.

The following recommended minimum training topics represent basic training only; it is imperative that all *telecommunicators* receive supplemental training that will enable them to process the emergency calls that are specific to their respective PSAP or ESP (such as emergency medical dispatch, emergency fire dispatch, and emergency law enforcement dispatch).

These topics are intended to be included in recommended minimum training for those who aspire to the role of **telecommunicator** (call-taker and/or dispatcher) as defined by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). The length of time devoted to each topic shall directly correlate to the needs and services rendered within each agency or authority having jurisdiction. It is understood that some agencies may 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 each *telecommunicator* will receive nationally recognized minimum training that will be the foundation for ongoing professional development.

Minimum training topics must include the following:

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
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agencies
- Public Safety Communications Agencies
- Documentation, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Recording, and Records Retention
- Privacy Laws

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

- Telephony Technologies (e.g., PBX/MLTS/VoIP)
- 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
- Security Breaches, Cybersecurity Threats

CALL PROCESSING

- Call Receipt
- 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

- 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 COMMUNICATION

- Radio Communication Techniques

- Radio Technology and Equipment

- Rationale for Radio Procedures and Protocols

- Radio Discipline

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules

STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Definition, Causation, Identification

- Strategies for Dealing with Stress

- Management of Critical Incident Stress

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC)/Quality Improvement (QI)

- Daily Observation Reports (DOR)/Skills Performance Testing/Performance Standards

- Identify Trends from QA to Address in Continuing Education/In-Service for QI

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

- 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

Model Minimum Training Guidelines for Telecommunicators Act
Enabling legislation for telecommunicator training regulation
Sec. 1. Short Title.
        This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Minimum Training Guidelines for Telecommunicators Act."

Sec. 2. Definitions.
   (a) A "Public Safety *Telecommunicator* " is a person employed by a public safety answering point (PSAP) or Emergency Service Provider (ESP) as a public safety dispatcher or 9-1-1 operator whose duties and responsibilities include the answering, receiving, transferring, and dispatching functions related to 9-1-1 calls and texts; and the dispatching of law enforcement officers, fire/rescue services, emergency medical services, and other public safety services to the scene of an emergency.
   (b) A "Public Safety Answering Point," or "PSAP," is an entity responsible for receiving 9-1-1 calls and processing those calls according to a specific operational policy.
   (c) An "Emergency Service Provider" or "ESP" is any agency that provides emergency response, such as police and fire departments, emergency medical service (EMS) agencies and private ambulance services.

Sec. 3. Certificate Required.
   (a) No person may represent herself/himself as a certified telecommunicator unless certified as such.
   (b) A PSAP, as defined above, may employ a 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicator trainee for a period not to exceed 12 months if the trainee works under the direct supervision of a certified 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicator, as determined by rule of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), and is enrolled in a public safety telecommunication training program.

Sec. 4. Authority and Responsibilities
   The AHJ shall have the authority and responsibility to establish rules and requirements for the following pursuant to this Act:
   (a) Require certification of a person who meets the training and other requirements as a telecommunicator.
   (b) Require minimum core competency topics for the training of telecommunicators
   (c) The AHJ shall establish by rule a procedure for the approval of public safety telecommunication training programs required by this section.
   (d) Require that the approved certification training programs be conducted in accordance with nationally recognized recommended guidelines and shall include a written examination that tests for competency.
   (e) Establish by rule a procedure that should define the number of hours of training required for the biennial renewal certification of 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicators.
   (f) Require that the PSAP or ESP be operated in accordance with nationally approved standards including, but not limited to:
        1. All personnel answering incoming emergency calls and/or providing for the appropriate emergency response, either directly or through communication with the appropriate PSAP, must be certified prior to functioning alone in a live environment.
   (g) Require that a person may not offer or conduct a training course unless the person is certified to conduct that course.
   (h) Require each telecommunicator and PSAP (or ESP) to report whenever an action has taken place that may require the revocation or suspension of a certification.

Sec. 5. Effective Dates

Effective XX/XX/XXXX, any person employed as a 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicator at a PSAP or ESP, as defined above, must be certified by the AHJ.

Sec. 6. Penalties

(a) Any person guilty of willfully violating or failing to comply with any provision of this Act or regulations set forth in this Act shall be fined not more than two hundred fifty dollars, or imprisoned not more than three months, or be both fined and imprisoned.

APPENDIX

This effort is supported by the following participating organizations, training providers, and professionals within the 9-1-1 community throughout the U.S.:

- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
- Connecticut Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection
- Denise Amber Lee Foundation
- Fairfax County (Virginia) Department of Public Safety
- Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network
- Hamilton County (Indiana) Public Safety Communications
- International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)
- National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA)
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)
- PowerPhone
- Priority Dispatch
- RedSky Technologies
- Rochester/Monroe County (New York) Emergency Communications Department
- Stafford County (Virginia) Sheriff's Office
- Vail (Colorado) Public Safety Communications Center
- Weakley County (Tenn.) Emergency 9-1-1

(Add other supporting local agencies, organizations, or training providers as appropriate for your jurisdiction.)