

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR ACCURATE JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATOR (PST)



EMERGENCY INCIDENT COMMUNICATION AND DATA WORKFLOW

PUBLIC

A bank's alarm system is tripped, triggering real-time surveillance streams from the bank and the city's fixed camera system to flow into the ECC. Multiple patrons send text messages to 911; several include images and video with visuals of the perpetrators.



PST FIRST RESPONDER

PSTs triage and analyze the data received, ascertaining critical incident information.



ENHANCED TEAM RESPONSE

PSTs use protocols, training and judgement to illicit information from a caller, to increase situational awareness and enhance response, improving outcomes for safety of the public and the on scene responders.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

An automatic license plate reader system receives a hit on a stolen car parked outside the bank and is relayed to the ECC. A gunshot-alerting system informs the ECC that shots have been fired inside the bank. A drone hovers over the bank to live stream video and location to the ECC along with video and audio from vehicular and body-worn cameras.



ADMINISTER CARE

The PST administers direct first aid and life saving care by providing the caller with life-safety guidance and any necessary first aid for injuries.



COORDINATE AND DEPLOY

The PST is the coordinator of events until on scene help arrives. Ensuring the proper resources are dispatched, deployed and notified. Continuously updating and documenting incident information. Making split second decisions in a highly stressful operations center with multiple response units and public victims.



To support the case for PST reclassification and provide agencies with steps to take to redevelop PST job descriptions that better align with the position today, the National 9-1-1 Program has developed the report Guidelines for Developing a Public Safety Telecommunicator Job Description. The report is available on www.911.gov.



This is just one of many scenarios that illustrates the changing communication and data work flow in the 9-1-1 ecosystem. It is key changes in technology that have given rise to new job tasks, which necessitates modernistic skill sets in today's 9-1-1 environment.

BACKGROUND

Each year, millions of calls are made to 9-1-1 and the estimated 98,000+ men and women¹ dedicated to answering those calls are facing a time of great change. As the emergency communications ecosystem continues to evolve and emergency communications centers (ECCs) transition from a legacy environment to a next generation 9-1-1 (NG911) environment, their roles and responsibilities, and the skills required to execute in these roles, continue to evolve as well.

However, while the job expectations for public safety telecommunicators (PST) have changed, job descriptions have not been updated to reflect these changes and the PST role remains classified as an Office and Administrative Support Occupation by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics under the Department of Labor.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Research has shown that public safety telecommunicator (PST) job descriptions, in some cases, are older than the people currently holding the position. Many of today's PST job descriptions do not accurately reflect the role NG911 plays in how the duties of a PST are executed.

This creates a two-pronged problem for agencies:

- The requirements for the position are not correctly described.
- Candidates without the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities are applying for positions resulting in missed opportunities to hire the most qualified candidate for this increasingly complex job.
- Additional cost when employees leave because they don't have the right skill sets or had the wrong expectations.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF PST

- As ECCs continue to evolve through the advent of new technologies and the implementation of NG911, so too must the job description for the role of the PST.
- Job duties and tasks associated with the position should be updated regularly to align more closely with the actual work being performed by PSTs daily.
- In turn, improved job descriptions better attract the right candidates to fill the positions and help support the case for reclassifying the role of the PST from a clerical position to that of a first responder.

TODAY'S PST

In order to ensure that the right candidates are applying, and being hired, for PST roles, emergency communications centers (ECCs) need to update their job descriptions to reflect the enhanced and more sophisticated skills and abilities required in today's evolving 9-1-1 environment.

Today's PST's must be:

- computer literate
- text proficient
- social media savvy
- possess data analytics skills
- an expert multi-tasker
- dependable
- adaptable
- ability to calm and control a stressful situation
- tactful
- patient
- resilient
- stress tolerant

YOUR NEXT STEPS

ACTIVITIES

✓ Understand your job requirements

- ▶ Review your job duties and tasks
- ▶ Identify key components
- ▶ Align job descriptions with current ECC operations
- ▶ Make sure job descriptions include soft skills including training application and knowledge, critical thinking and decision making
- ▶ Document required training, licensing and certifications needed

✓ Engage your hiring authority

- ▶ Understand hiring rules
- ▶ Get to know specific requirements
- ▶ Develop a process to keep job descriptions current and updated
- ▶ Learn which platforms your hiring authority uses to recruit applicants
- ▶ Adapt testing procedures to support needed job skills

✓ Consult trusted resources

- ▶ Review model job description
- ▶ Consult other respected ECC job descriptions
- ▶ Conduct a job task analysis to ensure training and job tasks are aligned