



POWHATAN PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

"THE *FIRST* FIRST RESPONDERS"

***Discovering Public Safety:
What is 911 Operations?***



ADMINISTRATION

- Thomas Nolan, Director of Communications
- Cindy Gillespie, Operations Manager

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About Us



We are the "FIRST First Responders."

Communications Officers (COs) are 911 Professionals who serve our community in a number of vital ways. Our COs go through an abundance of training and utilize state-of-the-art technology to provide a fast and efficient response to all emergencies that occur in Powhatan County.

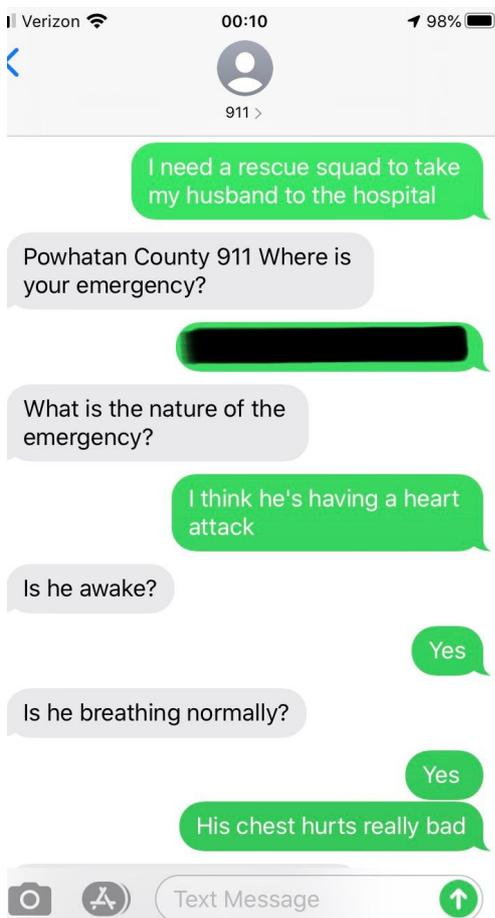
Public Safety Responders, citizens, and visitors should always expect Powhatan Public Safety Communications (PSC) to constantly strive to achieve and maintain high performance standards within the 911 Center or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). PSC is a high performance PSAP and sets individual and departmental goals for call entry times, call dispatch times, and Quality Assurance.

PSC recognizes the tremendous opportunity and responsibility to the county to become the best small PSAP in Virginia.

Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)

ANSWERING THE CALL

Powhatan PSC can answer the call for emergency assistance in a variety of ways. In addition to our landline and wireless 911 system, we use an integrated Text-to-911 system to provide our callers with an alternative means to call for help.



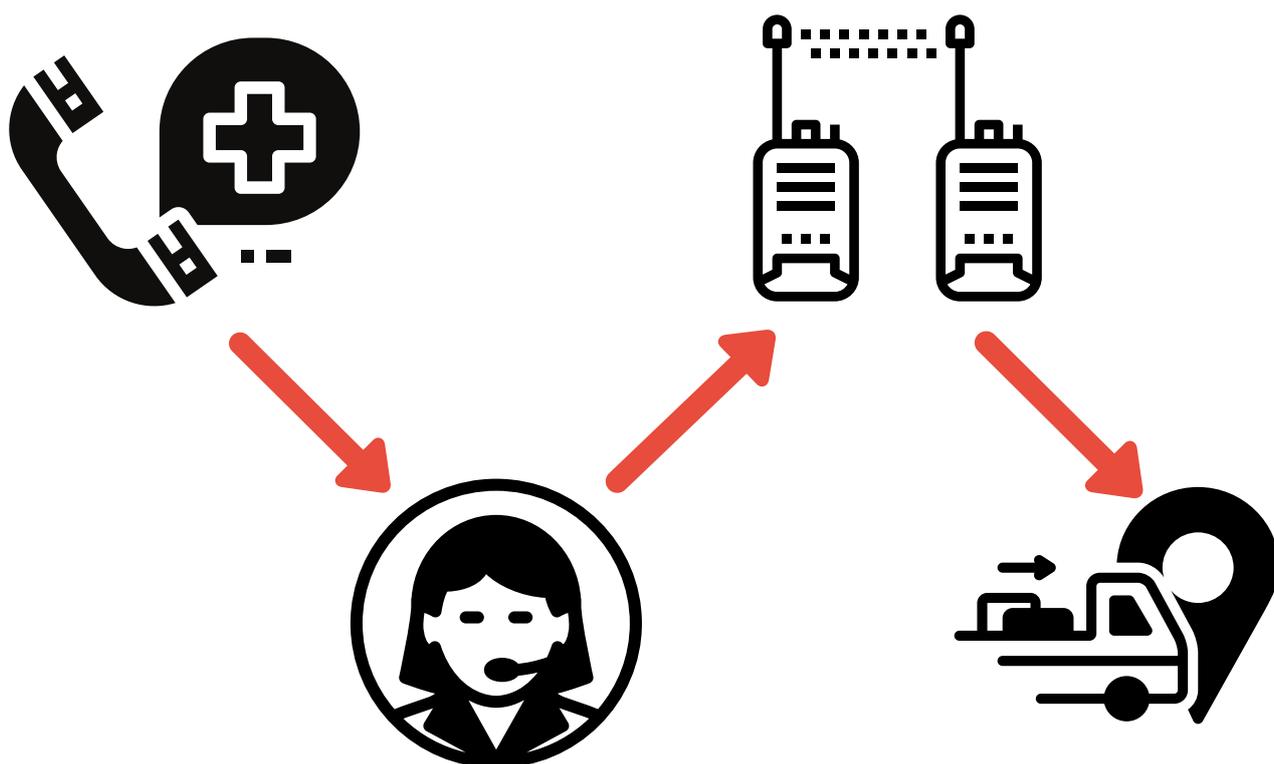
TEXT-TO-911

Text-to-911 provides a quick and easy way to access emergency services. This service caters to those who may be hearing impaired or in a situation where they are unable to speak on the phone due to safety reasons, such as a hostage situation, or poor cell service.

How Does 911 Work?

Our Communications Officers (COs) work as dedicated "calltakers" and "dispatchers." "Calltakers" answer the call via phone or text-to-911, and use scripts and rigorous training to strategically question the caller while simultaneously entering the information they obtain into our Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The "calltaker" will then triage and prioritize the call based on the severity of the emergency.

The "Dispatcher" then uses the completed, prioritized call to dispatch the proper response. The CAD system provides a list of recommended units based on the information entered by the "calltaker." This ensures that appropriate fire, EMS, and law enforcement units are dispatched every time, while being as efficient as possible with the County's resources. Dispatchers manage the incident and resources until the first unit arrives on the scene.



Technology

Technology is used in every aspect of our job here at PSC. Our COs utilize a VESTA 911 phone system, a Computer-Aided Dispatch system, a Centracom radio console, and much more.

9-1-1 is ever-evolving and more advanced technology is integrated into our center all the time.

COMPUTER-AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM (CAD)

PSC went live with Flex-Motorola Solutions on June 12, 2018. The CAD system provides a "one-stop" database for calls for service, police reports, unit accountability, and more. The CAD system also houses historical data from the previous CAD system that was used by the Powhatan Sheriff's Office for 18 years.

The CAD system is the centerpiece of our day-to-day operation. It is where all calls for service are entered and dispatched and provides important resources to our COs such as:

- Name Records
- Detailed Mapping System
- Response Plans
- Historical Data
- Warrant Information
- Premise Files
- GPS Tracking for responding units

And much more!

VIRGINIA CRIMINAL INFORMATION NETWORK

Our COs have access to protected information through the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN). They are able to query all DMV information as well as Criminal Histories and Wanted Persons Files. Our COs are thoroughly vetted through the hiring process and rigorously trained to ensure this sensitive information is handled in a secure manner.

PSC is responsible for maintaining all active warrants and protection orders entered into VCIN and uses 2nd and 3rd party crosschecks to ensure that the information entered into the system is accurate and up-to-date.

Technical Applications

RADIO INTEROPERABILITY SYSTEM (RIOS)

RIOS is a "gateway" that allows our COs to make communication links and radio talk groups with other agencies in the event of a multi-jurisdictional event. This system was provided by the State Police and is used by agencies all over the state. Our COs train on this system monthly to ensure a thorough knowledge of its operation.

This "gateway" allows Powhatan's responders to communicate directly with the responders from another jurisdiction without the need for a relay through dispatch, saving precious seconds in the event of a large-scale emergency.

RAPIDSOS

Our COs use RapidSOS - a free, web-based tool that provides location information and other data from cellular devices that have accessed the 911 system. This system was developed by Apple and Google to address the need for better location accuracy when someone dials 911 from their cellular device. RapidSOS uses the same technology that is used by rideshare applications like Uber to provide a more accurate location during an emergency.

ASAP-TO-PSAP

With our "ASAP-to-PSAP" service, we are able to receive residential and business alarm activations directly from the alarm company into our computer aided dispatch system, saving time when it matters most. PSC was the 10th PSAP in Virginia to implement this service.

"Implementation of the ASAP-to-PSAP program will help eliminate the potential for clerical errors, reduce telephone call volumes to the 911 Center from alarm companies, and most importantly, reduce 911 call processing times by as much as 2-3 minutes." - Thomas Nolan, PSC-911 Director for Powhatan County

COURTHOUSE SECURITY

Utilizing the Powhatan County Courts Security Management System, our COs are constantly monitoring a 41-camera system and are responsible for all building access to the courts and Sheriff's Office after-hours.

Training

Our COs go through a lengthy and rigorous training course comprised of classroom training, On-the-Job training, and continuing education.

All Communications Officers employed in the State of Virginia are required to attend a 40-hour basic dispatch academy that is put on by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). This academy-style course consists of the "fundamentals" of 911 and dispatch and provides all COs with a standardized education.

COs are then placed with a Certified Training Officer (CTO) on the 911 Console, where they are taught PSC's policies and procedures while actively taking 911 calls and dispatching responders. The trainees are constantly monitored by their CTO as they perform their duties during this stage. PSC uses a step-by-step training program that ensures all COs are trained consistently and effectively. COs have to show proficiency in the following duties before being "cut loose" to work without a trainer/monitor:

- Answering 911 lines / obtaining information
- Entering accurate data into calls for service and CAD data
- Police (Sheriff) Dispatch
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services Dispatch
- Use of the Virginia Criminal Information Network

Our COs are constantly learning and evolving with the changing dynamics of the job, and utilize multiple outlets for continuing education, including magazine articles, webinars, and in-service training courses.

Standards

The PSC Communications Officer, as with every high performance PSAP, must meet industry standards for call processing and constant and consistent quality review standards.

Our department standards are derived from national standards set forth by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA).

The demands placed on Powhatan PSC COs are significant and the performance standards are constantly increasing. Powhatan PSC has and will continue to measure its performance against the 911 industry standards and recently achieved measurable improvements to overall call processing goals.



Be a part of a winning team that is dedicated to saving lives and serving Powhatan County!

Powhatan PSC: *Public Safety Professionals*

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