

Public Safety Communications - City Council Briefing, May 2010

Public Safety Communications (PSC) was formed in 1991 to consolidate and optimize all emergency communications in Plano. PSC is the link between citizens and first responders. Plano has great police and fire departments, but the response doesn't start until they get the call.

PSC an accredited flagship agency, one of only 11 communications agencies in the country to receive CALEA's highest honor.

Two Major Divisions:

Dispatch Operations Division (Authorized Strength: 81 FT Positions)

Police-Fire-EMS-9-1-1- After-Hours Animal Control Dispatch

Annual Incidents Handled: 263,024

9-1-1 Calls Received: 163,740

Calls on non-9-1-1 lines: 209,397

Outgoing Calls: 139,582

Total Phone Calls In and Out: 512,719 (average nearly one per minute)

Average Number of Calls Handled Annually Per Dispatcher: 4,608

Public Alerting: 36 Outdoor Warning Sirens, Cable TV,

Limited Reverse Telephone Notification

Radio Infrastructure Division (5 FT Positions; expanding to 6 in FY '10-'11)

Operate and Maintain Regional Voice and Data Radio System for Several Plano Departments plus Allen, Murphy, Wylie, Parker, Lucas, and PISD

Major Projects:

- Replacement of the 19-year-old regional radio system, expanding to ten radio tower sites
- Preparation for Next Generation 9-1-1: Text, video, non-voice alternatives
- Staff Training and Quality Assurance

Issues Occurring:

Anticipating technological advances - how people will expect to report emergencies. Funding is in place in 9-1-1 revenue accounts but "Next Generation 9-1-1" products are not yet on the market.

Public Awareness on How To Call 9-1-1. Location needs to be articulated, call prolonged when barriers exist-language-local geography knowledge-speech deficit.

Surge Capacity and Public Expectations. We do a good job when incidents occur a few at a time, but the public needs to prepare for 72 hours of self-sustainment after a major disaster. No 9-1-1 center can give one-to-one information in a crisis.

Staffing-

- We were fully staffed in fall '09, but...
- Staff turnover since the first of this year is 2 ½ time greater than usual
- With over 1000 applicants annually, and only 1:100 suitable for hire, aggressive efforts are underway to re-staff and train replacement employees.