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|  | **Large County Fire Department** | | |
| **POLICY TITLE: Job Description—Senior Communications Officer** | | |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE:**  September 30, 2017 | **REVIEWED DATE:**  August 1, 2020 | **POLICY NUMBER:**  1.07 |

# PURPOSE:

This document describes the function; duties; knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA’s); and work conditions of a **Large** County Fire Department Communications (CFD) Senior Communications Officer

# POLICY:

CFD strives to provide all staff with tools, information, and training to be a successful member of our department. Employees may use this information to reference basic functions and KSA’s needed to perform as a Senior Communications Officer. This information may guide the professional development efforts of subordinate employees.

# JOB DESCRIPTION:

**JOB TITLE:** Senior Communications Officer

**DEPARTMENT: Large** County Fire Department Communications (CFD)

**POSITION REPORTS TO:** Communications Supervisor

**POSITION SUPERVISES:** Communications Officers in the absence of a Supervisor

**FLSA STATUS:** Non-exempt

## SUMMARY:

The Senior Communications Officer position encompasses all aspects of the Communications Officer position. This position may assist the Communications Supervisor with training and is in charge of the shift operations in the absence of the Supervisor.

The Senior Communications Officer provides a critical link in the delivery of public safety service, being the first and most important contact with the citizen needing help. This position must remain calm, show empathy, convey reassurance and instill confidence in the caller that the proper response to their needs will result.

Communications personnel serve field responders and support agencies, ensuring their safety, and employing necessary resources for optimum job performance. The employee is required to deal with sensitive information in a discreet and professional manner.

Senior Communications Officers performs specialized technical communications work in the operation of the **Large** County 911 Center; they receive incoming emergency and non-emergency calls and dispatch appropriate agencies and/or personnel

as required. Incumbents must develop a rapid and accurate sense of call interpretation and decision making/problem solving skills during stressful situations, process multiple calls simultaneously, and initiate a sequence of time sensitive actions. Telecommunications work involves the exercise of independent judgment and initiative, while adhering to departmental, local, and national standards and policies. Senior Communications Officers must establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, agency personnel, and the general public; and ensure that performance meets a high standard of customer service.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

*(Examples illustrate various types of work performed, work assignments may vary depending on the department's needs and will be communicated to the applicant or incumbent by the Supervisor.)*

* Serve as a lead communications employee; participate in the training and oversight of employees in the class of Communications Officer and assume control of more serious and complex emergency calls as necessary;
* Answer emergency and non-emergency calls for service, gather accurate information needed to assist callers, and simultaneously enter this information into computer systems;
* Calm, question, and provide instructions to callers using dispatch protocol systems; provide emergency assistance to callers until responders arrive as needed;
* Determine public safety agency responsible for responding to calls for assistance, dispatch appropriate units using radio and pager systems; accurately relay all appropriate and necessary information to responders;
* Continually update information as it is received, through documentation and verbal communication with responders, including follow up and updated status of calls;
* Ensure that all information recorded and communicated over the radio is correct and updated;
* Monitor multiple radio channels, handle multiple radio traffic, process multiple calls; process calls and radio simultaneously as volume requires; prioritize multiple calls for service;
* Operate various communications equipment including computer-assisted

dispatch terminal, and other reporting software, accurately enter and retrieve data;

* Monitor and operate TDD/TTY/RTT to communicate with hearing‐impaired callers;
* Maintain proficiency in the use of all communications equipment and programs, test communications equipment regularly and report problems; perform minor trouble shooting as needed;
* Notify additional personnel and/or support agencies as directed by field personnel, departmental policies, Supervisor, or anticipation of needs; notify Communications Manager of unusual or high-interest occurrences and equipment malfunctions;
* Track availability and status changes of all field units, including accurate tracking in computer systems; maintain a log of radio traffic on events, noting abnormal occurrences, documenting and responding to additional requests;
* Assist outside agencies when needed ensuring a high level of service to ALL **Large** County callers;
* Maintain a positive customer service attitude at all times with the public, user agency members, co‐workers and supervisors, lead subordinates by example;
* Remain calm, show empathy, convey reassurance and exhibit a demeanor that instills confidence that the caller will receive a proper response to their needs;
* Work shiftwork encompassing a 24-hour day, seven-day week; inclusive of odd hours, days, evenings, nights, weekends and holidays;
* May be required to be on‐call, remain on duty after shift‐end and respond to emergency situations at any time;
* Must be reliable and dependable, reporting for work on a consistent and punctual basis;
* Maintains certification requirements, actively self-studies during down time, and completes department mandated training or administrative duties;
* Assists with training new employees;
* Remain current on all CFD information including policy changes or updates, and information disseminated from superiors; ensure that actions follow most up-to- date direction;
* Perform emergency or disaster-related duties as assigned;
* Perform additional duties consistent with role and function as assigned;

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Contacts are made both inside and outside the organization. Internal contacts frequently include co-workers, Supervisors, administrative personnel, and support agencies. External contacts may include outside vendors, governmental personnel, visitors, applicants and citizens. This position represents **Large** County, it is critical that all interactions are respectful and professional. Interactions tend to focus on information exchange and the receiving and giving of procedural changes. Interpersonal communication should occur whenever information exists that could impact another individual or agency's knowledge or performance.

## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES:

* Knowledge of **Large** County geography, Volunteer Fire Department service areas, City and County jurisdictional boundaries;
* Knowledge of E-911 system and related laws and regulations;
* Knowledge of telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD) and related systems;
* Knowledge of International Academy of Emergency Dispatcher protocols and practices;
* Extensive knowledge of protocols, practices, and procedures of public safety emergency operations, including dispatching techniques, and equipment operations;
* Enhanced knowledge of current CFD policies and procedures;
* Enhanced knowledge of **Large** County Employee Policies;
* Ability to think, act, and speak clearly, quickly and calmly in emergency situations;
* Ability to prioritize calls according to level of need and importance;
* Ability to deal effectively with people in a multi-cultural society under extremely stressful situations;
* Ability to answer a PC-based, multi-line telephone, 911 lines, and radio traffic simultaneously;
* Ability to perform minor trouble shooting of radio and communications equipment;
* Ability to perform Supervisory duties including shift oversight, documentation of performance or unusual incidents, communication with superiors, and higher- level decision-making;
* Ability to prepare accurate and reliable reports containing information pertinent to calls for service;
* Ability to remember numerous details and quickly recall essential information;
* Ability to perform multiple time-sensitive tasks with a high degree of accuracy;
* Ability to work under stress, be a team player, establish good working relationships, and maintain self-control under stressful circumstances;
* Ability to disseminate complete and accurate information in a logical and timely manner, both orally and in writing;
* Work up to sixteen (16) hours at a time continuously wearing a communications headset that will cover one ear or fit within the ear canal of one ear, and be able to still hear and understand other outside sound sources not coming to the earpiece;
* Ability to be available for shift work encompassing a 24-hour, seven-day week; inclusive of days, evenings, nights, weekends and holidays;
* Ability to be on call for designated period of time as directed;
* Ability to operate a personal computer using standard or customized software applications appropriate to assigned tasks;
* Ability to understand several conversations occurring at the same time, disseminate appropriate information, prioritize actions and respond in an effective manner.

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

* High School Diploma or GED; *and*
* Minimum of two years’ experience as a Communications Officer with **Large** County or other emergency services agency; *or*
* Any combination of education, experience, special qualifications and training that provides the equivalent scope of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the work.
* Successful completion of a leadership course approved by the department head;
* Minimum typing score of 35 words per minute (WPM);
* Minimum passing score of 85% on Criticall Test;
* Current Healthcare Provider CPR Certification within three (3) months of employment;
* Emergency Medical Dispatch Certification within one (1) year of employment;
* Emergency Fire Dispatch Certification within one (1) year of employment;

## WORK CONDITIONS:

* Work is typically performed in the communications room, with varying levels of light;
* Disciplined environment with close supervision; must carry out lawful orders regardless of personal agreement;
* May be subjected to excited, abusive, foul-mouthed, incoherent, drunk, impaired or hysterical callers;
* Must be available to work shift work encompassing 24/7 schedules including evenings, nights, weekends and holidays;
* Must remain at the Center for the full scheduled shift, awake and alert at all times;
* Uninterrupted lunch and breaks are not guaranteed; lunch and breaks must be scheduled with the on-duty Supervisor;
* Due to the nature of public safety work, overtime may be required;
* May be subject to “call back” on short notice, for extended periods, and must be available by phone at own expense.

## PHYSICAL ABILITIES:

* Exerting up to 30 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 10 pounds of force to move objects; may be required to stand, walk, climb, balance, stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl.
* Dexterity of hands and fingers to operate standard office equipment, including a computer keyboard, mouse, and hand-held radio; extend hands or arms in any direction
* Sedentary for periods of time up to 90% of time worked;
* Adequate hearing and visual acuity to successfully perform the essential job requirements
* Ability to make rational decisions through sound logic and deductive processes;
* Ability to speak and comprehend English coherently to exchange information in person and on the telephone or radio
* Must be free from physical impairments that with or without accommodation would interrupt continuous performance of a shift lasting from eight to sixteen hours.