

# COMMUNICATIONS DISPATCHER

Approved: July 2016

FLSA: Non-exempt

Unit: SEIU



<p><b>Definition</b></p>
<p>Under general supervision, receives police and emergency calls and dispatches Police units following prescribed procedures; answers non-emergency calls for public safety and other City departments. Performs a variety of general administrative support duties and performs related work as required.</p>
<p><b>Supervision received and exercised</b></p>
<p>Receives general supervision from the Communications and Records Manager. Exercises no supervision of staff.</p>
<p><b>Class characteristics</b></p>
<p>This is the journey-level class in the Communications Dispatcher classification series responsible for receiving and dispatching emergency and non-emergency calls for the Police Department and City. Responsibilities are centered on extensive contact with the public over the telephone, in both emergency and non-emergency situations to receive, transmit, and provide factual information and assistance. All activities are performed within specified legal guidelines. Incumbents are expected to work independently and exercise judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit. This class is distinguished from the Communications Training Dispatcher in that the latter provides training to all departmental staff on the use of the dispatching communication system. It is further distinguished from the Senior Communications Dispatcher in that the latter is a lead-level class in the series responsible for organizing, assigning, and reviewing the work of assigned staff.</p>
<p><b>Examples of typical job functions (illustrative only)</b></p>
<p>Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receives and evaluates police and emergency calls and calls for City service during an assigned portion of the 24/7 Police Department operations; provides information, dispatches calls to field staff, and/or transfers calls to the appropriate department, agency, or response organization.</li> <li>• Dispatches public safety emergency units in accordance with established procedures and policies using a computerized dispatch system, including determining priority of emergency and contacting and sending appropriate response unit.</li> <li>• Maintains contact with field units, including accounting for location and status of units, recording status in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, and maintaining records of field calls; sends back-up units, as necessary, ensuring the safety of field units.</li> <li>• Operates computer, telephone, and radio console and telecommunication equipment simultaneously while performing dispatching activities; tests and inspects equipment as assigned.</li> <li>• Enters, updates, and retrieves a variety of records and information from criminal justice databases including, but not limited to, warrants, missing persons, and stolen property, firearms, and vehicles; evaluates urgency of requests and responds accordingly.</li> <li>• Accesses federal, state, and local law enforcement information databases to obtain information regarding outstanding warrants, criminal history, records information, and vehicle data; relays such information to appropriate staff.</li> <li>• Prepares, maintains, and uploads the press log and press releases to the Department's website.</li> <li>• Provides customer service and assistance to the public including taking crime and other reports, selling overnight parking permits, receiving found property and/or animals, and answering questions.</li> <li>• Acts as a liaison to the public and representatives of other agencies for the department; provides initial non-emergency contact to individuals requesting police records or related services; determines the nature of the contact; provides factual information which requires a knowledge of legal guidelines, departmental policies and procedures, and the use of tact and discretion, or directs callers and visitors to the proper staff contact or agency.</li> <li>• Maintains accurate departmental and law enforcement records and files; researches and compiles information from such files.</li> <li>• Utilizes various community outreach and social media tools and technology to notify and keep residents informed of police activities, services, and programs.</li> <li>• Attends necessary training and shift briefing sessions and participates in drills and test scenarios to prepare for unexpected emergencies.</li> <li>• May serve as Training Officer by conducting comprehensive training of all departmental staff on dispatch terminology, incident call structure, and application of departmental procedures and policies, as well as in the</li> </ul>

<p>operation and use of dispatch equipment and computer systems; creates and updates training manuals; implements training procedures and standards; maintains training records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performs other duties as assigned.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Qualifications</b></p>
<p>Knowledge of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions, principles, and practices of law enforcement agencies.</li> <li>• Terminology and procedures used in public safety dispatching.</li> <li>• Operation of computer-aided dispatching and telecommunications equipment.</li> <li>• Local, state, and federal law enforcement databases.</li> <li>• City and County geography, maps, streets, landmarks, and driving directions.</li> <li>• Social media tools and technology used in communicating with the public.</li> <li>• Basic principles of training.</li> <li>• Methods and techniques of developing training materials.</li> <li>• Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.</li> <li>• Principles and practices of data collection and report preparation.</li> <li>• Principles of record keeping.</li> <li>• Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.</li> <li>• English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.</li> <li>• Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff.</li> </ul> <p>Ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess and prioritize emergency situations while remaining calm and using sound, independent judgment.</li> <li>• Memorize codes, names, street locations, and other information.</li> <li>• Read and interpret maps and other pertinent documentation.</li> <li>• Train others in proper work procedures.</li> <li>• Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.</li> <li>• Attend to multiple activities simultaneously.</li> <li>• Obtain necessary information from individuals in stressful or emergency situations.</li> <li>• Compile and summarize information to prepare accurate, clear, and concise reports.</li> <li>• Perform technical, detailed, and responsible office support work.</li> <li>• Organize, maintain, and update office database and records systems.</li> <li>• Enter and retrieve data from a computer with sufficient speed and accuracy.</li> <li>• Organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical deadlines.</li> <li>• Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and software programs.</li> <li>• Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines.</li> <li>• Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.</li> <li>• Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education and experience</b></p>
<p>Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent to the completion of the twelfth (12th) grade.</li> <li>• One (1) year of general clerical involving frequent public contact, preferably in a law enforcement setting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Licenses and certifications</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid Public Safety Dispatcher Basic Certificate issued by the California State Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical demands</b></p>
<p>Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone and dispatch systems. This is primarily a sedentary office classification required to sit for prolonged periods of time although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to</p>

retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds.

**Environmental elements**

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.