Emergency Communications

Overview

- Our History
- Agencies Served
- Role of a Dispatcher
- Current Operations
- Incident Dispatch Team
- KPI Reports

Our History

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Agencies Served

The Communications Center serves over 500,000 citizens, 7 fire departments covering 3,800 square miles.

The Center dispatches for large portions of Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson, and Douglas Counties.

Our philosophy is regardless of the size of the agency, the citizens and departments will receive the highest level of customer service and best dispatching possible.

Role of a Dispatcher

- Answer calls for assistance
- Assess incident information
- Dispatch appropriate resources
- Maintain resource status
- Track incident progress
Role of a Dispatcher

- The first, first responders
- Ability to positively or negatively affect the outcome of the incident within seconds of the initial call.
- The voice of the department
- Attitude & voice inflection has drastic effects
- Researcher of many subjects
- 911 is sometimes confused with 411

Current Operations

In 2013 the McLean name was officially adopted with the re-organization of the Department.

We have transitioned to the South Metro Emergency Communications Bureau reporting to the Emergency Services Division.

We continue operate 24 hours shifts consisting of 1 Dispatcher Supervisor, 1 Lead Dispatcher and 5 Dispatchers per shift.

Current Operations

In 2019 we were re-accredited in Emergency Medical Dispatch and ARPD's Project 23.

We plan to go for re-accreditation again 3rd quarter 2021 for the 1st time in Emergency Medical Dispatch at the ARPD Project 23.
Current Org Chart

Incident Dispatch Team
The Incident Dispatch Team or IDT is a team of specially trained dispatchers operating during the initial response to an emergency. Established for rapid deployment to major incidents to facilitate communications, logistics, and planning functions during the first operational phase.

KPI Reports
INCIDENT DISPATCH TEAM
2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

South Metro Fire Rescue - Emergency Communications Bureau
9195 E Mineral Avenue, Centennial, CO 80112
Ph: 720-258-8911
www.southmetro.org
The Incident Dispatch Team (IDT), along with the entire world, saw 2020 bring about unprecedented challenges to how we respond to events within the District and the service area of the Emergency Communications Center. We have had to re-evaluate how we treat and respond to the day to day. IDT worked to overcome the challenges that “the new normal” created for both training and responses and was able to continue providing high quality support throughout the pandemic to the agencies we serve by implementing a more remote approach.

To maintain adequate IDT staff coverage, the decision was made to allow more on call hours to team members, operators were able to have everything they needed to support an incident at home. Keeping dispatch staff who were not on shift out of the communications center helped isolate each shift to prevent potential COVID-19 exposures and minimize any potential staffing concerns.

The Incident Dispatch Team is constantly training, similar to how line members participate in station/shift trainings. The training format had to evolve from traditional in person lessons to more remote and online based trainings. Trainings that required in person meetings (i.e. UAV flight time) were conducted in several smaller groups.

The increased on-call hours and coverage needs in addition to regular shift assignments during such an unprecedented and lengthy period meant that preventing staff burn out was the highest priority for the health and safety of the communications staff. The Emergency Communications Leadership did everything possible to make sure staff were supported and able to voice any concerns or needs they had.

I am proud, not only of the Incident Dispatch Team but, of the entire communications team for their hard work and dedication throughout 2020. I look forward to 2021 and am confident that this talented group can rise to meet any challenges it may bring.

Sincerely,

Chris Carnahan
Dispatch Training Supervisor / IDT Coordinator
South Metro Fire Rescue’s Incident Dispatch Team is made up of highly qualified dispatchers who respond from the communications center to emergency incidents in order to facilitate communications, logistics and planning functions for the first operational period.

Though specializing in communications, IDT has added drone as a tool available to provide support to incidents. Using drones the team is able to provide an overhead view of the incident and surrounding area. Using the drone’s FLIR technology we are able to find heat signature data that increases firefighter safety, protection of property, and time management on the incident.

With a fleet of four vehicles, IDT members are able to provide 24/7 district coverage to all 7 agencies we serve. Averaging 150 calls a year and over 1,000 training hours, our 7 member team provides maps, radios, on scene weather, resource ordering and tracking, repeaters, UAVs and supporting equipment. While providing this coverage to our first due of 1,776 square miles IDT also supports mutual aid in the Denver Metro area and beyond.
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2020 Call Volume

Compared to 2019, 2020 saw an increase in IDT’s responses. Annual utilization time increased from 146.5 to 260.3 hours respectively. The introduction of the Drone (UAV) Team added new responsibilities and needs for the team. During the height of COVID-19, responses for each deployment were evaluated differently. In order to keep exposure to a minimum, IDT members assisted remotely from home and the center as appropriate.

### IDT Response Report

Incident information from 1/1/2020 - 12/31/2020

Year to date counts from 1/1/2020 - 12/31/2020

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*Report from 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2020*
New For 2020

The IDT on-call schedule was modified to meet the needs of all the agencies we serve. In order to limit exposure inside the center during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, IDT on-call was handled primarily by the PSAP Manager and IDT Coordinator, who were working from home. As restrictions lessened, the responsibility for IDT coverage was brought back into the communications center and on-call was covered by the full IDT team with the on-call vehicle.
Training

Classroom and field training were put on hold for most of 2020. Trainings were moved to online platforms, primarily utilizing Microsoft Teams and PowerDMS. Using videos, PowerPoints, and tabletop exercises members were able to keep up on their skills while deployments were evaluated on a case by case basis.

Towards the end of 2020 as restrictions were lessened, the team resumed meeting monthly for in-person training, skills rodeos, and UAV training missions. As the team grew, in-person training was moved to occur bi-monthly and training time was extended. By extending the time the team is able to have classroom sessions and run longer scenarios to get more sets and repetitions in.
Accomplishments

First Responder Appreciation

The UAV team had the honor of flying multiple missions at different hospitals across the metro area to support first responder appreciation during the pandemic. While flying outside of our usual vantage point, our recordings provided safe and fun overviews to all the staff that could not attend in person. The Medical Center of Aurora, Sky Ridge Medical Plaza, North Suburban Medical Plaza, Littleton, and Swedish are a few of the facilities flown over. This also provided pilot training for the UAV operators. Using low acuity, low risk incidents provides the pilots low stress flight time, while continuing to build their skills.
Chatridge 2 Wildland Fire

On the morning of June 29th, IDT was dispatched as part of a first alarm response for a large brush fire. While en route, it became apparent to everyone that the fire was going to be BIG.

When IDT arrived on scene, we had our work cut out for us. Equipped with a mobile weather station, the first plan of action was immediately deploying to try and get a real-time and on-scene idea of what the weather was doing to help predict where the fire was moving. With weather information up, IDT then tied in with the IC and other members of the IST to print maps of the area and to plan out the probable fire behavior.

As the incident progressed, IDT became the main point of communications for the incident, running both the command channel as well as the staging channel. Meanwhile, MetCom continued to serve the rest of the fire district from the center. As the incident progressed further, IDT began to help in other areas, such as working with DCSO on getting documents prepared, printed, or copied for the briefing in the evening. When the MMA data became available, IDT was then able to live stream the aerial footage and the burn scar using the IDT TV for all to see. Finally, as crews from other agencies arrived, they stopped by IDT2 and got set up with necessary communications – IDT was able to assist them with all aspects, from getting the correct channel that was already in their radio bank or by checking out a cache radio and training the crews on how to use them.

IDT spent just shy of 12 hours at the Chatridge 2 incident and, apart from the overnight watch, was one of the last crews to clear the scene.
Chatfield Dive Recovery

In the days following an unsuccessful dive rescue, the incident transitioned to a search and recovery. The IDT team responded to scene to provide maps that marked the last known location of the victim. Multiple drones were deployed to scour the surrounding banks and provide a bird’s-eye view of the reservoir to continue search efforts.

The team spent five days at the reservoir providing drone footage, GPS Tracking, and maps. The UAV team had over 21 hours of drone flight time.
IDT played an intricate role in the 2020 South Metro radio reprogram. A physical upgrade, instead of the standard over-the-air update, was required for all mobile and portable radios throughout the district. Each mobile radio was required to be physically removed from the apparatus it was assigned to, and then upgraded. The upgrading required constant communication with the dispatch center for move ups, district coverage, and placing units out of service. With the assistance of Douglas County Radio Shops and South Metro Fleet, the IDT team was able to reprogram every mobile and portable radio in our 29 station fleet over a four day period.
Notable Calls

- DADS Landfill Large Brush Fire
- Ridgegate Brush Fire
- Cherry Creek Shooting Range
- Lakeside Interface
- Highlands Ranch Trench Rescue
2020 Incident Dispatch Team

Paul Smith
Director

Tyler March
Operations Manager

Chris Cermahan
Supervisor

CJ Bailes
Supervisor

Scott May
Lead Dispatcher

Kyfer Hewes
Dispatcher

Amenia Perkins
Dispatcher

Brian Zales
Dispatcher

A process was held for 2021 bringing on the following IDT Members

Steve Smith
Dispatcher

Steve Evans
Dispatcher

Jenn Koscelnik
Dispatcher
2021 Goals

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple 2020 goals were postponed. 2021 goals include some unfinished business as well as:

- Annual RT-130 wildland training refresher
  (A Target Solutions recert taught by the South Metro Wildland Team.)
- Wildland field day
- Host a RADO course
- New member orientation
- Participate in more line trainings
- IDT ride a long
- On call coverage regardless of Communication Center staffing
South Metro Fire Emergency Communications

History

On the 19th day of January 2006, the Metropolitan Area Communications Center (MetCom) was founded. Since that day, the primary objective has been to serve as a regional Fire/EMS Emergency Communications center, committed to outstanding patient care, exceptional customer service, and superior call handling performance. These founding principles are demonstrated each day by our ability to meet or exceed all NFPA 1221 performance standards, meet the standards established by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), and recognition as an “Accredited Center of Excellence” (ACE) by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch. Our ACE Accreditation is quite the prestigious honor, making South Metro the 141st public safety communications center in the world and the first PSAP in the Denver Metropolitan area to demonstrate this high level of Emergency Medical Dispatch performance.

In addition, dispatchers hold national certifications in Emergency Medical Dispatch, Emergency Fire Dispatch, Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System (NIMS), and more. We pride ourself on the ability to get a fire truck or medic unit to a citizen’s door in the most efficient and expeditious means possible.

As a communications center focusing solely on Fire and EMS incidents, we provide a unique and very attractive service to these departments. Striving to stand out as a leading Public Safety Answer Point (PSAP), South Metro has always encouraged professional growth through ongoing training, job related certifications, public education, special projects, and other opportunities.

In 2016, MetCom (comprised of IT, GIS, Analytics, and Dispatch) re-integrated back into South Metro Fire Rescue, the largest agency served by the Center. This re-integration further strengthened the working relationship between Dispatch and South Metro, while also providing the opportunity for greater service to the other agencies served. In 2021 MetCom was divided into 2 bureaus and Dispatch became the Emergency Communications Bureau under the Emergency Services Division, allowing an even more solid foundation to exist between dispatchers and line personnel.

We believe the best way to see the future is to create it. Knowledge, innovation, and dedication are precursors to greatness. It is our vision to become renowned for quality service and professionalism, setting the industry standard for multi-agency communication centers.

The Emergency Communications center is physically located on the lower level of the South Metro Fire Rescue Headquarters at 9195 East Mineral Avenue in Centennial, Colorado.
Agencies Served

The South Metro Fire Emergency Communications Bureau currently serves as the communications center for South Metro Fire Rescue, Bennett Fire Protection District, Byers Fire Protection District, Deer Trail Fire Protection District, Sable Altura Fire Rescue, Strasburg Fire Protection District, and West Douglas County Fire Protection District. With a service area stretching across more than 1,800 square miles, dispatchers must maintain a thorough understanding of rural, suburban, and urban operational needs. Adding to the uniqueness of this service area is the vastly different terrain, ranging from mountainous to rolling hills, to wide open plains.

With a population of over 540,000 residents spread across more than 1800 square miles of land in Douglas, Adams, Jefferson, and Arapahoe counties, South Metro is the most heavily populated agency served. Service areas include Centennial, Greenwood Village, Foxfield, Littleton, Lone Tree, Louviers, Parker, Castle Pines, Centennial Airport, Cherry Hills Village, and other unincorporated areas within these counties. In addition to district residents, thousands of people make their way into South Metro’s service area each day as they commute to various large employers throughout up-scale urban areas such as The Denver Tech Center and Inverness Business Park.

Rural additions to the agencies directly served are Bennett, Byers, Deer Trail, Sable Altura, and Strasburg. These five fire departments cover a combined total of more than 1,540 square miles of response area just east of the Denver Metro area. Often referred to as the “I-70 Corridor”, these five departments begin at the eastern edge of Aurora and extend for more than 40 miles east along both sides of I-70. Severe weather, dry vegetation, and expansive response areas all provide distinctive challenges to these departments.

The West Douglas County Fire Protection District provides fire and medical response to approximately 56 square miles of rural Douglas County. The mountainous terrain of this district provides unique challenges, both in terms of emergency access and also radio operability. West Douglas County Fire serves citizens and visitors throughout nearly a dozen subdivisions, the town of Sedalia, and a section of the Pike National Forest.

In addition to the agencies directly served by our Communications Bureau, there are several other agencies that South Metro works closely with regularly. For example, South Metro Fire is bordered by neighboring fire departments, including Aurora, Castle Rock, Denver, and West Metro. Agreements have been established with each of these departments for varying levels of aid in certain situations. South Metro also works with the Buckley Air Force Base Fire Department and several other rural fire departments along the eastern plains to provide resources to the I-70 corridor when needed.
**Staffing**

The Emergency Communications Bureau is staffed with 22 full-time and five part-time communications professionals, covering a total of three shifts. Each shift consists of one supervisor, one lead, and five dispatchers. An operations manager oversees the three shifts in addition to the Training Supervisor. In 2020, we answered over 95,000 calls and dispatched over 46,000 calls for service.

Our staffing model is unique, and the only one of its kind in Colorado. Operating on a Modified Kelly Schedule, South Metro dispatchers work 24-hour shifts, starting at 7:00 am each day. The benefits of this model include the ability to maintain consistent staffing levels, reduced sick/leave time usage, increased comradery within each shift, and greater time away from work to decompress from the stress of the job. From 6 pm to 6 am, dispatchers are each permitted a six-hour sleep period, however, if the need arises, dispatchers can be recalled, returning the center to full staffing in under 90 seconds. Several factors contribute to the success of this unique schedule, including full kitchen amenities, flexible breaks, full gym, and private sleep rooms.
Technology

The Emergency Communications Center is supported by a state-of-the-art Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. The Public Safety Enterprise Suite CAD system, manufactured by CentralSquare of San Diego, California, is a Windows-based CAD system designed to assist communications center personnel in managing unit locations, unit statuses, pending/active incidents, and other critical information. The incorporated GIS technology results in expedited response times and advanced mapping capabilities. Partnering with surrounding agencies, we can further improve the service provided to the community by using real-time closest unit recommendations, even if the unit being sent is from a surrounding fire district in many cases. The Informed CAD platform supports multiple interfaces which allow caller information to be input directly from the 911 phone system, emergency units to be tracked through automatic vehicle location (AVL), and the use of mobile data terminals (MDTs) to support field operations. Additionally, South Metro supports interfaces to:

- First-In Automated Station Alerting
- Records Management
- SMS (paging/e-mail) notification
- Active 911 notifications
- Pulse Point citizen alerting
- Rapid SOS
- Marvlis Deployment Monitor

PulsePoint

Radio communication is supported through the use of the Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado (CCNC), a statewide 800 MHz digital trunked radio system (DTRS). This common statewide backbone allows South Metro, and the agencies it serves, to communicate with each other in most parts of Colorado. The standardized equipment and frequency format allow users to communicate with each other and various communications centers, regardless of the unit’s physical location within the state. Additionally, South Metro has the ability to utilize VHF frequencies from each dispatch position.

Utilizing Intrado’s Viper call handling system, the dispatchers take total control of landline, wireless, VoIP, and Text communication methods. The user-friendly and customizable user interface provides dispatchers a wide variety of options for locating a caller, triaging calls, placing calls, and transferring callers.
Training & Continuing Education

The new hire training academy begins with a comprehensive selection process. The Emergency Communications Bureau only hires communications professionals for dispatch positions with a minimum of two years of public safety experience. Additionally, all applicants must undergo standardized CritiCall testing, psychological screening, drug testing, and background checks before being offered a position. Once hired, initial training focuses on advanced Fire/EMS call management, while also reinforcing consistency and incorporating the importance of thorough documentation. The new hire training academy includes 120 hours of didactic training and 240 to 320 hours of on-task training prior to being cleared to work all positions within the Communications Center. Our training program is accredited and meets the APCO Project 33 Standards, further demonstrating our commitment to excellence in public safety communications.

As a base standard, all dispatchers are required to maintain certification in CPR and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch’s EMD and EFD programs. Dispatchers must also achieve APCO Telecommunicator and Fire Communications certifications, Blue Card Fire certification, and complete NIMS 700/800 and ICS 100, 200, 300, and 400 courses. All dispatchers also have awareness-level training in hazardous materials, tech rescue, dive operations, wildland fire operations, and aircraft rescue firefighting (ARFF).

The Emergency Communications Bureau works to strengthen departmental knowledge through scheduled continuing education and field observation rides. We provide monthly training, along with quarterly discussions and table-top exercises to ensure core knowledge for low frequency/high acuity calls for service.

Finally, all personnel must attend a minimum of 40 hours of in-service training annually, in addition to staff meetings, drills, and exercises. All of the Dispatch Supervisors are required to complete a Communications Center Managers course and are expected to attend yearly management training in addition to all scheduled in-service trainings.
Emergency Communications’ dispatchers are certified in and practice Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) through a set of standards known as the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS). MPDS is based on published standards by the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American Medical Association (AMA), and more than 20 years of research, development, and field testing throughout the world. The MPDS protocol contains 37 Chief Complaint Protocols, Case Entry and Exit information, and call termination scripts.

There are also additional verbatim instruction protocols for AED support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), childbirth assistance, tracheotomy, airway and breathing, and the Heimlich maneuver. Special protocols for stroke identification, aspirin administration, and pandemic flu triage are also part of this internationally accepted standard.

Similarly, dispatchers are certified in Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD), which follows a comparable set of standards based on fire and rescue situations. Much like the MPDS, the Fire Priority Dispatch System (FPDS) provides 33 Chief Complaint Protocols, each having specific case entry questions, pre-arrival instructions, and call termination scripts for the dispatcher to follow to ensure consistent and professional call handling.

The Emergency Communications Bureau holds accreditation through the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch for its ability to comply with all training, quality assurance, and performance standards associated with MPDS.
Process Improvement Program

At South Metro, performance is constantly monitored at both the dispatcher level and the systems level. Opportunities for improvement are addressed individually and/or systemically. The Quality Assurance Program is based on a standardized evaluation process, with primary objectives being to:

- Ensure that dispatch personnel understand policy, practice, and procedure
- Ensure strict adherence to medical protocols
- Ensure that calls are accurately documented in CAD
- Ensure safety of user agencies
- Ensure standardized and consistent radio dispatching
- Ensure the training program is consistent with national standards

Process improvement also includes the use of feedback forms, which function as a routine and reliable way to receive information on a call. These forms are submitted by individuals involved with the dispatching process, including fire personnel, supervisors, or other dispatchers. The feedback form is a written request for clarification on service events. The expressed issue is investigated by the Shift Supervisors and forwarded to the Director as appropriate. The Dispatchers receive feedback on their performance and recognition for exemplary performance.

South Metro has also created a variety of reports to further illustrate departmental compliance, statistics, and performance:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Call assign times for all priorities
- Dispatch code comparative history
- MPDS Master Dispatch Analysis
- Protocol Compliance
- Quality Improvement Summary
- Dispatch Compliance
- Exceptions by Cause

In addition, we have the ability to pull specific reports for agency performance, pandemic planning, and response compliance reporting. The strengths of the Emergency Communications Bureau have been developed and oriented toward a single vision of being Colorado’s most comprehensive and customer service focused communications centers. This has been established by a team approach involving all of the employees at all levels, driven by a common mission and organizational values. Our strength comes from being grounded in our operational diversity, technology, and most importantly, our employees.

Case reviews are performed utilizing standardized forms to evaluate the consistency of EMD, emotional content of the call, consistency of information given to responding crews, consistency in radio dispatching procedures, and overall success of the call.

Process Improvement evaluations occur monthly and are reviewed by the Shift Supervisors. Areas of improvement or concern are reviewed by a peer-driven Dispatch Review Committee (DRC). Areas that are retroactively reviewed include:

- Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) Calls
- Radio Dispatches
- All Critical Incidents
- Random Selection of Customer Service Calls
Incident Dispatch Team (IDT)

South Metro’s current service area encompasses over 1,800 square miles of mixed topography and includes everything from commercial high rises, to open plains, to mountains and wildland interface. The numerous hazards and potential for large-scale incidents prompted the need for communications support outside of the dispatch center. To fill this need, the Incident Dispatch Team (IDT) was established in 2008. Building upon the philosophies of successful IDTs across the country, we are able to offer an operationally efficient team with diverse capabilities.

Daily staffing includes a minimum of one trained IDT member per shift. With a minimum staffing level of seven in the center, IDT members can respond immediately to an incident. On-call IDT members are also available to supplement staffing levels within the center or to respond to a scene. Currently, ten dispatchers and the Operations Manager are members of IDT.

IDT members are qualified through an in-house training academy that covers a wide range of material from the basics of firefighting to building a complex communications plan. All members are required to be certified through ICS 400, Blue Card Incident Command, S130/S190 wildland firefighting, and teach at minimum of once a year. The team also has members that have qualifications as RADOs, All Hazard COML Trainees and more advanced wildland firefighter training.
IDT, continued...

When deployed, all IDT members are equipped with a full set of Nomex bunker and wildland gear, allowing them to safely function on scene. As a single resource, the members will bring a kit that includes a laptop computer, printer, camera, GPS, VHF radio programming equipment, internet access, weather software including radar & lightning data, a cache of ICS forms, and a small office supply kit.

In support of the agencies served by South Metro, IDT operates one frontline fully-equipped response vehicle and two additional fully-equipped support vehicles. The frontline response vehicle, designated as IDT2, is equipped with all of the tools necessary to establish and handle field communications from any scene. This vehicle has all of the capabilities of a single resource dispatcher, with added computer and CAD capability, cell phones, printers, 800 MHz and VHF radio caches, ICRI Tactical Gateway, Satellite Phone and data, 800 MHz and VHF repeaters, map printers, on-board weather station, and enough food and water to be self-sufficient for 72 hours.

Introducing fourth-quarter 2019, the South Metro Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) team was created in partnership with IDT and Training. All UAV pilots are FAA certified in drone operations. UAVs are used on initial attacks for large structure fires, wildland fires, HazMat incidents, and any other incident that could benefit from having a closer look without having to put a firefighter in danger. UAVs are also used for wildland mitigation, investigations, and district data collection. Using multiple software platforms we are can create 2D and 3D mapping and imagery for quick on-scene maps and large data maps for research and after-action review. South Metro staffs multiple drones in safety units and all IDT vehicles, so a pilot is always available.
Interoperability

South Metro's Motorola-based radio system is capable of communicating with all local agencies, including neighboring fire, rescue departments, law enforcement, and EMS providers. Interoperable communications are either in native format on Motorola 800 MHz systems or through gateways tying disparate 800 MHz radio systems together.

In support of interoperable communications, South Metro is a member of the Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado (CCNC), which is a user's group for the Colorado Statewide Digital Trunked Radio (DTR) System. CCNC supports 700 MHz and 800 MHz radio communications throughout the state of Colorado. The DTR network is divided into six zones, 250 towers, and provides direct radio-based communications to over 118,000 portable, mobile and fixed-based subscribers (radios). The coverage area includes all of the Denver Metro (Front Range) area and the most populated areas throughout Colorado.

The cities of Lakewood, and Wheat Ridge utilize a Harris 800 MHz radio system, which is made compatible with Motorola systems through the use of an interoperable communications gateway. This "Network First" gateway was installed in 2005 tying the two systems together. The gateway supports 16 channels for metro-wide interoperable communications and is utilized daily by public safety agencies. To further support communication efforts, procedures have been developed and formally documented in the Denver Urban Area Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TIC Plan). Additionally, all radios in the Denver metropolitan area are programmed with federal interoperable channels to include "8TAC" and "8CALL" channels which can be utilized in both repeated and simplex modes. These channels are available for national, regional, and local interoperable communication needs; they are frequently utilized by public safety agencies and are maintained by the State of Colorado and local agencies.

South Metro, Denver, Douglas, and Arapahoe counties maintain 800 MHz radio caches in support of radio swaps. These radios are preprogrammed with local channels and readily available to all public safety agencies.
Conclusion

For more than a decade, South Metro dispatchers have been committed to providing the highest level of service to the communities served and surrounding areas. This is demonstrated by a constant focus on efficient and professional call handling, minimal response times, and effective resource management. Our values of innovation, teamwork, dedication, accountability and integrity provide the guideposts for the daily commitment to fulfill our mission:

The Emergency Communications Public Safety Professionals are committed to serving with integrity, compassion, and care for the welfare and safety of our citizens and personnel. We support expedient, quality fire rescue and provide emergency medical instructions through the application of the industry’s best practices. Our standard is excellence and the road to success is through our teamwork.
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

3 YEAR PLAN 2021-2024

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## Strategic Path

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## Conclusion

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Emergency Communications

History
Metropolitan Area Communications Center (MetCom) was created in 2006 as a Fire/EMS emergency communications center committed to improving call handling performance and customer service for South Metro Fire Rescue. Although this center was created for South Metro, the overall intent was to design a regional Fire/EMS emergency communications center.

Over the course of 15 years, MetCom successfully achieved that goal and currently serves as the communications center for seven agencies, covering approximately 1800 square miles. Those agencies are: South Metro Fire Rescue, Bennett Fire Rescue, Byers Fire Protection District, Deer Trail Fire Protection District, Sable Altura Fire Rescue, Strasburg Fire Protection District, and West Douglas County Fire Protection District. The center is also the point of contact for area strike teams.

At the time of MetCom's creation, the communications center personnel were South Metro Fire Rescue personnel. When MetCom became a communications authority, all of the staff became employees of the Metropolitan Area Communications Center, being overseen by equal representation from South Metro Fire Rescue and Parker Fire Protection District. The agencies then merged into an authority and subsequently consolidated into a protection district. As of December 20, 2015 MetCom, personnel once again became South Metro Fire Rescue employees. Although this was a change in official employment, all staff members remained in their current positions. Since 2018, the Emergency Communications Bureau has been staffed with twenty two full-time communications professionals, five part-time communications professionals, a division assistant, a Training Supervisor and a PSAP Operations Manager.

PRESENT SITUATION
On January 1st, 2021, internal reorganization within the department split the MetCom bureau. Information Technology (IT), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Analytics will continue to report to the Assistant Chief of Support Services and Emergency Communications will now be under the Emergency Services Division. This reorganization has created the new name of Emergency Communications Bureau, also referred to as Dispatch on the radio. Though Emergency Communications, I.T., GIS, and Analytics have split, these bureaus will continue to work hand in hand to support the strategic Mission and Vision of South Metro Fire Rescue, Emergency Services Division, and the Emergency Communications Bureau.

In 2021, it is projected that Emergency Communications will dispatch over 47,000 calls for service covering approximately 1,776 square miles in portions of Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson, and Douglas Counties.
STAFFING

In January 2007, MetCom became the only civilian PSAP in Colorado to operate on a modified Kelly 24-hour shift schedule. This three-shift system has proven to be a success and is now a model in the emergency telecommunications industry. Each shift is currently staffed with a Supervisor, Lead Dispatcher and five Dispatchers with the ability to manage an incident load of 42,000 calls annually. In the last quarter of 2015 the PSAP Operations Manager position was created to redistribute the span of control below the Director of MetCom. In 2021, with the reorganization the PSAP Operations manager has assumed all of the responsibilities of the Director while maintaining current responsibilities and now reports directly to the Assistant Chief of the Emergency Services Division.

Mission, Vision & Values

MISSION STATEMENT
Emergency Communications Bureau’s public safety professionals are committed to serving with integrity, compassion, and care for the welfare and safety of our citizens and personnel. We support expedient, quality, fire rescue and provide emergency medical instructions through the application of the industry’s best practices. Our standard is excellence and the road to success is through our teamwork.

VISION STATEMENT
Emergency Communications Bureau believes the best way to see the future is to create it. Knowledge, innovation, and dedication are precursors to greatness. It is our vision to become renowned for quality service and professionalism, setting the industry standard for multi-agency communications centers.

DISPATCH VALUES

INNOVATION
Utilizing creative thinking while constantly seeking opportunities and embracing new technologies for the advancement of our standard of excellence.

TEAMWORK
Cohesively working together to achieve a common goal for the betterment of the individuals we serve and the future of our center.

DEDICATION
Selfless devotion by proactively meeting the needs of our citizen’s co-workers, and the personnel we serve.

ACCOUNTABILITY
Taking responsibility within the center to promote effective communications professional growth and a team based work environment.
TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Emergency Communications Bureau wholeheartedly embraces South Metro Fire Rescue’s emphasis on training and education. Dispatchers are required to obtain far more certifications than their peers in similar positions. In addition daily trainings are completed as a shift which cover a wide variety of topics.

All dispatch personnel undergo standardized testing and must have prior experience before being offered a position with South Metro Emergency Communications. Initial training includes 80 to 120 hours of didactic training and 240 hours of hands on training prior to being cleared to work all positions within the communications center. Basic certifications for all Telecommunicators include IAED Emergency Medical Dispatcher & Emergency Fire Dispatcher, APCO Telecommunicator 1, APCO Fire Communications, CPR, ICS 100, 200, 300, 700, 800, and Blue Card Incident Commander. Most of these certifications require additional continuing education hours throughout the year for recertification.

Supervisors and Lead Dispatchers require additional certifications such as ICS 400 and Communications Center Manager courses. The leadership team is committed leadership by attending on-going leadership training which can consist of presentations, reports on assigned reading materials, and additional one on one leadership building. In the event a Dispatcher would like to advance to a Lead Dispatcher, they must complete a “Lead/Supervisor Study Packet”. This packet includes training that are required of a supervisor, some of the tasks are exception reporting, management processes, leadership classes, QA/QI processes, shift trainings, and creating presentations for the leadership group. Once “initiated” the Dispatcher will have one year to complete their packet and upon completion becomes eligible to apply for any open Lead Dispatcher position. Should a Lead Dispatcher position not open within a six-month period upon completion of the study packet, a refresher packet will be assigned to the Dispatcher to complete to maintain their skills and knowledge.

Incident Dispatch Team operators must obtain specialty certifications including ICS 400, NWCG Radio Operator, Wildland Firefighter, Emergency Vehicle Driving, Type III All Hazards Communications Unit Leader, NWCG S200, NWCG S230, NWCG S290, and FAA Part 107 UAS operators license for drone flight. They also attend line trainings on large scale incidents where they provide communications from the Incident Command Training Center.

The Emergency Communications Bureau believes that both initial and continuing training for Dispatchers are exceedingly important as they provide essential services in an ever expanding and changing public safety environment. With that standard in mind, Emergency Communications has achieved the APCO Project 33 Agency Training Program Certification, a formal mechanism for public safety agencies to certify their training programs as meeting the APCO American National Standards (ANS). The primary objective of the Agency Training Program Certification is to advance the training and professional development of public safety communications officials.

In June 2010, Emergency Communications became the 141st communications center in the world to achieve the prestigious ACE Accredited status from the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch. This achievement requires a detailed QA/QI process that evaluates and improves the performance of our Telecommunicators on a regular basis. Dispatch has been re-accredited by the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch

Due to the innovative and ever-changing nature of the technologies that impact Emergency Communications and the systems that support it, staff is encouraged to seek out trainings and conferences in order to remain informed and stay abreast of system improvements and aware of potential network security vulnerabilities. In order to keep South Metro Emergency Communications on the cutting edge of progressive technologies, it is imperative that information and lessons learned are brought back and communicated to the entire staff. Higher education is highly encouraged by the department for all employees of South Metro and tuition reimbursement is available. Employees achieving higher education degrees are compensated through an education differential.
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

The South Metro Fire Emergency Communications Bureau strengths are aligned toward the main goal of serving with the mindset of CUSTOMER. Team. self. This applies to the handling of emergency calls, day-to-day interactions with fellow co-workers, as well as our partners in the other agencies of our communities.

Employee retention and dedication are issues that plague the work force today. South Metro Emergency Communications is aware of the difficulties that other agencies have in keeping dedicated dispatchers and qualified support staff in place, due in part to the stressful nature of the job. This is such a high priority that two of the five goals for South Metro’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan include becoming an employer of choice and support the desired culture within the organization.

When you ask what draws dispatchers to South Metro, one of the most popular answers is the work schedule. It has been a popular answer in the past and remains one of the deciding factors in applying with South Metro. The 24-hour shifts allow employees more time between shifts to connect with their families and to decompress from the emotional demands of the job. This schedule not only strengthens the employees outside of work, it also strengthens the center. Unless working overtime or a trade, dispatchers do not work two days in a row, resulting in less sick call-outs and thus minimizing the need to backfill the center. It also brings a family aspect to all the shifts. When spending days together a companionship forms and we become more than just co-workers, we become a support system for each other.

The family dynamic is more than just a support system, it improves morale of the dispatchers as well as accountability because communication is more open and honest. Among the personable atmosphere, each dispatcher knows they can depend on each other to have each other’s backs and be able to perform their job to the highest degree. By doing all of this our customer service and care second to none.
STRENGTHS, cont.

When IDT members are deployed to large-scale incidents in mobile command units, Incident commanders and crews in the field have come to depend on their skills and knowledge when managing low frequency, high acuity incidents. The IDT team has partnered with the UAV team which allows modern technology and drones to assist line operations with a birds-eye view of events.

These strengths of South Metro Fire Rescue Emergency Communications is not a reflection of one area alone. In order for us to continue to achieve the level of customer service we are known for, we must respect each other and promote team participation. We have strived to create a workplace which supports and inspires staff to do their best everyday while providing them the tools needed for success. When the best tools are given to those who want to succeed, the best attitude to skills are developed and brought to the table every day at work. Customer service excels in the center and is delivered to the field crews as well as administrative personnel, which in terms creates a combined workforce that delivers the best to the customers who call for our assistance.

Realignment

With the organizational realignment within South Metro, Emergency Communications became its own bureau, falling under the Emergency Services Division. Having Emergency Communications be a part of Emergency Services will help ensure effective alignment and connectivity with the other bureaus contained within Emergency Services.
WEAKNESSES

While South Metro Fire Emergency Communications prides itself on being a name recognized among the many dispatch centers across the nation and being a place sought out by many, we also recognize that with our strengths and desired positions, we face many weaknesses too. We are not immune to the same challenges other centers face. With the growth of the center and the changes South Metro has experienced over the last few years, the challenges of incorporating the “new” with the “old” brings to light issues that are perhaps overlooked or even ignored. It’s not that those who have been with South Metro for years oppose change, it’s just easy to become complacent in the work environment. “If it’s not broken, don’t fix it.” A true adage, but one that doesn’t quite work within an emergency communication center. After all, we know things change and update. With new faces, new ideas can be offered that aren’t practiced. Since South Metro Fire Emergency Communications hires those with dispatching experience, the insight those people bring from other centers can help us realize what practices could be changed or reimagined. Just because we’re one of the tops centers, doesn’t mean we’re perfect – a challenge that sometimes we’re not eager to admit.

The differing of ages between the new hires and those who have dedicated years to South Metro can also cause a rift in terms of lateral movement. The majority of new hires recently have been due to the centers growth, not due of turnover. With the lack of turnover, less opportunities arise for those wishing to try and grow their skills into a leadership role. Complacency develops in those who aren’t able to move forward and a “why bother” type attitude can become common. Stagnancy can also develop at the leadership level when “new

blood” isn’t introduced with the potential for new ideas. We don’t want the turnover just for the sake of addressing these issues, so we adapt the best we can. At the beginning of 2021, every lead dispatcher rotated to a different shift. Each shift has a different dynamic and way of working together even if the end goal is the same with CUSTOMER. Team. self. But allowing a new face on the team can help renew long dormant thoughts from other dispatchers that felt it unnecessary to share.

The moving of the leads also helps address the attitude of “you’re only as strong as your weakest link.” Every dispatcher is quick to admit they have one position they aren’t as strong as they could be in. Perhaps they struggle with System Status Managing and are not quick to see what coverage is needed for the district. Or they grow anxious on the radio if a large-scale event occurs. With a change in leads, this allows the opportunity for the knowledge of the leads to be shared among their new team, bringing insight that perhaps wasn’t seen before. Even new hires can bring an insight from what they learned at their other centers, such as a CAD command entry not yet realized or known by current staff.

The main weakness we face is the same weakness that all humans face. As humans we all carry a bit of selfishness within us. Whether this is an entitlement we feel we earned having been part of South Metro for years, or as a new hire earning their right to be a part of this agency. As a team, this can tear us down if we put ourselves ahead of others. Emergency Communication employees need to put the mission, vision, and values of South Metro ahead of our own personal agendas. We need to embrace creativity in all areas, practice open and honest dialogue in all our interactions, show value in our employees and have trust and confidence in each other. When we continue to put these values into practice, our strengths will increase while our weaknesses decrease.
Opportunities are abundant within South Metro Fire Emergency Communications. Dispatchers have a chance to grow and learn within the organization. The realignment of bureaus allows for a more “hand-in-hand” growth between Operations and Emergency Communications personnel since they now fall under the same division. While ride-along opportunities have always been a practice in the past they were halted during the pandemic, their return will allow dispatchers to spend a few hours with line personnel while encouraging the practice to continue and be reciprocated to allow the Line to have sit-along time with dispatchers.

Dispatchers are also encouraged to open their “lead packet,” which has recently been updated to incorporate training on new systems. A six-month refresher packet was created to maintain skills as necessary. This keeps the dispatcher constantly in line with the focus and goals of leadership, while always keeping them prepared should the time arise when they are needed in a leadership position.

When 2020’s COVID-19 pandemic hit and shut down the nation, training opportunities were halted for safety. As the vaccine makes its way throughout the citizens, chances improve for reopening dispatch education opportunities. It isn’t just with the live training that was practiced in the past with the line (such as Active Shooter Mass Casualty Event, High-Rise Fire trainings, and even Hell Night), but other events that allowed dispatchers to stay current with the continuing education (CE) requirements. The reopening will allow more hand and hand practices with the line. It will also allow for staff to attend conferences such as APCO, NENA, Navigator, and 360 Dispatcher (a leadership training event). Dispatchers are encouraged to write a cover letter explaining their desire to attend one of these conferences and what knowledge they hope the gain while there that they can share upon their return.

It isn’t just the opportunity to attend conferences, leadership has been invited to teach at various conferences to share the processes that South Metro uses and, in some cases, pioneered. In 2021 leadership can present “Dispatch in a Box” — our evacuation contingency should a threat arise that required we evacuate the center. While a seemingly “obvious” concept, the truth is it’s a luxury most agencies don’t have in place. Sharing this knowledge is beneficial for other agencies while also helping leadership to grow in their presentation skills.
Wellness is not limited to physical wellness, but also includes mental and spiritual health. Communication personnel will focus on mental health and are encouraged to take breaks after critical calls. From the spiritual perspective, community involvement will increase by having the opportunity to participate in various community events. Personnel can also volunteer to help in service projects yearly to provide assistance to those in need.

As noted earlier, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the way of life; effectively cutting off access to gyms and indoor recreational activities. While outdoors was still accessible, the “shutdown of life” became a reasonable excuse to “shutdown the motivation”. However, with a new year brings new hope and a vaccine and the hope of reopening. Communications values all aspects of health and wellness and will be an industry leader with this program that encompasses all aspects of being a healthy communications center.

Health and Wellness has always played a large role in EMS, however it has never really played a role in the dispatch arena. One of our largest undertakings in 2021 is furthering a Health and Wellness program catered for Emergency Communications personnel that was initially started in 2017. In recent years it has been said that sitting over six hours per day increases your risk of death by 40 percent and that people with positions that sit for extended time have twice the rate of cardiovascular disease than those with standing positions. As a “sitting” occupation, we have to be responsible for our staff.

Personnel who were interested in making changes to their health underwent baseline testing in the form of “Bod Pod” testing and cardiovascular testing through the Dr. Boone Institute. Once this testing was complete, reasonable and achievable goals will be set for each person based on their personal needs and goals. Incentives for reaching these goals will be provided to these employees. Leadership understands that a dispatcher’s health can suffer due to lack of movement and exercise. Emergency Communications has teamed up with the wellness department to devise a weekly stretching regimen that can be done at the console. Physical group activities are encouraged outside of the workplace and activities such as hiking, golf and bowling are among some of the activities personnel could participate in throughout the year which will hopefully improve overall health and well being.
THREATS

The biggest threat South Metro Fire Emergency Communications has faced recently was the formidable 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic. Even as we progress into 2021, the lingering effects of 2020 still weigh heavily on the center and its dispatchers. History has a way of repeating itself and as dispatchers we know not to have the mindset of “it won’t happen to us.” We always have it in the back of our minds to prepare for the worst. It’s not “if it will happen,” but “when will it happen.” And yet no one can honestly say we were prepared for a pandemic. No one can say they were fully prepared as our state literally shut down, as panic set in among our citizens who became too afraid to call 911 because hospitals were no longer safe, and as contact with people was no longer a option. No one can say they were not scared, but rather than cower or collapse at the threat, we adapted and we did our part to fight the best we could. We developed a screening process on the phone for our callers to better prepare our crews for potential risks. We gathered statistics by taking precise notes, a system that has remained firm and consistent unlike other agencies. Sadly, we closed the center doors to non-center employees and outside guests in order to prevent staff exposure, and when exposures did happen we had a strong team dedicated to working extremely long hours while those exposed awaited their test results. We took mask precautions seriously and supported each other emotionally and mentally.

Cyber threats are another risk that Emergency Communications faces as NG9-1-1 systems come onboard. Nevertheless, cyber risks present a new level of vulnerability that we must understand and actively manage as a part of a comprehensive risk management program. As these threats grow in complexity and sophistication, attacks could be more severe against NG9-1-1 systems as attackers can launch multiple distributed attacks with greater automation from a broader geography and against more targets. Potential risks coming from malware, ransomware, denial of service attacks that overload network infrastructure, and sending resources maliciously from a swatting attack. Cybersecurity risks to NG9-1-1 systems have severe potential impacts, including; loss of life or property, job disruption for affected network users, and financial costs from the misuse of data and subsequent resolution. Cyber infrastructure for NG9-1-1 systems that must be protected includes networks, assets, databases, and services involved in the processing, storage, and transport of data.

South Metro Fire Rescue, like most businesses, isn’t immune to the burden of economic stresses. South Metro’s financial position is only as strong as the tax revenue from our citizens. Thankfully with the passing of Colorado Amendment B on the 2020 ballot (the Gallagher Amendment Repeal and Property Tax Assessment Rate Measure), the risk South Metro faced, a potential $16 million budget deficit, was avoided. All bureaus will continue to do future budget planning and modeling to help ensure the department remains financially strong. PSAPs, or Public Safety Answering Points, are not regulated or funded by any state or federal agency. 911 funding, technology, and standards are determined and maintained at a local county level with 911 Authority Boards. Funding from these boards are ever changing and, as we assess the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, how the funding for the PSAP is managed may change. Despite these conditions, proper planning and budgeting will continue to prepare us for potential lost revenue.
THREATS, cont.

Outgrowing our current facility is also another threat consideration as we continue to grow. Currently the Emergency Communication center is utilizing all 8 dispatch consoles. A 9th console is used by the CAD System Administrator. In the current dispatch center configuration there is no room to add additional consoles. The major threat associated with not having spare consoles is that we cannot rapidly expand our working positions in the event of a major incident such as an MCI or a major weather catastrophe. A second issue linked to our limited space is that we are unable to effectively increase our call volume either by contracting with additional departments for our dispatch services or accommodating our current departments experiencing an increase to their call volume that would result in the communications center needing additional staff.

Emergency Communications
Commitment to Service:

Dispatch prides itself on its mission and values, and has to make sure it maintains that under any and all circumstances. We do not want to get so big that our service suffers because of our size.

Maintaining appropriate staffing levels in the center is also a threat to its daily operations. The turnover rate within dispatch centers nationwide is 18% while we hold below 11%. The cost to recruit and train a new dispatcher is high and takes an average of five to six months to train. This could leave the center at critical levels and place burdens on current staff and supervisors. As a result, burnout and turnover rates are likely to increase. It is imperative that staff levels and scheduling options take into account the ability to compensate for open positions as well as promote employee retention. When evaluating the staffing needs of a communication center it is seldom recognized that dispatchers’ performance is greatly impacted by routinely redundant tasks which require significant attention to detail. For this reason, management must include a relief factor built into the optimum staffing level. The relief factor indicates how many persons it takes to fill a single position for a single shift, taking into account vacation, sick leave, training and other types of leave.

The sudden onset and duration of the pandemic also brought to light the weakness we always have been aware of, but never truly took it as a threat: complacency. We grew comfortable in our center and how we handled everyday calls. When high acuity calls happen they can shake us – both Chatridge Fires, the Zackari Parrish DCSO shooting, and the STEM School Shooting are all less frequent, but high acuity and intense events that opened our eyes to what threats are out there. Though the lingering effects remain, what is different from these events in comparison to COVID-19 is that those events aren’t an active threat anymore. The threats of those calls last a day, maybe two, and then the event subsides. Everyone moves to the next call and we go back to our everyday routines.

Complacency has the potential to be a weakness in any work environment and we will continue to create solutions to fight the complacency within the center and the department. COVID-19 was somewhat of a game changer, things we thought we were strong in showed room for improvement. What if suddenly the crews don’t have the ability to transport to local hospitals? What does that do to crews? What does that do to district coverage? What does that do to our citizens? The actions taken were based on available information about the pandemic and the center did its best to manage the situation as it evolved. Questions will always remain; What could we have done better? What could we have done to prepare? What can we do to prepare for the next long-term crisis?
STRATEGIC PATH

HIGHLY MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES

South Metro employees are dedicated professionals who contribute to public safety every day, no matter which positions they hold within our organization. Building an evolving emergency communications system of this size is a multi-faceted effort. Supporting the people behind-the-scenes is essential to our future and success. We want to create a workplace that supports and inspires staff to do their best every day and provide them with the tools they need to be successful and grow.

Our Goal

To foster a work environment that inspires and motivates employees to seek opportunities for growth and development and be the best employees possible.

Core Strategies

- Establish a strong sense of team and connection to Dispatch by setting a foundation of trust in one another
- Seek input and engage employees on issues that impact their work and the center while promoting empowerment and discipline within the bureau
- Recognize the contributions employees make to the organization and the community
- Support employee wellness, safety, and work-life balance
- Cross-train employees to both learn each other’s strengths and weaknesses and increase opportunities to support each other thus building a stronger, more integrated team
- Invest in the training, development and progression of employees from recruitment to retirement
- Provide timely, accurate and proactive communication to employees
- Develop management skills and proficiencies to invest and develop future generations of leaders
- Hold ourselves and one another accountable to adhere to the values of Dispatch and SMFR
- Continue to foster a sense of family in the center

Desired Outcomes

- Employees who are proud to work at South Metro
- Healthy, safe, and high-performing employees
- Employees have confidence and trust in leadership
- Employees are invested and feel they have a voice in the process
- Employees are proactive and seek out trainings to increase proficiency on the current industry standards

Key Performance Indicators

- Daily Feedback via QA Tracker
- Monthly One on One Meetings
- Bi-Annual Employee Survey
- Bi-Annual Self Reviews
- Bi-Annual Reviews of Leadership Team
- Low Employee Turn-over
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Our overall effectiveness in managing and assessing our work is critical to achieving our desired results. This is especially important considering the trust our shareholders, partners and community have placed in us to provide stable and secure services.

It is crucial that we measure our organizational performance in ways that demonstrate the accountability, resiliency and key competencies required to operate our systems effectively on both a day-to-day basis and in times of crisis. Our priorities are to maintain the high performance standards we have developed while also increasing our innovation, flexibility and capacity to respond to the changing needs and requirements of this industry.

Our Goal

To reflect the CUSTOMER-Team-self ideal of Dispatch within the processes, tools and competencies that support the effective delivery of high quality, socially responsible service to the communities we serve.

Core Strategies

- Optimize current technology while looking for new and innovative products that better serve our needs
- Develop future-focused approach to technology planning including implementation of the Next Generation 911 and the development of a Next Generation Radio Network
- Further expand interoperability between regional and state resources in support of fire operations
- Enhance planning and implementation capabilities and competencies
- Ensure processes are regularly evaluated for efficiency, effectiveness and consistency; deploying custom and third party software where appropriate
- Develop and implement CAD to CAD with neighboring jurisdictions
- Maintain and enhance infrastructure so that technologies are in a ready state-of-response to cope with any potential network or service disruptions
- Continually improve our environmental footprint and work toward corporate carbon neutrality
- Continually refine a COOP and Emergency Evacuation plan to be followed in the event of failure or communications center would need to be moved off-site

Desired Outcomes

- Innovative use of technology
- Sustainable, ethical, and strategic business practice
- Faster dispatch times between agencies with technology
- Succession planning for future growth and changes
- Accreditations through industry-recognized organizations and standards.

Key Performance Indicators

- Improved customer outcomes due to quicker response times with CAD to CAD.
- Progress towards Strategic Plan goals
- Quarterly surveys sent to our customers
- Evacuation Site complete and Kits continuously updated
- IAED & Project 33 re-accreditations
- Supervisor & Lead packets
SERVICE EXCELLENCE AND COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Recognizing that fulfilling our mission requires collaboration, Dispatch is consistently working to establish partnerships within South Metro Fire and across the region that support innovative approaches to current and future challenges. This includes providing the technology, tools, and infrastructure needed to implement new and enhanced support for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional incidents, improving communication among agencies during joint responses to major events and continually striving to ensure the security and privacy of all information in Dispatch's control.

Our Goal

To exceed our user customer's service-delivery expectations and build collaborative relationships that unite efforts within SMFR and across the Front Range.

Core Strategies

- Ensure services meet and/or exceed agency expectations while remaining cost effective
- Promote regional emergency communications resiliency and continuity
- Maintain strong and trusting relationships with partner organization's staff at all levels
- Ensure agencies see and understand the value of Dispatch, financially and organizationally
- Maintain strong relationships with our customers and community by interaction through Regional Public Education.
- Ensure all personnel are trained to exceed industry standards
- Ensure risks are identified early and mitigation strategies are put in place
- Promote regional training for IDT
- Promote regional Fire Dispatch trainings to neighboring agencies.
- Maintain strong relationships with our customers and community by continuing to earn their respect and trust

Desired Outcomes

- User agencies are highly satisfied with service delivery
- User agencies are strong advocates of Dispatch
- Shareholders recognize Dispatch's value
- Our citizens are highly satisfied with our customer service
- Maintain standards to ensure Dispatch's reaccreditations

Key Performance Indicators

- Annual Service Results—
  Technology & Operations
- Public Safety Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey
- After Action Reviews of projects and large scale incidents
- Satisfaction surveys following Trainings and Public Education events
INTERGRATION UNDER OPERATIONS

The beginning of the 2021 brought many changes to The Communications Center including a change of name to Emergency Communications. With Emergency Communications being moved under the Emergency Services Division, opportunities in which to collaborate together greatly increases. By offering the knowledge of our respective field, we look to enhance education and understanding of how Emergency Communications works. This will help ensure effective alignment and connectivity with field crews and other bureaus under Emergency Services division.

There are high demands placed on our partners in Operations; we must do all that we can to support them in creating the most resilient and effective bureau possible. The strategic investments made over the next several years in supporting them will not only help to better meet those expectations, but also support increased cost effectiveness for the center and our partners.

In Emergency Communications, we believe it’s our duty to explore the best ways to leverage the investment in our bureau. This includes finding ways of making our knowledge available to the department and neighboring agencies through collaboration, virtual consolidation and resource sharing.

Our Goal

To successfully integrate into and provide Dispatch services support to Operations and the other bureaus within Emergency Services.

Core Strategies

- Develop partnership with EMS to assist in more in depth reporting and that support research of 911 to hospital discharge
- Provide Dispatcher knowledge and insight to DC/BC and Officers Meetings.
- Offer services to Training, provide introduction of Dispatch to training Academies.
- Continue to support Officer packet sit-alongs to build understand, trust and confidence in one another.
- Develop future-focused, approach to identifying and attending trainings and consulting
- Update current policies and job descriptions to reflect current and future needs

Desired Outcomes

- Expand support to EMS Bureau
- Continued support for integrated Trainings
- Continue collaboration with Operations and Emergency Management

Key Performance Indicators

- Increased participation in trainings with field crews, Academy Trainings and ‘Hell Nights’
- Continued participation with Operations and Emergency Management with DC/BC and Officers Meetings and planned and unplanned Large Scale Events, MCI’s and IST events.
- Collaborative research between EMS and Dispatch with regard to responses
PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Call reviews utilize standardized forms to evaluate the consistency of EMD, emotional content of the call, consistency of information given to responding crews, consistency in radio dispatching procedures, and overall success of the call. Areas that are in need of improvement are reviewed immediately with the Dispatcher. The Dispatchers will receive feedback on their performance and recognition of exemplary performance. Overall statistics are reviewed with each dispatcher at the end of each month during one on one sessions.

While the purpose of the QA program is to correct deficiencies and encourage excellence, there may come a time when an audit results in the need for remedial training or discipline.

Remediation is a positive process, focusing on course correction, education, and modification rather than discipline. The initial focus is to help the dispatcher correct his/her deficiencies in knowledge, skills, or technique.

Ensure that dispatchers understand policies, practices, and procedures.

Ensure strict adherence to the medical protocol cards and providing high customer service.

Ensure that call information is documented accurately in the CAD.

Ensure user agency safety.

Ensure standardized and consistent radio.

Ensure the training program is consistent with national standards.

A minimum of ten random call evaluations are completed each shift by the Supervisor or Lead Dispatcher on duty.

Areas that are reviewed include:
- EMD call
- Radio dispatch
- All critical incident calls
- Policy and procedure followed
- Customer service
PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, cont.

In 2021, the communications center will continue to utilize the following reports to illustrate departmental compliance:

- KPI reporting
- Number of calls dispatched by dispatcher
- Call assign times for all priorities
- Response Plan/Problem Nature compliance
- Dispatch code comparative history
- MPDS Master Dispatch Analysis
- Protocol compliance reports
- Quality improvement summary report
- Dispatch compliance reports
- Exception reports by cause
- QA Tracker Performance Summary Reports
- ECaTS
- First Watch
- Total dispatch exceptions

ASSOCIATIONS

The leadership team believes that staying current on industry issues and trends are of vital importance to the success of its operations. For this reason, Emergency Communications maintains working relationships with state and national associations and has memberships in the following associations:

- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
- Blue Card Command
- Consolidated Communications Network of Colorado (CCNC)
- International Academy of Emergency Dispatch (IAED)
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS LEADERS

Through collaboration with our partners, Emergency Communications is in a unique position to contribute to public safety leadership at regional and national levels. This also allows us to develop and enhance our own approaches to the challenges facing fire communications as we participate with like-minded Public Safety Answering Point agencies to generate a standardized training program for the state of Colorado. Already known as a leader in technology implementation, and operational expertise, we want to build on achievements, in support of public safety and to demonstrate the value we provide to our shareholders, partners and the community.

Our Goal

To help align public safety communication efforts regionally and nationally

Core Strategies

- Ensure the public is aware of and understands the role communications plays in public safety
- Contribute to community well-being through 9-1-1 and emergency communications education and outreach
- Champion greater interoperability and communication along the Front Range
- Engage in the development of a regional data-sharing plan that maximizes collaboration among all agencies responding to regional events
- Develop a culture of best practices in operational and technological service
- Serve our community in areas other than just dispatching; Pub-Ed, Events, etc.
- Become more active in regional and national trainings
- Participate on APCO/NENA Boards

Desired Outcomes

- Public has confidence in communications contributions
- Communications has a larger role in the community we serve
- Communications is regarded as industry leader in service delivery
- Update CAD that is tailored to the organizations needs
- Professional outreach to other communications centers
- Communications at the forefront in favor of training regionalization through legislation
- Lab and scenario based trainings seen as leaders in the state

Key Performance Indicators

- Annual Public Confidence and Awareness Surveys
- Established industry-leading performance and training standards
- Achieved greater levels of cooperation and collaboration with neighboring agencies
- Highest technological standards and up-to-date equipment
- Adoption of a State Training Standards program
- IAED & Project 33 re-accreditations
CONCLUSION

In order to fulfill its mission, Emergency Communications has established its strategic paths and set out goals for the years 2021 through 2024. These goals, with their accompanying objectives, are realistic and measurable. Achievement of the imperatives will enable communications to build upon prior achievements by strengthening the regional public safety communications center.

Reaching these goals relies heavily on the committed, knowledgeable, and skillful work of the communications leadership team, public safety agency personnel, and the communications staff. These goals are not small undertakings, but they can be accomplished with an aggressive and strategic approach that is centered around the mission, vision, and values of Dispatch.
SMFR Property Exclusions
(City of Aurora)

April 5, 2021
Public Hearing
Location

- Jones
  - 24326 E. Canyon Dr.
- Meahl
  - 24386 E. Canyon Dr.
- Heywood
  - 7873 S. Elk St.
- Cordova-Melton, Drake
  - 7883 S. Elk St.
- Folan
  - 7849 S. De Gaulle Ct.
- Acosta
  - 7859 S. De Gaulle Ct.
Best interest of property, district, county

• Still able to provide economical and sufficient service to all properties within the District's boundaries.

• No effect on employment and other economic conditions in the District and surrounding area.

• The additional cost to be levied on other property within the District if exclusion is granted will be negligible.

• There is economically feasible alternative & similar service available from another special district in the area of the Property.
Criteria

Dual Jurisdiction?
### Process

- **Aurora notification**
  - 2016: “single-plan” exclusions
  - 2018-2020: 13 missing lots

- **Property notification**
  - Letter #1: September 24, 2020
  - Letter #2: November 2, 2020
  - HOA notification: February 3, 2021
  - Home visit: February 24, 2021

- **Petitions received**
  - 8 of 13

- **Public input**
  - Notice of public hearing
  - Public hearing

- **District court**

- **Assessor**

- **Deadline:**
  - May 1, 2021
  - Taxes discontinued in 2022
Questions?