

**SOUTH METRO FIRE RESCUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021- 04**

**A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING EMERGENCY DISPATCHERS  
AS FIRST RESPONDERS**

**WHEREAS**, the Emergency Dispatchers of South Metro Fire Rescue’s Emergency Communications Center are the first and most critical contact that our citizens have with emergency services; and

**WHEREAS**, Emergency Dispatchers are trained in emergency medical dispatch qualifying them to offer a variety of potentially lifesaving instructions including CPR, bleeding control, choking, childbirth and airway maintenance over the telephone until paramedics arrive on the scene; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019 and 2020, South Metro Fire Rescue’s Emergency Dispatchers gave medical guidance to over 33,000 callers; 14 Emergency Dispatchers were recognized for their roles in directly saving the lives of 21 people who suffered cardiac or respiratory arrest, and six Emergency Dispatchers coached nine mothers over the telephone, through the birth of their healthy babies; and

**WHEREAS**, the safety of our firefighters and emergency medical personnel is dependent upon the quality and accuracy of information obtained by Emergency Dispatchers, the technology and creativity of Emergency Dispatchers to assist emergency personnel in locating an emergency scene and increase situational awareness, and the monitoring of activities and radio traffic of emergency personnel to assist with communications during life-threatening and Mayday situations; and

**WHEREAS**, Emergency Dispatchers frequently deploy to the scene of planned events, major emergencies, and other incidents to provide critical assistance with resource management, communications, incident planning, and situational awareness. In 2019 and 2020, the Incident Dispatch Team responded 354 times to emergency incidents; and

**WHEREAS**, the work of an Emergency Dispatcher comes with an extreme emotional and physical impact that can lead to the development of post-traumatic stress; and

**WHEREAS**, over the past several decades, the work performed by Emergency Dispatchers has transformed from what used to be considered a clerical role to the lifesaving and increasingly complex tasks required today, and ongoing enhancements to public safety communications technology such as Next Generation 911 and public safety broadband will produce even more dramatic changes to the way these professionals communicate with the public and first responders; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal government’s Standard Occupational Classification System (SOCS) sorts workers into occupational categories for statistical purposes, and America’s Emergency Dispatchers are currently categorized as an “Office and Administrative Support Occupation” which includes office clerks and taxicab dispatchers; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a national effort through the U.S. Congress’s H.R. 1629 and S. 1015 to reclassify Emergency Dispatchers as “Protective Service Occupations” alongside “First Responders” such as police, firefighters, security guards, lifeguards, and others whose job it is to protect our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, such a reclassification is important not only to more accurately reflect how the job has evolved over the past several decades into its current critical, technical, and life-saving component of the 911 system, but also to support critical research into the nature and impacts of all 911-related jobs which differ substantially from those encountered by non-public-safety occupations; and

**WHEREAS**, while those national efforts have stalled in Congress, there are continued efforts for local government agencies to individually recognize the importance of their Emergency Dispatchers and formally consider them to be “First Responders” in the life-saving chain of events of the 911 system; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTH METRO FIRE RESCUE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT:**

1. The Board of Directors has the utmost respect and admiration for our Emergency Dispatchers and recognizes their role as “First Responders” and the enormous impact they have on patient survival, emergency responder safety, and the overall successful outcome of all types of emergency incidents.
2. Our organization appreciates the impacts of the emergency response profession on the mental and physical health of our personnel, including Emergency Dispatchers, and supports the national effort to correctly classify professions so that the research, data, and programs to support those professions are correctly aligned.

Effective Date: This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its approval by the District Board.

ADOPTED this 5th day of April, 2021.

SOUTH METRO FIRE RESCUE  
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

By   
James E. Albee, Chair

Attest:

By   
Hank Eng, Secretary