

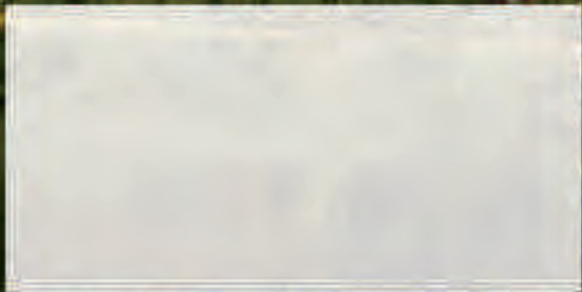


Wavelength

A Public Safety Communications Journal

Compassion Fatigue

Call Centre Coordinates The Gift of Life



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PRESIDENT

DONNA ANDERSON

Toronto Police Service
donna.anderson@apco.ca

VICE PRESIDENT

MAUREEN SCHMIDT

Public Safety & 9-1-1
maureen.schmidt@apco.ca

PAST PRESIDENT

NANCY BANKS

Peel Regional Police Service
nancy.banks@apco.ca

DIRECTOR

MIKE SAMPSON

Halifax Regional Integrated
Emergency Services
mike.sampson@apco.ca

DIRECTOR

CURTIS BROCHU

Public Safety Communications – Calgary
curtis.brochu@apco.ca

DIRECTOR

SANDY VOGSTAD

RCMP – Prince George
OIC – North District Operational
Communications Centre (OCC)
sandy.vogstad@apco.ca

DIRECTOR

CHRIS KEARNS

Public Safety Communications Centre
City of Edmonton
chris.kearns@apco.ca

Elijah's Call

The recent VoIP-9-1-1-related tragedy in Calgary was very sadly reminiscent of the types of incidents we encountered years ago with basic 9-1-1 service versus the enhanced landline system. Many of us had perhaps thought that the inadvertent response of emergency agencies to billing addresses versus an actual call location was a thing of the past. Indeed, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) 2005 VoIP ruling was designed to prevent such occurrences with the use of Internet-based telephony. The ruling required that such services inform customers of all the limitations with emergency service notification before commencement of service to them, providing this information in the marketing material used for television, radio, and printed media; in the terms and conditions of service; in on-line material; through their customer service representatives; in their service contracts and in their starter kits. Despite this the calamity of the loss of a child still occurred in the same month that we celebrated the work of emergency telecommunicators. In the case at hand, which was unfortunately not a wholly unique communications experience, emergency services received the call for help from an Internet provider to respond to the former address of the family, in Mississauga, Ontario, versus the actual call location where they currently reside in Calgary, Alberta. The mix-up is being investigated by all the parties involved in each of the two provinces as well as at the CRTC. So too, many emergency agencies are taking this opportunity to review their own policies and procedures, although they can realistically only be expected to respond to where they are directed. Hopefully, VoIP providers will also be taking a long look at how they notify and remind customers about 9-1-1. It wouldn't be unreasonable then to suggest the CRTC take their investigation further by completing a thorough comparison of similar rulings by other countries on the oversight of VoIP providers as it relates to emergency service notification. Our nearest neighbour to the south obligates Internet service providers, amongst other stern measures, to remind subscribers of the 9-1-1 limitations with the arrival of each monthly bill.

We will never know if more strict federal rules would have seen Elijah's family's call processed differently and his eighteen-month-old life saved. But we do know that the relationship between emergency service notification and response and the ever-evolving communications technologies requires proactive and on-going attention.

*Ted Harris
Editor-in-Chief*





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Editor-in-Chief

Ted Harris | ted.harris@apco.ca

Associate Regional Editors

Ontario

Theresa Virgin | TVIRGIN@drps.ca

Prairies

Tyler Thomas | tyler.thomas@calgary.ca

Australasia

Des Bahr | des.bahr.apcoaustr.com.au

Australia

John Marinis | John.Marinis@police.vic.gov.au

India

Dr. Anil K. Jampala | anil_jampala@emri.in

USA

Tony Davidson | chiefd@atlantaga.gov

Contributors

Donna Anderson | Nancy Banks | Douglas Bigrigg
Bill Boehly | Dennis Brown | Grace Fowler
Ted Harris | Susan Harrison | Carol Hubacheck
Anil K. Jampala | George S. Rice Jr | Heather Sorge
Christina Summers | Sandy Vogstad

Managing Editor

Scott Bryant | ScottQBryant@aol.com

Art Director/Design

Binda Fraser | binda.mac@cogeco.ca

Advertising

John Birkby | jbirby@andrewjohnpublishing.com
Ph 905-628-4309

Sales & Circulation Coordinator

Brenda Robinson | brobinson@andrewjohnpublishing.com

Accounting

Susan McClung

Translator

Gladys St-Louis

Group Publisher

John D. Birkby | jbirby@andrewjohnpublishing.com

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L'appel d'Elijah

La dernière tragédie liée au VoIP-9-1-1 qui eu lieu à Calgary vient nous rappeler avec grande tristesse les types d'incidents que nous avons eus il y a plusieurs années avec le service de base 9-1-1 en comparaison avec le réseau amélioré de lignes terrestres. Plusieurs d'entre nous ont peut-être pensé que la réponse involontaire des agences d'urgence à une adresse de facturation par rapport à l'adresse actuelle du lieu de l'appel était une chose du passé. En fait, la décision sur le VoIP en 2005 du Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes (CRTC) avait été entérinée dans le but d'empêcher de telles situations de se produire avec l'utilisation de la téléphonie IP. La décision exigeait que de tels services informent les clients de toutes les restrictions concernant la notification des services d'urgence avant l'entrée en vigueur du service, diffusant cette information dans le matériel de commercialisation utilisé pour la télévision, la radio ou la presse écrite; selon les modalités et conditions du service; dans le matériel en ligne; par l'entremise de leurs représentants à la clientèle; dans leurs contrats de service et les trousseaux de démarrage. Malgré tout cela, il y a eu quand même la mort d'un enfant au cours du même mois que nous avons célébré le travail des spécialistes des systèmes des télécommunications d'urgence. Dans ce cas-ci, ce qui n'était malheureusement pas une expérience de communications entièrement unique, les services d'urgence ont reçu un appel à l'aide par l'entremise d'un fournisseur d'accès Internet à l'ancienne adresse de la famille, à Mississauga, Ontario, alors que l'appel venait du domicile de la famille à Calgary, Alberta. L'erreur a été examinée par toutes les parties en jeu dans les deux provinces ainsi que par le CRTC. Ainsi, plusieurs agences d'urgence ont saisi cette occasion de revoir leur propres politiques et procédures, même si on s'attend de manière réaliste qu'elles répondent à l'appel à l'aide là où elles sont dirigées. Espérons que les fournisseurs de VoIP réexamineront la façon dont ils informent les clients au sujet du 9-1-1. Il ne serait pas déraisonnable de suggérer que le CRTC poursuive son investigation en faisant une comparaison détaillée des décisions semblables entérinées par d'autres pays sur la surveillance des fournisseurs de VoIP en ce qui a trait à la notification des services d'urgence. Nos voisins du sud obligent les fournisseurs de service Internet, entre autres mesures sévères, de rappeler aux abonnés les restrictions du 9-1-1 avec chaque relevé mensuel.

Nous ne saurons jamais si des lois fédérales plus strictes auraient permis d'acheminer l'appel de la famille d'Elijah d'une autre façon et de sauver la vie de cet enfant de dix-huit mois. Mais nous savons que la relation entre la notification et la réponse des services d'urgence et les technologies de communication en évolution constante exigent une attention proactive et continue.

Ted Harris
Rédacteur en chef



Our public safety industry continues to make media headlines and while most have been positive we are still faced with the challenges of dealing with those that focus only on the negative. Communications centre professionals are in most cases the first contact during times of crisis and calls for help. We handle hundreds of thousands of calls yet it seems like the media is only interested in reporting on the few negative issues.

One example is the W5 production of “Call for Help” which aired on Saturday April 12, 2008. The board responded to this production and as of writing this article has received no response from the producers of W5. APCO Canada was contacted prior to this show and asked to comment. The board prepared a response which identified challenges faced by our industry as well as possible solutions but these were not included. Below is the response from APCO Canada to W5.

“The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials APCO Canada is “the leading voice of public safety communications in Canada”.

APCO Canada is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the enhancement of public safety communications. It serves the people who supply, install, and operate the Emergency Communications Systems used around the country from coast to coast. Members come from every type of public safety organization in the country, including 9-1-1, police, fire, and emergency medical services as well as emergency management, disaster planning, and federal search and rescue personnel.

APCO Canada members strive to ensure that the safety of human life, the protection of property and the public welfare benefit to the utmost degree through the provision of the call taking and dispatching of services to those who are in need.

The portrayal of a few incidents is a poor representation of the quality work performed every minute of every hour of every day by the men and women who answer hundreds of thousands of 9-1-1 calls across Canada. This representation has prompted APCO Canada to respond to W5’s interpretation of the state of 9-1-1 service in Canada. It should be noted that 9-1-1 is technology that routes the call to the designated response agency. 9-1-1 procedures dictate how a call is routed; the emergency response is handled by the agency’s specific policies.

There are solutions to 9-1-1 challenges. One such solution requires the assistance of the media to provide public education and awareness and represent the effectiveness of 9-1-1. Ongoing media campaigns will educate the public on the appropriate use of the 9-1-1 system and that 9-1-1 does work. Canadians can be confident that dedicated

professionals and associations such as APCO Canada are working together to ensure that 9-1-1 continues to save lives.

As the “Voice of Public Safety Communications,” APCO Canada is prepared to partner with the media to raise the awareness of 9-1-1 and to promote the appropriate use of this life saving number.

APCO Canada will continue to respond to media requests; however, APCO Canada will not comment on individual agency issues but rather provide the national perspective on behalf of the membership. We will continue to encourage the media to provide ongoing public education and awareness.

To the men and women who provide this valuable service to the citizens of and visitors to Canada, the APCO Canada Board of Directors stand up and salute you for the excellent work you perform every day. Be proud of the work you do, and remember to autograph your work with excellence.

*Donna Anderson
President,
APCO Canada*

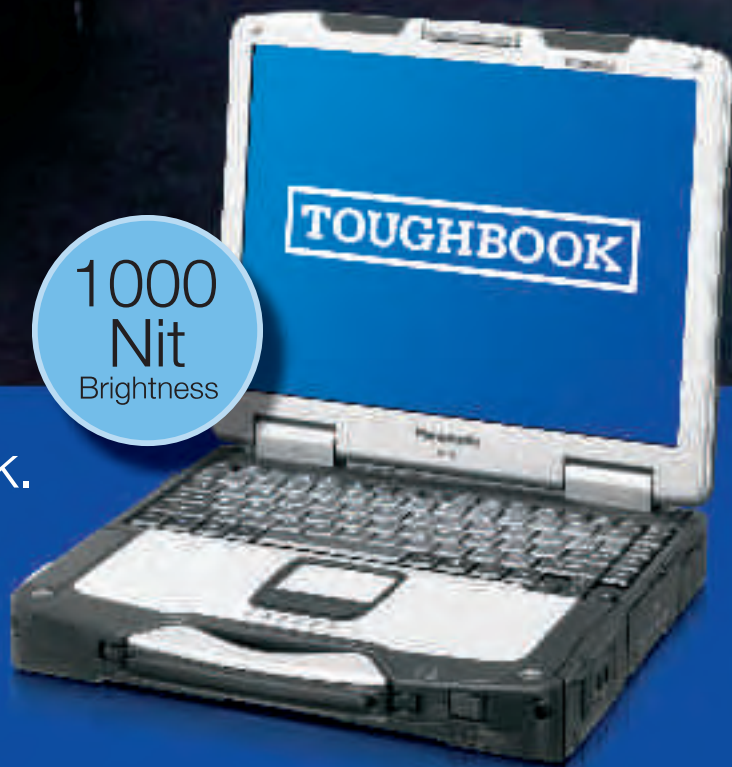


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Notre industrie de la sécurité publique continue de faire les manchettes et bien que la plupart de ces nouvelles aient été positives, nous avons toujours la tâche de répondre à ceux et à celles qui ne voient que le côté négatif des choses. Les professionnels du centre des communications sont dans la majorité des cas le premier contact au moment d'une crise et d'un appel à l'aide. Nous traitons des centaines de milliers d'appels et, encore, il semble que les médias sont intéressés à ne rapporter que les quelques mauvaises nouvelles.

Un exemple est l'émission de W5 "Call for Help" (Appel à l'aide) qui a été diffusée le 12 avril 2008. Le Conseil a répondu à cette émission et, au moment d'écrire cet article, n'avait pas reçu de réponse des réalisateurs de W5. On avait communiqué avec APCO Canada avant cette émission et on nous avait demandé de faire nos commentaires. Le Conseil a préparé une réponse qui permettait d'identifier les défis auxquels doit faire face notre industrie de même que les solutions possibles, mais ces dernières n'ont pas été incluses. Vous trouverez ci-dessous la réponse d'APCO Canada à W5.

« APCO Canada est la voix principale des communications en sécurité publique au Canada ».

APCO Canada est un organisme bénévole, à but non lucratif consacré à l'amélioration des communications en sécurité publique. Il dessert les personnes qui fournissent, qui installent et qui font fonctionner les systèmes d'urgence en communications utilisés de part et d'autre du pays. Les membres sont issus de chaque type d'organisation en sécurité publique au pays, y compris le 9-1-1, les services de police, d'incendie et d'urgence médicale ainsi que la gestion des urgences, la planification des sinistres et le personnel des recherches et du sauvetage.

Les membres de APCO Canada visent à ce que la sécurité de la

vie humaine, la protection des biens et du bien-être public soient assurées par l'entremise de la prise des appels et la distribution des services à ceux et celles qui en ont besoin.

L'évocation de quelques incidents est une mauvaise représentation du travail de qualité qu'accomplissent chaque minute de chaque heure de chaque jour les hommes et les femmes qui répondent à des milliers d'appels 9-1-1 au Canada. Cette représentation a donc incité APCO Canada à répondre à W5 en ce qui a trait à l'interprétation de l'état du service 9-1-1 au Canada. Il faudrait noter que 9-1-1 est la technologie qui achemine l'appel au service de réponse désigné. Les procédures 9-1-1 définissent la manière dont un appel est acheminé; les politiques spécifiques à l'agence dictent l'intervention en cas d'urgence.

Il existe des solutions aux défis que représente le 9-1-1. Une telle solution exige l'assistance des médias pour pouvoir éduquer et sensibiliser le public et représenter l'efficacité du 9-1-1. Les campagnes médiatiques courantes éduqueront le public sur l'utilisation appropriée du système 9-1-1 et sur son fonctionnement. Les Canadiens et les Canadiennes peuvent être assurés que les professionnels et les associations telles que APCO Canada travaillent ensemble

pour faire en sorte que 9-1-1 continue de sauver des vies.

En tant que la « Voix des communications en sécurité publique », APCO Canada est prête à créer un partenariat avec les médias pour sensibiliser la population au 9-1-1 et à faire la promotion du bon usage de ce numéro qui peut sauver des vies.

APCO Canada continuera de répondre aux demandes des médias; toutefois APCO Canada ne fera pas de commentaires sur les questions se rapportant aux agences individuelles, mais plutôt fournira un point de vue national au nom de tous ses membres. Nous continuerons d'encourager les médias à éduquer et à sensibiliser le public.

Aux hommes et aux femmes qui fournissent un précieux service aux citoyens et aux visiteurs au Canada, le Conseil d'administration de APCO Canada vous félicite de l'excellent travail que vous accomplissez chaque jour. Soyez fiers du travail que vous faites et n'oubliez surtout pas de signer votre travail avec excellence.

Donna Anderson
Présidente,
APCO Canada



The APCO Global Alliance: A History in the Making

In October 2006, representatives of organizations affiliated through the APCO International family of associations met in Toronto, Ontario, Canada to ratify the structure that created the APCO International Global Alliance for Cooperation and Development, now referred to as the APCO Global Alliance.

The history of this agreement dates back to 1935 with the founding of the then Association of Police Communications Officials in the United States of America. A small group of police personnel responsible for the operation and maintenance of radio systems for various American police departments decided to band together to address issues of common concern. As the years and decades progressed communications systems became tools used and managed jointly by the full array of public safety disciplines, adding fire and rescue services as well as emergency medical services to the fold. It became evident that it was time to broaden the nomenclature of the organization to include the many communications professionals who had been working in this field for many years. Thus was born, the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials.

Inevitably, the tenets of APCO's mission and its efforts across the United States became known outside the country's borders, as professionals in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand also experienced the need to engage their colleagues in a deliberate manner on these same issues. Public safety communications professionals from these and other countries joined APCO, now carrying the expanded name of APCO International to reflect its growing mission and sphere of influence. Individual memberships grew into the establishment of nation-specific chapters,



which grew into the creation of international affiliates, and then into the strong and successful family of independent associations represented today through the Global Alliance. APCO Canada, BAPCO, and APCO Australasia have generously added their distinctive value to the rich history of APCO International.

Prior to the establishment of the Global Alliance, a governance-related step along the way included the formation of the International Development Committee or IDC, the immediate predecessor body to the Global Alliance, which was charged with coordinating efforts across nations represented through the many APCO members worldwide. It became apparent to those involved, that while an effective tool, the IDC was limited in its ability to truly represent the global interests of APCO's growing role and autonomous organizations. A new structure would be needed. Again, the progressive forces within the APCO family of affiliated organizations went to work creating the Global Alliance.

The defined purpose of the Global Alliance – as noted in its governing documents – is to facilitate collaboration, support for, and influence in,

the global development of public safety communications and information management systems and to ensure cooperation between all its signatories. To that end, the participant associations from the October 2006 gathering in Toronto took the bold next step of establishing an annual meeting schedule, which built upon the existing conference and annual meeting structure of each organization. The Global Alliance would meet four times each year, under the banner of the Presidents Council, the elected leadership of each association at those four points on the calendar. This first meeting occurred in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, in February 2007, during which participants set in motion the structure that would govern their actions for the coming months and years.

Chaired by member organization executive staff for a two-year term, in order to provide continuity across the overlapping terms of each member body's elected leadership, APCO International's executive director became the initial hub for coordinating the activities of the Global Alliance. This first year saw the establishment of organizational structures to support the ongoing efforts of the group; the creation of memoranda of understanding to provide clarity of roles where needed; the development of a brand identity to distinguish the efforts of the group from those of any individual member; and the drafting of its first international policy statement to establish its voice of advocacy on

issues of great concern to the field of public safety communications around the world.

The opening joint policy declaration of the Global Alliance represents a clear example of the use of a collective voice in advocating a position. In this first position statement on Travel Safety and Security, the members of the Global Alliance strongly recommend that telephony carriers utilize technology already available, as well as explore burgeoning technologies, to ensure that accurate location information is provided with all calls, and that they adhere to this global standard regardless of the type service used by the traveling public.

Global tourism and business travel continue to increase and are vital to the economic success of all countries. In 2005, international arrivals worldwide, i.e., an individual from one country arriving in another country, exceeded 800 million. Terrorism, natural disasters, health emergencies, and political uncertainties are just some of the issues facing the travel industry, which can cause dramatic fluctuations in the amount of revenue brought into a country.

Today, many travelers carry their wireless phones or Voice over IP (VoIP) enabled lap top computers abroad, and may, because they do not know the emergency access number of the country that they are visiting, use the emergency access number of their homeland to call for help. To ensure the safety and security of the traveling public the members of the Global Alliance deem it necessary for a visitor to any country to have access to the host country's emergency services by dialling their homeland emergency access number.

This resolution, ratified by the members of the Global Alliance in Baltimore, Maryland, USA in August 2007, defines the shared concern, outlines the need, and sets forth a recommended solution, all in the best interest of each nation and the worldwide community.

In the months to come, ongoing efforts undertaken through the auspices of the Global Alliance will include activities designed to galvanize action around long range planning efforts for public safety communications technology, as well as explorations of current patterns and trends in technology development.

The collective tenor of the Global Alliance will be used to engage leaders in dialogue to collaboratively analyze and develop technological specifications and recommendations for public safety communications. Working in conjunction with elected officials and commercial entities, and among one another, the member organizations will provide leadership in the rapidly growing arena of communications technology.

Now having completed its initial year of activity, and with a vision for influencing the growth and development of communications technology worldwide, the Global Alliance is poised to set in motion additional policy considerations, examinations of technologies, and explorations of unique partnership opportunities to carry on its mandate to promote and influence excellence in the development and use of public safety communications and information management systems on a global scale and to pro-actively encourage cooperation amongst the participating organizations to make the world a safer place in which to live.

*George S. Rice, Jr.
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Chair, APCO Global Alliance*

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The new 889 SBMF military folding knife is the latest addition to the growing family of tactical models from Buck Knives. This rugged folder is based on the Strider knife issued to elite US military units.

With its battle-proven design by Strider Knives, the 889 has been tested in Iraq and Afghanistan. Engineered for hard use, it's loaded with features: an extra-thick, oversized blade; quad-hold TACCOM™ handle with finger grooves for sure grip; thumb and handle grip-ridges; and thumb-stud/hole for one-hand opening.

This versatile knife has a non-serrated 3-1/2 inch drop-point blade made of 420HC stainless steel and is black-oxide coated. The 4-5/8 inch glass-reinforced nylon handle comes in three battle-ready colors: black, olive drab, and coyote brown. Locked open, the 889 is 8-1/4 inches long and it weighs 4.9 oz.

The stainless steel belt clip has a non-reflective black-oxide coating, is reversible, and comes with extra screws. Buck's advanced Edge2x™ technology makes the blade sharper out of the box, keeps the blade sharp longer, and makes it easier to resharpen. The 889 is backed by Buck's respected 4-Ever Warranty and has an MSRP of \$84.

Buck's New Lumina LED Gives You Light Right Where You Need It

The new 777 Lumina LED from Buck Knives is one of those ideas that make you wonder why nobody thought of it before. This one-hand open/close liner-lock has an integral, programmed 5-mm LED light that provides great illumination right where you're cutting.

In all settings, the long-lasting light has automatic shut-off after five minutes to conserve the two 3-volt lithium batteries. The LED light itself is water resistant and has no moving parts, so it's not prone to breakage. Average lifetime is 100,000 hours, far more durable than flashlight bulbs, which wear out and break. There are four programmed functions: high beam, medium beam, low beam, and intermittent flash.

The light makes a great added feature to what is already a very solid knife. It has a partially serrated 3-inch drop-point blade, made of 420HC stainless steel. Finished with Buck's Edge2x™ technology, the blade is sharper out of the box, holds an edge longer, and is easier to resharpen.

The ergonomically shaped, molded nylon handle has large lanyard hole, and comes in three colors: red, blue, and smoke. Closed, the Lumina LED is 4-3/8 inches long, and it weighs 3.6 oz. Like all Buck Knives, it carries the century-old company's respected Lifetime Warranty. MSRP, \$60.

For more information about the 889, 777 or other Buck knives,
call Buck Knives toll-free at 800-326-2825, or visit their web site, www.buckknives.com

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Priority Dispatch Corporation

By Bill Boehly

Priority Dispatch Corporation provides public safety call taking and training solutions in over 32 countries around the world. We are a United States-based company with a large international "footprint." Our largest concentration of international users is spread over three areas: Canada, Australia (including New Zealand), and the United Kingdom. In each of these countries, Priority Dispatch Corporation has established a local office in an ongoing effort to provide timely customer service and a local contact team. Coincidentally, these are the same regions which are represented by International APCO affiliates. Our strategy to be close to our clients in these regions includes support and interaction with the local APCO affiliate. With APCO Canada this means advertising in *Wavelength*, attendance at the annual trade show, and membership on the Corporate Advisory Council (CAC). Through the *Wavelength* advertisements and the trade show, we showcase our core solutions and ongoing innovations out in front of



the market. By being active in the CAC, we assure that our voice is being heard on technical issues and legislative initiatives. Active membership in the CAC assures that the annual tradeshow is scheduled and designed to maximize our exposure to the attendees while still providing maximum educational value. Being active with the Corporate Advisory Council is integral to the international strategy of Priority Dispatch Corporation. As Priority Dispatch Corporation expands into Asia, South America, and the Middle East, we look forward to the emergence of APCO affiliates in these regions to continue our valuable partnership.

Bill Boehly is the Director of Consulting for Priority Dispatch and responsible for management of major clients in North America, Australasia and the Middle East.



Go to the **WEBSITE**
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www.apco.ca

Members are invited to submit a **John A. Smith Bursary Award** request for the board's consideration.

The John A. Smith Bursary shall be awarded annually to a qualifying individual who undertakes research into, or makes a significant contribution to, the activities, planning, operation, or function of public safety communications in Canada.

Submissions should be made in writing no later than August 31, 2008, to the president of APCO Canada at donna.anderson@apco.ca or to our Ottawa office mailing address: APCO CANADA, 440 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1R 7X6.



Des membres sont invités à soumettre une demande de **la bourse John A. Smith** pour la considération du conseil.

La bourse John A. Smith sera attribuée annuellement à un individu de qualification qui s'engage à la recherche de, ou qui fait une contribution significative à, les activités, la planification, l'opération, ou la fonction des communications de la sécurité publique au Canada.

Des soumissions devraient être faites par écrit pas après le 31 août, 2008, au président de l'APCO Canada à donna.anderson@apco.ca ou à notre adresse de bureau à Ottawa: APCO CANADA, 440 Rue Ouest Laurier, Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1R 7X6.

APCO CANADA NEWS

APCO CANADA IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN

APCO Canada is a great organization to belong to, and it provides opportunities in so many ways. It's not just the networking with colleagues, attending the annual conference or receiving *Wavelength*, but the opportunities to become involved in committees, where you have the opportunity to learn and provide input that can make a difference to the many thousands working in communications centres across the country.



If you're looking for more involvement, and are interested in the management of the association, there are positions on the board of directors which are elected every year. There are four directors, each with specific duties, including representing the board on committees. At our Annual General Meeting on May 15, Bylaw amendments were voted on to change the director positions to a two year term. As 2008 is the transitional year, all four director positions will be up for election at the conference in Ottawa, two will be for one year and the other two will be for two years. Next year, 2009, only two director positions will be up for election and will be a two year term.

If you have even more time and energy, then the next logical step is to run for vice president. While the position of vice president is a one year term, it transitions to president and then past president, making it a three year commitment. The Bylaw changes also require that in order to be eligible to run for vice president, you must have previous experience as a director.

Besides the desire to make a difference, there are certain skills that are beneficial to any of the board positions. Leadership, time management, attention to detail, organizational skills and industry knowledge are all part of what makes the work of the board successful.

If you're looking for a challenge or an opportunity, and you've got what it takes, contact myself or any of the members of the board of directors and discuss the options. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the future.

*Nancy Banks
Immediate Past President*

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE: ADD YOUR VOICE TO APCO ADVOCACY

Advocacy is defined in the Encarta Dictionary as "giving aid to cause" or "active verbal support for a cause or position." And your voice is needed.

APCO Canada is forming an Advocacy Committee that will collaboratively define the messages that we as an industry sponsor need to articulate in order to effectively promote public safety communications in Canada. But don't be daunted by the complexity of that statement; what we're looking to do is really very simple.

First and foremost, the purpose of APCO Canada is to support the professionalism and recognition of public safety communication officials across Canada. So why do we need a committee for advocacy? And isn't that something we should be doing as part of our usual course of business?

The answer is that an advocacy committee will help APCO Canada identify issues and seek solutions and support with a stronger and more consistent voice.

Some of the questions that the committee will answer are: What are the issues facing communicators across Canada? Are they the same in Newfoundland as they are in British Columbia? What are the primary common challenges facing PSAPs and communication centres are today? Is it technology? Recruiting? Training? Standards? Regionalization? And how can APCO, across the breadth of Canada, respond to these major issues, focus its efforts, and provide a consistent message regardless of your location or affiliation?

By coming together to discuss these issues and make consensus decisions, APCO Canada can promote a unified response and solution to the issues that are facing all of us, not only in our hometowns but for those in large centres, rural communities, the Territories and isolated communities.

As a result of this process, the voice of APCO Canada becomes stronger by focusing on clear, collaborative, and consistent messages as it advocates on behalf of public safety communication officials across the country.

The committee will be composed of one APCO member per province and territory who also sit on provincial 9-1-1 associations or working groups. If you are interested in joining this important initiative, please respond to Curtis Brochu, APCO Canada Director, at curtis.brochu@apco.ca.



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November 16-19
Ottawa 2008

The Ottawa 2008 APCO/NENA Conference and Trade Show is being held at The Westin Ottawa in the heart of the Nation's Capital.

The Westin Ottawa is the destination for business and leisure. Complementing the Westin's ambience are its indoor walkway to the Rideau Centre Shopping Mall and Ottawa Congress Centre. You will find many opportunities to explore the historical and cultural elements Ottawa has to offer, such as Parliament Hill, the National Art Museum, the Byward Market, the National Art Centre, and many many more.

We invite you to view our web page to register and invite you to view the great many sponsorship opportunities offered. Check our links @ www.APCO.ca or www.NENACONTARIO.com. We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference in November - fall.

Our trade show has a capacity of 85 booths (10x10) and there will be additional opportunities in the foyer adjacent to the Exhibition floor. All lunches and breaks will be offered on the Exhibitors floor where delegates and vendors will enjoy many networking opportunities.



Captain Brudnicki "The Perfect Storm"

This year's APCOA conference on the Gold Coast had a healthy complement of expert speakers with inspiring stories and valuable contributions. Topping the bill at the open night ceremony was Captain Larry Brudnicki, Retired. Captain Brudnicki was the Commanding Officer of the USCGC TAMAROA during the 1991 storm off the coast of New England, America, made famous by the Hollywood blockbuster "The Perfect Storm".

With first hand stories of the challenging conditions and the choices he had to make in two major rescue operations during the storm, Captain Brudnicki had the conference delegates on the edge of their seats as he outlined his approach to risk management.

Captain Brudnicki retired from the US Coast Guard in 2002 after 30 years of active duty. At just 24 he earned his first Commanding Officer position of the USCGC CAPE CURRENT from 1973-1975. During that time, he worked under the direction of Coast Guard Group Charleston and lead CAPE CURRENT toward being one of the pioneers that helped begin a long and proud history in counter drug operations for the US Coast Guard. He directed operations that seized more than 150 tons of cocaine. He also directed all Coast Guard operations for an America's Cup, supervised more than 15,000 search and rescue cases including Alaska Air Flight N262, led the team that converted federal aids to navigation to solar power, and he helped save the federal government from the \$5 Billion liability for the clean-up operation of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

At the APCOA conference Captain Brudnicki outlined his approach to risk management that can be used in any situation from long term board meeting decisions, to time frames that come down to minutes in emergency situations. Using well versed and perfectly delivered anecdotes, facts and figures, the good captain talked about the choices he was forced to make in some of the worst ocean conditions Mother Nature can muster.

to the 3rd delegates in the audience Captain Brudnicki began with a question, "Have you ever been in a situation that was beyond your control where you knew you had to make a difficult decision, but you didn't like any of your options?" he asked.

"If your answer is yes, then you have an idea of what it was like to be in the perfect storm. Most people's decisions don't make the difference between life and death, but you don't have that luxury, because your decisions make the difference between having the right people in the right place at the right time with state of the art equipment that is interoperable with all the other emergency response agencies; or facing a disaster without the ability to protect the public, the colleagues you are sending in to respond, your family, or even yourself."

"The Perfect Storm was aptly named. Our modern recording systems have never recorded anything like it. Three major storm systems that converged at the same point in the ocean at the same time made sure the conditions were nothing short of apocalyptic with waves up to 100' and winds over 200km/hr. In the middle of that storm, Captain Brudnicki was asked to assess, decide and act. When it comes to such a position, he is even the stoic seaman.

"I was in the wrong place at the right time, but no matter what you are doing, something can go wrong. If you don't know everything that can go wrong, how can you be prepared so it doesn't go wrong? I already had an idea on what could go wrong before it took place so I was ready to make the decisions when they were needed," he said.



Whatever method used to achieve an evaluation, the secret to effective risk management is incremental decision making based on constant assessment as the situation changes.

"Here's the situation, here's the plan, evaluate the risk. Now, change something in the situation - column without changing your plan and you will see your risk escalate out of control, most of the time. What is important here is monitoring the situation with a mind on what can happen and what you can do if it does. If this happens I will do this, if that happens I will do that. You end up creating a matrix of decisions that will allow you to live with any decision you make in a high risk situation no matter what the result."

After the Perfect Storm, an inquiry into every facet of the rescue operations found Captain Brudnicki's decisions at every stage matched the information at his disposal. As the risk increases, the decisions he made allowed for more risk in order to save life without losing it.

In best manage decision making in critical situations one must have a plan, according to Captain Brudnicki. Under all the fascinating anecdotes was a theme of risk management that focused on the need to have a flexible plan that incorporates constant monitoring of the situation and a will ingness to change attacks. As the situation changes, so must your approach. The truth changes in emergencies, and having a plan that allows you to change your approach as the risk increases or decreases is vital.

Since retiring from service Captain Larry Brudnicki has enjoyed a life of content. For past of the year he resides at the small port town of Sunapee, New Hampshire with his wife where they snow ski during the week to escape the tourists. For the rest of the year he travels the world sharing his insights and knowledge. He plans to buy a sailboat once he convinces his neighbours to loosen the size restriction for moored yachts. He wants something over 50'. With his experience, it's hard to argue with that.

APCOA thanks Captain Brudnicki for his time and valuable insights at this year's conference and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Have you ever been in a situation that was beyond your control where you know you had to make a difficult decision, but you didn't like any of your options?

INDUSTRY NEWS

TORONTO CACC BECOMES AN ACCREDITED CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (ACE)



Left to right: Senior Field Manager Gary Bragagnolo; Ontario EHS Director Malcolm Bates; Toronto EMS Chief Bruce Farr; Deputy EMS Chief / Director of Communications Norm Lambert; Ontario EHS Senior Manager Dennis Brown.



Left to right: Deputy EMS Chief / Director of Communications Norm Lambert, 2007 Toronto EMS Communicator of the Year John Lynas; IAED President Scott Freitag

Toronto EMS was presented with the plaque designating them as an Accredited Centre of Excellence.

At the same ceremony Toronto EMS signed their 2008 Performance Agreement to operate the Toronto Central Ambulance Communications Centre on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Emergency Health Services Branch.

Toronto Emergency Medical Services' Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) started using the Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System (AMPDS®) in 1992 because the center needed a better tool than what they had been using for assigning critical resources.

Jump to the next decade, and the center has now achieved what it set out to do soon after AMPDS became the cornerstone of their service delivery: Become an Accredited Center of Excellence (ACE) through the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED).

"ACE means that the citizens and visitors to this great city should understand that when they call 9-1-1, they will be treated by, listened to, and given care by, the most dedicated and professional emergency medical dispatchers in the world," said IAED President Scott Freitag, who had traveled to Toronto for a special award presentation. "They are now amongst a very elite group of communications centers."

The accomplishment says much about how the job of an emergency medical dispatcher has changed. While in the past dispatchers gathered information and coordinated the movement of ambulances, now it is recognized that they are truly the first point of contact in a medical emergency and can give

life-saving instructions over the phone before the ambulance arrives. When appropriate, emergency medical dispatchers now use information from AMPDS to instruct the caller in providing immediate intervention for choking, cardiac arrest, imminent birth and other medical emergencies before the paramedics arrive.

An ACE was the natural progression for the staff of the centre, said Ambulance Communications Manager Cindy Nicholson. Now that the goal is achieved it directly shows their continuing resolve to maintain the highest standards of emergency dispatch care and stay compliant with the most effective, medically-driven guidelines available. Deputy Chief Norm Lambert stated that a great deal of the credit needs to be given to the emergency medical dispatchers, supervisors, and CQI staff who worked extremely hard over the last year to obtain the "Centre of Excellence" accreditation. We are very proud of their achievements and the high standard of care they deliver to the citizens of Toronto everyday.

The Toronto EMS, which is the largest EMS in Canada, joins the ranks of the most outstanding ambulance communications centers, including the cities of Edmonton, Miami, Dublin, and London, England as well as the Scottish and Welsh ambulance services. Toronto is the second largest ambulance service in the world to gain the status after the London Ambulance Service (LAS).

NICE ANNOUNCES ENHANCEMENT TO ITS NICE INFORM MULTIMEDIA INCIDENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SOLUTION


NICE Systems has announced enhancements to its NICE Inform™ solution for public safety and security command and control centers. The new features complement NICE Inform's revolutionary capabilities as a comprehensive and centralized multimedia incident information management solution.

Introduced in March of 2007, NICE Inform supports the convergence of multimedia by capturing and managing incident information from a vast array of multimedia sources, for seamless and efficient incident reconstruction, greater insight and improved response. NICE Inform also promotes collaboration among agencies and departments by enabling secure sharing of incident folders and multimedia incident information.







NICE Inform is part of a comprehensive end-to-end NICE security solution that encompasses proactive detection of events through video analytics, to successful resolution, investigation and prosecution.

"Organizations in the public safety and transportation sectors are facing unprecedented security challenges, along with a rising tide of critical multimedia incident information in the form of audio, video, text, and data," said Chris Wooten, President, Security Americas, NICE Systems. "NICE Inform brings all of this critical information together to provide a clear and comprehensive view of incidents, for proactive real-time decision making and more thorough, timely investigations. With the addition of these new enhancements, NICE Inform will deliver even more robust capabilities to address public safety and security concerns," Wooten added.

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Changing the World: The Road Ahead – 2010

By Dr. Anil K. Jampala

The good news news is that EMRI has forged two new partnerships, with Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and the City of Austin Texas.



EMRI is gradually spreading its wings to cover the entire nation. The dream of our Chairman Ramalinga Raju is being realized sooner than envisaged. One of the participants commented

“As leaders, we always appreciate the chance to reflect on our dreams and what moves us to succeed. Your thoughtful leadership sparked the enthusiasm and optimism that suggest we are ready to make some really game-changing moves. What Raju and you (our CEO Venkat Changavalli) have done to help manage emergencies was something I could not believe will happen in our lifetime, in this country. You have clearly proved that it is possible to “change the world.”

With increased awareness of 1-0-8 services among the public, the Emergency Response Center (ERC) has now touched a record 50,000 calls in a day in Andhra Pradesh and 14,000 in Gujarat.

As usual, EMRI has opened its arms to embrace those individuals who are committed to saving lives. As of today, EMRI has 4142 staff, which includes operations in 3 states (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh).

UNITE, a cultural event, was organized on January 26. This evening was dedicated to bringing together all our members in the various 1-0-8 centres across India

Dr. Christy Keyes, MD, International Fellow, Emory University, Pete Collins, CIO, City of Austin, and Dr Thomas Krafft, Geomed Research were here in February to explore more avenues of collaboration.

Events

Geospatial Technology in Emergency Management was conducted on February 2, 2008. It was very well received by the audience.

Adopting Military Medicine Best Practices in Emergency Management was another one-day conference conducted on February 29, 2008. The speakers included eminent doctors, scientist, as well as air force and army doctors.

Legal Framework in Emergency Management – A workshop held on April 12, 2008. We had participation from a retired chief justice of India and prominent advocates from the supreme court, apart from other legal and medical experts.

Upcoming Event

TEMcon 2009 – Mark your calendars for last week of January 2009.

Dr. Anil Jampala is Lead Partner – Alliances & Partnerships with EMRI and is Wavelength's regional associate editor for India. He can be reached at anil_jampala@satyam.com.



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Wavelength Features a Unique Call Centre in Ontario Which Coordinates

The Gift of Life

Every year thousands of Ontarians get a second chance at life thanks to the generosity of people who have given the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.

The Provincial Resource Centre (PRC) at Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) is the 24/7 call centre that is responsible for coordinating and managing the allocation of organ and tissue donation in Ontario.

The PRC, often referred to as the nerve centre of TGLN, receives the call each and every time a patient has died, or when death is imminent and donation is a possibility.

“The PRC is vital to ensuring the organ and tissue donation process takes place,” said Frank Markel, president and CEO of TGLN. “The majority of men and women who work in the PRC are nurses who are a very skilled group of individuals that work incredibly hard to ensure that every donation possible occurs.”

Timing is critical in the donation process.

“It is vital that once an organ has been recovered transplantation must happen in a matter of hours,” said Clare Payne, Director of the PRC. “The longer an organ is without blood and oxygen the less suitable for transplantation it becomes.”

A typical organ donation case involves about 150 calls, including, but not limited to, the referral call, calls to and from the hospital ICU and transplant surgeons, other organ procurement organizations across Canada, air/land ambulance, and tissue banks.

Deceased organ donation is quite rare. Less than 2% of all hospitals deaths result in organ donation. The most common type of organ donation in Ontario occurs after brain death is declared. Brain death means that there is no brain activity, blood or oxygen flowing to the brain. However, there is still blood and oxygen flowing to the rest of the organs. Most often brain death is the result of a tragic accident, an aneurism, brain tumour or a severe blow to the head. Another, less common, type of deceased donation is Donation after Cardiac Death (DCD). Organ donation after cardiac death is a procedure



Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty in the Provincial Resource Centre discussing the work of the Trillium Gift of Life Network with President and CEO Frank Markel.

whereby organs for transplantation are recovered shortly after the pronouncement of death based on cardio-respiratory (cardiac) criteria, rather than neurological (brain) criteria.

As previously mentioned the PRC is called by the hospital when a patient has died or is imminently dying. If the potential for organ donation exists at that time the PRC dispatch an organ and tissue donation coordinator (OTDC). TGLN has 20 hospitals across Ontario. OTDC's are highly qualified and receive ongoing training to speak to families about donating their loved one's organs and tissues.

If consent is obtained for donation, extensive screening and testing is done to ensure the organ is suitable for donation. Once the screening and testing information is obtained, the PRC begins the process of allocation of the organ, finding the recipient match. All donor data is entered into the provincial database by the clinical services coordinators (CSC) in the PRC and a list of potential donors is generated. Once the recipient match is verified the CSC informs the transplant physicians that an organ

is available. If the organ is medically suitable and a match is found the recipient is notified that there is an organ available for them.

“We make it our priority to ensure that every consented organ gets assessed and offered to the transplant programs for transplantation,” said Payne. “It is our goal to save and enhance as many lives possible through organ and tissue donation. The PRC, transplant programs, health care professionals and everyone who says yes to donation all play an important role in the donation process.”

Even with the dedicated staff in the PRC, at TGLN, transplant surgeons, health care professionals, and those who say yes to donation there is still a shortage of organs. Today, in Ontario, 1,723 men, women and children are waiting for an organ transplant.

You can register your wishes at an OHIP office when you renew your health card. If you have the red and white card or have recently renewed your card and did not register your wishes, you can go to the Trillium Gift of Life Network website (www.giftoflife.on.ca) and download an “Organ and Tissue Donor Registration” form, fill it out and mail it in to the address on the form. It is also critical that you share your donation wishes with your family, as they will be asked for final consent.

“We all have the power to save lives. One organ donor can save up to eight lives and enhance the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation,” said Markel. “Share your organ and tissue wishes with your loved ones so they can make an informed decision. Hundreds of lives are saved every year because of a simple conversation.”

Trillium Gift of Life Network is the not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.

The Benefits of Project 25 Standards

By Douglas Bigrigg

As more and more public safety agencies upgrade their radio networks to voice interoperable narrowband communications, it seemed an appropriate time to remind readers of the benefits of a Project 25 – Radio standards based communications systems. Public safety agencies have many choices when it comes designing a radio network. Listed below are 7 benefits obtained when a P25 system is deployed.

Interoperability

Project 25 Radio Standards provide the bases of interoperability by operating over a common protocol. In the past different agencies in the same regional area would use completely incompatible radio systems. Without a common standard in place, agencies would choose their communications network based on vendor’s equipment options and capability. With a common radio network multiple agencies are able to interoperate utilizing the benefits of a common platform.

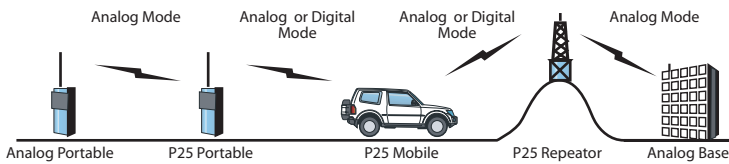
Multiple Vendors

Standards allow a variety of vendors to design and manufacture radio communications equipment outside the circle of propriety solutions. The real benefit is a competitive environment for the end user. With multiple solutions available, the end user is given choices. Not only are we seeing prices drop in this competitive marketplace but we are now seeing different tiers of equipment levels. Project 25 equipment is currently manufactured in a variety of offerings. These include everything from high-end military specified intrinsically safe products to modestly priced commercial products. With this level of products and prices available, we are seeing not just public safety agencies deploying P25 radio systems but now many utilities and commercial users are embracing Project 25 solutions.

Backwards Compatibility

Project 25 radio solutions provide end users with a migration path. Simply stated P25 systems are backwards compatible with older 25 kHz and 12.5 kHz analog radio systems, this is referred to as multimode operation. This advantage allows an end user to upgrade their radio system in stages. An

THE BENEFITS OF PROJECT 25 STANDARDS



The diagram above illustrates a mixed analog/digital solution.

end user has the ability too change out infrastructure equipment with a P25 offering and continue to operate in an analog mode. At a later date the agency can then upgrade subscriber equipment and seamlessly switch to Digital P25 mode having previously upgrade infrastructure now operating in multimode.

Encryption Capability

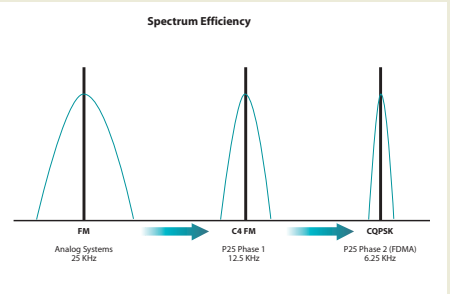
One of the biggest advantages of a digital radio solution is the ability to more easily encrypt your transmission. The current standard for a Project 25 solution is 256 bit AES. This is a huge improvement over analog encryption method as well as

providing additional security over 128 bit DES solutions. Encryption keys have the ability to be transmitted over the radio network. This is referred to as Over the Air Re-keying or OTAR. This allows the network manager to remotely and more efficiently provide new encryption keys to end users.

Spectrum Efficiency

With the radio spectrum becoming more and more congested, it has become critical that new radio deployments utilize more efficient use of the spectrum. Project 25 provides a path for spectrum efficiency with its digital C4FM mode of modu-

lation. P25 has the ability to operate in analog mode at 25 or 12.5 kHz occupied bandwidth. In digital mode the radio system also operates at 12.5 kHz. Future releases of P25 radio solutions will have the capability of providing efficiencies of 6.25 kHz.



Much like the C4FM Frequency Division Multiple Access (FDMA), CQPSK modulation will be capable of a 6.25 kHz FDMA solution. Next phases of P25 will also be available in Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) offerings providing the abil-



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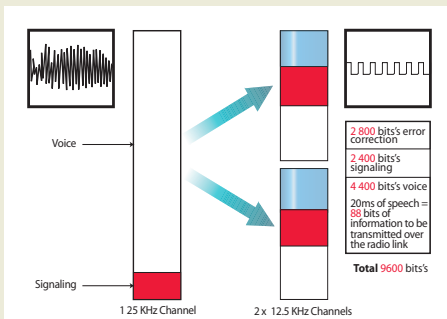


To learn more about EADS P25 solutions and the P25 ISSI, go to: www.eads-ps.com or call 1-866-977-3237

ity to operate at an effective 6.25 kHz occupied bandwidth by utilizing a two-slot TDMA solution over 12.5 kHz.

Improved Audio Quality

The advantage of a digital radio transmission over an analog solution is error correction. P25 uses 2800 bits of its 9600 bps for error correction. This improves the voice quality especially in areas of low signal strength or noisy RF environments. Digital encoding of the voice also helps to eliminate background noise.



Enhanced Functionality

The Project 25 standard also employs 2400 bits of signalling information. This enhancement over analog tone signalling allows end users to have greater control of how the digital transmission is steered. For example, P25 signalling incorporates a selective identification word that the system infrastructure can use in a variety of ways. The selective ID can be used to create an individual selective call from a single end user to another signal end user. Network Acknowledge Codes can be used to access the radio system and provide the ability to create custom, on the fly, drop – link radio routing. Of course traditional talk group information is also a standard part of the P25 signalling information.

As more Project 25 radio systems are deployed, the industry is able to gain more insight to its advantages. Not

only are more manufacturers producing more infrastructure and subscriber gear, we are now starting to see additional accessory products become available. This in itself is pushing the capability of these standards based P25 networks, benefiting the end users and the communities those networks support.

Douglas Bigrigg holds a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from the University of Victoria as well as a Diploma in Electronics Engineering Technology from Camosun College. Douglas has held numerous positions at Daniels Electronics Ltd including RF Design Engineer, Radio Systems Engineer, Sales Engineer, Marketing Manager and Director of Sales. Douglas is currently the Canadian National Sales Representative. With 24 years of Electronic Design and RF Engineering, Douglas is putting his talent to use by helping customers in Canada achieve their radio system goals.

EADS leads the way in IP P25 Public Safety Radio Systems.

EADS' open-standards core network architecture breaks down proprietary barriers to enable customized mission-critical communications solutions.

Our advanced network approach unites all P25 Standards-based applications and terminals on one core architecture that now supports the ISST interface, creating a unique combination of control, flexibility, interoperability and choice.

As the second largest provider of Public Safety communications systems in the world, EADS has more than 17 nationwide networks deployed and has provided critical leadership in the P25 standards development process every step of the way.



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November 16 - 19, 2008
The Westin, Ottawa, Canada.



Compassion Fatigue: Resiliency and Recovery

By Dennis Brown and Grace Fowler

Ambulance, what city are you calling from? What is your problem?

Many times every day the ambulance communications officers (ACOs) across Ontario and Canada voice these words as they answer the call to assist the countless members of the public in crisis who need the services of an ambulance and paramedics. Whether it is for a vehicle collision, a fall, someone feeling unwell, or a person having chest pain, the caller is experiencing an emergency and is looking to the ACO for the assistance they need. Being an ACO is all about being and staying calm, cool, and focused in a very stressful, time-sensitive role where seconds and accurate judgment can mean the difference between a good outcome for the patient or one that is less favourable.

Recognizing and understanding the workplace stresses that faces an ACO, day-to-day and builds up over

time is a challenge for dispatch centre management. Dealing with crisis situations on a daily basis causes emotional pressures to build to the point where an ACO may experience a condition known as “Compassion Fatigue” (CF).

Compassion fatigue is not “burn-out.” Compassion fatigue is recognized as the emotional residue of exposure to working with the suffering, particularly those suffering from the consequences of emotionally or physically traumatic events. Health care workers who are regularly engaged with people, especially those who are suffering, must contend, not only with the normal challenges and issues associated with a workplace, but also with the emotional and personal feelings for the suffering as well as the general health and wellbeing of the people they interact with.

There are well defined human costs associated with unrecognized and unmanaged CF: performance suffers, mistakes increase, morale drops, and workplace and personal relationships can be affected. Being able to identify and support workers experiencing CF with the essential information and tools to help them manage this stress was recognized as a challenge by the Emergency Health Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Following considerable research and consultation with various agencies, the Traumatology Institute was selected to develop and deliver a one-day pilot workshop on four occasions in late 2007 and early 2008. The purpose of the workshop is to help ACOs identify and deal with compassion fatigue. The workshop content recognizes the condition of CF as it relates to healthcare workers and its content is founded on specific ACO workplace research and analysis that was done by the institute.

The ACO feedback from the pilot CF workshops was overwhelmingly positive and with the enthusiastic feedback from the participants of the pilot sessions the Emergency Health Services Branch moved to continue to offer the Compassion Fatigue (CF) Training program as a regular part of its continuing education programming for ambulance dispatcher staff.

Recognizing and managing compassion fatigue allows communications officers, health care workers to maintain and improve professional performance and satisfaction as well as maintain or improve their general health and wellbeing.

Dennis Brown is the Senior Manager, Performance and Quality Management and Grace Fowler is a Senior Program Analyst with the Emergency Health Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.



Sandy Vogstad

OIC RCMP North District Operational Communications Centre/911 PSAP

Prince George, BC

APCO Director 2008

Wavelength: Tell us a bit about your career/background in public safety communications.

Sandy Vogstad: I have been a civilian member of the RCMP for 27 of the last 32 years. I have been employed in the OCCs as an operator, shift supervisor and manager of four of the centres. In my career I have been active in training, recruiting, managing, and currently active on the E Div. Woman's Advisory Committee, the E Div Managers Group, and APCO.

Wavelength: What are some of the everyday challenges you encounter in your organization?

SV: Everyday anyone active in managing an emergency communications response centre is challenged by budgeting, recruiting, strategic planning and training.

Wavelength: Are there any communications-related initiatives currently being planned, discussed, or implemented at OIC RCMP North District Operational Communications Centre/911 PSAP?

SV: We are always actively involved in a number of issues. As is everyone else we are heavily involved in a recruiting drive, the review of national policies, and on the divisional level ensuring our operating policies are consistent and that our resourcing is augmented in order to effectively manage call volumes.

Wavelength: What do you feel are the benefits of being a member of APCO Canada?

SV: The incredible value of networking, sharing best practices, staying abreast of technical advances, and the general affiliation with like agencies. Secondly but just as important, having a voice to represent the industry and the people.

Wavelength: What are some areas you would like to see APCO Canada be involved with in the future?

I would like to see us explore some study work in areas such as multitasking test tools, resourcing studies, and lastly to continue to respond in a timely fashion to such topics as VoIP.

Pencil It In

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August 3–7, 2008

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APCO Canada NENA
Ontario 2008 Conference
& Trade Show

November 15–19, 2008

Westin Hotel
Ottawa, Ontario

When The Communications Centre Staff Cannot Go Home: Staff Sustainability

By Dennis Brown and Christina Summers

For over four decades the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been involved in the delivery of ambulance and ambulance communications services. Through the Emergency Health Services Branch (EHSB) the ministry continues to ensure that high-quality ambulance communications exist in the Ontario ambulance system.

Until the mid-1970s ambulance communications services were provided by individual ambulance operators. In 1977 the MOHLTC began centralizing ambulance communications. Centralization allowed for the development of a balanced and seamless provincial system of both ambulance and communications services. Greater flexibility in the ambulance system came with the integrated ability to seamlessly and electronically pass requests for ambulance services and to move ambulance vehicles from the control of one ambulance communications service to another. Centralization of communication services brought a greater reliance on the need to ensure that services could be maintained in the event of



a major service or utility disruption.

Ambulance service in Ontario has been punctuated by several major emergency events, which became benchmarks for emergency preparedness (e.g., 1979 Mississauga train derailment, 1998 Eastern

Ontario ice storm, 2003 SARS, and the Eastern Seaboard Blackout). Evaluations and lessons learned from each event led to the development and implementation of specific policies and standards for service provision and emergency response. Nowhere in the provision

of ambulance services is this more important than in emergency ambulance service call taking and dispatching.

A 2005 review of Ambulance Communications Services (ACSs) continuity of operations planning revealed a significant gap. Each of our 23 ACS locations has excellent emergency response/evacuation plans, including access to short term back-up sites. The emergency plans are premised on evacuating the centre and providing a reduced level of service in a back-up site. Back-up sites do not provide access to full call taking and dispatching telecommunications or to the IT infrastructure. The option to shelter-in-place in the ACSs, when the facility or the infrastructure has not been compromised had not been explored.

EHSB management initiated a project to determine what would allow ACS staff to shelter-in-place for an extended period of time, without needing to access additional equipment, supplies or human resources.

Emergency Management Ontario advises residents to have an emergency survival kit allowing a family to be self sufficient for 72 hours. A Task Group of experienced ACS and field office managers developed the framework and criteria for ACS sheltering-in-place and decided ACS self-sufficiency should exceed the target for the general public and planned for 96 hour (4 day) sheltering-in-place sustainability kits.

The Task Force searched for commercially available emergency survival kits that might be suitable and found the majority of such kits were designed for outdoor survival or included a significant number of unnecessary elements (e.g., a tent, a whistle, or luminescent vests).

ACS management was surveyed to determine staffing levels and the equipment/supplies normally stored in each centre (e.g., water supply/systems, electrical extension cords). The survey helped establish the number of staff and the basic level of equipment and supplies that

would be required in an ACS and in the kits. Policies ensure that equipment and supplies are standardized in all centres.

Each of Ontario's 23 ACS is equipped with Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and a liquid fuel generator with an extended capacity fuel tank, which supports the HVAC and lighting along with the IT and telecommunications functions in each ACS. As such each ACS can support a microwave oven to heat meals for staff that need to shelter-in-place.

A list of essential food, equipment and supplies was developed and local suppliers engaged to develop the kits. Communications officers, who routinely work long shifts/overtime, often have a "stash" of food and other supplies in the kitchen and/or lockers. When the food and supplies lists were being developed this was taken into account.

Numbers

ACSs vary in size and staffing levels and can range from three (James Bay area) to 46 in a large metropolitan area (Toronto). The maximum number of call takers/dispatchers for a regular daytime shift for each centre was used as the threshold for the number of operational staff that would need to be sustained. In addition, one management and one administrative assistant position was added to the list in order to establish a total staffing count that would need to be sustained. It is accepted practice for an ACS to up-staff (increase number of staff on site) and for there to be technical support officers on site. Additionally, since there may be other staff that would be required to be in attendance, the total staffing requirement counts were increased by 15%. This final number was used to determine the size of each centre's sustainability kit

The selected kit configuration was established to meet the needs of 6, 8, or 10 persons. These sizes allowed single kits of an appropriate size for smaller ACSs or combinations of various kits sizes for larger centres. For

example a site with a total staffing level of 14 would receive one 6-person kit and one 8-person kit, a staffing level of 46 would receive one 6-person kit and four 10-person kits, and a staffing level of six or less would receive one 6-person kit.

Allergens

In selecting food and personal care products every effort was made to ensure products were allergy free (e.g., did not contain latex). The manufacturer of the dehydrated food packages ensured common food allergens e.g., peanuts were not included in the ingredients.

Personal Hygiene Kit and Equipment

The kits provided that each staff person sheltering-in-place would receive a personal hygiene kit, which includes hygiene products, over-the-counter medications, and personal equipment (e.g., socks and fleece blankets, and disposable wash cloths, towels, overalls, sleeping bags, pillows and thermal blankets).

General Equipment and Supplies

In addition to food and personal care supplies, the kits also contained other common survival based devices and supplies (e.g., hand-crank AM/FM radios and flashlights, code red batteries, chemical light sticks, collapsible water carrier and water purifications tablets, candles and matches, disinfectants, can opener, 8-cup plastic measuring cup for heating dehydrated food (2 person portions) in the microwave oven, and duct tape).

Water

Each ACS is routinely stocked with cooler dispensed bottled water (18.5 litre size). Each ACS must ensure a one-week supply of bottled water is always on hand for the total number of staff expected during a sheltering in place emergency. Routinely providing staff with bottled water ensures staff is not dependent on the

municipal water supply, which may be shut off or under a boil-water advisory. Water bottled in smaller/individual sizes and purchased/stored as an emergency stockpile would require monitoring and stale date rotation. Through the ongoing routine use of this bottled water each ACS is able to ensure there is an adequate supply of fresh water on hand.

Camp Cots

Basic folding camp cots are provided on a ratio of one cot for every three staff. For example a staffing level of 14 would receive five cots, a staffing level of 46 would receive 15 cots, a staffing level of six or less would receive two cots.

Food

The dehydrated food is supplied by a local manufacturer that specializes in the camping and survival markets. A four-day supply of dehydrated food is packaged in two-person servings and assembled to ensure a balanced and nutritious menu package based on 1,700 calories per person per day. The food products are soya-based, microwavable, and cover breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, and snacks.

Storage

An Ontario-based medical equipment supplier was selected to assemble the equipment and supplies, which is stored in large, moisture-proof yellow plastic drums. For security the drum lids are

secured by a bolted and padlocked metal band. Each drum was delivered with a laminated list of contents, which includes the expiry date for each item. The replacement supplies for the few items with a short shelf life (e.g., toothpaste and mouthwash) will be purchased on expiry and stored outside the drums. The stock can be replenished when the drum is opened during a sheltering-in-place event). The equipment and supplies for the sustainability kits are stored in 30, 60, or 95 gallon drums. Wheeled dollies were supplied for each drum to facilitate easier handling and movement.

Drum sizes and packed weights	
6 Person Kit =	1-65 gal drum: 161 lbs
8 Person Kit =	1-95 gal drum: 172 lbs; and 1 - 30 gal drum: 55 lbs
10 Person Kit =	1-95 gal: 172 lbs; and 1-65 gal: 161 lbs

The collapsible cots are stored outside the drums in zippered canvas bags

The dehydrated food packets are stored in waterproof, lockable duffel bags. Disposable cutlery and dishes are included. The dehydrated food has at least a two year shelf life and storage outside of the equipment/supply drums ensures easy replacement on expiry.

Security

The management of each ACS is accountable for monitoring the security and use of the kits for replenishment or updating of supplies in the sustainability kits.

Human Resource Emergencies

To reduce the impact of any emergency event on staffing levels (e.g., environment emergencies, seasonal influenza, and pandemic) policies, procedures and thresholds for reduced staffing levels have been developed. Policies include a requirement for communications officers to have an annual N95 mask fit test. ACSs are provided with a stock of N95 masks and individual size bottles of hand sanitizer, which are stored separately. During a declared infectious disease outbreak, access to the ACS is strictly controlled and following proper screening for signs of illness, only approved ACS and technical support staff is allowed into the facility.

For more information on the sustainability kits or our business continuity planning for the Ontario Ambulance Communications Services, please contact Ms. C. Summers at Christina.Summers@ontario.ca.

Dennis Brown is the Senior Manager, Performance and Quality Management and Christina Summers is a Senior Program Analyst with the Emergency Health Services Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.



Quality Call Monitoring 101

By Carol Hubacheck

With talk of training standards and core competencies now in the forefront, police services are realizing the importance of having a designated person in quality assurance. Ensuring quality service and protecting against liability are just two of the reasons the need for such a position is growing. Deciding what quality assurance is all about and how a quality assurance program could apply to a communications centre is challenging. Quality assurance involves some type of auditing which can be either preventive or detective. Preventive is designed to discourage errors or irregularities from occurring. Detective is designed to find errors or irregularities after they have occurred. Both of these use methods or procedures to ensure two things that are of high importance in the communications centre. The first is reliability and integrity of information and the second is compliance with policies.

Most police services already have several preventive measures in place such as policies and procedures and training standards. Usually there is a separate manual that gives clear instructions to guide communicators in their duties and a manual to process call priorities. When I started thinking about establishing a quality assurance program for our communications centre, the preventive part seemed well covered so the detective method was my main focus.

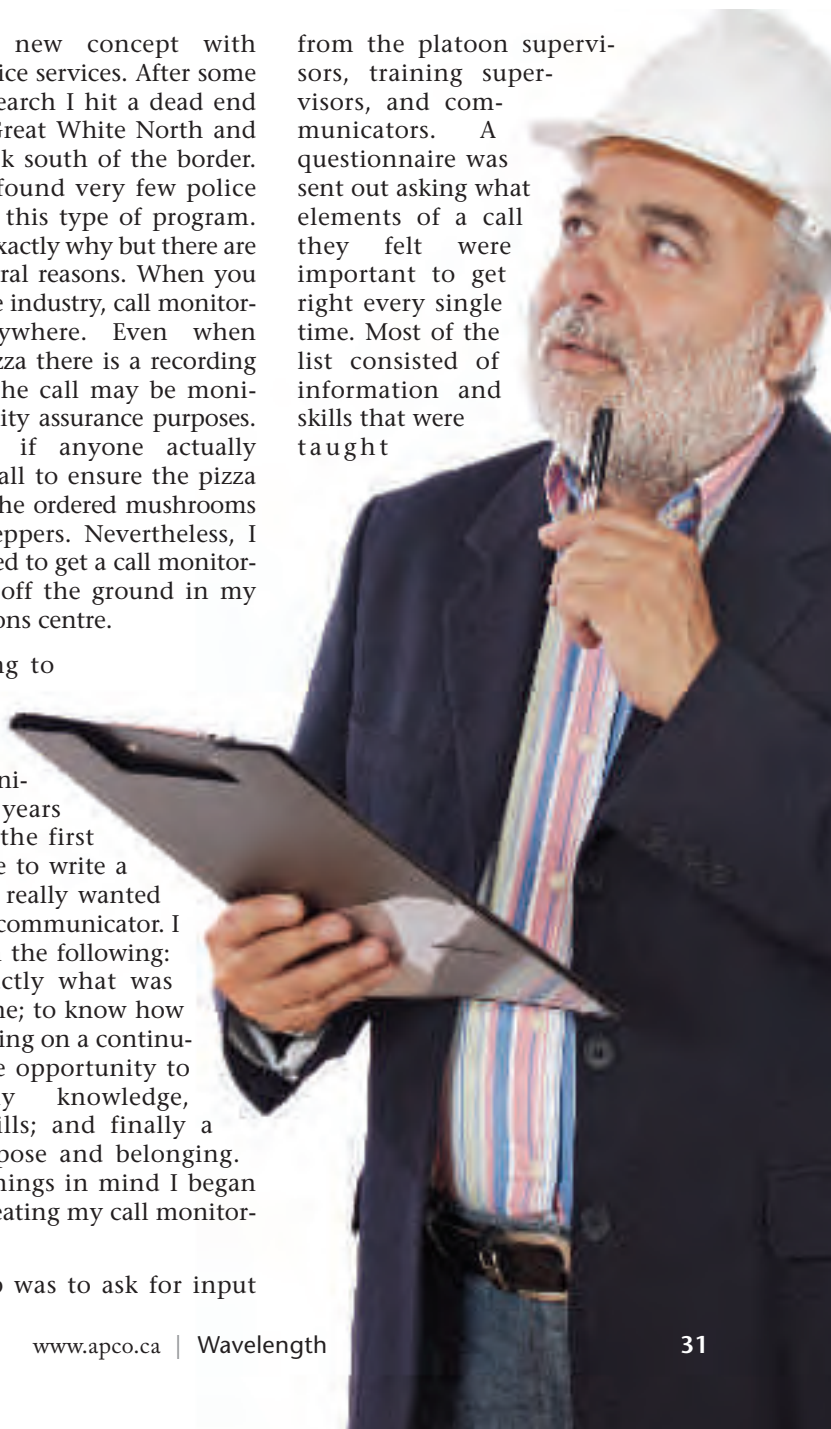
Back in 2002 I decided to launch a call monitoring program as part of quality assurance. I found that it was

a relatively new concept with Canadian police services. After some extensive research I hit a dead end here in the Great White North and started to look south of the border. Even then I found very few police services with this type of program. I'm not sure exactly why but there are probably several reasons. When you look at private industry, call monitoring is everywhere. Even when ordering a pizza there is a recording stating that the call may be monitored for quality assurance purposes. Who knows if anyone actually reviews the call to ensure the pizza arrived with the ordered mushrooms and green peppers. Nevertheless, I was determined to get a call monitoring program off the ground in my communications centre.

Before coming to the quality assurance position I was a communicator for 10 years and decided the first step would be to write a list of what I really wanted when I was a communicator. I came up with the following: to know exactly what was expected of me; to know how I was performing on a continuous basis; the opportunity to develop my knowledge, expertise, skills; and finally a sense of purpose and belonging. With these things in mind I began the task of creating my call monitoring forms.

The first step was to ask for input

from the platoon supervisors, training supervisors, and communicators. A questionnaire was sent out asking what elements of a call they felt were important to get right every single time. Most of the list consisted of information and skills that were taught





right in the classroom to new call takers. The list also included some best practices that we had used consistently throughout the years. It was decided that, while developing a monitoring form for call takers, a form for dispatchers would be developed as well. After both forms were created I went back and changed them two or three times or it may possibly have been four or five times or even more. It was very difficult to decide what should be included and ensure there was no repetition.

On the call taker form I wanted to ensure I hit on different aspects such as call processing, CAD documentation, procedure compliance, and communication skills. The dispatcher form included similar categories. Each category was then broken down into four specific questions or skills that I call checkpoints. For example, on the call taker form under "Call Processing" there is "Obtains Correct Location" and three other checkpoints. On the dispatcher form under "Communication Skills" there is "Controls Conversation" and three other checkpoints.

After the forms were completed a decision on what type of marking scheme was discussed. Should it be yes/no, a scale of 1-5, 1-10? The decision was made to use the same terminology that is used on our annual performance evaluations. The call taker or dispatcher would be rated "Meets Standard," "Needs Development," or "Unacceptable." Anything other than "Meets Standard" would need some explanation in the comments section left blank at the bottom of the form.

Each form then needed a rating guide. This is a very important part of the development of the call monitoring program and one that is often overlooked or not known about. How do you know if something needs development or is really unacceptable? It shouldn't be left to personal opinion. Parameters should be very clear for each rating. The rating guide is a separate form that should list how to "Meets Standard", what "Needs Development" means and what

"Unacceptable" is. All the checkpoints should be listed and then explained. For example, on the call taker form under "Obtains Correct Location," "Meets Standard" would list – asks for or verifies correct location of incident from ALI at the beginning of the call or before officers are dispatched if applicable. "Needs Development" would list – does not ask for or verify location at the beginning of the call. "Unacceptable" would list – does not ask for or verify location. This rating guide was completed for each checkpoint under every category and took considerable thought and time. Development of this rating guide was truly challenging but absolutely essential.

As far as what to use for the actual scoring, that was trickier. There are pros and cons to actually arriving at a number when the call is assessed. Why not start at 0% and work up to 100%, or work from 100% down, or forget the percentage altogether? The decision became easy for us as we had just purchased software that worked alongside our voice recording logger and it used percentages to score. The software would also provide individual or platoon reports which would be beneficial in identifying trends and assist in keeping the platoons consistent with each other. The weight for each checkpoint still needed to be decided so I again asked for input from the platoon supervisors, training supervisor, and various others in the communications centre. Weights for each checkpoint were based on the feedback I received.

Another challenge was how to decide who to assess and when. It was decided that it would be beneficial to do a call assessment on a communicator whose annual performance evaluation was due, which would assist the platoon supervisor with the evaluation. Also included for assessment were call takers and dispatchers newly on their own or anyone identified as having some issues. An added bonus would be that I would also be able to identify examples of excellence that could be recognized or passed onto training for future use.

The process after a call was assessed needed to be established. Time was spent with each platoon supervisor going over the forms and the process of how to review the assessment with their platoon members. This is their opportunity to take comments and observations of the assessment and provide coaching and education. There may also be areas identified where additional training may be needed and this would be passed on to the training supervisor. If an area of improvement is identified as being needed and is reoccurring than an action form would be completed and the platoon supervisor would follow up on it.

Before we were ready to launch the program I got the assistance of the communications training supervisor and we did a training session so every communicator would know what was being assessed. The call taker and dispatcher forms were shown to all communicators in a presentation and questions were answered. We discussed all the checkpoints and how to achieve "Meets Standard" as outlined in the rating guide. The communicators commented that it was just normal everyday things they did for all calls taken or dispatched. No big deal. The other two on the rating guide, "Needs Development" and "Unacceptable" were only shared with the supervisors in a separate training session so they would be aware of anything that did not "Meets Standard" according to the rating guide. It is very important that it is known that there is a set criteria in writing and the marking or scoring does not come down to just a decision made at the time the call is being assessed.

It was after I had developed our call monitoring program that I took a course on call monitoring and coaching. I was surprised how well I had done setting up our program with the limited information I had at the time. However, it was difficult throughout the course to squish the information I was learning into the police "world" due to our unique environment. What I did discover is that all these private companies have been doing

this type of quality assurance for years and were taking the course not to build a program but to get ideas for improvement.

Industry standard is that 2 to 3% of all calls are monitored for quality. When you're looking at over 550,000 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls into the communications centre every year it is understandable that one person alone may not be sufficient. There are benefits to having multiple assessors and some private industries use peer monitoring quite successfully. Peer monitoring allows for a person from the work floor to assist in assessing calls for a period of time. When they return to their duties they have new insight and prove to be better at the job. This is something that we will be looking at in the future. However, if more than one person is doing the assessing then calibration sessions must be conducted. This is where all the assessors listen to the same call and fill in the assessment form. The results are then discussed to ensure everyone is scoring the same. This needs to be done on a regular basis to keep assessments consistent.

Call monitoring assessment in a police environment has its challenges. Creating forms with input from others and developing rating guides makes the process both credible and consistent; however, we must always be open to changing the forms and processes as our quality assurance program evolves. Ensuring compliance with policies and procedures is crucial and quality service is something that every organization is striving to achieve. Having a full-time dedicated person assessing calls for service can assist with both as we continue to strive for excellence in our communications centres.

Carol Hubacheck has been with Peel Regional Police since 1989. She served as a Communicator for 10 years and has spent the last 9 years in Quality Assurance in the Communications Centre as the Quality Performance Specialist. She is the current Chair of APCO Canada's Recognition and Awards Committee.

RCMP Civilian Member Telecommunication Operator Recruiting Unit

By Heather Sorge

In 2005, realizing the importance of public/member safety and the importance of a dispatch centre being the "hub," the RCMP in British Columbia created an OCC Manager position to work closely with the managers in each of the seven strategically placed OCC/911 Centres in the province.

In 2007 the OCC Program Manager assisted overall with the OCC Program with such items as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with 9-1-1 service providers, and other government agencies such as Conservation and ECOMM. The OCC Program Manager through open dialogue with the OCC membership brought about a number of best/good practices such as the CIT (Continuous Improvement Team) and an OCC website. But the biggest priority in the OCC's still needing to be reckoned with was Recruiting. Recruiting concerns have put many of the 9-1-1 centres and telecommunications/radio rooms across the globe, in crisis mode with respect to filling the chairs. The additional responsibilities and advances in technology have increased the difficulty in finding suitable and willing individuals to play this critical role in public safety.





In the RCMP, recruiting generally falls under the umbrella of staffing and personnel, however, this unit was without the necessary resources to form a “proactive recruiting team” so Inspector Jas Basi, the officer in charge of the OCC Management Unit reallocated six of the existing telecommunications positions in order to create the first ever Civilian Member Recruiting Team. This team would focus on recruiting strategies within the law enforcement support – telecommunication operator area. Each of the four districts in BC (Island, Southeast, North, and Lower Mainland) along with a recruiting manager and two I/C form the C/M Recruiting Unit for BC.

This section was created to address the critically low staffing levels throughout the OCCs across the division. Working directly with each District OCC Recruiter the OCC Management/Recruiting Unit provides support and direction with respect to recruiting. Our collective goal: filling the OCC’s with qualified, professional telecommunication operators.

Some of the varied events and areas this unit is working on:

- Attend career/job fairs to talk directly to people about our career choice
- Educate the public by giving examples of the service we provide

- Participate with our regular member police personnel with Police Week May 11-16
- Make our presence known to the public through government approved advertising
- Provide creative and exciting, yet informative career presentations
- Streamline the application process to maximize recruiting efforts
- Provide the district recruiters with current recruiting and training information
- Work with our Human Resources and Department Security Screening Units to ensure a smooth application process
- Liaise with national recruiting regarding policy changes and standards
- Work with the Pacific Regional Training Centre which provides superior training to our operators
- Create sustainability that goes beyond today’s needs and looks to the future

It is crucial to maintain a national recruiting strategy that enable the RCMP to continue to enhance its status as an employer of choice for the current and next generations of employees.

Heather Sorge is one of the Pacific region associate editors for the Wavelength and works in O.I.C. Ops Support, ‘E’ Div OCC Management Unit for the RCMP.

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