

TELECOMMUNICATOR SELF-SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

A professional public safety telecommunicator is a highly responsible, multi-functional public servant who must handle many tough demands, often in crisis situations. A telecommunicator's job can commonly be described as:

- Answering 9-1-1 emergency calls and public inquiries, and dispatching the appropriate police, fire and EMS assistance.
- Providing potentially life-saving first aid advice to callers through the Emergency Medical Dispatch program.
- Operating in a heavily IT-based environment that includes a wide variety of computer equipment, multiple software programs, the E9-1-1 telephone system and two-way radios, sometimes simultaneously.
- Working 8-hour shifts, most commonly 0630 to 1430, 1430 to 2230 and 2230 to 0630, though other time slots are occasionally available.
- Working on a team of four to six other telecommunicators.
- Occasionally being forced to work mandatory overtime.
- Mostly sedentary.

Being a public safety telecommunicator means you become part of the community of first responders. In many ways, telecommunicators are the *first* first responder: the first person to know someone needs help, first person to identify the caller's needs and location, the first person to provide assistance that could save a person's life. Public safety dispatching means you not only provide assistance to civilian callers, you are also the lifeline for police officers, firefighters and EMS responders who are working in often chaotic scenes with uncontrollable factors. When the police need help, they call dispatch.

This self-screening questionnaire provides a sense of what it's like to serve the public as a telecommunicator at the Lewiston-Auburn 911 Emergency Communications Center. It is intended to help you determine whether you are making a sound decision in applying for the position. Answer the questions honestly, but only to yourself. You are not required to divulge your answers; however, we will be happy to discuss any aspect of the position's requirements. You are not asked or expected to complete the survey as part of the hiring process; it is for your informational purposes only.

Work Environment

Are you willing to sit at a telecommunications console that limits your movements to a 6-foot radius, except during an occasional break?

Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work an 8-hour shift without regular breaks?

Yes___ No___

Are you willing to serve on any of three shifts (days, evenings or overnights) and remain on that shift for up to a year at a time? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to accept periodic last minute changes to your work schedule (such as mandatory overtime) that might require you to cancel personal plans or make alternate arrangements for family members who depend on you? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work weekends and holidays? Are you able to come to work during heavy winter storms? Yes___ No___

Occupational Competency

Are you willing to spend the first six months of your employment in a probationary status during which you'll spend most of your time undergoing on-the-job training, receiving daily mentoring, critiques and evaluations? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to learn all facets of a multi-tasking job: call/complaint taking; automated data entry and transfer; DMV and criminal record inquiries; radio communications / dispatching; equipment troubleshooting? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to read and study numerous procedural manuals and regularly learn new skills and tasks? Yes___ No___

This profession requires you to copy information as it is being received over the telephone or radio, simultaneously digest what you hear and respond immediately. Is this something you can do? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to periodically travel outside of the local area to attend professional training courses and seminars? Yes___ No___

Can you be trusted with critical or sensitive information that may be about someone you know or are related to? Yes___ No___

Supervision and Evaluation

Are you willing to take direction from your supervisor and other seniors in front of your co-workers? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to be closely supervised and questioned routinely about why you followed a certain course of action without taking it personally? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to work under constant electronic monitoring that records all telephone and radio transmissions, or logs data entries? Yes___ No___

Are you willing to defend your decision making processes in a court of law? Yes___ No___

Job Stressors

Are you able to deal calmly with angry people when their problems are not your fault? Yes___ No___

Can you listen to abusive and often profane language over the phone and still provide help to the caller impersonally and unemotionally? Yes___ No___

Are you able to work closely with people you may have social, political or moral differences with, yet be able to set aside those differences in the name of teamwork and public safety? Yes___ No___

Are you able to deal with a crisis call—where a child has died, an officer is injured, a woman has been assaulted—then set it aside and calmly deal with another caller who is irate over a comparatively minor issue? Yes___ No___

Do you understand that if you process a call incorrectly, it could contribute to someone's injury or loss of property, and it might incur liability for the cities? Yes___ No___

If you smoke, can you go for an extended period without a smoking break? Yes___ No___

If you answered "No" to too many of these questions, a career as a public safety telecommunicator may not be the right fit for you.

But if you thrive in an environment that is ever-changing, that is the source of tomorrow's headlines and puts you in the middle of law enforcement, fire fighting and EMS action, a career as a public safety telecommunicator might be right for you. You'll have the satisfaction of knowing you provide a vital service to the public, and you'll take pride in knowing that every day you help promote the protection and preservation of life, property, and community security.

You'll be the *FIRST* first responder.