

THE 200 QUESTION CHALLENGE

**9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS MANUAL
SEVENTH EDITION**

What will your students and trainees learn?

This updated challenge gives instructors, schools, agencies, and prospective learners a practical look at the breadth of knowledge in the Seventh Edition. The 200 questions move from the profession and call receiving through modern 9-1-1 technology, police/fire/EMS communications, radio, liability, crisis intervention, and career wellness.

Use it as a classroom discussion guide, textbook companion, pre/post learning check, study assignment, interview-preparation activity, or a demonstration of the knowledge foundation students build before hands-on simulation.

**10 UNITS • 200 QUESTIONS • ONE COMPLETE FOUNDATION FOR EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS**

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UNIT 1 - EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AS A PROFESSION

WILD CALLING

1. What makes emergency communications a distinct public-safety profession, and what qualities are needed to succeed in it?
2. Compare the primary duties of a Call Receiver and a Dispatcher.
3. What is a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and how can a Primary PSAP differ from a Secondary PSAP?
4. Describe three different configurations a communications center may use, such as consolidated, combined multi-jurisdictional, or call-receiver-only operations.
5. What is an Emergency Service Zone (ESZ), and why does jurisdiction matter when routing a 9-1-1 call?
6. Identify at least five career positions or advancement opportunities found in emergency communications beyond entry-level call taking and dispatching.
7. What is a lateral hire, and how does a lateral differ from a person entering emergency communications for the first time?
8. List several tests or screening steps an applicant may encounter during the 9-1-1 hiring process.
9. Why is simulation increasingly used before trainees handle live calls on the operations floor?
10. Describe the progression a new trainee may follow from classroom and simulation training to independent call taking.
11. What shift lengths and scheduling patterns may be found in a communications center, and why must staffing be matched to workload?
12. Why are security and confidentiality constant requirements in virtually every communications center?
13. Give examples of information a Telecommunicator must protect from unauthorized disclosure or personal use.
14. How do police, fire, and EMS communications differ in their basic mission and workflow?
15. Why are in-progress police calls handled differently from delayed police reports?
16. Why are fire and EMS calls generally not held for later response?
17. What does it mean for a call to become 'dispatchable,' and why might dispatch begin before the call has ended?
18. What role does the Telecommunicator play in responder safety after units are dispatched?
19. What current challenges are shaping the profession, including staffing, rapidly changing technology, major incidents, and professional recognition?
20. What personal strengths, habits, and attitudes would help you survive and thrive in a long emergency communications career?

UNIT 2 - HEART OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

CALL RECEIVING

1. Why is the Call Receiver described as the emergency services link between the caller and help?
2. How can a Call Receiver's demeanor, voice, pace, and inflection affect a caller's cooperation?
3. Why are empathy, courtesy, patience, persistence, and professional control considered call-taking mastery tools?
4. Explain the difference between empathy and agreeing with a caller.
5. What are the essential 'W' questions used to establish what is happening, where, when, who is involved, and why or how the event occurred?
6. What is sequencing, and why should critical 'send' information be obtained before less urgent details?
7. Why must the Call Receiver verify the incident location and callback number, especially on wireless or VoIP calls?
8. What does it mean to use active listening and visualization during a 9-1-1 call?
9. How can silence be used effectively as a communication tool, and when could silence become unsafe?
10. What techniques can help a Call Receiver gain useful information from a hysterical, angry, confused, or frightened caller?
11. Why should the caller's emotional intensity never be used by itself to determine the seriousness of an incident?
12. What information makes a CAD entry or call narrative useful to the dispatcher and responders?
13. What is the difference between useful detail and 'too much information' in a CAD narrative?
14. Why is accurate call classification and prioritization an essential part of call receiving?
15. How should a Call Receiver approach a 9-1-1 hang-up or abandoned call according to agency policy?
16. What additional safety concerns arise when the caller may be in danger from someone nearby?
17. How should a Telecommunicator approach a suicidal or crisis caller while also following local policy and available crisis resources?
18. What special challenges do text conversations create compared with voice calls?
19. Why should a Telecommunicator question technology when the displayed location, caller information, or circumstances do not make sense?
20. Review a difficult call: what information, communication choices, CAD documentation, and safety decisions would you evaluate afterward?

UNIT 3 - A NATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBER

TECHNOLOGY 9-1-1

1. When and where was the first 9-1-1 call in the United States made?
2. Why was a single national emergency number needed instead of separate local police, fire, and ambulance numbers?
3. What is the difference between a Primary PSAP and an agency that receives transferred calls as a Secondary PSAP?
4. What are N11 numbers, and what services are commonly associated with 211, 311, 511, 711, 811, and 988?
5. Why is public education about when and how to use 9-1-1 an operational issue for communications centers?
6. What is a database, and how do databases support call routing, location identification, CAD, and responder information?
7. Why is wireless caller location more difficult than location from a traditional fixed landline?
8. What types of device-based information can modern smartphones use to improve caller location?
9. Why must a Telecommunicator still ask and verify the caller's location even when advanced location technology is available?
10. What is Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), and how does it differ from the original telephone-based 9-1-1 system?
11. What is an ESInet, and how can IP-based routing improve continuity and transfer of emergency calls?
12. What additional information types can NG9-1-1 support beyond voice, including text, images, video, and associated data?
13. What new decision-making skills may Telecommunicators need when images, video, or multiple data streams arrive with a call?
14. What is Text-to-911, and in what situations can texting be especially important to a caller's safety or accessibility?
15. Why are short messages, one question at a time, and confirmation of an active conversation important during Text-to-911?
16. What is swatting, why is it dangerous, and why must a reported emergency still be handled according to established protocol?
17. How can services such as enhanced location data, live call audio, caller profiles, video links, and mass-notification systems assist public safety?
18. What types of 9-1-1 legislation can affect training, funding, immunity, physical security, backup power, recording, and operational standards?
19. Why do 9-1-1 technology and service levels vary among states, counties, and PSAPs?
20. Research your local area: which NG9-1-1, Text-to-911, enhanced location, accessibility, and public-education capabilities are currently available?

UNIT 4 - LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

POLICE COMMUNICATIONS

1. What is the role of communications in supporting law enforcement response and officer safety?
2. Explain the difference between violent crime and property crime, and give examples of each.
3. How do felony and misdemeanor classifications affect the way crimes are understood, even though exact definitions vary by jurisdiction?
4. What is the difference between a robbery, burglary, and theft?
5. What information should be gathered on an in-progress crime before the call is dispatched?
6. Why are domestic violence calls considered high-risk for both victims and responding officers?
7. What responder-safety information should a Call Receiver attempt to obtain on a domestic violence call?
8. What is the difference among restraining, protection, and no-contact orders, and why must local law and policy guide handling?
9. What is the correct head-to-toe sequence for developing a useful person or suspect description?
10. What information belongs in a useful vehicle description, including color, year, make, model/body style, license, state, and direction of travel?
11. Why must dispatchers know beats, jurisdictions, neighboring agencies, and mutual-aid resources?
12. What is an alert tone, and when might an agency use one for a critical law-enforcement incident?
13. What is a BOLO, and what information makes a BOLO useful to field units?
14. How do call type and priority affect the number and type of law-enforcement units sent?
15. What does 'on view' activity mean, and what information should an officer provide dispatch during an on-view event such as a traffic stop?
16. What role do state and national law-enforcement information systems such as NCIC play in dispatch operations?
17. Why must criminal-justice information systems never be used for personal curiosity or unauthorized searches?
18. How should a dispatcher track officers, acknowledge radio traffic, document times, and respond when an officer does not answer?
19. How can a single new fact change the classification, priority, or safety response to a police call? Give an example.
20. Create a police call scenario and identify the call type, priority, essential questions, CAD narrative, responder-safety information, and radio dispatch.

UNIT 5 - FIRE COMMUNICATIONS

HIGH PERFORMANCE TEAM

1. What three elements make up the fire triangle?
2. What basic information is needed on every fire call: location, type of assistance, extent, structure or environment, and caller information?
3. Why can the type of structure change the number and type of apparatus assigned to a fire response?
4. What is a run card or response card, and how does CAD use location and call type to recommend resources?
5. What is meant by a layered or predetermined fire response?
6. How can smoke, flames, odor, injuries, exposures, and proximity to structures affect the severity of a fire call?
7. What is an exposure, and why is it important to fire dispatch?
8. Why are fire calls generally not held even when the local first-due units are unavailable?
9. What is mutual aid, and how can it maintain coverage when local resources are committed?
10. What is status keeping, and why must dispatch know whether apparatus are available, en route, on scene, or out of service?
11. What is staging, and why might fire or EMS units stage until law enforcement declares a scene safe?
12. What is the Incident Command System (ICS), and how does communications support command without making command decisions?
13. What is NIMS, and why is common incident-management terminology important during multi-agency events?
14. What are tactical channels, and why might a major incident require radio traffic to be split among channels?
15. Identify common types of fire apparatus and explain how their functions differ.
16. What hazards should a Telecommunicator consider when taking a hazardous-materials call?
17. What information can CHEMTREC, CAMEO, placards, shipping papers, or other hazardous-material resources provide?
18. What are the nine hazard classes used for hazardous materials, and why should a Telecommunicator recognize them?
19. Why can first responders themselves become victims during fires, hazardous-material incidents, or mass-casualty events?
20. Create a fire scenario and identify the questions, call type, extent, response level, apparatus, safety concerns, and radio information needed.

UNIT 6 - EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH

CHAIN OF SURVIVAL

1. Why is the Emergency Medical Dispatcher often described as the 'first first responder' in the chain of survival?
2. Describe the three levels of EMD presented in the manual and how their responsibilities differ.
3. Why is the EMD's first responsibility to send the appropriate response without allowing questioning or reference systems to create an unsafe delay?
4. What is a layered EMS response, and how can BLS, ALS, fire first response, and private ambulance resources work together?
5. What is the difference between Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS)?
6. What types of key questions help determine whether a medical call may be life-threatening?
7. What are pre-arrival instructions, and why must they be based on approved agency protocols and medical control?
8. What is a short report, and what sequence of age, sex, condition, and history can be used to brief responding EMS units?
9. Why are level of consciousness and breathing status critical pieces of information on medical calls?
10. What are common signs and symptoms of shock, and why is shock important to recognize?
11. How does anaphylactic shock differ from other forms of shock?
12. What information about bleeding can help the EMD assess urgency without attempting to diagnose the patient?
13. What factors are used to describe burn severity, including location, extent, cause, and patient condition?
14. What symptoms may be associated with a cardiac emergency, and what questions help determine urgency?
15. What is the difference between hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, and what caller observations may be useful to responders?
16. What questions or observations may help identify a possible stroke/CVA while staying within EMD protocol?
17. When may seizure, respiratory, pediatric, or unconscious-patient calls require a higher level of response?
18. Why should police also respond or EMS stage when a medical call involves violence, weapons, drugs, alcohol, or an unsafe scene?
19. What does HIPAA mean for emergency communications, and what patient information may still be transmitted when necessary for response and treatment?
20. If a caller wants to cancel an EMS response, why should dispatch relay the request and reason rather than independently deciding to cancel responders?

UNIT 7 - LIFELINE TO THE RESPONDERS

EMERGENCY RADIO

1. Why is emergency radio considered one of the most complex and highly skilled parts of the Telecommunicator's job?
2. What knowledge must a dispatcher have about geography, units, call types, procedures, equipment, and responder safety before working a radio position?
3. How do police radio operations differ from fire and EMS radio operations?
4. Why must a dispatcher understand beats, zones, jurisdictions, neighboring agencies, and unit availability even when mapping and CAD are available?
5. What is a unit identifier, and what useful information may be encoded in a police, fire, or EMS unit number?
6. What is the difference between an incident/call card, a status record, and a fire run card?
7. Why is dispatch responsible for accurate times and unit status throughout an incident?
8. Why must keyboarding and CAD entry become nearly automatic before a trainee can safely handle heavy radio traffic?
9. What are clarity and brevity, and why are both essential to professional radio communication?
10. Why can one incorrect word or misunderstood phrase create a responder-safety problem?
11. What is radio discipline, and how does a dispatcher maintain control of the air during heavy traffic?
12. How should a dispatcher handle emergency traffic, officer-help transmissions, restricted channels, or critical alert tones according to agency procedure?
13. Why are phonetic alphabets useful for names, license plates, addresses, and other critical spelling?
14. Why are microphone distance, volume control, voice quality, pace, and enunciation safety issues rather than merely presentation preferences?
15. What are primary and tactical frequencies, and why might an incident require dedicated radio channels?
16. What is a UPS or backup-power system, and why must communications centers routinely test backup systems?
17. Why should drills be clearly identified as drills before and after transmissions?
18. How do GPS, AVL, and mapping support unit selection and responder safety, and what limitations must dispatch remember?
19. What are FirstNet and public-safety broadband, and why do data networks supplement rather than replace land-mobile radio?
20. What cybersecurity and downtime practices should Telecommunicators follow if CAD, phones, records systems, networks, or other technology becomes unavailable?

UNIT 8 - LIABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HERE COMES THE JUDGE

1. What is liability, and why can emergency communications work create significant legal exposure even when employees act in good faith?
2. What is governmental or sovereign immunity, and why does immunity not mean an agency can never be sued?
3. Why do gross negligence, willful misconduct, or wanton neglect fall outside many immunity protections?
4. Explain the difference between discretionary and ministerial duties.
5. How can words such as 'shall' and 'may' in an SOP help distinguish mandatory duties from areas of discretion?
6. Why are clear, current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) important to both employee performance and agency liability?
7. How can poor supervision, inadequate training, weak hiring practices, poor equipment, stress, negativity, or human error contribute to liability?
8. Why are accurate location verification, call classification, priority assignment, and protocol compliance recurring liability concerns in 9-1-1?
9. How can complacency with chronic callers or assumptions about a caller create unsafe decisions?
10. Why can unrealistic promises, poor listening, inadequate interrogation, or unnecessary conflict with a caller create risk?
11. How can missed radio acknowledgments, call holding, outdated procedures, or failure to track responder status create liability concerns?
12. Why can inadequate training become a legal issue, and what kinds of performance failures can result from inadequate training?
13. Why should supervisors regularly evaluate calls and radio traffic rather than wait for a complaint or catastrophic error?
14. What is the value of documenting training, demonstrating actual learning, and using measurable performance evaluations?
15. Why is signing a training sheet alone not enough to prove that a trainee can competently perform a skill?
16. How can simulation reveal gaps in knowledge, judgment, and performance before those gaps affect a real caller or responder?
17. Define negligence, tort, plaintiff, civil action, criminal action, precedent, and ethical conduct in practical terms.
18. What is a public record, and why should Telecommunicators understand that recordings, CAD records, and other documentation may later be reviewed?
19. Review a recent 9-1-1 liability case from the manual: what operational lesson does it provide about location, prioritization, or protocol compliance?
20. What safeguards should an agency maintain to reduce risk: hiring, training, SOPs, quality assurance, evaluation, documentation, wellness, staffing, and reliable equipment?

UNIT 9 - CRISIS INTERVENTION

DANGEROUS OPPORTUNITY

1. What is crisis, and how can a crisis become both a dangerous moment and an opportunity for change?
2. What is intervention, and what is the Telecommunicator's role when helping a person through a crisis?
3. Explain the difference between empathy and sympathy in crisis communication.
4. Why is listening often more useful than advice-giving, judging, minimizing, or trying to 'fix' the caller?
5. What are the four stages of crisis: event, crisis, resolution, and reconstruction?
6. How can accumulated or hidden stressors cause an apparently small event to trigger a major crisis?
7. What does helplessness or hopelessness sound like, and why should a crisis worker recognize it quickly?
8. What communication behaviors should be avoided when dealing with a potentially violent person?
9. What physical, emotional, or behavioral indicators may suggest abuse of a child, elder, partner, or other vulnerable person?
10. Why is domestic violence considered a serious responder-safety and victim-safety call type?
11. What does power and control mean in the context of domestic violence?
12. Why might a victim remain in or return to an abusive relationship, and why should the Telecommunicator avoid blaming or judging the victim?
13. What can a Telecommunicator say to a domestic-violence victim that supports safety, dignity, and cooperation?
14. What is the role of 988 in suicide, mental-health, substance-use, and emotional-distress crisis support, and when might 9-1-1 still be required?
15. What listening and safety principles should guide a Telecommunicator when speaking with a suicidal person?
16. What factors can increase the lethality or urgency of a suicide or violent-crisis situation?
17. What should a Telecommunicator understand about hostage situations and the role of trained negotiators?
18. Why is sexual assault described as a crime of violence and power, and how can myths about sexual assault harm victims?
19. How can alcohol or other substance use affect behavior, crisis, violence, and the information a Telecommunicator needs to gather?
20. Create a crisis-call scenario and identify the caller's emotional state, safety concerns, listening approach, resources, responder information, and documentation needed.

UNIT 10 - 9-1-1 FOR WELLNESS

STRESS MANAGEMENT

1. What is toxic stress, and how can repeated exposure to high-demand work affect a Telecommunicator over time?
2. What is the difference between a normal stress response and a pattern of stress that begins to impair judgment, health, or relationships?
3. How can stress affect listening, patience, decision-making, call classification, and interactions with callers or co-workers?
4. What is critical incident stress, and why can different people react differently to the same event?
5. What signs in yourself or a co-worker may indicate that a difficult call or critical incident is not being processed well?
6. What is burnout, and how can burnout differ from a short-term reaction to a critical incident?
7. How can overtime, short staffing, negativity, conflict, isolation, and lack of connection contribute to workplace stress?
8. Why is recognizing and talking about strong emotions important after disturbing calls?
9. What healthy coping strategies can help a Telecommunicator recover after a demanding shift or critical call?
10. How can supervisors and co-workers support someone after a critical incident without forcing a single response or coping method?
11. What policies and workplace practices can a communications center use to support wellness and reduce preventable stress?
12. What physical occupational hazards can occur in console work, including prolonged sitting, repetitive movement, headset use, sleep disruption, and shift work?
13. How can regular movement and exercise support physical and cognitive performance for a Telecommunicator?
14. Why do hydration, nutrition, and awareness of stress-related eating matter in shift work?
15. How can sleep and circadian disruption affect attention, mood, health, and performance on rotating or night shifts?
16. What is the relationship between negativity, cynicism, apathy, and impaired professional judgment?
17. How can interpersonal communication skills reduce conflict and stress inside a communications center?
18. Why is personal resilience not a substitute for adequate staffing, sound leadership, training, procedures, and organizational support?
19. How can respect for diversity and individual differences improve teamwork, caller service, trust, and workplace wellness?
20. Create a personal 'survive and thrive' plan for a 9-1-1 career that addresses stress awareness, physical health, emotional support, boundaries, professional growth, and connection to purpose.