

# **Basic Telecommunications Certification Course**



**Course Number 1013**

**Texas Commission on Law Enforcement**

**Basic Telecommunications**

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**Revised August 2003**

## Basic Telecommunications

### ABSTRACT

The Basic Telecommunications Certification Course is designed to provide the beginning telecommunicator with an understanding of situations encountered in an emergency communications environment. This course is required by the Commission for certification as a basic emergency telecommunicator.

#### **Note to Training Providers:**

This instructor guide is designed as a standardized outline for all training providers; however, instructors are expected to develop detailed lesson plans that supplement this outline. The incorporation of scenarios is recommended to facilitate learning of the material.

**It is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensure individual copies of the course are up to date. This may be done by checking the Commission website. [www.tcleose.state.tx.us](http://www.tcleose.state.tx.us).**

<b>Target Population:</b>	Individuals desiring to obtain a Basic Telecommunications Proficiency Certificate.
<b>Pre-Requisites:</b>	Employment in a law enforcement agency.
<b>Certification Requirements:</b>	Successful completion of this course; and one year experience in public safety telecommunications.
<b>Length of Course:</b>	40 hours
<b>Facility Requirements:</b>	Standard classroom environment.

#### **Evaluation Process and Procedures**

Classroom interaction with the instructor and other students, and a final comprehensive written examination based on course objectives. Training providers are responsible for assessing and documenting student mastery of all objectives contained in the course.

#### **Acknowledgments**

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#### **Reference Materials**

See Bibliography for the entire course.

**NOTE: This course is not intended to override local department's policies and procedures.**

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## Basic Telecommunications

### 1.0 A Telecommunicator's Role and Responsibilities in Public Safety

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize some issues involving the telecommunicator's role and responsibilities as a member of public safety.

#### 1.1.1 The student will be able to define Telecommunicator.

- A. Definition of Telecommunicator – a dispatcher or other emergency communications specialist appointed under or governed by the provisions of the Occupations Code §1701.405 (TCLEOSE, *Current Commission Rules*, 2003)
  - 1. **Occupations Code §1701.405(3)** – Telecommunicator:  
"Telecommunicator" means a person acknowledged by the commission and employed by or serving a law enforcement agency who receives, processes, and transmits public safety information and criminal justice data for the agency using a base radio station on a public safety frequency regulated by the Federal Communications Commission or by teletype or other communications system.

#### 1.1.2 The student will be able to define Emergency.

- A. Definition of Emergency - occurrence or imminent threat of damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from an extraordinary natural or man-made cause. [Occupations Code §1701.405(A)]

#### 1.1.3 The student will be able to define Communication.

- A. Definition of Communication – any type of system in which electric or electromagnetic signals are used to transmit information, including a system transmitting information by means of the following: radio, light, or waves in other portions of the electromagnetic spectrum; wire or cable; or any other medium. [Occupations Code §1701.405(a)]

#### 1.1.4 The student will be able to explain the roles and responsibilities of an emergency telecommunicator at a communications center/department.

- A. Roles.
  - 1. Value of an emergency telecommunicator.
  - 2. Goals and objectives.
- B. Responsibilities.
  - 1. Value of duties and tasks.
  - 2. Goals and objectives.
- C. Relationship with the community and public safety.
- D. Relationship with agency providing law enforcement, fire, and/or EMS.

#### 1.1.5 The student will be able to discuss the importance of ethical judgment and behavior in telecommunications.

- A. Definition of Ethics – discipline dealing with what is good and bad; moral duty and obligation (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate On-line dictionary, 2002).
  - 1. Ethics is concerned with the study of moral duty; it is important in that it develops ways of understanding and learning of moral duty and right or

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wrong. Ethics is the study of the rules of the game of life. It is important to realize that ethics is simply a field of study, because there are different rules. People who believe that they have no duty other than to themselves will act differently than those who believe that they have a duty to assist others in many circumstances. Who is correct in their beliefs; and, both, or neither? Ethics attempts to look at these differing approaches to determine if one view is better than another and then to generate discussion and consideration of differing views regarding the same problem.

2. Ethics are among other things, a set of rules and standards that govern individual conduct.

### B. Typical Misconceptions about Ethics.

1. Ethics is not something that good people need to worry too much about.
2. Idealism is incompatible with realism.
3. People concerned about ethics dismiss every pleasure and are just holier-than-thou.
4. Principle subject matter of ethics is moral problems as opposed to the formation of habits of good character.
5. If other employees are not concerned, then it is acceptable.
6. Some common examples of unethical behavior: criminal behavior, lying, sexual harassment, cultural insensitivity, and abuse of position.

### B. Standards of Conduct for State Employees.

1. Standards are relevant for emergency telecommunications because it articulates some minimum legal concepts of areas of concern for public service employees.
2. As a public servant, you are expected to abide by standards of conduct established by the Texas Legislature, the federal government, and departmental policy. The public has entrusted you with a large responsibility; it demands that you abide by the highest ethical standards and is quick to criticize when you fail to live up to those standards.
3. The Texas Legislature has enacted standards of conduct for state employees; the intent was that the standards of conduct provided “serve not only as a guide for official conduct of those persons but also as a basis for discipline for those who refuse to abide by its terms.”
4. **Government Code 572.051** - Standards of Conduct: A state officer employee should not:
  - a. Accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence the officer or employee in the discharge of official duties or that the officer or employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence the officer’s or employee’s official conduct.
  - b. Accept other employment or engage in a business or professional activity that the officer or employee might reasonably expect would require or induce the officer or employee to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of the official position.

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- c. Accept other employment or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair the officer or employee's independence of judgment in the performance of the officer or employee's official duties.
    - d. Make personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the officer's or employee's private interest and the public interest.
    - e. Intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised the officer's or employee's official powers or performed the officer's or employee's official duties in favor of another."
  - 5. The Texas Ethics Commission administers and enforces provisions relating to, among other things, the standards of conduct of state officers and employees. They have subpoena power and can initiate their own investigations.
- D. Principles of Public Service.
- 1. Public Interest - public office is a trust to be used only to advance public interests, not personal gain.
  - 2. Objective Judgment - decisions made on the merits, free of partiality or prejudice and unimpeded by personal bias.
  - 3. Accountability - government is to be conducted openly, efficiently, suitably and honorably so the public can make informed judgments and hold public officials accountable.
  - 4. Democracy - honor and respect democratic principles; observe letter and spirit of laws.
  - 5. Respectability - safeguard public confidence in integrity of government by avoiding appearances of impropriety and conduct unbecoming a public official.
- E. Ethical Decision-Making Tools.
- 1. Trustworthiness
  - 2. Integrity
  - 3. Promise-keeping
  - 4. Loyalty
  - 5. Respect
  - 6. Responsibility
  - 7. Accountability
  - 8. Pursuit of excellence
  - 9. Self-restraint
  - 10. Justice and fairness
  - 11. Caring
  - 12. Civic virtue and citizenship
- F. Ethics Check Questions.
- 1. Is it legal? Will actions violate any laws, codes, or constitutional rights?
  - 2. Is it balanced? Is my decision fair to everyone concerned?
  - 3. How will I feel about myself? Will it withstand public scrutiny?

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- G. Community's "Expectancy of Service" vs. Litigations Filed Against the Agency.
  - 1. Examples of actual cases or situations.
- H. Refer to Your Agency/Department for Specific Guidelines.

[**Note:** This section was adapted from Commission course, *Basic County Corrections* #1007, revised 2003.]

- 1.1.6** The student will be able to identify some issues involving an agency's organizational structure, functional relationships and duties, missions and goals, and service/geographic area.
- A. Organizational Structure.
    - 1. Refer to your agency/department.
  - B. Functional Relationships and Duties.
    - 1. Refer to your agency/department
  - C. Missions and Goals.
    - 1. Refer to your agency/department.
  - D. Agency Service/Geographic Area.
    - 1. Refer to your agency/department.
    - 2. Landmarks and reference points
    - 3. Jurisdictions.

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### 2.0 Communication Resources and Confidentiality

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize some issues involving available resources to a telecommunicator and the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

**2.1.1** The student will be able to list some resources available in a communications department/center.

- A. Directories
- B. Computerized records
- C. Contact information for other agencies, organizations, or services
- D. Supervisors
- E. Databases
- F. Media, community, or other organizational outlets
- G. Note or flip cards
- H. Peace officers
- I. Co-workers and colleagues
- J. Training manuals and handbooks
- K. Agency/department's written policies and procedures
- L. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.1.2** The student will be able to explain the importance of maintaining confidentiality of information.

- A. Distinguish between public or private nature of information. (What can or cannot be released to media, public, and other organizations.)
  - 1. Specific topics or cases. Give examples
- B. Do not discuss work related information in a personal setting
- C. When in doubt:
  - 1. Ask supervisor(s)
  - 2. Refer to your department policy



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### 3.0 Telecommunication Systems and Technology

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize some systems and technology used in emergency telecommunication (telephone, text telephones, computer aided dispatch system, maps and recorders, and radio systems).

#### Telephone (Wired Telephone System)

- 3.1.1** The student will be able to describe the general configuration of a wired telephone system.
- 3.1.2** The student will be able to distinguish between the mechanics of portable vs. cellular phones, and their effects on 9-1-1 calls.
- A. Portable home telephones (land-line)
  - B. Cellular phones [Personal Communications System (PCS)]
  - C. Effects on 9-1-1 calls
- 3.1.3** The student will be able to identify the Basic and the Enhanced 9-1-1 Systems.
- A. Basic 9-1-1 System
  - B. Enhanced 9-1-1 System
- 3.1.4** The student will be able to identify an Automatic Location Identification (ALI) and an Automatic Number Identification (ANI) system, and their relation to emergency telecommunications.
- A. **HSC 772.001(1) – ALI:** "Automatic location identification" means a feature corresponding to automatic number identification by which the number provided by the automatic number identification feature is matched with the address or location of the telephone from which the call is made and is presented to the public safety answering point along with the number in a computerized 9-1-1 system.
  - B. **HSC 772.001(2) - ANI:** "Automatic number identification" means a feature that enables a service supplier to identify the telephone number of a caller and that operates by forwarding the caller's telephone number to the public safety answering point, where the data is received by equipment that translates it into a visual display.
- 3.1.5** The student will be able to identify other terms and concepts pertaining to emergency telecommunications. [Definitions were taken from HSC 772.001.]
- A. **Base rate** – a rate or rates billed by a service supplier, as stated in the service supplier's charges approved by the appropriate regulatory authority, that represent the service supplier's recurring charges for local exchange access lines or their equivalent, exclusive of all taxes, fees, license costs, or similar charges.
  - B. **Dispatch method** – a method of responding to a telephone request for emergency service by which a public safety answering point decides on the proper action to be taken and dispatches, when necessary, the appropriate emergency service unit

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- C. **Local exchange access lines** - all types of lines or trunks that connect a service user to the service supplier's local telephone exchange office.
- D. **9-1-1 service** –a telecommunications service through which the user of a public telephone system has the ability to reach a public safety answering point by dialing the digits 9-1-1. A system of processing emergency 9-1-1 calls.
- E. **Participating jurisdiction** – a public agency that by vote consents to receive 9-1-1 service from an emergency communication district.
- F. **Principal service supplier** - the entity that provides the most central office lines to an emergency communication district.
- G. **Private safety entity** - a private entity that provides emergency fire-fighting, ambulance, or medical services.
- H. **Public agency** - a municipality or county in this state that provides or has authority to provide fire-fighting, law enforcement, ambulance, medical, or other emergency services.
- I. **Public safety agency** - the division of a public agency that provides fire-fighting, law enforcement, ambulance, medical, or other emergency services.
- J. **Public safety answering point** - a communications facility that is:
  - 1. Operated continuously;
  - 2. Assigned the responsibility to receive 9-1-1 calls and, as appropriate, to dispatch emergency response services directly or to transfer or relay emergency 9-1-1 calls to other public safety agencies;
  - 3. The first point of reception by a public safety agency of a 9-1-1 call; and
  - 4. Serves the jurisdictions in which it is located or other participating jurisdictions.
- K. **Relay method** - the method of responding to a telephone request for emergency service by which a public safety answering point notes pertinent information and relays that information to the appropriate public safety agency or other provider of emergency services for appropriate action.
- L. **Selective routing** - the feature provided with computerized 9-1-1 service by which 9-1-1 calls are automatically routed to the answering point serving the place from which the call originates.
- M. **Service supplier** - an entity providing local exchange access lines to a service user in an emergency communication district.
- N. **Service user** - a person that is provided local exchange access lines, or their equivalent, in an emergency communication district.
- O. **Transfer method** - the method of responding to a telephone request for emergency service by which a public safety answering point transfers the call directly to the appropriate public safety agency or other provider of emergency services for appropriate action.
- P. **Data base** - the information stored in a management system that is a system of manual procedures and computer programs used to create, store, and update the data required for the selective routing and automatic location identification features in the provision of computerized 9-1-1 service.

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- Q. **Business service user** - a user of business service that provides telecommunications service, including 9-1-1 service, to end users through a publicly or privately owned telephone switch.
- R. **Business service** - a telecommunications service classified as a business service under rules adopted by the Public Utility Commission of Texas or under the applicable tariffs of the principal service supplier.
- S. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- T. Refer to your department policies and procedures manual for more definitions.

**3.1.6** The student will be able to identify some methods for tracing a call.

- A. Equipment.
- B. Basic guideline for tracing calls.

**3.1.7** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for using a wired telephone system.

### **Text Telephones (TTYs) for the Speech/Hearing Impaired**

**3.2.1** The student will be able to identify the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) involving public safety and emergency telecommunications.

- A. ADA and public safety.
- B. ADA and 9-1-1 system.
- C. State requirements
- D. Refer to your department policies and procedures.

**3.2.2** The student will be able to explain some issues involving individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, and/or speech impaired.

- A. Special needs/issues.
- B. Necessary equipment to meet State and Federal law.
- C. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

**3.2.2** The student will be able to explain the types of technology and systems used for providing TTY access and their basic operating functions.

- A. Systems and Technology.
- B. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

**3.2.3** The student will be able to explain the Baudot and ASCII signaling used in text telephones.

- A. Baudot.
- B. ASCII.
- C. Impact on 9-1-1 service.

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**3.2.4** The student will be able to identify some methods for handling a call requiring text communication.

- A. Identification of incoming TTY calls.
- B. Basic guideline on etiquette and protocols.
- C. Transmission difficulties.
  - 1. Causes.
  - 2. Solutions.

**3.2.5** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for using a text telephone.

### **Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems**

**3.3.1.** The student will be able to distinguish between a CAD and a mobile data system.

- A. CAD.
  - 1. Design and basic components.
  - 2. Operation/functions
  - 3. Advantages vs. disadvantages.
- B. Mobile data system.
  - 1. Design and basic components.
  - 2. Operation/functions
  - 3. Advantages vs. disadvantages.
- C. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

**3.3.2** The student will be able to identify the components of a CAD and how they relate to other computer systems.

- A. Unit status.
- B. Unit recommendations.
- C. TLETS/TCIC/NCIC interface.
- D. Automatic functions.
- E. Location history.
- F. Automatic prioritizing of calls.
- G. Emergency message communications.
- H. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

**3.3.3** The student will be able to explain some methods for handling problems with a CAD system and/or a mobile data system.

- A. Basic guideline.
- B. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

**3.3.4** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for using CAD and mobile data systems.

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### **Maps and Recorders**

- 3.4.1** The student will be able to identify the various types of mapping tools utilized in a communications department/center.
- A. Mapping equipment.
  - B. Purpose: to provide assistance in locating callers and tracking responders.
  - C. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 3.4.2** The student will be able to identify some types of recording equipment utilized in a communications department/center.
- A. Recording equipment or logging recorders.
  - B. Purpose: to help assist in documenting conversations transmitted over phone or radio.
  - C. Functions.
  - D. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 3.4.3** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for using maps and recorders.

### **Radio Communications and Technologies**

- 3.5.1** The student will be able to identify the various types of radio communication systems.
- A. Simplex.
  - B. Half-duplex.
  - C. Repeater system.
  - D. Interagency systems:
    - 1. Mobile to mobile
    - 2. Mobile to base
    - 3. Base to mobile
    - 4. Base to base
  - E. Texas law enforcement interagency radio system (intercity).
  - F. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 3.5.2** The student will be able to define terms and concepts associated with radio technology.
- A. Definitions.
  - B. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 3.5.3** The student will be able to explain the functions and operations of a radio.
- A. Functions.
  - B. Operations.
  - C. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

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- 3.5.4** The student will be able to list some Federal Communications (FCC) requirements of emergency telecommunication.
- A. FCC rules that govern the use of public airways.
  - B. FCC rules that govern Public Safety Communications Center radio systems.
  - C. FCC licenses for radio “stations.”
  - D. Radio frequencies for departments/call centers.
  - E. Refer to your department’s policies and procedures.
- 3.5.5** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods of radio communications and technologies.

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### 4.0 Basic Communication Skills

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize the process of applying effective basic communication skills.

**[Refer to Appendix “A” for Basic Emergency Call-Taking Techniques.]**

#### 4.1.1 The student will be able to list some types of ACTIVE listening techniques.

- A. Emotion Labeling.
  - 1. Example: “You sound really angry about that.”
  - 2. The first active listening skill to be used in an incident.
  - 3. Respond to the emotion heard, not the content.
  - 4. Demonstrates that you are really listening and tuned into what the subject is emotionally experiencing.
  - 5. Do not tell a person how they are feeling, but how they seem or sound like they are feeling to you.
- B. Paraphrasing.
  - 1. Example: “Are you telling me ... Are you saying ...?”
  - 2. Give the story back to them in your words.
  - 3. Demonstrates you are listening.
  - 4. A summary in your words of what you were just told.
  - 5. Creates empathy and rapport because it demonstrates you have heard and understand.
  - 6. Creates empathy and rapport, clarifies content, allows you to obtain additional intelligence.
- C. Reflecting/Mirroring.
  - 1. Example: “She said she was going to leave with your grandson?”
  - 2. Repeating back the last word or phrase the subject just said. (Be careful, this technique can be overused.)
  - 3. Gives feedback that is very exact.
- D. Effective Pauses.
  - 1. Silence.
  - 2. Most people are not comfortable with silence and fill it with talk.
  - 3. Use of silence:
    - a. When you are about to say something important
    - b. When you have said something important
  - 4. Caller will feel obligated to keep talking – say something.
  - 5. Can only be used once rapport has been established.
- E. Minimal Encouragers.
  - 1. Examples: “Uh huh?”, “And?”, “OK”, “All right”, “I see”, “Really?”
  - 2. The sounds you make especially on the telephone, to let the other person know you are there and listening.
  - 3. May be short questions such as “Oh?” and “When?”
  - 4. Help build rapport.

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- F. "I" Messages.
    - 1. Example: "I really feel uncomfortable with you holding that gun to yourself." Or, "I want to help, but you're really starting to scare me."
    - 2. Enables you to let the subject know how they are making you feel, why you feel that way, and what they can do to remedy the situation.
    - 3. Humanize yourself to the caller.
    - 4. Convey your message in a non-threatening manner.
  - G. Open Ended Questions.
    - 1. Examples: "What upset you so much tonight?", "What happened to make you feel this way?"
    - 2. Questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no answer.
    - 3. Gets the subject to start talking.
    - 4. Gets you away from "just the facts" (like Joe Friday would say).
- 4.1.2** The student will be able to identify some methods of effective communication.
- A. Receiving, extracting, and disseminating information with total accuracy.
    - 1. Receive – listen to details of situation.
    - 2. Extract data – document all pertinent details of situation (dictation/note taking)
    - 3. Disseminate facts – deliver the information to respective individual (s) via telephone or written communication.
  - B. Barriers to Good Listening.
    - 1. Acting as judge and jury - you can't be involved in judging and hear the whole story.
    - 2. Tuning-in vs. Tuning-out - if you're not paying attention, you're missing information.
    - 3. Turning off ideas you don't agree with - when your mind closes, so do your ears.
    - 4. Jumping to conclusions - listening involves entering into the other person's frame of reference. Don't get caught up in your own assumptions. Be message-minded, not image-minded.
    - 5. Active vs. Passive.
    - 6. Image vs. Message.
    - 7. The optic nerve is 25 times stronger than aural nerve. In other words, there is a very strong bias toward vision (as opposed to hearing).
    - 8. Self-consciousness.
    - 9. Inability to concentrate.
    - 10. Programming – hearing what we want, are expecting, or are taught to hear.
  - C. Effective Intervention Techniques.
    - 1. Work toward getting the caller to express the emotion they are feeling.
    - 2. Put actions in perspective.
    - 3. Express personal concern and empathy.
    - 4. Encourage the caller to tell their story.
    - 5. Bide for time.
    - 6. Use active listening skills.



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- D. Tone of Voice.
  - 1. A calm voice causes the other party to concentrate on listening and not on preparing a reply.
  - 2. A soothing voice allows the caller to believe that they are in a friendly atmosphere and that they are more likely to get help.
- E. Journalistic/Investigative Approach.
  - 1. Questions:
    - a. Where?
    - b. What?
    - c. Who?
    - d. When?
    - e. How?
    - f. Why? **\*Caution\***
    - g. Weapon?
  - 2. Where is the emergency? It may be a different location than where the call is coming from.
  - 3. What is the emergency? What responders are needed? (police, EMS, fire)
  - 4. Who is involved? (victims, suspects, witnesses)
  - 5. When did it happen? Was there a time delay?
  - 6. Why did it happen? Was there a motive?
  - 7. How did it happen? (specific details)
  - 8. Was a weapon used or observed?
- F. Use of Active Listening Skills.
  - 1. Creates an environment for positive change.
  - 2. Allows the telecommunicator to respond to the emotional needs of the caller.
  - 3. Allows the telecommunicator to listen to the caller, and have the caller know that the call-taker is actually listening to and understanding him/her.
  - 4. Allows time to pass positively, builds rapport, gains intelligence.

**4.1.3** The student will be able to explain some important considerations of good communication and call-taking during a crisis situation.

- A. After identifying himself/herself, express a desire to help the subject.
- B. An important goal of a telecommunicator should be to buy time.
  - Reasons for buying time:
    - 1. Reduces stress and anxiety
    - 2. Increases rationality
    - 3. Decreases emotions
    - 4. Possibility that caller “surrenders”
    - 5. Telecommunicator can gather intelligence for better decision-making and relay to responding law enforcement and EMS personnel
    - 6. Reduces expectation of the caller
    - 7. Allows for a rapport to build between the caller and the telecommunicator

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8. Increases the caller's basic needs (food, drink, sleep, bathroom, need to talk to a loved one, etc. - in others words, distractions and reasons for survival)
  - C. Be calm, but firm. Example: "Calm down and listen to me."
  - D. Be prepared to hear anything ranging from complete silence to loud and abusive ranting. The telecommunicator should not respond to barrages of verbal abuse, and should maintain a perfect picture of calmness.
  - E. Nothing is best left unsaid except words spoken in anger. To know what someone is thinking is to know how that person feels, and that is the first step toward understanding. We can't help each other if we don't understand each other's needs.
  - F. The telecommunicator should also show empathy (i.e., understanding) for what the subject is saying by responding to the subject in a non-critical way.
  - G. The telecommunicator should not attempt to make light of what the subject is saying or respond to verbal abuse with verbal abuse. This is not always easy, and requires a great deal of discipline. It is only through this showing of empathy that the subject can be convinced to surrender or abandon his suicidal plan.
  - H. Telecommunicators' responsibilities to law enforcement and EMS personnel:
    1. Give pre-arrival medical instructions, survival instructions, and/or instructions to the caller in order to preserve physical evidence.
    2. Update pertinent information to responders. Keep your police officers informed of any changes, weapons, dangerous circumstance, etc. Help the officers be prepared - eliminate surprises for them.
    3. Provide a reasonable standard of care to your caller.
- 4.1.4** The student will be able to list some traits and qualities of a good telecommunicator.
- A. Patience
  - B. Good listener - quick at ability to read flags and "between the lines"
  - C. Good speaker (use of tone of voice, pitch, vocabulary, speed, etc.)
  - D. Understanding
  - E. Desire to help
  - F. Ability to remain calm under stress
  - G. Caring and compassionate
  - H. Empathetic
  - I. Resourceful
  - J. Is calm but firm
  - K. Ability to control stress
  - L. Alert
  - M. Properly trained and educated in telecommunications and law enforcement
  - N. Good note taker
  - O. Action oriented
  - P. Risk taker
  - Q. In control
  - R. Thrill seeker
  - S. Dedicated
  - T. Strong desire to be needed

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- U. Family oriented
  - V. Detail oriented
  - W. Takes good mental and written notes
  - X. Use active listening skills.
- 4.1.5 The student will be able to explain the importance of timely and accurate communication between the call-taker and the caller.
- A. Quick response from peace officers, EMS, firefighters, etc.
  - B. Safety of victim(s).
  - C. Safety of responding officer and other personnel.
  - D. Possible capture of suspect(s)
  - E. Meet public's expectations.
  - F. Fulfill your duty as an emergency telecommunicator.
  - G. Display good ethics and accountability.
  - H. May help decrease liability exposure.
  - I. Meet mission and goals of public safety.
  - J. Fosters good customer service.
  - K. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.1.8 The student will be able to identify specific methods for gathering pertinent information.
- A. Separating pertinent facts from "useless" information.
  - B. Perceptions, observations, and inferences.
  - C. Follow your department's policies and procedures.
- 4.1.9 The student will be able to explain some considerations for dealing with calls involving children and the elderly.
- 1. Considerations.
  - 2. Basic guideline for talking to children and/or the elderly.

[**Note:** Some material from this section was adapted from Commission course, Crisis Communications for Telecommunicators, #2120, revised July 2003].

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### 5.0 Call Classification and Procedures (Fire and EMS)

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize the process of classifying and handling calls requiring police, fire/rescue, and/or EMS emergency services.

**[Note to Instructor:** Refer to Appendix “A”, Basic Emergency Call-Taking Techniques; and Commission Course, Crisis Communication for Telecommunicators #2120 for in-depth instruction.]

#### Police

**5.1.1** The student will be able to list some types of police-related calls.

- A. Routine.
- B. Emergency.
- C. In-progress situations.
  - 3. Pursuits (foot and patrol)
  - 4. Robberies.
  - 5. Riots and violent demonstrations.
  - 6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Family violence (domestic disturbances)
- E. Suicide.
- F. Homicides.
- G. Kidnapping.
- H. Missing persons.
- I. Burglary.
- J. Unlawful entry.
- K. Rape/Assault.
- L. Hostage situations.
- M. Bomb threats.
- N. Vehicle accidents.
- O. Person(s) hit by a car.
- P. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Q. Refer to your department’s policies and procedures.

**5.1.2** The student will be able to identify some methods for classifying and providing pre-arrival instructions for law enforcement calls.

- A. Refer to call guides (flip cards, etc.).
- B. Refer to Appendix “A.”
- C. Refer to your department’s policies and procedures.

**5.1.3** The student will be able to explain the importance of maintaining peace officer and the public’s safety.

- A. Officer safety.
- B. Public safety.
- C. Find out if suspect(s) is still on the scene, and other potential dangers.

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- 5.1.4** The student will be able to discuss some methods for dealing with calls from children and the elderly regarding any type of emergency service.
- A. Talk slowly.
  - B. Be Patient.
  - C. Basic guideline.
  - D. Follow your department's policies and procedures.
- 5.1.5** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for classifying and handling calls requiring police service. [NOTE: Students should practice on systems and technologies discussed throughout this outline.]

## Fires/Rescuing

- 5.2.1** The student will be able to list some types of fire and rescue-related calls.
- A. Residential fires.
  - B. Commercial fires.
  - C. Environmental fires.
  - D. Explosions (bombs, chemicals, lab, vehicles, household appliances, etc.).
  - E. Smoke inhalation.
  - F. Hazardous materials.
  - G. Weapons of mass destructions (bio-terrorism, etc.).
  - H. Drowning.
  - I. Any type of medical emergency.
  - J. When needing rescuing.
  - K. Emergency management (flooding, severe thunder storms, ice storms, etc.).
  - L. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - M. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 5.2.2** The student will be able to identify some methods for classifying and providing pre-arrival instructions for calls requiring fire and/or rescue service.
- A. Obtain exact location (house address, subdivision, building name, address, floor, near a landmark, or a public building, etc.).
  - B. Obtain name of caller and a number where you can reach him/her.
  - C. Find out if there are others in the house/ building and how many.
  - D. Have the caller activate fire alarm, if not already done so, and if possible.
  - E. Tell the caller to evacuate the building immediately by using exit doors or windows – **DO NOT use elevators**. Have them account for everyone. (Personal safety and safety of others are the most important factors.)
  - F. Fires: If a fire extinguisher is available and if caller is able to do so, have caller follow these operating instructions (PASS):
    - 1. PULL the pin.
    - 2. AIM extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire (approach no closer than 8 feet from the fire).
    - 3. SQUEEZE the trigger while holding the extinguisher upright.

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4. SWEEP the extinguisher from side to side, covering the area of the fire with the extinguishing agent.
  5. Never turn your back on a fire.
  - G. Dispatch the call to appropriate department.
  - H. Rescue: Have the person(s) remain where they are at until help arrives.
  - I. Make sure to relay all pertinent information to all responding personnel.
  - J. Follow call guides (flip charts, etc.)
  - K. Follow department policy and procedures.
- 5.2.3** The student will be able to identify some methods for handling clothes/bodies that are on fire.
- A. Tell them the caller to the following:
    1. STOP moving.
    2. DROP to the floor.
    3. ROLL on the floor to smother flames.
    4. DRENCH with an emergency shower, sink hose, or water from a faucet.
    5. Have them evacuate house/building to a safe area.
  - B. Assure them that medical assistance is on the way.
  - C. Follow department policy and procedures.
- 5.2.4** The student will be able to explain the importance of maintaining firefighter/rescuer's and the public's safety.
- A. Firefighters/Rescuer's safety.
  - B. Public safety.
  - C. Find out if suspect(s) is still on the scene, and other potential dangers.
- 5.2.5** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for classifying and handling calls requiring fire/rescue service. [NOTE: Students should practice on systems and technologies discussed throughout this outline.]

### Other items of discussion:

- Primary fire dispatch information; Second and Third level information
- Looking for red flags
- Ancillary notifications
- Fire pre-arrival instructions
- Pre-incident planning
- Site/Incident specific information
- More telephone techniques

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### Medical Emergencies

**5.3.1** The student will be able to list some types of police-related calls.

- A. Any type of major injury on any person.
- B. Homicide.
- C. Suicide.
- D. Fires.
- E. Poisoning.
- F. Vehicle accidents.
- G. Stabbing/gunshots.
- H. Family Violence (domestic disturbances).
- I. Bleeding.
- J. Childbirth/miscarriages.
- K. Drowning.
- L. Heat exhaustion
- M. Choking.
- N. Burns.
- O. CPR/First Aid.
- P. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Q. Follow your department's policies and procedures.

**5.3.2** The student will be able to identify some methods for classifying and providing pre-arrival instructions for calls requiring EMS service.

- A. General guidelines:
  - 1. Keep the victim still and comfortable to avoid further injury. DO NOT MOVE THE VICTIM once away from danger.
  - 2. Ask the victim, "Are you okay?" and "What is wrong?"
  - 3. Check breathing and pulse - give CPR, if necessary
  - 4. Control serious bleeding by direct pressure on the wound.
  - 5. Identify the victim, look for emergency medical tag or a personal ID
  - 6. Carefully loosen and remove clothing
  - 7. Check for hidden injuries
  - 8. Determine injury or probable cause of illness - ask witnesses
  - 9. Note the victim's general appearance (skin color, etc.)
  - 10. Check for stains or burns around the victim's mouth – check breath odor for possible alcohol or drug overdose, or toxin
  - 11. Protect the victim from disturbances and exposure
  - 12. Continue to assist the victim until help arrives
  - 13. Try to keep the caller calm, and obtain as much information as possible.
- B. Refer to call guides (flip cards, etc.).
- C. Refer to Appendix "A."
- D. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

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- 5.3.3** The student will be able to explain the importance of maintaining peace officer and the public's safety.
- A. EMS personnel's safety.
  - B. Public safety.
  - C. Find out if suspect(s) is still on the scene, and other potential dangers.
- 5.3.4** The student will be able to explain important considerations when dealing with medical emergency calls.
- A. The danger of minimizing "common" or "typical" emergency calls.
  - B. Emergency situations are interpreted differently by each person.
  - C. Other concerns and issues.
- 5.3.5** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods for classifying and handling calls requiring police service. [NOTE: Students should practice on systems and

### Other Issues:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Common Misconceptions
- Risk Management
- Multiple calls
- Response Allocations & Resources
- Disaster preparedness.



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### 6.0 Radio Communication Techniques

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize some issues involving radio communication techniques.

- 6.1.1** The student will be able to explain the importance radio/data dispatch.
- A. After the call-taker receives the call for service it is sent to the radio dispatcher for assignment to field units (other jurisdictions and/or responding personnel). The dispatcher coordinates the field response, provides updated information and keeps track of all field responses. This process requires the dispatcher to listen to several radio frequencies, think about and respond to several different incidents during the same time, and keep ongoing records for all events.
  - B. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 6.1.2** The student will be able to identify some methods for using phonetic alphabets and numeric codes.
- A. Phonetic alphabet codes.
  - B. Numeric codes.
  - C. Articulating numbers and times when using a radio frequency.
    - a. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 6.1.3** The student will be able to identify some methods for broadcasting information over the radio.
- A. Voice projection.
  - B. Clarity.
  - C. Rate of speech.
  - D. Voice techniques.
  - E. Maintaining control.
  - F. Being Calm.
  - G. Being Alert.
  - H. Identifying and prioritizing traffic.
  - I. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 6.1.4** The student will be able to identify some methods for accurately dispatching responding personnel for emergency service.
- A. Police.
  - B. Fire.
  - C. EMS.
    - 1. Important medical terminology.
  - D. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.

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- 6.1.5** The student will be able to identify some methods for obtaining and broadcasting descriptions of motor vehicles, persons, and events.
- A. Describing motor vehicles.
  - B. Describing persons.
  - C. Describing events/situations.
  - D. Broadcasting signals, names, and numbers.
  - E. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 6.1.6** The student will be able to identify some methods for microphone and headset techniques to achieve effective broadcasting messaging.
- A. Microphone (Mikes).
  - B. Headset.
  - C. Refer to your department's policies and procedures.
- 6.1.7** The student will be able to demonstrate the methods of radio communication techniques.

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### 7.0 Liability and Legal Issues

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize some liability and legal issues involving emergency telecommunicators and their agencies.

**[Note to Instructor:** For other legal terms and concepts not discussed in this section, but are also pertinent to emergency telecommunications, refer to the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and Texas Penal Code.]

#### 7.1.1 The student will be able to define Liability, Vicarious Liability, and Tort.

- A. Definition of Liability – a legally enforced responsibility to pay damages for one’s wrongful conduct; accountable. [Ormsby, C.C., Jr., J.D. & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Connecticut: PowerPhone, Inc.]
- B. Definition of Vicarious Liability – an indirect legal responsibility of allowing liability to be placed upon one person for the actions of another. Example: A liability of an employer for the acts of an employee. [Ormsby, C.C., Jr., J.D. & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Connecticut: PowerPhone, Inc.]
- C. Ramifications, but not limited to include:
  - 1. Costly legal actions:
    - a. Definition of Tort – a private or civil wrong or injury, other than breach of contract, for which the court will provide a remedy in the form of an action for damages. [Black’s Law Dictionary. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (1979). West Publishing Company: Minnesota.]
    - b. Courts and attorney fees.
  - 2. Administrative reprimands from agency (i.e., suspension, administrative leave, or being laid off) – refer to your department’s policies and procedures manual.
  - 3. Can affect personal lives (i.e., family and friends, financial stability, etc.)

#### 7.1.2 The student will be able to define Negligence and Damages.

- A. Definition of Negligence – failure to do something that a reasonable person might do; failure to exercise the level of care required by law; and not following required standards. The goal of negligence law is to protect people against any unreasonable risk of harm to their person or property. [Ormsby, C.C., Jr., J.D. & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Connecticut: PowerPhone, Inc.] and [Black’s Law Dictionary. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (1979). West Publishing Company: Minnesota.]
- B. Elements of Negligence (all lead to liability under negligence law):
  - 1. Definition of Duty – a legal or moral obligation to service or conduct; legal obligation to Standard of Care of that of a “reasonable person.”
  - 2. Definition of Breach of Duty – failure to adequately perform a duty owed to another.
  - 3. Causation – two types:
    - a. Cause in Fact – an event that was necessary to result in a particular outcome, but for that event, the outcome would not have occurred.

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- b. Cause of Action – legal claim with sufficient facts to warrant judicial attention.
- 4. Definition of Damages – monetary compensation awarded to the injured person(s), which is determined by the court but paid by the person(s) who committed the wrong. The intent of awarding damages is to restore the injured person(s) to the position they would have been if the injury had not occurred.
- C. Providing Care under Negligence Law.
  - 1. Definition of Voluntary Assumption of Duty – a principle stating that a person who decides to act for the benefit of another, even though under no obligation to do so, is then under a duty to act in a reasonable manner.
  - 2. Definition of Standard of Care – the degree of care that a reasonable person owes to another under same or similar circumstances. If a person's conduct falls below the standard of care may result in a breach of duty; ultimately resulting in liability under negligence law.

[**Note:** Definitions adapted from: Ormsby, C.C., Jr., J.D. & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Connecticut: PowerPhone, Inc.; and Black's Law Dictionary. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (1979). West Publishing Company: Minnesota.]

### 7.1.3 The student will be able to define Immunity, Public Duty Doctrine, and "Good Samaritan Statute."

- A. Definition of Immunity – (also referred to as Sovereign Immunity) – an old English doctrine of "The King can do no wrong", then later expanded to almost all government action receiving total immunity from lawsuits; freedom from duty or penalty. However, today, this doctrine has been legislatively or judicially abolished almost universally.
- B. Definition of Public Duty Doctrine – legal doctrine stating that government holds a duty of care only to the public at large, but not a particular member or members of the public unless a "special relationship" (i.e. public or political official) is formed. For instance, if there is not special relationship found, then there is not duty owed to that person, and if there is no duty, then there can be no negligence.
- C. Definition of "Good Samaritan" Statute – statute that exist in some states protecting volunteer rescuers or responders from negligence suits based on their acts. However, Samaritans can still be liable if they reach the level of Gross Negligence.
  - 1. Definition of Gross Negligence – a high level of negligence; failure to use even a slight degree of care and/or representing extremely unreasonably conduct.
  - 2. Refer to Civil Practice & Remedies Code §74.001 – Liability for Emergency Care.

[**Note:** Definitions adapted from: Ormsby, C.C., Jr., J.D. & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Connecticut: PowerPhone, Inc]

### 7.1.4 The student will be able to explain some Federal laws that regulate emergency telecommunications and their agencies.

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- A. 42 U.S.C. §1983 – a federal law that allows lawsuits against state, local or federal governments if those entities act to deprive an individual of a federal right.
1. Equal Protection of the Laws:
    - a. 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution – three classes of rights: 1) privileges and immunities of U.S. citizens, 2) due process of law, and 3) equal protection under the law.
    - b. Due Process of Law – a guarantee found in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that states, “Nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” This phrase is designed to bring fairness to government’s citizens. In a procedural context, if the government is going to take away a citizen’s life, liberty or property, they must give that person sufficient notice of their intention and allow that person to a fair hearing before depriving them of his/her rights. Notices and hearings vary according to each case.
      - (1) An opportunity for one to be given notice and be heard.

**7.1.5** The student will be able to explain some State laws that regulate emergency telecommunicators and their agencies.

- A. Health and Safety Code (HSC).
1. § 576.001. Rights of a Person with Mental Illness under the Constitution and Law – “(a) A person with mental illness in this state has the rights, benefits, responsibilities, and privileges guaranteed by the constitution and laws of the United States and this state. (b) Unless a specific law limits a right under a special procedure, a patient has: (1) the right to register and vote at an election; (2) the right to acquire, use, and dispose of property, including contractual rights; (3) the right to sue and be sued; (4) all rights relating to the grant, use, and revocation of a license, permit, privilege, or benefit under law; (5) the right to religious freedom; and (6) all rights relating to domestic relations.”
  2. §771.053. Liability of Service Providers and Certain Public Officers – “(a) A service provider of telecommunications service involved in providing 9-1-1 service, a manufacturer of equipment used in providing 9-1-1 service, or an officer or employee of a service provider involved in providing 9-1-1 service is not liable for any claim, damage, or loss arising from the provision of 9-1-1 service unless the act or omission proximately causing the claim, damage, or loss constitutes gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct. (b) A member of the commission or of the governing body of a public agency is not liable for any claim, damage, or loss arising from the provision of 9-1-1 service unless the act or omission causing the claim, damage, or loss violates a statute or ordinance applicable to the action.”

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3. §771.061. Confidentiality of Information – “(a) Information that a service provider of telecommunications service is required to furnish to a governmental entity in providing computerized 9-1-1 service is confidential and is not available for public inspection. Information that is contained in an address database maintained by a governmental entity or a third party used in providing computerized 9-1-1 service is confidential and is not available for public inspection. The service provider or third party is not liable to any person who uses a computerized 9-1-1 service for the release of information furnished by the service provider or third party in providing computerized 9-1-1 service, unless the act or omission proximately causing the claim, damage, or loss constitutes gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct. (b) Information that a service provider of telecommunications service furnishes to the commission or an emergency communication district to verify or audit emergency service fees or surcharge remittances and that includes access line or market share information of an individual service provider is confidential and not available for public inspection.”
  4. §771.107. Liability – (Text of section effective until September 1, 2003) - The operations of the regional emergency medical dispatch resource center are considered to be the provision of 9-1-1 services for purposes of Section 771.053. Employees of and volunteers at the center have the same protection from liability as a member of the governing body of a public agency under Section 771.053.
- B. Civil Practice and Remedies Code.
1. § 74.001. Liability for Emergency Care (Good Samaritan Law)– “(a) A person who in good faith administers emergency care, including using an automated external defibrillator, at the scene of an emergency but not in a hospital or other health care facility or means of medical transport is not liable in civil damages for an act performed during the emergency unless the act is willfully or wantonly negligent. (b) This section does not apply to care administered: (1) for or in expectation of remuneration; or (2) by a person who was at the scene of the emergency because he/she or a person he/she represents as an agent was soliciting business or seeking to perform a service for remuneration. (c) If the scene of an emergency is in a hospital or other health care facility or means of medical transport, a person who in good faith administers emergency care is not liable in civil damages for an act performed during the emergency unless the act is willfully or wantonly negligent, provided that this subsection does not apply to care administered: (1) by a person who regularly administers care in a hospital emergency room unless such person is at the scene of the emergency for reasons wholly unrelated to the person's work in administering health care; or (2) by an admitting or attending physician of the patient or a treating physician associated by the admitting or attending physician of the patient in question. (d) For purposes of Subsections (b)(1) and (c)(1), a person who would ordinarily receive or be entitled to receive a salary, fee, or

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other remuneration for administering care under such circumstances to the patient in question shall be deemed to be acting for or in expectation of remuneration even if the person waives or elects not to charge or receive remuneration on the occasion in question. (e) This section does not apply to a person whose negligent act or omission was a producing cause of the emergency for which care is being administered.”

2. § 74.002. Unlicensed Medical Personnel – “Persons not licensed in the healing arts who in good faith administer emergency care as emergency medical service personnel are not liable in civil damages for an act performed in administering the care unless the act is willfully or wantonly negligent. This section applies without regard to whether the care is provided for or in expectation of remuneration.”
- C. Labor Code.
  1. §22.001(3). Employment Discrimination for Participating in Emergency Evacuation - "*Emergency services personnel* includes fire fighters, police officers and other peace officers, emergency medical technicians, and other individuals who are required, in the course and scope of their employment, to provide services for the benefit of the general public during emergency situations.”

[**Note:** Refer to Appendix B for a list of other legal terms and a list of selected court cases related to this unit.]

### 7.1.6 The student will be able to identify some methods for reducing exposure of liability.

- A. Ways of protecting yourself and your department.
  1. Practicing effective call-taking and communication skills.
  2. Training and education.
  3. Using common sense.
  4. Prioritizing skills.
  5. Follow department policies and procedures.
- B. Accountability to others (not in any particular order).
  1. Peace officers, firefighters, and EMT personnel.
  2. Supervisors and department.
  3. General public.
- C. Public expectations from telecommunicators (not in any particular order).
  1. Quality of service (prompt dispatching, accurate, etc.)
  2. Prioritizing.
  3. Improved customer service.
  4. Follow department policies and procedures.

### 7.1.7 The student will be able describe how the “call receiving”, “dispatching”, and “post-dispatch” phases of emergency communications can increase an exposure of liability.

- A. Call receiving phase.
- B. Dispatching phase.
- C. Post-dispatching phase.

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- D. List of specific actions and inactions as potential liability concerns:
  - 1. Provide list with examples.
- 7.1.8** The student will be able to discuss some discriminatory or improper practices as they relate to liability issues.
  - A. Provide examples and/or actual cases.
  - B. Law enforcement capacity.
- 7.1.9** The student will be able to discuss some liability concerns in law enforcement, fire/rescue, and EMS agencies that may involve a telecommunicator.
  - A. “Expectation of service.”
  - B. Response time.
  - C. Obtaining information during call. (dictating/note-taking)
  - D. “Standard of care.”
  - E. Provide examples and/or actual cases.



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### 8.0 Stress Management

**Unit Goal:** The student will be able to summarize the process of stress management for inside and outside a communications department/center.

[**Note to Instructor:** Refer to Appendix C for handouts of recommended exercises.]

#### 8.1.1 The student will be able to define Stress.

- A. Definition of Stress – mental, emotional, or physical tension, strain, or distress. (Webster's II New College Dictionary, 1995).
  - 1. "Stressed-out" or "Burned-out" – slang term for being stress. Undergoing or suffering the effects of extreme stress. The result of constant or repeated emotional pressure associated with an intense involvement with people or a problem over long periods of time.
  - 2. A physical response of the body that occurs whenever we must adapt to changing conditions.
  - 3. It is not a disease, rather a response to an environmental event or a mental frustration.
  - 4. It is not anxiety or depression.
  - 5. Stressors – any stimulus that triggers the stress response.
    - a. Types:
      - (1) **Environmental:** extreme temperatures, high levels of noise, hostile people, etc. (Equipment malfunctions. Ex: TTY down/CAD crashes.)
      - (2) **Psychological:** dealing with critical incidents (death, pediatric death, suicide, etc.), personal injury, anxiety in family, crucial mistakes, boredom, uncertainty, poor leadership, lack of feedback or recognition, making rapid decisions, lack of encouragement, specialized duty, lack of advancement opportunity or personal development, lack of management's respect, etc.
      - (3) **Personal:** family issues, etc.
      - (4) **Social:** Relationship problems with friends or significant others, not getting along with coworkers, etc.
      - (5) **Life changes:** Menopause, mid-life crisis, separation or divorce, loss of child custody, etc.
- B. Negative Consequences of Stress:
  - 1. Can foster diseases (heart diseases), illnesses, pain, and overall poor health.
  - 2. Can lead to loss of motivation, absenteeism, decreased productivity, decreased quality of performance, diminished creativity, and a host of maladaptive coping measures.
- C. Positive Consequence of Stress:
  - 1. Minimal stress is essential for vitality and optimal functioning of the brain and body.

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2. Can challenge and provide stimulus for growth and positive developments throughout one's life.
3. Perceived to be a process of adapting to the challenges and changes of life.

**8.1.2** The student will be able to identify some important facts about dispatcher stress.

- A. Top ten things a telecommunicator/dispatcher should know about stress:
1. *Dispatcher stress is not always caused by the same things as police officer stress, firefighter stress, or EMT/paramedic stress.* Some of the stressors are similar and may arise from the same precipitating incidents; but there are many, which are unique to the profession. Also, a dispatcher most often does not have the opportunity to physically discharge stress and anxiety-related energy, and must remain at the console awaiting the next caller in need. Often, there are not even debriefing options for dispatchers because the concept of dispatcher stress is not as fully recognized as that of stress for field workers.
  2. *Most dispatchers identify poor communications within the department as a prime cause of stress.* Dispatchers identify failure to listen to the line troops when making policy, inconsistent messages from "above" (field hears one thing, office hears another; one shift does things this way, the next shift does things that way), and downright "silly" rules as being among their most distressing job related issues.
  3. *The work environment can take just as much out of you as the work!* Among the many work environment issues are lighting, noise, ventilation, windows, security and ergonomics.
  4. *Dispatching is a sedentary job.* You must make yourself exercise regularly. Routine simple exercise provides cardiovascular benefit and positive influence on mood and energy levels at no financial cost. Dispatchers will often say things like, "I don't have the time." They feel that the time it takes is too high a cost for whatever immediate benefits they can see. The key word here is immediate. Dispatchers are outcome-oriented people who do their best work when two critical aspects of emergency communications are being met: speed and accuracy. This can be a real pitfall when applied to your personal life. If you are looking for immediate speedy return on your investment of time in whatever exercise program you undertake (including just getting out and walking around the building a few times), you are going to be disappointed.
  5. *Dispatchers' diets are generally awful.* Example: large amounts of antacid tablets in communications centers; fast food; fried food; vending machine food, etc. Eating these things at times when your stomach is ill prepared to deal with them can exacerbate the problem. Your body has a number of "circadian" ("around the day") cycles that influence, among other things, alertness, body temperature and digestion. Night shift no-no's include foods high in spice or fat, fried foods, whole milk, tomato juice, foods with caffeine in them and "heavy" foods like Dagwood sandwiches and pizza. The better (and usually less expensive) choice is to pack healthier and more reasonable food. Once again, as in the case of

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exercise, this entails a little more effort. But the long-term payoff is worth it. And, wherever possible, get meal relief! Eating at your work console is never recommended.

6. *Have variety in your life.* Developing a life “outside the job” is extremely important. Just like exercising more and improving one’s eating habits, this one also requires some effort. Going to school, committing to community activities, or simply engaging in a hobby is often hard to do because of your hours. Nonetheless, these things are important because they help to offset the forces that engender cynicism. For instance, coaching youth basketball can remind you that most kids are not potential felons. If your job has many inherent frustrations associated with it and most of what you do with your life is job related, what do you think the influence on your outlook and mood will be?
7. *Try to maintain a working relationship with peace officers; vise versa.* This includes ride-alongs where dispatchers find that sometimes the reason that the officer asks for a repeat of the message transmitted 10 seconds ago is that there are noises and distractions in the field of which the communications center is unaware. This will reduce the incidence of dispatcher’s automatically assuming that the officer is deaf or lazy. Similarly, the officer who visits the communications center will have an opportunity to see that simply coming on the air and transmitting a message does not mean that that message was heard. This will reduce the incidence of the officer’s assuming that the dispatcher is stupid or incompetent. In this case, familiarity breeds respect.
8. *High expectations can be killers.* Approaching this job field with the idea that you’ll dramatically save a life every day can be disappointing; it can take only a week or so to be somewhat deflated. If you hold the expectation that you must do everything right all the time, you are also setting yourself up for frustration. If you anticipate that your family, the field units, and even your bosses will understand and appreciate your job, you are, unfortunately, asking for trouble. Talk to your colleagues and mentors on how they have coped with these issues. As with any high stressful job, be cautious not to hold unrealistic expectations for yourself or those around you. That can increase your stress; thus, shorten your career.
9. *Competence in the task at hand reduces stress. Proper training increases competence and confidence.* The key word here is “proper”. What constitutes proper training? When it comes to operational training in police, fire or EMS dispatching, there are a number of good training options out there. Dispatcher stress training, however, is another story. In this area, not only is it useful to have trainers who have done the job; but they also need to have specific expertise beyond platform skills and good intentions. The instructor in a dispatcher stress program needs to have credibility among the dispatcher-students and a working knowledge of human biology and psychodynamics. Familiarity with circadian rhythms, dispatcher ergonomics, dispatcher belief systems, common dispatch and

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field personnel attitudes, and dispatch operations are just a few of the things this instructor must have in order to do the job.

10. *You act and feel according to what you think.* A good deal of dispatcher stress is, by virtue of the nature of the job, unavoidable. But there is even more dispatcher stress that is unavoidable because dispatchers' thinking makes it that way. The way that we think has enormous influence over the way we feel. Our thinking influences our mood. Training for new thinking and beliefs requires that dispatchers suspend cynicism long enough to allow new ideas into psyches long enough to get a tight grip.

### 8.1.3 The student will be able to identify some contributing factors of stress.

- A. Having to remain calm and controlled on the air all the time during critical incidents can lead to stress.
- B. Dealing with/exposure to critical incidents on a daily/continuous basis:
  1. Critical incident - event that can overwhelm an individual's capacity to copy. Sudden powerful events, which are outside the range of ordinary human experiences.
    - a. Examples (but not limited to):
      - (1) Violent death or traumatic injury of a person.
      - (2) An officer taking a life in the line of duty.
      - (3) Death of a person, especially an infant or child.
      - (4) Any life-threatening injury.
      - (5) Suicide, homicide, hostage situations.
      - (6) Multiple fatalities.
      - (7) A rescue operation where the victim dies.
      - (8) Domestic violence incidents.
      - (9) National or public murders, disaster, or weapons of mass destruction (Columbine, Oklahoma City Bombing, 9/11).
- C. Other factors (but not limited to):
  1. Poor health.
  2. Lack of exercise.
  3. Poor nutrition or eating habits.
  4. Lack of sleep.
  5. Family or personal issues.
  6. Financial issues.
  7. Lack of personal time.
  8. Alcohol/drugs.
  9. The job in general (no/not enough time off, shift work, coworkers, boss, duties, no/limited breaks, high volume of incoming calls, etc.)
  10. Demand of job and duties. Too much pressure.
  11. Demands of family life and parenthood.
  12. Difficult time adapting to work schedule (shift work, or rotating shifts)

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**8.1.4** The student will be able to explain some predispositions of stress and personality traits that can be linked to a person's susceptibility of stress.

- A. Traits: low-self esteem; lack of assertiveness; inability to express anger; hostility or aggression in one's own defense; external loss of control and feelings of helplessness; self-sacrificing behavior; and others.
- B. Type A vs. B behavior:
  - 1. *Type A*: competitive, egocentric, perfectionists, hard worker, produces superior work (when completed accurately), always in a hurry and feel a sense of time urgency, irritable, impatient, attempt to do two or more things at once, cannot cope with leisure time, always motivated/walking/eating rapidly, obsessed with numbers and measure success in terms of how much or how many, seek challenges, can perform poorly on judgment tasks, impatient, are subject to analysis in terms of quantity rather than quality, make good mid-level managers but not high-level executives, they don't mind if they live frantic lives, do not like to waste time, and tend to get nervous when they have to sit and relax.
  - 2. *Type B*: calm, laid back, perform better on complex judgment tasks, work tends to be accurate, great decisionmakers, more creative, patient and can stay focused on one thing, never suffer from sense of time urgency, no need to discuss achievements and accomplishments unless demanded, play for fun and relaxation, relax without guilt, and make good high-level executives (better than poor mid-level managers).

**8.1.5** The student will be able to identify some signs and symptoms of stress.

- A. *Physical*: loss of appetite; pounding heart; ulcers, hypertension, arthritis, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, cold and sweaty hands; profuse sweating; teeth grinding; dizziness; rapid, erratic or shallow breathing; insomnia; shortness of breath; nausea or vomiting; upset stomach; sharp abdominal pain; muscle weakness or tremors; headaches; shaking hands; muscle pain or tremors; allergy flare-ups; skin rashes or hives; insomnia; poor muscle and joint coordination; increased internal body temperature; complications with gastrointestinal and digestive organs; decreased heart strength; cardiac failure, collapsing often, hyperventilating, fatigue and exhaustion, and others.
- B. *Emotional*: anger; fear; inappropriate emotions; depression; denial; irritability; feeling overwhelmed; sudden mood shifts; severe panic (rare); paranoia or worry; anxiety; sadness; grief; mixed emotions; guilt; racing thoughts; and others.
- C. *Behavioral*: withdrawal; emotional outbursts; suspiciousness; increased or decreased sexual desire; acting out; pacing the floor; increased or decreased appetite; startle reactions; change in unusual communications; isolation; increased consumption of alcohol; recklessness; avoidance; interpersonal conflicts; morale problems; prone to accidents and making mistakes; early retirement; decreased ability to make effective decisions; and others.
- D. *Cognitive*: blaming someone or yourself; poor decisions; raised or lowered alertness; distractibility; hypervigilance; poor problem-solving ability; forgetfulness; preoccupation with detail; flashbacks; nightmares; intrusive images and thoughts; memory problems; loss of orientation; and others.

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- E. *External:* high medical costs; chronic absenteeism; alcoholism; depression; mental problems that undermine judgment and adversely affect performance; attrition; suicide; and others.
- F. NOTE: If you have experienced these signs and symptoms (or are currently experiencing), you are normal and are having normal reactions. Don't label yourself as anything else!

### 8.1.6 The student will be able to list some areas for dealing with stress.

- A. Peer support groups. (colleagues, associations, union members)
- B. Confidential sources.
- C. Professional therapy, fee.
- D. Non-therapy, with no fee. (private and government sponsored organizations)
- E. Educate yourself on job issues and ways to control stress.
- F. Someone that's not going to critique you, just listen or allow you to vent.
- G. Relax in a quiet room.

### 8.1.7 The student will be able to list some methods for reducing or eliminating stress.

- A. Regular aerobic physical exercise (walking, swimming, jogging, weightlifting, tennis, etc.).
- B. Maintaining a well-balanced diet (Refer to Appendix F for Nutritional Knowledge Test). Eat regular and well-balanced meals, even when you don't feel like it. Sapping your physical strength only detracts from the emotional strength you need right now.
- C. Get plenty of rest.
- D. Evaluate what your interests and issues are (Refer to Appendix F for Interests and Issues Checklist as an example).
- E. Counseling: peer, marriage, family, personal, or other to target a specific issue.
- F. Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol. Avoid numbing the pain with the overuse of drugs or alcohol. You don't need to complicate the situation with a substance abuse problem.
- G. Seminars, workshops, and conventions on stress management, goal setting, etc.
- H. Continuing education and training in your career field.
- I. Taking vacations, traveling, using leisure time creatively, engaging in hobbies and social relationships outside of the law enforcement field.
- J. Decompression, biofeedback training, and systematic relaxation – meditation, Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, self-pacing, etc.
- K. Try to identify a particular stressor and find an alternative (Refer to Appendix F for Cognitive Reappraisal handout).
- L. Try to joke and laugh more often.
- M. Leave work problems at work; and personal problems at home.
- N. Structure your time and keep busy. Reach out, people do care. Maintain as normal a schedule as possible. Spend time with others. Help your coworkers by sharing feelings. Help your coworkers by checking how they're doing.
- O. Keep a journal; write through sleepless hours. Engage in things that feel good to you.
- P. Realize that others around you are under stress.

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- Q. Make as many decisions as possible that give you a feeling of control over your life, such as if someone asks you what you want to eat, answer them – even if you're not sure or don't care.
- R. Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks of the scene are normal events. They will decrease over time and become less painful to you, so don't try to fight them or think that they "shouldn't happen".
- S. Give yourself permission to feel "rotten" and share those feelings with others.
- T. Make the following suggestions to your superiors at your department:
  - 1. Duty assignments be rotated on a regular basis. This can help combat fatigue, overload, and boredom.
  - 2. Decrease workload.
  - 3. Provide adequate/formal training.
  - 4. Make an effort to improve the morale and reputation of dispatchers.
  - 5. Increase in pay salary and benefits.
  - 6. Perform an in-house study of dispatchers, tasks, and needs.
  - 7. Allow you to leave your console periodically, even if someone else has to cover for you.
  - 8. Improve communication center working conditions.
  - 9. Add windows to the workplace, ensure adequate lighting, comfortable chairs, footstools, good ventilation, ergonomically designed equipment, and adjustable stations.
  - 10. Imply that you appreciate positive recognition and value when deserved.
  - 11. Expose officers to the communication center while training or in the academy to help recruits/rookies understand a dispatcher's position to understand a dispatcher's role and responsibilities and perhaps before developing misconceptions. Allow dispatchers to participate in ride-alongs with peace officers. This can help foster a mutual respect.
  - 12. Cross-train.
  - 13. Provide shift structures/schedules that reduce uncertainty.
  - 14. Have regular staff meetings to discuss problems.
  - 15. Ensure that department has an Employee Assistance Program and Critical Incident Debriefing Team.

### Related Issues for Discussion:

- Job Analysis/Evaluation
- Co-worker relations
- Lifestyle Evaluation/Planning
- Nutrition Evaluation
- *Circadian Rhythms* – a daily rhythmic activity cycle, based on 24-hour intervals, that is exhibited by many organisms
- Specific Job Related Stressors
- Stress Inventory Scale
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- More Stress Management Techniques
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Programs

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**Appendix A**

**Basic Emergency Call-Taking Techniques**

## Basic Telecommunications

### Basic Telephone Techniques

**Purpose:** This section will provide a familiarity of the basic telephone tools that are essential for being an effective telecommunicator. Always consult with your local departmental policy for specific regulations and procedures.

**Scope of Problem:** As call centers become more and more overwhelmed with emergency calls, it is essential for telecommunicators to communicate in a professional and tactful manner. The following are some basic guidelines for maintaining proper telephone etiquette.

- A. Tone of Voice.
  - 1. Is your tone of voice friendly or unfriendly?
  - 2. Is it clear?
  - 3. How's your rate of speed? Too fast? Too slow?
  - 4. How's your voice's volume? Too soft? Too loud?
  - 5. Do you sound like you're being patient?
- B. Choice of Words.
  - 1. Do you use jargon?
  - 2. Do you use customer-friendly words?
- C. Cliff Hangers.
  - 1. Offer to help every caller.
  - 2. Assure the caller that help is on the way.
  - 3. Use a proactive support statement. For example, "Let me have your name and number, and I'll see that someone gets your message."
- D. The Dreaded Hold.
  - 1. Explain you'll need to put the caller on hold.
  - 2. Be truthful. Present a mini-visual. For example: "Are you able to hold?" or "Can you hold, please?" Wait for a response before putting the person on hold.
- E. Missed Messages.
  - 1. Avoid unhelpful statements.
  - 2. Offer to help. For example, "How can I help you?" or "What can I do for you?"
- F. Knowledge.
  - 1. Use your knowledge about your department to help your customers.
  - 2. Learn the policies and procedures from your department and apply them to your job duties.
- G. Experience.
  - 1. Use your life and work experience when providing customer service.
  - 2. Try to remember what you've learned through your formal and informal training experiences.

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### H. Data.

1. Keep often-used and needed telephone numbers nearby.
2. Anticipate your caller's requests.
3. Ask open-ended questions (e.g., "What can you tell me about the car?"); supplement with closed-ended questions (e.g., "What color was the car?"); avoid asking suggestive or leading questions (e.g., "Was the car red?")
4. Ask if anything else should be known about the incident.
5. Transmit the information to responding officer(s).
6. Update officer(s) as more information comes in.
7. Use "Call Guide" cards, when necessary. These cards can be obtained through local departments and/or through training courses. They are usually compiled in a flip-chart booklet for quick access.

### I. Posture.

1. Practicing proper body posture helps maintain air passages free and clear, and healthy joints and bones.

### J. Equipment.

1. There are a variety of telephone and radio technology now available.
2. Ensure that your department offers updated and operational equipment in order for you to effectively respond to incoming calls.

### K. Support Group.

1. Be willing to ask for support from your co-workers; and be available to provide your support to them as well. For instance, serving as a back-up or relief person when needed; sharing notes; training, etc.
2. Becoming involved in support groups and organizations offered to telecommunicators can have many benefits. This can allow you to learn new telephone techniques, share your work experiences, and help relieve stress and frustration, etc.

### L. First Impressions.

### M. Correct Message Taking.

### N. Managing Call Volume.

### O. Your Telephone Personality.

### P. Call Screening.

### Q. The Holding Zone; Call Transfers.

### R. Journalistic/Investigative Approach.

### S. Professionalism.

### T.irate Callers. (Detailed Unit, "Angry and/or Difficult Callers")

**Appendix B**

**Liability & Legal Supplement**

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### Other Legal Terms

[Source: Ormsby, C. C., Jr., J.D., & Salafia, P.M., Jr. (1998). 9-1-1 Liability: A Call for Answers. Conn.: Powerphone, Inc.]

**CAUSE OF ACTION:** A legal claim with sufficient facts to warrant judicial attention.

**CIRCUIT COURTS:** Courts that are part of a system of courts that cover a given area or jurisdiction. There are thirteen federal judicial circuits in which the United States Courts of Appeal operate.

**CIVIL LAW:** An area of law, not criminal in nature, where suits may be brought to enforce and protect private rights.

**COMMON LAW:** A legal system, which is based on judicial precedent (previously decided cases) as opposed to statutory laws. In a sense, common law is “judge-made law.” As courts interpret the meaning and applicability of statutes when deciding cases, lower courts are then bound by those interpretations in reaching their future decisions.

**CONSORTIUM:** The spousal relationship between a husband and wife. The loss of consortium can be a factor in determining the damages in a tort action for wrongful death.

**DEFENDANT:** Under civil law, this is the party being sued, who must respond to the legal complaint of the plaintiff.

**DICTUM:** A comment or remark in a judicial opinion that is not required to decide the case. A dictum offers insight into the thought process of the court; however, because it is not necessary to the decision of the case and arguments were not presented specifically on the topic, the dictum is not binding in subsequent cases. See common law.

**DISCRETIONARY ACTS:** Acts of government that involve high-level planning or policy decisions. See discretionary-ministerial test.

**DISCRETIONARY-MINISTERIAL TEST:** A test developed to determine if a government is protected with immunity from negligence lawsuits. The test is based on making a distinction between the “discretionary” acts of government and the “ministerial” acts of government, with only the latter being subject to liability. See discretionary acts and ministerial acts.

**EQUAL PROTECTION:** A constitutional guarantee found in the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which reads in part “*No State shall...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*” Generally this clause is designed to scrutinize statutes, which discriminate against a special class of people to make sure there is proper justification for such discrimination.

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**GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTION:** A function of the government which is deemed uniquely “governmental” in nature, and not a function that a private corporation or entity would engage in. The precise definition of what constitutes a governmental function is not easy to determine, and many courts reached conflicting results on the matter. See proprietary function and governmental-proprietary test.

**GOVERNMENTAL-PROPRIETARY TEST:** A test developed to determine if a government is to be protected with immunity from negligence lawsuits. This test is based on making a distinction between the “governmental” and “proprietary” functions of the government, with only the latter being subject to liability. Most courts have found this distinction very difficult to make and have thus abandoned the test. See governmental function and proprietary function.

**INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS:** An intentional tort whereby the actor engages in extreme or outrageous conduct, which in turn causes severe emotional distress in another person.

**MALFEASANCE:** Those doing a wrongful or unlawful act.

**MINISTERIAL ACTS:** Those acts of government that do not involve high-level planning or policy decisions. All of the day-to-day acts that carry out the public policy of the government are ministerial in nature. See discretionary-ministerial test.

**MISFEASANCE:** The doing of a proper or lawful act in a wrongful or injurious manner.

**NONFEASANCE:** The failure to perform an act or duty that is otherwise required.

**PLAINTIFF:** Under civil law, this is the party that has been injured and has brought a lawsuit against the defendant, usually in the hope of collecting damages.

**PROPRIETARY FUNCTION:** A function of government that is not unique to the government, but is the type of function that most private corporations would also perform. Courts had a very difficult time defining the term precisely. See governmental-proprietary test and governmental function.

**RATIONAL BASIS TEST:** A level of constitutional analysis under the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It is designed to determine if a challenged law bears a reasonable relationship to the attainment of a legitimate government objective. See strict scrutiny.

**RESCUE DOCTRINE:** A legal rule which allows a person to be held liable for injuries sustained by a third party rescuer, in cases where the original actor was negligent in endangering himself or another person, and the rescuer was injured trying to come to their aid.



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**RESPONDEAT SUPERIOR:** Latin for “let the superior reply.” This doctrine provides that when an employee, acting in the course of his or her employment, acts negligently and causes an injury, his or her employer may be held responsible for the negligence. Respondent superior is one form of vicarious liability.

**SEPARATION OF POWERS:** The doctrine that prohibits one branch of the government (judicial, legislative, or executive) from interfering with or exercising the powers of another branch. This doctrine operates to ensure that one branch of the government doesn’t become too powerful.

**SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP:** A legally recognized relationship formed between the government and a private citizen giving rise to a duty on the part of the government to act in a non-negligent fashion. The factors needed to form a special relationship vary, but generally some form of contact between the individual and the government, and reliance on that contact by the individual are necessary. A special relationship is only needed in jurisdictions that still adhere to the public duty doctrine.

**STALKING:** A dangerous, obsessive type of behavior that is now criminal in many jurisdictions. Generally it includes willfully, maliciously and repeatedly following or harassing someone, and may include the making of threats against that person with the intent to put them in fear of death or bodily injury.

**STATUTE:** A law passed by the legislature.

**STRICT SCRUTINY:** A level of constitutional analysis under the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This level of scrutiny, much higher than the rational basis test, is applied to test the constitutionality of laws that single out a “suspect class” (at this time, alienage, nationality and race are suspect classes) of people for special treatment. The state must show that the classification is necessary to achieve a compelling state interest, or the law is unconstitutional.

**SURVIVAL STATUTE:** A statute that allows a decedent’s estate to have a cause of action to recover damages for the pain and suffering of the decedent prior to their death. In cases where death was instant or there was no suffering; a survival statute would not apply. Compare with wrongful death statute.

**TORTFEASOR:** One who engages in a tort.

**WRONGFUL DEATH STATUTE:** A statute that allows a decedent’s estate to have a cause of action to recover damages for losses the family sustained as a result of that person’s death. This includes the loss of services and financial support the family would have received if the decedent were still alive. Compare with survival statute.

## Basic Telecommunications

### RELATED COURT CASES

1. *DE LONG V. COUNTY OF ERIE*, 60 N.Y.2d 296 (1983) – (landmark case that involves the issue of the Public Duty Doctrine) – De Long, family and estate of a woman killed by an intruder sued the county for negligently directing police units to the wrong address and failing to resolve this error.
2. *BARTH V. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO*, 490 N.E. 2<sup>nd</sup> 77 (1986) – this case involves the issues of discretionary immunity, the Public Duty Doctrine, standard of care, and other related legal issues. Despite repeated calls from public school personnel about a student who was injured during recess, an ambulance was not dispatched for 50 minutes. This delay resulted in severe medical complications and permanent injury to the child. Award damages estimated over 2 million dollars.
3. *HUTCHERSON V. CITY OF PHEONIX*, 933 P. 2d 1251 (1996) – Popular case that involves the issues of duty, standard of care, negligence, causation, damages, and apportionment of fault. It involved a woman who was being stalked by her ex-boyfriend, which resulted in tragedy after a dispatcher did not handle the call in a serious manner.
4. *HUSTON V. MONTGOMERY COUNTY*, U.S. Dist. Lexis 19248 (1995) – involved a man who was having difficulty breathing. The call-taker dispatched an emergency response team to the wrong address. As a result, the man experienced full cardiac and respiratory arrest and was subsequently pronounced dead at the hospital.

**Appendix C**

**Stress Management Handouts**

**Handout 1: Cognitive Reappraisal**

Cognitive reappraisal is a stress control strategy that helps us rethink potential stressors so that they are interpreted in an adaptive, health-promoting as opposed to maladaptive and stress-fostering patterns of thought.

1. Confront the stressor: Events usually have an actor and an action. Who and what are they? What are the surrounding circumstances? What is the immediate effect on you? Focus on your emotions and feelings. Try to describe them.
2. Analyze your reaction: After identifying the stressor, carefully and thoughtfully analyze your original appraisal. What thoughts run through your mind during and immediately following the event? What is it about the event that causes you distress? Does it remind you of a past experience? What value, belief or expectation might be contributing to the stress?
3. Rethink your situation: Generate some alternative ways of viewing the event, ways that focus less on the stressful aspects and more on neutral or positive ones. Try to come up with appraisals that interpret the event as a challenge instead of despair.
4. Select one of your alternative: Review your list and discard those that sound phony or sugar-coated. Choose one that is genuine and positive and help you to deal more effectively with the event.
5. Trying it out: Deliberately divert your thoughts from your former stressful interpretation and replace it with your new, positive interpretation. Remember, this technique does not involve denial. It is a highly rational effort in which we choose to focus our attention on the elements of a situation that help us stay calm and help us resolve the problem. However, it is not an easy thing to do. Our thought patterns form slowly, over many years. We become accustomed to thinking in patterns that are hard to change. But it can be done. You always have a choice. Mental rehearsal is a good way to practice. Sometimes it's a good idea to talk about your feelings with a trusted friend, family member or spiritual advisor.

## **Handout 2: Nutritional Knowledge Inventory**

Answer *True* or *False*, in the space provided, to each of the following statements. Turn the page for correct answers and scoring information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Orange juice functions as a predisposer to stress in the same manner that refined sugar does.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When in doubt, eat protein over carbohydrates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Protein supplements should be taken during stress and exercise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Honey and molasses are simply another form of sugar and affect you in the same stress-prone fashion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Hypoglycemia is a stress related disease associated with faulty metabolism.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Using soy sauce is an excellent way to avoid the use of salt.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The average soda contains 10 to 15 teaspoons of sugar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The use of vitamins during stressful periods of fasting is senseless.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. It is far better to eat six small meals a day than 1 to 3 larger ones, even if you are dieting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Liquid protein is an excellent food supplement, particularly when dieting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Starches should be avoided as much as possible, particularly when dieting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Although good for the body, fiber is not a source of energy for humans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Fasting to remove impurities is health promoting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Excessive amounts of vitamin C can cause kidney stones and diarrhea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Eating has been shown to be effective in coping with stress.

### **Scoring Key**

Give yourself one point for each correct response, based on the following key and explanation to each item.

- 1. *True* If you wish to consume fruit-flavored sugar, it is far better to eat the naturally occurring form, rather than extracted juice.
- 2. *False* Both supply 4 Callgm and carbohydrates are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals, foods high in protein are generally high in fat content.
- 3. *False* While it is true that chronic stress causes a certain amount of protein degradation, excess proteins cannot be stored by the body.
- 4. *True* Sugar is sugar, no matter what color or consistency you find it in.
- 5. *False* Hypoglycemia is not a disease, but a syndrome associated with the normal, physiological response to an abnormal amount of sugar intake.
- 6. *False* One tablespoon of soy sauce contains 3,300 mg. of salt. The average daily requirement is 200 mg. One or two strokes of the salt shaker meets that requirement.
- 7. *True* Read it and weep.
- 8. *True* Vitamins don't provide energy in themselves but act on the nutrients present to regulate chemical activities within the body; but the nutrients need to be there.

## Basic Telecommunications

9. *True* With the exception of carnivores, most animals in the wild nibble all day or night. It seems that nature knows best.
10. *False* Evidence is accumulating that shows liquid protein to be a significant stressor. Even milk in excess has its drawbacks. Moreover, most Americans get far more protein than they need, even when dieting.
11. *False* Starches belong in the carbohydrate group and thus, yield 4 Callgm just like fruits, vegetables and proteins. Since they are complex in nature, they take a while to be digested and absorbed, thereby avoiding the metabolic stress associated with the simple sugars.
12. *True* Fiber is a complex carbohydrate for which we do not have the enzymes to digest as an energy source.
13. *False* Fasting is an artificial stressor, which dramatically alters metabolism and taxes organs and systems within the body. The body is very efficient at removing toxins if left alone, those which it is unable to handle will not be removed by one or two days of fasting.
14. *True* And it doesn't prevent or cure colds either.
15. *True* We did not say good, just effective. The behavior pattern has obvious complications, the least of which is not the obvious fact that the guilt associated with overeating and weight gain begin to serve as stressors in themselves. From here, the situation snowballs downhill rapidly.

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Interpretation:</b>	<b>13 – 15</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>9 – 12</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>6 – 8</b>	<b>Poor</b>
	<b>0 – 5</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>

**Handout 3: Interests and Issues Checklist**

This checklist helps identify some of your interest and issues. The topics listed below pertain to us, directly or indirectly, at some point in our adult lives. Read through the list and place a checkmark by each topic that you might like to learn more about. Check as many as you wish:

**Health-Related**

- general diet
- illness and/or injury
- diet for reducing risk of heart disease
- exercise for self, for spouse
- relaxation skill
- surgery
- stress management
- CPR, first aid
- women's health

**Self and Family**

- problem solving
- parenting & family planning
- sex education
- marriage, remarriage, divorce
- leisure, travel
- self-development
- communication in the family
- decision-making
- aging
- self-confidence
- self-defense
- death in the family
- dealing with benefits, insurance, credit, social security
- rape
- mid-life crises
- dealing with loneliness
- increasing self-awareness
- alcohol abuse, drug abuse
- spouse abuse; child abuse
- dealing with strong emotion
- time management
- how to identify, locate and use community
- resources, such as public agencies, clinics
- legal aid, clergy

## **Basic Telecommunications**

### **Career and Employment**

- promotions, or lack of
- promotion exams and study schedules
- second and third jobs (moonlighting)
- shift work, change in regular work schedule
- on-the-job injury
- your retirement
- your mate's retirement
- occupational illness
- death on the job
- changing your career
- mate's career change
- bringing the work home
- job hunting
- extra hazardous duty assignments
- mate's free-time activities
- volunteerism

**Other:**