

POLICE DISPATCHER - LATERAL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Classification Responsibilities: A Police Dispatcher - Lateral performs most of the duties of a Police Dispatcher based on previous dispatching experience. An incumbent in this class learns to perform the full scope of duties of a Mesa Police Dispatcher through a structured on-the-job training program tailored to each individual's experience, or lack of, in the areas of answering 911 calls and dispatching police services. Incumbents are trained according to Mesa Police Department policies and operating procedures. Duties include: receiving calls from the public; evaluating the calls for proper action; and initiating Police response by obtaining information required for dispatching field units. An employee in this class learns to dispatch messages and calls by voice and computer to Police units and to maintain radio contact with mobile units. This class performs related duties as required.

Distinguishing Features: This is a civilian trainee class that works in the Police Communications Center. Training is provided by a Police Dispatcher on special assignment or a Police Communications Shift Supervisor. Typically, intense training is provided for 18 weeks; however, additional training to reach full performance may be required. As training progresses, employees are expected to demonstrate extensive communication skills, and to exercise good judgement under pressure. An employee in this class must progress by noncompetitive promotion within a specified time frame to the classification of Police Dispatcher after successful completion of training and satisfactory performance. A Police Dispatcher - Lateral may be assigned to either a day, swing, or graveyard shift on a regular, rotational basis that includes nights, weekends, and holidays. This class is FLSA nonexempt.

QUALIFICATIONS

Employee Values: All employees of the City of Mesa are expected to uphold and exhibit the City's shared employee values of Knowledge, Respect, and Integrity.

Minimum Qualifications Required. Graduation from high school or GED. Any combination of training, education, and experience equivalent to at least one year of work experience in communications involving one or more of the following areas: dispatching fire/emergency medical services or dispatching police services at a Primary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) also known as a 911 Center. Experience with computer data entry and/or dealing with emergency traffic. Must successfully pass Critical test prior to hire or promotion date.

Special Requirements. Candidates given a conditional job offer will be required to successfully complete a hearing test. Because of the confidential, sensitive nature of information handled, successful completion of a background investigation, polygraph testing, and psychological examination are required.

Substance Abuse Testing. Due to the safety and/or security sensitive nature of this classification, individuals shall be subject to pre-employment/pre-placement alcohol, drug and/or controlled substance testing as outlined in City policy and procedures.

Preferred/Desirable Qualification. Bilingual speaking skills (English/Spanish) are desirable.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Communication: Communicates first with an instructor, and then as training progresses, by telephone with the general public, in order to gain experience in obtaining facts quickly and accurately through the use of questions and tone of voice appropriate to the nature of the call. Learns to communicate on a base radio system with Police Officers in order to obtain or relay information. Enunciates clearly and correctly to facilitate communication. Under hypothetical learning situations and then in actual circumstances, keys messages on a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) terminal that is directed to Police Officers in responding to a call using clearly organized thoughts, expressed in a structured format and sequence which is taught and practiced, in order to relay information to units about an incident.

Manual/Physical: Receives training provided verbally by an instructor who simulates the types of phone calls received from the public. After classroom practice, receives phone calls from the public who are seeking public safety assistance. Enters information directly into a computer as it is being broadcast over the radio or obtained over the phone. Detects distinct tones from a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). Detects unclear or unusual sounds on the phone or radio system that might be a call for help. Reads training material in order to learn the facts, procedures, and restrictions which are applied in call evaluations and radio protocol. Learns to visually monitor unit status on a screen in order to maintain knowledge of the current status of Police Officers and the calls assigned to them. Multi-tasks by conducting conversations on the phone while monitoring radio traffic and keeping up with requests from Police Officers. Switches to manual operations when the CAD system is not working. Operates a multi-line telephone system, base radios, computer terminals, and teletype equipment to receive and transmit information. Works while confined to a communications console area under conditions requiring close contact with other employees, often during stressful conditions. Reads maps in order to give verbal directions on the phone to persons who are unfamiliar with the City.

Mental: Completes study guides requiring reading and interpretation of procedures and application of those procedures in order to pass written examinations. Distinguishes between emergency and non-emergency calls when given criteria, practice, and feedback. Practices determining answers to questions by accessing various resources (computer system, files, schedules, rosters) in order to obtain accurate information. Uses logic or other problem-solving tools in data analysis or in generating solutions. Practices deciding (with decreasing assistance) which, and the number of Police units to dispatch by considering such factors as time of day, description and location of calls, beat unit or equipment available, and probable degree of hazard to personnel responding. Evaluates, with practice, caller's answers to questions in order to determine the urgency of the call and whether Police personnel should be dispatched to the scene. Practices and gains proficiency in acquiring and entering information provided by citizens via phone (including uncooperative callers) and by officers via radio, directly into the CAD system by listening to content, asking clarifying questions, controlling the conversation, and determining the course of action to take within time constraints and departmental procedures. Acquires proficiency through practice in prioritizing multiple tasks such as answering the radio and phone, dispatching calls, acknowledging messages, and running inquiries. Learns the geography and operating procedures of other jurisdictions for multi-jurisdictional and automatic aide agreements. Makes sound decisions and quickly reacts positively under stressful conditions which typically entail the life or well-being of a citizen or public safety member who is in danger.

Knowledge and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

basic telephone etiquette;
public relations techniques;
the Federal Communications Commission rules and regulations pertaining to the operation of public safety, municipal government, and public utility radio communications services; and
police department organization, procedures, and operating policies.

Ability to:

acquire a working knowledge of the geography and organizational structure of the City of Mesa including streets and their hundred blocks, the relative distance between streets, City boundary limits, sectors and beat areas, and fire response districts;
learn the operating procedures of the Police Communications Center;
perform several tasks simultaneously;
monitor police alarm panels;
maintain a record of all police activity;
enter data into a computer as it is being received;
operate CAD equipment;
operate a base radio;
dispatch police calls, listen to incoming phone information, and assimilate spoken instructions or information from other dispatchers or a shift supervisor;
scan the personal computer (PC) screen rapidly in order to select pertinent information;
shut out extraneous information from other radio channels and coworkers, while selectively listening to information recognized as crucial;
learn, understand, and carry out specific procedural steps;
speak with a clear, well-modulated and pleasant voice;
deal effectively with upset individuals in obtaining information;
handle negative comments and feedback from the public;
cope with emotionally tense situations which may include the death of a citizen or officer;
remember details and make decisions under stressful conditions; and
establish and maintain effective working relationships with coworkers, supervisors, police field personnel, and the general public.

The duties listed above are intended only as general illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. Specific statements of duties not included does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. Job descriptions are subject to change by the City as the needs of the City and requirements of the job change.

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INCREMENTS 43-200

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