City of Bellingham
Classification Specification - Civil Service or AFSCME

CLASS TITLE	**Fire/EMS Dispatcher-in-Training, Fire/EMS Dispatcher**
DEPARTMENT	**Fire**
UNION:	**114F**
SG:	**Plan M**
CS:	**Yes**
FLSA:	**Y**
EE04CODE|SOC:	**TE|43-5031**

NATURE OF WORK:

The Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Dispatcher processes and dispatches all requests for Fire and EMS response. Receives transferred calls from What-Comm Communications Center, various other agencies and directly from the public for Fire/EMS, public assistance, and hazmat responses. Gathers information from calling parties; prioritizes and triages emergency and non-emergency requests for various types of assistance. When appropriate, transfers the caller to another appropriate agency. Fire/EMS Dispatchers located in the Prospect Communication Center (PCC) dispatch fire, rescue, medical, hazmat and other support units according to established policies, procedures and training. PCC dispatchers use a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and Medical/Fire triage platform to triage information from the caller to determine the most appropriate apparatus to send, the level of coverage required and manage deployment of available units. PCC dispatchers monitor current status of Fire/EMS Department resources and assist in making recommendations for temporary or permanent changes to fire response standards. PCC dispatchers are responsible for protecting and upholding the Washington State HIPAA/Confidentiality Laws as they relate to the dispatch work.

PCC is the primary answering point for the City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and dispatches all hazmat incidents. As the secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in Whatcom County, PCC has the capability and equipment necessary to receive all 911 calls directly in the event that What-Comm Communications Center needs to be evacuated.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

Fire/EMS Dispatcher-in-Training

This is the entry level for a new Fire/EMS Dispatcher. New hires go through a structured training program learning to meet the requirements and performance standards for Fire/EMS dispatching. During this period of time, dispatchers are expected to obtain certifications as may be required, for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD), Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD), Telecommunicator I and Telecommunicator II. A Fire/EMS Dispatcher-in-Training will promote to Fire/EMS Dispatcher upon meeting the requirements outlined below.

Fire/EMS Dispatcher

- Demonstrating the skills to independently handle the requirements of the Fire/EMS dispatch console.

- Completion of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) training and certification.
- Completion of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and certification.

Fire/EMS Dispatchers are required and expected to exercise considerable discretion in their daily work. It is essential for Fire/EMS Dispatchers to manage the distribution of resources and problem solve during times of high call volume when resources are depleted.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to Communications Division Chief. Fire/EMS Dispatchers receive oversight and direction for day-to-day operations from the Fire/EMS Dispatch Supervisor. Fire/EMS Dispatchers perform work independently under the direction of policies and procedures provided by the City of Bellingham, Bellingham Fire Department, OEM, Whatcom County Fire Communications Protocol, Whatcom County BLS Protocols, Medical and Fire Triage Protocols, Joint Operations Protocols and PCC Protocols. Fire/EMS Dispatchers also coordinate with and occasionally receive direction from the on-duty Battalion Chief or an Incident Commander.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Receives, prioritizes, and routes emergency and non-emergency calls from the public, transferred calls and calls received directly from other agencies. Based on established procedures, enters non-emergent caller's information and dispatches according to priority or transfer/refers to the appropriate agency. Gathers information from calling parties and enters the type, location, source and all information for emergency calls into CAD. Triages emergency requests for assistance, and dispatches fire, rescue, medical, hazmat and other support units based on established protocols. Relays pertinent information between responders via radio.

2. Provides pre-arrival emergency and non-emergency instruction to the caller, including but not limited to, CPR, childbirth instruction and other life-saving instructions. Continually updates the status of patients and responders to apparatus responding to the incident.

3. Retrieves and evaluates information from computers based on knowledge of dispatch and emergency response protocols, status of available apparatus and familiarity with county and city geography. Dispatches and relays call information to responding personnel and apparatus.

4. Manages multiple radio frequencies and radio communications simultaneously per established policies and procedures.

5. Communicates and coordinates closely with field units and command officers to support and meet the needs of the incident and to accurately monitor incident status and unit response availability. May work closely with other fire service personnel assigned to assist dispatch operations.

6. Checks the Fire/EMS dispatch consoles on a scheduled basis by running maintenance tests and monitors all other dispatch equipment as needed. Reports problems to the Fire/EMS Dispatch Supervisor or Communications Division Chief for facilitation of repair service for malfunctioning system components.

7. Provides vehicle routing information to responding units as needed. Establishes and maintains current road closure information in a local database.

8. Appropriately monitors city-wide webcams, weather, local and national news during active incidents or weather-related emergencies for safety and scene information and relays that information to responders and other agencies as staffing and workload allows.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Generates routine reports daily such as the incident history reports, incident shift summaries, informational reports, etc.

2. In specifically defined situations, provides and/or coordinates on-site radio and telephone communications at the scene of an incident.

3. Faxes and mails daily reports and information reports to appropriate agencies. Maintains various files, such as premise information, location information, reference maps, business phone numbers, personnel phone numbers, etc. Assists in the evaluation of dispatch systems, operations and practices.

4. Regularly participates in fire service drills, training and emergency ride-alongs.

5. Participates in the training of probationary Fire/EMS dispatchers.

6. Performs other duties within the scope of the classification.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities):

Knowledge of:
- Knowledge of or ability to learn the geography of Whatcom County including: cities and towns, locations of highways, main streets, major buildings and businesses.
- Working knowledge of interagency and international call protocols and resources.

Skill in:
- Demonstrated skill in handling stress.
- Demonstrated skill in assimilating and recalling large amounts of information.
- Appropriately prioritizing simultaneous responsibilities in stressful situations.
- Demonstrated skill in providing clear, concise information in English and relaying information in the context in which it is received.
- Demonstrated skill in following written instructions with strict attention to detail.
- Demonstrated skill in using a computer keyboard to quickly enter information into a computer and process information from a video display terminal.
- Demonstrated skill in problem solving for the public and co-workers with courtesy, tact, and good judgment.
  Use of computer software to perform various tasks and assignments, including reading and interpreting geospatial data quickly and accurately.

Ability to:

- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with fellow staff members, supervisors and the public.
- Function calmly and effectively in stressful situations.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
  Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
  - Frequently remain stationary for long periods of time;
  - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone and fax;
  - Receive and communicate accurate information in a stressful or confrontational environment;
  - Visual acuity (correctable) to accurately read information from a computer screen and printed materials at varying distances, while multi-tasking.
  - Hearing within (or correctable to) normal limits across the speech frequencies and recognition of speech in the very good to excellent range.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

The work is performed in an office environment at a computer/telecommunications work station, in close proximity to co-workers. PCC Fire/EMS Dispatchers use different computer systems, a multi-line telephone system utilizing a headset and complex radio communications system to receive, input and process information. PCC Fire/EMS Dispatchers frequently take calls from people in various emotional states requesting an emergency response. The workload intensity varies considerably and requires frequent swings from emergency calls for service to less emergent assistance calls all dependent on cooperative teamwork. Specifically defined circumstances may require the response to an emergency scene to provide and coordinate on-scene emergency communications.

The work includes shift work and the need to keep current with changing operational policies and procedures. It also includes the requirement to attend and participate in fire service drills and certain fire trainings, as well as the requirement to maintain specialized training certifications as determined by policy and union contract. The work environment requires long periods of sitting or standing.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Minimum of one year of experience in a position with intensive public contact.
- Minimum keyboarding skill of 40 wpm net.
- Experience or training in the use of computer software such as word processing, spreadsheets, database management or other business/educational software preferred.
- Experience using multi-line phone systems preferred.
- Previous experience in public safety dispatching preferred.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Must obtain Washington State EMT Certification during training period and maintain throughout employment.
- Must obtain EMD, EFD, certification within one year of hire or the time period specified by policy or contract.
- Must obtain and maintain Telecommunicator I & II certifications within twelve (12) months of hire.
- Must have a telephone at place of residence or a cell phone.
- Must pass a hearing evaluation prior to hire.
- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal background check and child and vulnerable adult abuse records check.
- Must pass a pre-employment drug screen.
- Willingness and ability to work 12 hour shifts, weekends and holidays, including responding to callouts and overtime needs.

PREPARED BY: L. Hill
Dispatch Work Group
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REVIEWED BY:_____
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COMMISSION ADOPTION: 1/8/2025